

# **REPORT**

## ***Climate Action, Planning and Development***

**To:** Community Heritage Commission      **Date:** March 2, 2022

**From:** Dilys Huang, Development Planner      **File:** HER00780

**Item #:** [Report Number]

**Subject:** Heritage Revitalization Agreement Application: 802 & 806 Eighth Street and 809 Eighth Avenue

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### **PURPOSE**

To review the application's heritage elements and provide a recommendation to Council.

### **SUMMARY**

An application for a Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) has been received for 802 & 806 Eighth Street and 809 Eighth Avenue. The project includes the retention and on-site relocation of the 1929 Sincok House on its own subdivided parcel, and the construction of three new townhouse buildings, for a total of 18 residential units. The heritage house would be restored and legally protected through a Heritage Designation Bylaw. The Community Heritage Commission is being asked to review the heritage value of the house, the proposed Heritage Designation Bylaw for the site, the heritage conservation work on the house, and the design relationship of the new townhouse buildings to the heritage house.

### **GUIDING POLICY AND REGULATIONS**

#### **Official Community Plan (OCP) Land Use Designation**

The Official Community Plan (OCP) sets out the City's anticipated land use for the future, for the purposes of guiding development applications. In the OCP, the subject properties are designated for "Residential - Infill Townhouse (RT)". This designation envisions small scale, side-by-side townhouses and rowhouses that are compatible within areas of single detached housing and other lower density ground oriented housing. The Infill Townhouse and Rowhouse Development Permit Area (DPA 1.3) guidelines also apply. The application is consistent with these development policies.

### Projects with Heritage Assets

The OCP encourages the use of Heritage Revitalization Agreements when a heritage asset on a site is appropriately incorporated into a development. The OCP also indicates that through an HRA, a development may be eligible for incentives such as an increase in density or reduced parking requirements, which would make it viable to conserve assets with heritage merit. With the preservation and restoration of a heritage asset, the proposed development is consistent with the OCP.

### **Zoning Bylaw**

The subject properties are currently zoned Neighbourhood Single Detached Residential (NR-2). The proposal would not be consistent with the current zoning, and as such, a rezoning or Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) is required. In this case, the HRA is being used both for relaxations to the NR-2 zone in relation to the heritage house, and similar to a rezoning, to permit a different building form (e.g. townhouses).

### **Heritage Revitalization Agreement**

A Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) is a negotiated agreement between the City and a property owner for the purposes of heritage conservation. In exchange for long-term legal protection through a Heritage Designation Bylaw and exterior restoration, certain zoning relaxations may be considered as long as the application is consistent with the Official Community Plan. An HRA is not precedent setting, as each one is unique to a specific site. The *Policy for the Use of Heritage Revitalization Agreements* lays out the process for HRAs and the relaxations that may be considered.

### Heritage Related Design Guidelines

Council endorsed the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* in 2008 as a basis for assessing heritage projects within the city. These are national guidelines for best practice in heritage conservation and design. All HRA proposals are carefully evaluated using this document to ensure conservation work on the exterior of the heritage building is in compliance. Additionally, the design of the adjacent new buildings is reviewed against the principles and guidelines in this document.

### **Heritage Designation Bylaw**

A heritage asset that is the subject of a Heritage Revitalization Agreement is also protected by a Heritage Designation Bylaw. This Bylaw is a regulation that places long-term legal protection on the land title of a property. Any changes to a protected heritage property must first receive approval from City Council (or its delegate, the Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development) through a Heritage Alteration Permit (HAP). Future development is no longer entitled, but could be permitted by Council with an

HAP. HAP applications are also evaluated by staff against the Standards and Guidelines.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Site Characteristics and Context**

The subject site, which currently includes three properties, is located north of Moody Park at the north-west corner of Eighth Street and Eighth Avenue across from the high school, Massey Theatre, and arena. The site has an approximate combined gross area of 1,887 sq. m. (20,317 sq. ft.) and is relatively flat with lane access on the north side.

