

COUNCIL AGENDA

Date: _____ Item: _____



DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER
750 17TH STREET, WEST VANCOUVER BC V7V 3T3

COUNCIL REPORT

Date:	April 6, 2016
From:	Lisa Berg, Senior Community Planner
Subject:	Heritage Revitalization Agreement and Heritage Designation for 1425 Gordon Avenue (Vinson Residence)
File:	1010-20-15-084

RECOMMENDATION

THAT

1. Proposed "Heritage Revitalization Agreement Bylaw No. 4890, 2016" be read a first time;
2. Proposed "Heritage Designation Bylaw No. 4891, 2016" be read a first time;
3. Proposed "Heritage Revitalization Agreement Bylaw No. 4890, 2016" and "proposed "Heritage Designation Bylaw No. 4891, 2016" be presented at a public hearing scheduled for May 16, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Hall Council Chamber, and that the Municipal Clerk give statutory notice of the scheduled public hearing.

1.0 Purpose

To present to Council a proposed Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) for 1425 Gordon Avenue (**Appendix A – Context Map**) along with implementing bylaws.

The proposed HRA would enable the property owner to:

- retain the Vinson Residence as a municipally designated heritage building on the lot;
- create a garden suite in the basement of the Vinson Residence; and
- build two detached dwelling units and accessory garages on the property.

The application is not a rezoning. The proposed HRA and implementing bylaws are the tools which would enable the development of the land and legally protect the Vinson Residence, and are subject to a public hearing.

2.0 Executive Summary

Vinson House Developments Ltd. (a partnership between the Geller Group and Trasolini Chetner Construction Corp.) has applied for a Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) for 1425 Gordon Avenue. The intent of the HRA is to designate and protect the existing historical Vinson Residence on the property in exchange for additional development.

The Vinson Residence has heritage value for its architecture, its age, the development pattern it illustrates, and the significance of its original owner (Reeve Valient Vincent). The home is an excellent, very early, and unusually intact example of the Craftsman style and it provides a valuable link with the early architecture and the history of West Vancouver.

The HRA would enable the development of four dwelling units on the site: retention and legal protection of the historical Vinson Residence; a garden suite in the basement level of the Vinson Residence; and two detached single family residences referred to as the "Garden Cottage" and the "Laneway Cottage." The HRA would provide for Zoning Bylaw variances and a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.59 for the whole site. While the application is not a rezoning and the underlying RS5 zoning would remain intact, the HRA and implementing bylaws are subject to a public hearing.

Redevelopment of the site is guided by OCP Policy HE 1 and per Council-approved guidelines for the applications of such incentives to retain heritage resources. The Vinson Residence is listed on the West Vancouver Community Heritage Register and is eligible for municipal conservation tools and incentives enabled under Part 15 of the *Local Government Act*. The HRA is the legal framework between the District and the property owner, and municipal heritage designation is to provide ongoing legal protection for the Vinson Residence.

The Design Review Committee (DRC) considered the proposal at its February 18, 2016 meeting where the Committee passed a motion of support, subject to refinements to the proposal to be reviewed by staff. The applicant modified the proposal and staff considers the revisions to be consistent with the direction from the DRC.

The proposed HRA would place development controls to ensure that the infill of additional dwelling units preserves neighbourhood character and complements the historical significance of the Vinson House. It would also contribute to the diversity of housing stock by offering smaller infill units within an existing neighbourhood.

Should Council support the recommendations outlined in this report, the bylaws would receive first reading and a public hearing would be scheduled for May 16, 2016. Prior to the public hearing, the applicant would be required to host a Development Application Information Meeting to allow the neighbours an opportunity to learn about the proposal and ask questions of the applicant prior to the public hearing.

3.0 Legislation/Bylaw/Policy

Legislation

Municipal conservation tools and incentives are enabled under Part 15 of the *Local Government Act*. Continuing protection tools are described in Division 5 of Part 15, under sections 610 through 616, and include: heritage revitalization agreements, heritage designation, and heritage site maintenance standards (see **Appendix C**).

Policy

Consideration of this development application is guided by Official Community Plan (OCP) policy HE 1: “to encourage the preservation, retention and maintenance of buildings, sites and landscapes listed in the municipal heritage inventories¹.”

Zoning Bylaw

The site is zoned RS5 (Single Family Dwelling Zone 5).

4.0 Background

4.1 Previous Decisions

At the November 26, 2007 Council meeting Council passed the following motion:

“THAT the District of West Vancouver Community Heritage Register be established, pursuant to section 954 of the *Local Government Act*.”²

At the June 15, 2009 Council meeting Council passed the following motion:

“THAT staff utilize the following guidelines in the application of heritage conservation tools and incentives, which are enabled under the Local Government Act and Community Charter.

