

REPORT

Climate Action, Planning, and Development

To: Community Heritage Commission **Date:** April 6, 2022

From: Hardev Gill,
Planning Technician **File:** PAR01423

Item #: [Report Number]

Subject: Preliminary Application Review: 203 Pembina Street

PURPOSE

For the Community Heritage Commission to provide feedback on the Preliminary Application Review of a Heritage Revitalization Agreement for a heritage tree.

PROJECT SUMMARY

A Preliminary Application Review request has been received for 203 Pembina Street in Queensborough. The redevelopment would include demolition of the existing 1966 house and construction of two townhouse buildings (one at the front and one at the rear of the property). The applicant is proposing to retain an existing specimen sized Oak tree as the project's heritage component in a Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA). The Community Heritage Commission is being asked to review the heritage value of the Oak Tree and determine if it is appropriate to be considered as the heritage component for the development.

GUIDING POLICY AND REGULATIONS

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 of a heritage asset through a Heritage Designation Bylaw, certain zoning relaxations may be considered, as long as the application is consistent with the Official Community Plan. For development related policy context, see Appendix C. The *Policy for the Use of HRAs* lays out the process for HRAs and the relaxations which may be considered. The application is consistent with this policy and the development regulations for the site.

The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

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. The guidelines indicate it is appropriate to consider ecological features and vegetation as having heritage value, and they provide general recommendations for the conservation of vegetation in a cultural landscape. The proposal to retain the Oak Tree is generally consistent with these guidelines (see Appendix G).

Heritage Designation Bylaw

A heritage asset which is the subject of an HRA is also protected by a Heritage Designation Bylaw. The criteria for Designation is outlined within the Local Government Act, where the Act allows the protection of a landscape feature through such bylaws. This type of bylaw is a regulation that places long-term legal protection on the land title of a property. Any changes to a protected 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

203 Pembina Street is a corner property in Queensborough. There are two street frontages (Salter and Pembina Streets) as well as an existing unconstructed lane at the rear. A site context map, aerial image, and information on the surrounding sites is provided in Appendix A. The overall site is 1,072 sq.m. (11,543 sq.ft.) in size. There is a 1966 two storey house on site, with an area of 309 sq.m. (3,322 sq.ft.). A 59 year old Oak Tree is located near the front of the property in the southwest corner along Pembina Street. See figure 1 below of the existing house and Oak Tree captured in December, 2020.



Figure 1: Existing House and Oak Tree

Project Description

The proposal is to demolish the 1966 house and replace it with six new stratified townhouses. One townhouse unit would be in a stand-alone building at the front of the site, and a building with five connected units would be constructed at the rear. A proposed site plan is attached as Appendix B. An overview of project statistics is in Appendix C. Vehicle access to the units would be from Salter Street, and parking would be provided in garages on the entry level of each unit. The proposal would also include a communal outdoor amenity space.

As a key component of the redevelopment proposal, the applicant is proposing to retain and protect an existing specimen sized tree (Oak Tree) which is located at the front of the property. The retention of the Oak Tree is to be considered as the heritage component to the proposal for the Heritage Revitalization Agreement.

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, three Zoning Bylaw relaxations would need to

be considered: side and rear yard setbacks and to the distance between the buildings (details in Table 1 in Appendix C).

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Heritage Value of the Oak Tree

The applicant has submitted a Statement of Significance (SOS) (Appendix D) and an Arborist Report (Appendix E) for the Oak Tree. Based on the SOS, the tree is approximately 59 years old and was planted the same year that the house was finished. Further photographs of the tree are in Appendix F.

Condition of the Tree

An Arboricultural and Tree Risk Assessment has been completed and has been reviewed by the City's Arborist. It is understood that the tree is "*significant and exhibits a healthy green canopy, good basal flare, vigorous new growth, and is an excellent long-term candidate for retention*".

Tree Protection

Preserving the tree would be in-line with the City's Urban Forest Management Strategy (link in Appendix C) whose goal is to protecting the city's tree canopy cover. It would also be in keeping with the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* (see Appendix G).

Retention of the Oak Tree through an HRA would be a very unique situation. Only one tree in New Westminster is currently recognized for its heritage value. That tree is included in the City's Heritage Register, but not legally protected. Should the Tree be considered to be a heritage asset, there would be protection measures including an Oak Tree Management Plan for pre and post-construction purposes to ensure long-term preservation.

Is there enough heritage merit for the Oak Tree to warrant a Heritage Revitalization Agreement?

Is the heritage value of the Oak Tree sufficient to warrant 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 Oak Tree?

Heritage Significance of the 1966 House

The house on site was built in 1966 by the Clarot family with the help of the local Italian Community (more detail in Appendix D). The house is not currently protected, nor recognized as having heritage value. It is not listed on the Queensborough Residential Heritage Inventory. However, due to the age of the house, the Commission is being asked to consider the house's merit under the City's standard Demolition Review policy.

The two storey house is a typical mid-century build, characterized by having a low-pitched side gabled roof style, horizontal lines, long windows, and overhanging eaves. In 1986 an addition made to the house. The applicant has indicated that the house would have to be demolished to facilitate the proposed development.

Given the value of the Oak Tree, and its retention through a Heritage Revitalization Agreement, is it appropriate to consider demolition of the house?

NEXT STEPS

Following the review by the Commission, staff will be presenting a report, including the Commission's feedback and recommendations, to the Land Use and Planning Committee (LUPC). A report to the LUPC is required since the proposal would warrant an amendment to the Official Community Plan to re-designate the land from single residential to a multi-unit residential designation.

FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMISSION

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

- The heritage value of the Oak Tree;
- The prepared Statement of Significance for the Oak Tree; and
- Heritage value of the existing house.

The Community Heritage Commission is also being asked to provide a recommendation to Land Use and Planning Committee 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 Land Use and Planning Committee support a Heritage Revitalization Agreement for 203 Pembina Street in considering the Oak Tree as the heritage asset to the proposed project; or
- 2) That the Community Heritage Commission recommend that the Land Use and Planning Committee does not support a Heritage Revitalization Agreement for 203 Pembina Street given that the Commission does not agree that there is sufficient heritage merit for the Oak Tree ; or

- 3) The Community Heritage Commission could also provide an alternative recommendation, stemming from elements identified in their discussion.

ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix A: Site Context Map, Aerial Image, and Surrounding Site Information
- Appendix B: Conceptual Site Plan
- Appendix C: Development Policy and Regulations, and Proposed Project Statistics
- Appendix D: Statement of Significance
- Appendix E: Arborist Report
- Appendix F: Images of the existing House and Oak Tree
- Appendix G: General Guidelines for Preservation, Rehabilitation and Restoration

This report was prepared by: Hardev Gill, Planning Technician

This report was reviewed by: Britney Dack, Senior Heritage Planner