The properties each contain an existing single detached dwelling. The existing single detached properties to the immediate north across the lane are also designated Residential - Infill Townhouse (RT), while those to the west are designated Residential - Detached and Semi-Detached Housing (RD). To the south-east are some three to four storey low-rise apartment buildings. A site context map is provided in Appendix A.

### **Pre-Application Review**

Prior to this Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) application, the applicant submitted a Pre-Application Review for redevelopment of this site, which did not include heritage retention. During that process, staff assessed the existing buildings by reviewing City records and conducting a site visit. As a result, it was recommended that an HRA be explored instead of a standard rezoning, in order for some heritage retention to be negotiated. The resulting application is described below.

### **Project Description**

There are currently three wartime houses on this site. Two are proposed to be demolished, and one would be restored and be relocated from the north-east corner to the south-west corner of the site. The 160 sq. m. (1,722 sq. ft.) house would remain the same square footage, containing three bedrooms, and be located on its own 226 sq. m. (2,437 sq. ft.) sub-compact lot with a proposed Floor Space Ratio (FSR) of 0.71.

Seventeen new units are proposed to be created in three new townhouse buildings. The buildings would be oriented parallel to Eighth Avenue on both sides of a central pedestrian courtyard, with the heritage house to the west against neighbouring houses. The proposed density for the larger parcel containing the new townhouse units is 1.13 FSR. Select project drawings from the applicant are provided in Appendix B.

### **Subdivision**

The applicant has proposed subdivision so that the heritage house would be on its own fee simple lot after the on-site relocation. If the heritage house were to be stratified and form part of the townhouse strata, substantial envelope upgrading would be required,

resulting in the loss of significant original heritage materials. In this case, subdivision is reflective of heritage conservation best practices. Both parcels would be legally interconnected through the HRA and various covenants.

### Proposed Relaxations

Under the City's *Policy for the Use of Heritage Revitalization Agreements* and the Official Community Plan, regulatory land use (Zoning Bylaw) relaxations may be considered through an HRA. In this case, due to the proposed subdivision, five Zoning Bylaw relaxations would need to be considered for the heritage house: smaller lot size, shorter rear setback, increased density, higher site coverage, and off-street parking location (details in Table 1 in Appendix C).

The HRA is also acting akin to a rezoning for townhouses. The primary requested relaxations to the townhouse policies for this site include allowance of stacked townhouse units, slightly higher density and heights for two of the townhouse buildings, reduced off-street parking, and parking space setback from lot lines (details in Table 2 in Appendix C).

## **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **Demolitions**

There are three houses on the site: 802 Eighth Street (1928), 806 Eighth Street (1929), and 809 Eighth Avenue (1937). The three houses are modest interwar bungalows without previous heritage recognition. Of the three houses, 806 Eighth Street was recommended by staff for retention because it has the greatest physical integrity. Photos of 802 Eighth Street and 809 Eighth Avenue, proposed to be demolished, are provided in Appendices D and E.

*Considering that development of townhouses is permitted on this site, is the demolition of the 1928 and 1937 houses appropriate to consider, given the proposed retention and protection of the 1929 house?*

### **Heritage Value of the Sincock House**

The 1929 Sincock House currently located at 806 Eighth Street is a one and a half storey plus basement wood-frame house. Based on the proposed Statement of Significance (Appendix F), the building is valued for its direct association with the interwar development boom in New Westminster during the late 1920s and as a working class Craftsman bungalow. Although modest in scale, it features high quality craftsmanship and finishing. The house is also important for its association with the original owners and the builder, who had enduring impacts on the social and physical development of the city. See photographs of the house in its current condition in Appendix F.

*Is there enough heritage value to the house for it to be given long-term legal protection and heritage status through a Heritage Designation Bylaw?*

*Does the Statement of Significance provide an accurate representation of the heritage values of the building?*

## **Heritage Conservation Work**

Overall, the house is in good condition. Details on the conservation work are outlined in the Heritage Conservation Plan, which is attached to this report as Appendix F. A summary of the retained and restored elements of the house is provided in Table 1.