- (a) Properties that are formally recognized for their heritage value via listing on West Vancouver’s Community Heritage Register are considered eligible for municipal conservation incentives.
- (b) ‘Non-monetary’ and other ‘supportive’ incentives be made available for conservation of privately-owned heritage properties.
- (c) Heritage Revitalization Agreements (HRAs) will be used as the legal framework for drafting conservation agreements between the District and the owner of a heritage property, including the application of incentive tools.
- (d) Heritage designation bylaws will be used in tandem with HRAs to provide for ongoing legal protection of heritage resources.”

¹ The District commissioned three heritage inventories in the late 1980s and the early 1990s: (1) West Vancouver Heritage Inventory; (2) West Vancouver Heritage Landscape Inventory; and (3) West Vancouver Survey of Significant Architecture: 1945 – 1975. These inventories give no legal status and are primarily used for information and research purposes, including the development of the nomination list for the Community Heritage Register in 2008.

² Note: The revised *Local Government Act* (RS2015) came into force on January 1, 2016, so references to applicable sections of the LGA in this report differ from those sections referenced in previous Council resolutions.

At the June 9, 2008 Council meeting Council passed the following motion:

“THAT The ‘short list’ of 33 historic places shown in Appendix ‘C’ to the report from the Sr. Community Planner, titled Community Heritage Register, dated May 30, 2008 be added to the West Vancouver Community Heritage Register, pursuant to Section 954 of the *Local Government Act*.”

4.2 History

In June 2006, Council adopted the Heritage Strategic Plan. This document articulates the community’s values around heritage, and lays out the framework for building a robust heritage conservation program. The key implementation action following adoption of the Plan was the establishment of a Community Heritage Register in November 2007.

The register provides formal recognition of heritage value, and establishes eligibility for municipal conservation incentives. To date, 49 buildings and landscape resources have been added to the Register – including 27 privately-owned houses.

In 2008, the Heritage Strategic Plan Implementation Working Group identified the need for municipal incentives to make conservation and legal protection of heritage resources economically-viable. In June 2009, Council adopted a set of guidelines for the application of heritage conservation tools and incentives (as noted in Section 4.1 above), including the use of Heritage Revitalization Agreements (HRAs) and Heritage Designation. Incentive tools endorsed by Council are ‘non-monetary’ in nature – e.g., land use and development incentives rather than municipal grants and permissive tax exemptions.

The Vinson Residence is listed on the West Vancouver Community Heritage Register, and is eligible for municipal conservation tools and incentives enabled under Part 15 of the *Local Government Act*. Per Council-approved guidelines for the application of such incentives, a Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) has been the legal framework for drafting the conservation agreement between the property owner and the District, and municipal heritage designation is to provide ongoing legal protection for the Vinson Residence.

5.0 Analysis

5.1 Discussion

The Vinson Residence

The Vinson Residence was built in 1913 for Valient Vinson (b. 1878 – d.1934), who was Reeve of West Vancouver from 1918 – 1920, 1922, and 1927 – 1929 (see Figure 1). It was the first house in the upper Hollyburn Area, and it is a well-preserved and excellent example of the Craftsman Style.

Context

The Vinson House is located at 1425 Gordon Avenue in Ambleside, and is situated toward the rear of this gently sloping and large lot, being 11,555 square feet (1,073.5 square metres) in area. The lot is bounded by Gordon Avenue to the south, a rear lane to the north, and two single-family residential lots to the east and west being approximately 9,000 square feet (838 square metres) and 7,450 square feet (692 square metres) in area, respectively.



Figure 1: Valient Vinson, Reeve
West Vancouver Archives (1918)



Figure 2: Vinson House, 2015

In addition to the Vinson House, the lot is developed with a detached garage constructed in 1986 located on the northeast corner of the lot and is accessed via the lane. The remainder of the lot consists of garden areas, with an expansive front lawn, four on-site trees, and a stone wall topped with a fence, which separates the front of the property from the Gordon Avenue boulevard (see Figure 2). Two off-site trees are also referenced on the development plans (see page 4). The existing FAR of the home is 0.28.

RS5 Zoning

The minimum lot area within the RS5 zone is 6,000 square feet (558 square metres) and under the existing zoning, the site could be redeveloped with a new house of approximately 4,044 square feet (376 square metres), not including an in-ground basement or other exempted floor area (see Figure 4). The lot is just under the minimum amount of area (445 square feet) to qualify for a conventional two-lot subdivision.



Figure 4: RS5 Development Potential

THE PROPOSAL

The proposed Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) would enable redevelopment of the property with four units as an incentive for ongoing legal protection (Heritage Designation) for the “Vinson Residence” to be retained on the lot.

The application is not a rezoning. While the underlying zoning would remain intact, the HRA would effectively vary the zoning bylaw, including density, to enable the proposed development. The proposal includes:

- moving the Vinson House (2,697 square feet) forward on the lot plus the addition of a strata suite in the basement level (1,954 square feet) in accordance with a conservation plan;
- the construction of two detached dwelling units: 1,447 square feet and 1,574 square feet each (plus basements); and
- laneway garages (two detached and one attached totaling 890 square feet) (see Figure 5).