*Table 1: Summary of Heritage Conservation Work*

| <b>Building Element</b> | <b>Action</b> | <b>Detail and Material</b>   |
|-------------------------|---------------|--|
| Form and massing        | Preserve      | Preserve massing of roof forms and elevations  |
| Foundations             | Rehabilitate  | Concrete seismic foundation, increase basement height through excavation   |
| Main body siding        | Preserve      | Preserve rough cast stucco,<br>repair/patch/replicate where damaged<br>Preserve wood siding  |
| Front stairs            | Reconstruct   | Due to the move, these cannot be retained.<br>Reconstructed stairs would be based on existing design and reuse the original stones for granite piers |
| Roof                    | Restore       | Reshingle with coloured shingle per residential practice of the era  |
| Doors                   | Restore       | Partially glazed wood front door; Rehabilitate rear door;<br>Contemporary door for basement on west side elevation                                   |
| Chimney                 | Preserve      | Repoint and reflash  |
| Windows                 | Preserve      | Original wood windows on front and side elevations, additional basement window on east side elevation  |
| Decorative elements     | Preserve      | Wood front porch columns, fascia boards, belt course, moulding, flower boxes   |
| Exterior paint          | Restore       | Yellow and gold 1920s paint scheme based on original colours/house catalogues of the era   |
| Lighting                | Restore       | Restore semi-flush front porch light fixture by rewiring and replacing glass shade, or install new replica fixture                                   |

*Is the level of retention proposed appropriate for this project?*

*Are there exterior building elements not addressed which could or should be?*

*Is the Heritage Conservation Plan sufficiently comprehensive and detailed?*

## **Design Relationship with the Townhouse Buildings**

The City's policies, including the Standards and Guidelines, strongly encourage developments that include a historic building to be respectful of the existing heritage assets. Respectful development does not necessarily mean the new building(s) must be physically smaller than the heritage building or that the site should not be developed, rather that the site or new buildings' design should consider the heritage building, and allow the heritage building to be the focus of the development. The guidelines identify that new buildings should not be overwhelming, or detracting from the historic features.

In this instance, it should be noted that the Official Community Plan land use designation for this site anticipates townhouse density and forms. The Standards and Guidelines also encourage new buildings to be distinctly contemporary, so as to appropriately represent their period of construction today, and not falsify the history or historic development of a place or specific site.

The overall height and scale of the townhouses are proposed to gradually reduce toward the north-west to provide more sympathetic transition to the surrounding existing single detached properties, including the heritage house.

Traditional bungalow elements are reflected through the townhouses' gabled roofs, front porches, and exterior colours for the lower storeys. Contemporary design and finishes, along with minimal texture and architectural ornamentation are also proposed. Further details are provided in the drawings (Appendix B) and the Heritage Conservation Plan (Appendix F).

*Considering that development of townhouses is permitted on this site, are the massing and siting elements of the new buildings compatible with and respectful of the heritage house?*

*Alternatively, does the site plan or the design of the new townhouses overwhelm the heritage house?*

## **FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMISSION**

The Community Heritage Commission is being asked to review this application and provide feedback in relation to the following elements:

- The heritage value of the 1929 house;
- The prepared Statement of Significance;
- The appropriateness and level of the planned heritage conservation work; and
- Any heritage implications related to the design of the site or the new townhouse buildings.

The Community Heritage Commission is also being asked to provide a recommendation to Council on this application, based on its heritage merits. The following options are offered for the Commission's consideration:

- 1) That the Community Heritage Commission recommend that Council support the Heritage Revitalization Agreement for 802 & 806 Eighth Street and 809 Eighth Avenue; or
- 2) That the Community Heritage Commission recommend that Council does not support the Heritage Revitalization Agreement for 802-806 Eighth Street and 809 Eighth Avenue; or
- 3) That the Community Heritage Commission provide an alternative recommendation, stemming from elements identified in their discussion.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A: Site Context Map  
Appendix B: Drawing Package (Select)  
Appendix C: Project Statistics and Proposed Relaxations  
Appendix D: Photos of 802 Eighth Street  
Appendix E: Photos of 809 Eighth Avenue  
Appendix F: Heritage Conservation Plan and Statement of Significance

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