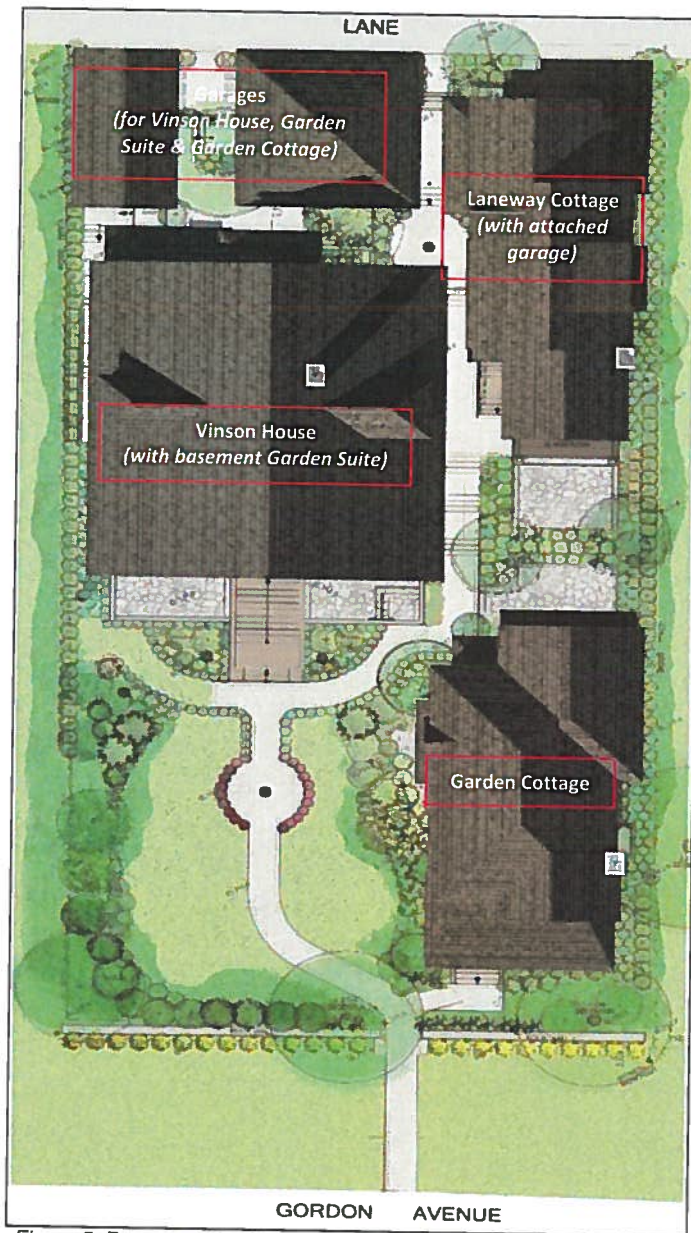


Figure 5: Proposed Site Plan

The proposed landscape plans include rebuilding the front stone wall and creating a pedestrian network through the site.

An outdoor patio area and courtyard is created for each unit and an "Edwardian" garden concept is proposed to link the buildings to each other and the historical past of the Vinson House.

The original appearance of the Vinson House will be conserved and restored to the extent possible in accordance with a conservation plan (see **Schedule A to Appendix E**).

The design of the infill units are done to complement the character of the main house by incorporating traditional details (see Figure 6).

Moving the Vinson House forward on the lot (to accommodate the garages) will result in the roof ridge height being one foot lower than the existing ridge line due to the slope of the lot.



Figure 6: Proposed South Elevation (Gordon Avenue)

The Project Profile is set out in **Appendix B** and the development proposal is attached as **Schedule B to Appendix E**.

Housing Diversity

The Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character and Housing identified a strong desire for greater housing diversity. The Dialogue revealed that West Vancouver has evolved from a community of traditional family households (parents and children) to “empty nesters,” seniors, smaller households (fewer or no children), and conversely, households embracing extended families and multi-generations.

The Dialogue identified fundamental planning challenges, including:

- How to provide for improved housing choices and affordability;
- How to achieve more affordable housing in close proximity to existing community services and amenities;
- How to meet the changing needs of residents by providing new housing opportunities within their own neighbourhoods, while maintaining the character of those neighbourhoods;
- How to meet the challenges of “designing with nature” and encouraging both the rural, natural character of West Vancouver, and environmentally sustainable development within dramatically different areas of the community with different character attributes.

The 2008 Community Dialogue survey revealed that 84% of respondents believe that a greater variety of housing types is needed. While the notion of a detached house is still highly valued in the community, residents want to see more variations to the traditional housing form, such as smaller units, more manageable gardens, opportunities for one-level living, and flexible designs to accommodate changing household needs.

The proposed development aligns with these objectives as it would fill a housing gap by providing smaller single family units (1,447 square feet to 2,697 square feet), as opposed to the construction of a single 4,000 square foot house (plus exempted areas) that could be built under existing zoning. The site presents a unique opportunity to preserve and protect an important heritage resource while adding smaller units that respect the surrounding neighbourhood and does not detract from the historical Vinson Residence.

While the proposal calls for an increase in density (i.e. from a FAR of 0.35 to 0.59), the proposed housing forms would be compatible with the surrounding built form context.

Required Bylaws

Implementation of the proposal, as described in this report, is subject to Council approval; specifically, the adoption of two proposed bylaws:

- "Heritage Revitalization Agreement Bylaw No. 4890, 2016" (**Appendix E**); and
- "Heritage Designation Bylaw No. 4891, 2016" (**Appendix F**).

Design Review Committee

The Design Review Committee considered the proposal at its February 18, 2016 meeting and the Committee passed the following motion:

THAT the Design Review Committee recommends SUPPORT; SUBJECT TO the comments from the meeting be implemented for staff to review.

Identified items for review included:

1. **Garden Cottage Location:** this dwelling was identified as being set too close to Gordon Avenue, with particular relation to the house to the east and that it would block the view of the Vinson Residence from the street heading westward. Further discussion ensued about containing the front porch within the massing of the house, similar to the Vinson Residence.
2. **Vinson House Height:** Concern was raised over the height of the Vinson House and the number of added steps to the front porch. Moving the house forward on the lot results in the structure picking up grade due to the downward slope.
3. **Rear Lot Massing:** Comment was made about the massing of the rear portion of the lot, which required fine tuning. Impact of the middle garage on the Vinson Residence was raised.
4. **Design Simplification:** A need to simplify the design of the new dwellings was expressed to better reflect the 'relaxed classicism' of the Vinson Residence resulting in a 'less decorative style.'

The applicant responded to the comments from the meeting and put forward revisions for staff review, including:

1. The front yard setback for the Garden Cottage was increased by 10 feet, resulting in a 21 foot (6.4 metres) setback from the property line. This was achieved by reducing the footprint and size of the dwelling, and reducing the separation space between the Garden and Laneway Cottages.
2. The Vinson Residence would be lowered by approximately one-foot, and site grades will be revised so that the number of steps leading to the front porch will be the same as in the original design. Other steps will be contained within the site works and landscaping.
3. The laneway elevation was generally kept as proposed, including retaining the central garage building. The rendered drawings were improved to reflect the actual height of the central building roof and variety is introduced to the garage doors.
4. The Laneway and Garden Cottage elevations were simplified, through revising the windows (additions and deletions) and the dormers.

Staff considers the revisions to the project to be consistent with the direction from the DRC, including reducing the density to 0.59 and setting the Garden Cottage further back from the front property line.

5.2 Sustainability

Heritage conservation is a fundamental component of community sustainability, and is particularly significant in preserving community identity and character, and the cultural values around our built environment. The District of West Vancouver supports the conservation of privately-owned heritage property through the application of conservation tools and incentives enabled under Part 15 of the *Local Government Act*.

The objectives are to make the conservation of significant buildings an economically-viable alternative to demolition and replacement, and to support the preservation and enhancement of neighbourhood character.

According to the National Trust for Canada³, construction and demolition waste makes up over 30% of the total waste Canadians produce.

³ The National Trust for Canada is a national charity that inspires and leads action to save historic places, and promotes the care and wise use of the historic environment. "The Trust believes that heritage conservation is a key part of sustainable communities. The message to maintain, repair and reuse, rather than to neglect, demolish and replace, links heritage conservation with healthy and affordable lifestyle choices such as walkability, cycling, and public transportation, and enable greater density, better energy performance and adaptive use in historic areas." Source: www.nationaltrustcanada.ca

5.3 Public Engagement and Outreach

Public Input

Per sections 610 and 612 of the *Local Government Act*, the proposed Heritage Revitalization Agreement and Heritage Designation Bylaws will be subject to a public hearing. In accordance with the Development Procedures Bylaw, formal notification of the public hearing will be given to owners and occupants of properties located within 100 metres of the subject property. This the same notification area requirement for a public meeting on a proposed rezoning application.

Public Notification

Should Council choose to consider first readings of the bylaws and schedule a public hearing, District staff will make preparations for the public hearing and provide notification as per District procedures.

Development Application Information Meeting

The applicant will be required to organize, publicize and facilitate a Development Application Information Meeting after first reading but before the public hearing so that residents can learn more about the proposal beforehand.

5.4 Other Communication, Consultation, and Research

Planning staff has consulted with District staff from various departments including: engineering (transportation and utilities); development engineering, and permits and inspections. The applicant responded accordingly to each department's noted comments and is satisfied with the proposal, subject to further detail review during the building permit phase.

6.0 Options

6.1 Recommended Option

Council give first reading to the proposed bylaws and set the date for a public hearing.

The Vinson Residence has been formally recognized for its heritage value via addition to the Community Heritage Register, and is eligible for consideration of municipal conservation tools and incentives. As the proposed HRA complies with the Council-approved guidelines for the application of these tools and incentives, staff recommends that the required implementing bylaws be read a first time, and be considered at a public hearing.

6.2 Considered Options

- a) give first reading to the proposed bylaws and set the date for a public hearing; or
- b) give first reading to the proposed bylaws and set an alternative date (to be specified) for a public hearing; or

- c) defer consideration pending the receipt of additional information (to be specified) be provided and available to assist in consideration of the application; or
- d) reject the application.

The above options are presented for consideration should Council desire to give first reading to the proposed bylaws and set a date for a public hearing, request additional information or reject the application.

7.0 Conclusion

While the replacement of older housing stock is a part of neighbourhood evolution, the loss of recognized heritage houses can be seen as a loss to the connection to the past of a community. West Vancouver's recognized heritage buildings are vulnerable to loss through demolition. At present, only five properties in West Vancouver are municipally-designated – i.e. legally protected. There are three in-stream applications for HRA/heritage designation, including the subject application for the Vinson Residence. As with the Toby House HRA (approved May 2015), this is a precedent-setting approach for conserving West Vancouver's heritage buildings, and presents a viable alternative to demolition and replacement.

The proposed HRA would also bring housing stock diversity within an existing neighbourhood that is sensitive to the historic residence and to the area. It would bring smaller units rather than traditional redevelopment, which would see the loss of the heritage house and construction of a larger home.

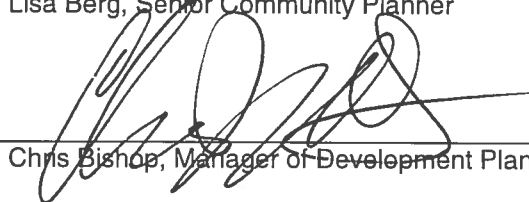
Subject to public input, staff recommends that the proposed Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) for 1425 Gordon Avenue (Vinson Residence), along with the required implementing bylaws be given first reading and scheduled for a public hearing.

Author:



Lisa Berg, Senior Community Planner

Concurrence

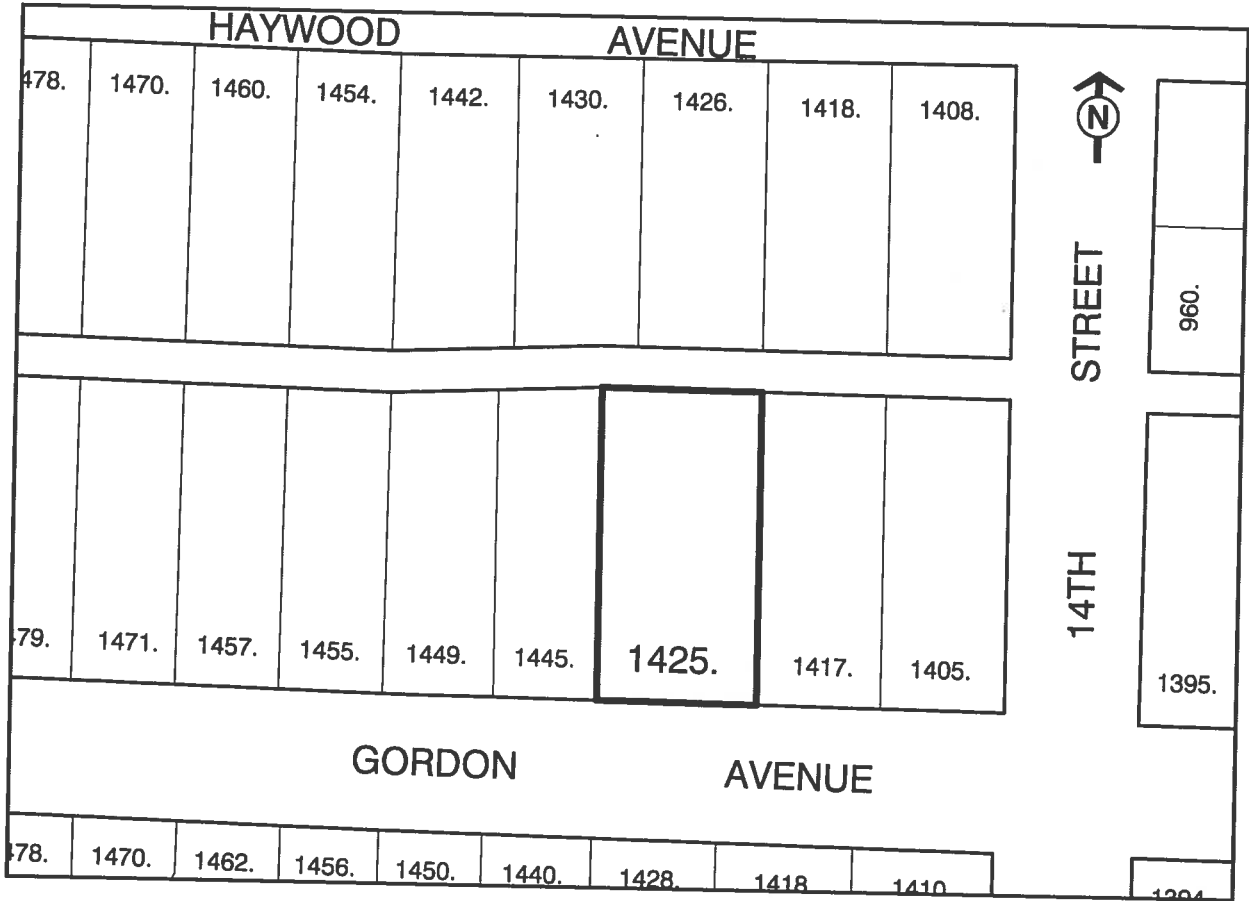


Chris Bishop, Manager of Development Planning

Appendices:

- A. Context Map
- B. Project Profile
- C. Continuing Protection Tools (enabled under Part 15 of the LGA)
- D. DRC comments and resolutions (excerpts from minutes of February 18, 2016)
- E. Proposed "Heritage Revitalization Agreement Bylaw No. 4890, 2016" (*includes Schedule A: Conservation Plan and Schedule B: Proposed Architectural and Development Plans*)
- F. Proposed "Heritage Designation Bylaw No. 4891, 2016"

APPENDIX A – CONTEXT MAP



APPENDIX B – PROJECT PROFILE

at April 6, 2016

Project:	Vinson House HRA
Application:	HRA No. 15-084
Applicant:	Vinson House Developments Ltd. (Trasolini Chetner & The Geller Group)
Architect:	Formwerks Architectural Inc.
Address:	1425 Gordon Avenue
Legal Description:	Lot 18 NE1/4 of DL 1054 PL 6811
PID:	010-775-480
OCP Policy:	HE1 & HE3: Encourages the protection & preservation of historical places
Zoning:	RS5
Community Heritage Resister	Listed June 9, 2008
Previously Before Council:	Not previously before Council
Summary:	Proposed Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) to enable infill development of the property (total 4 strata units) as an incentive for ongoing legal protection (Heritage Designation) for the "Vinson Residence" to be retained on the lot. Proposed works include alterations and additions to the existing heritage building (adding a garden suite) in accordance with a conservation plan; and constructing a Laneway Cottage and Garden Cottage, with garages accessed from the lane. The proposal would see the Vinson Residence moved 7.15 metres (23.5 ft) south on the lot.

ZONING SUMMARY:

	BYLAW	EXISTING	VINSON RESIDENCE & GARDEN SUITE	LANEWAY COTTAGE	GARDEN COTTAGE	COMMENTS
Site Area	558 m ²	1073.5 m ²				
Site Width	15.2 m	23.4 m				
Floor Area		251 m ²	331 m ²	159 m ²	146m ²	Plus exempt area
Floor Area Ratio	0.35	0.28		0.62		
Units	1 + suite	1	2	1	1	Total Proposed: 4
Site Coverage	30%	23.5 %		41%		
Setbacks						
Front Yard	7.6 m	26 m	22.3 m	27 m	6.4 m	Bold measurements define site envelope to closest point of structure (including garages).
Rear Yard	9.1 m	1.95 m	9.1 m	0.6 m	27 m	
Side Yard (East)	2.3 m	1.98 m	9.1 m	0.9 m	1.52 m	
Side Yard (West)	2.3 m	9.05 m	0.6 m*	15.2 m	15.2 m	
Combined Side:	5.9 m	11.2 m		1.5 m		
Building Height	7.62 m	6.9 m	8.5 m	7.5 m	7.2 m	
Highest Bldg Face	6.72 m	9.2 m	9.8 m	8.9 m	7.8 m	
No. of Storeys	2 + bsmt	2 + bsmt	2 + bsmt	2 + bsmt	2 + bsmt	
Garages:	allowed	52 m ²				
V.R./G.S. Garage			41 m ²			Double detached
Lwy Garage				21 m ²		Single attached
Gdn Garage					21 m ²	Single detached
Total Garage Area				83 m ² (893 sq ft)		Totals 0.08 FAR

*West side yard setback to Vinson House is 0.9 m.

V.R. = Vinson Residence
 G.S. = Garden Suite
 Lwy = Laneway Cottage
 Gdn = Garden Cottage

APPENDIX B – PROJECT PROFILE

LAND USE & ENGINEERING SUMMARY:

Planning:	
LUC/DAA	No
DPA	No
Heritage	Yes - see Statement of Significance
ROWs	None
Easements	None
Covenants	None
Engineering:	
Rock Removal	Unknown
Max Driveway Slope	20%
Roads	Gordon Avenue, rear open lane
Sanitary	Gordon Avenue connection
Storm Water	No known storm water connection
Water	Gordon Avenue connection

VINSON RESIDENCE SUMMARY:

- Construction Date: 1913
- Former home of Reeve Vinson (1918 – 1920, 1922 and 1927 – 1929)
- Heritage Achievement Award to former owners in 1997 for reinstatement of original features. First home in the upper Hollyburn area, and originally stood on a two-hectare lot.
- Architecture: Craftsman style.
- Statement of Significance: Yes (May 2008)
- Conservation Plan: Yes (October 2015)

All source information provided by the applicant.

APPENDIX C CONTINUING PROTECTION TOOLS

The Vinson House is listed on the West Vancouver Community Heritage Register, and is eligible for municipal conservation tools and incentives enabled under Part 15 (Heritage Conservation) of the *Local Government Act*. Per Council-approved guidelines for the application of such incentives, an HRA would be used as the legal framework for drafting the conservation agreement between the property owner and the District, and municipal heritage designation is to provide ongoing legal protection for the Vinson House.

An HRA is the principal planning and administrative tool for facilitating heritage conservation proposals (and is typically supported by a Conservation Plan, including a Statement of Significance). It is a formal voluntary written agreement negotiated by a local government and an owner of heritage property that outlines the duties, obligations, and benefits negotiated by both parties to the agreement. An HRA may:

- Detail the timing of the agreement terms;
- Vary or supplement the provisions of a zoning bylaw including use, density, siting, and lot size;
- Vary or supplement the provision of a bylaw concerning land use designation;
- Vary or supplement a permit under Part 14 of the *Local Government Act* (Planning and Land Use Management);
- Vary or supplement a bylaw or heritage alteration permit under Part 15 of the *Local Government Act* (Heritage Conservation); and/or
- Include other terms agreed to by the local government and the property owner.

The final agreement is included as a schedule to an enabling bylaw. An HRA bylaw is typically considered in tandem with a heritage designation bylaw, which provides for ongoing legal protection of the heritage resource. In the absence of a municipal tree protection bylaw, and with limited powers to protect trees outside of riparian areas, an HRA or Section 219 Covenant can be used to protect significant landscape resources on individual sites – if these are deemed to have heritage value, or are character-defining elements of a heritage resource or property. As a result of an approved HRA, any proposed future alterations or additions to the buildings or changes to the landscape would be subject to a Heritage Alteration Permit.

A Conservation Plan, including a Statement of Significance (SOS) for the Vinson Residence was prepared by Don Luxton and Associates (October 2015) (see Figure 7) and is included as **Appendix B**. The SOS describes the heritage resource, includes a statement of heritage value, and outlines the “character defining” elements of the house and the site.



Figure 7: Vinson House Conservation Plan

APPENDIX D

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE – FEBRUARY 18, 2016

1425 GORDON AVENUE, “VINSON HOUSE” HERITAGE REVITALIZATION AGREEMENT (4-UNIT INFILL HOUSING) (1st appearance)

Background:

Lisa Berg advises that the Vinson House is listed on the West Vancouver Community Heritage Register. Under a Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA), the applicants propose to conserve the existing heritage house (“Vinson House” built in 1913) and add a garden suite in the basement level of the house and add two detached dwellings, one at the northeast corner and one at the southeast corner for a total of four strata units.

Project Presentation:

Using a Power Point presentation, renderings and material boards Architect Michael Geller opened the presentation. He advised as part of the conservation they are proposing to retain trees along street and keep the stone wall along Gordon Avenue, although these were later additions to the property. He went over the neighbourhood context advising that the house is sitting on the largest lot on the street and the views to the house from the neighbouring properties and the street. They propose to move the house forward 23.5 feet in order to create parking at the lane. A garden suite will be added in the basement level of the Vinson House. The ridge elevation of the heritage house will not be raised and laneway cottage will not be above the ridge. He presented images of the inside of the Vinson House and advised that the proposal would involve removing the added on porch and the general intent is to bring the heritage house to look as it did originally both on the interior and exterior.

Mr. Geller went over options for the site that they explored leading up to the application - one option was to move house forward and put infill at back, however when they drew the house to scale, it kept moving further forward. They feel that large front yard is an attractive feature of this property, and taking it away would diminish its heritage significance. He reviewed the rationale of how they decided to pursue the craftsman style for the infill houses and they propose one garage for each unit at laneway. They feel this arrangement enhances the landscape will be significantly better to what was there and contribute to sense of neighbourliness. From a marketing point of view, he explained that creating a single-level suite is a very attractive housing option for this neighbourhood, and having four strata units of similar size and value will function better. He reviewed the elevation sketches and colour options considered for the Committee. For the landscape plans, they propose to recreate an Edwardian garden, which was typical of the day when the house was built. He noted that his partners in the project bring expertise and experience in similar heritage conservation projects in Vancouver and this will help to ensure that the project is carried through as presented.

Donald Luxton went over the conservation plan he prepared for the project and noted that it was an opportunity to preserve the exterior and interior features as, for the age of the house, it is unusually intact. He went over the historical significance of this site, including the original owner Reeve Vinson. The Interior has been well loved and was beautifully restored thus the commitment being made goes beyond what usually required and allows for concentration of both the interior and the exterior. The sleeping porch, which is now enclosed, will be opened up and restored so that the front façade will revert to its original appearance. The windows will be restored back to original appearance. Overall, he suggested that the proposal brings a high level of conservation.

Landscape Architect Damon Oriente advised that they are seeking a genuine sympathetic approach to the landscape design. Plans include restoring the stone wall,

APPENDIX D

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE – FEBRUARY 18, 2016

retaining shrubs and planting trees along Gordon Avenue. Looking at a landscape form that is more historical, curvier, and softer with a focus on perennials and deciduous planting. A formal high-level concept is proposed, that includes garden statues and elements in paving for a more sumptuous feel. Effort is to make the lane edges as pleasing as can, with pockets of planting, vines and arbours to give a more residential and pleasing sequence.

Committee Questions:

- The Committee went on to question the presenters, with the applicant's response in *italics*:
- Question to Donal Luxton, to comment on "mimicking" versus "complimenting" in terms of architectural style – what do you think about style of the rebuild. *Mr. Luxton referred to the standards 11 and 12 of guidelines set out in the Conservation Plan and used this as a benchmark. The development should not mimic or copy as that would distort the integrity of the historic place, but full contemporary could be distracting. The proposed new buildings relate to the Vinson House and are complementary but not an exact copy and each one is different with subtle architectural language. He commented that the proposal is a good middle ground; the vocabulary is not copied but is sympathetic, and is comfortable with the approach.*
- If you were to build a single family house how would it impact the neighbourhood? *Looked at existing zoning and modeled out what neighbours could anticipate with a new single family home under existing zoning. As an alternative, it is proposed to keep the large lawn area but acknowledges that 0.62 is a significant FAR for West Vancouver. This approach is to conserve the Vinson House and add housing alternatives that fits with the neighbourhood. The Vinson House is moving forward 23 feet, but it is not moving up.*
- Is this a rezoning? *Not rezoning, under Part 15 of the Local Government Act Council has ability to vary provisions of the Zoning Bylaw to facilitate developments such as this. The underlying zoning remains, but through HRA provisions can be varied, including density. If the proposal would change the use or density, there is a mandatory requirement for a public hearing. The HRA bylaw covers the zoning variances and form and character of design whereas the companion Heritage Designation Bylaw would give legal protection for the Vinson House and other character-defining elements including landscaping.*
- The elevation showing shows an increase in the number of steps leading to the porch - why? *In an earlier sketch of the proposal a visual on the front steps of the Vinson House was shown. As the site is sloped, when the house moves forward, it picks up grade and the elevation increases. However, this achieves the ability to make the basement suite more livable. Looking at ways to manage the stairs so not as continuous.*
- How do you envision the strata will work? *A four-lot strata front yard shared by all residents, limited common property front porches, Vinson house patio would be limited common, laneway cottage limited common property, and garden cottage patio identified limited common property.*

APPENDIX D

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Committee Comments:

Members' comments on the application included:

- Generally support the project; however, not sure if support this extent of density and wonder if units added need to quite as big as they are. More information would be helpful to clarify in particular site sections showing the two new dwellings in context with the original one and could simplify the plan.
- Think the planning of the two houses is quite well done and like privacy relationship to the existing house but feel the style is overwrought and to simplify it might be positive in how it can be supportive of the existing house and encourage looking at a less decorative style. *Have taken a contemporary approach to the architecture with a craftsman style.*
- Encourage look more at fine tuning the exact location on the site of the Vinson House as not convinced that the relationship to the accessory buildings at the back and tightness of the pathway to Vinson House and narrow passageway through two other houses.
- An advocate of density and like the fact that have done a nice job blending the density with the articulation of massing. If someone were to demolish and start from scratch you could end up with a large boxy modern style house. Commend that making the effort to go through the process to retain the Vinson House, like the articulation of the cottages without trying straying too far from the original design and colour variation as bright cheerful welcoming colours. Only point is garage from rear side like to see more variety and articulation to create a sense of place.
- Like the articulation and view from the lane feels it adds to the lane. Agree back half of the lot quite dense and pathway quite narrow. Do like relationship between garden cottage and the back cottage with stairs at different levels. Think garden appropriate for the era. Feel that a house of this caliber deserves natural stone rather than the concrete flagstone pavers, look at granite or real flagstone. *Will add natural stone.*
- Generally support the project and am in favour of this kind of scale of density being introduced into the community and need more of it, especially when you think what the alternatives could be for this site, and gives people a lot of options for where they could live. It is a lot of work and applauds it. Breaking down the mass helps a bit and it is a little dense at the back. Heritage is tough and the nuances of craftsman are very expensive to replicate. Agree if want to showcase the heritage piece do you stay different in a minor way, not sure how can do it well with this kind of density. Good that West Vancouver has HRA vehicle to pull this off and feel this will be the start of many.
- Very clear and professional presentation, know this area well and always admired this house. Fine with densification and pleased with the retention and conservation of a significant historical home. Most of the streetscape is retained, there is the loss of a major tree and planting will become a bit smaller in scale than tree that is living right now. Don't like the vertical proportion of the laneway house. Admired Vinson House as from the street elevation had a sense of a relaxed classism with very interesting proportions It always appeared like the major house on the street with simple street side elevation. The new cottages pick up on roof angle so sympathetic but a bit fussier and could take cues from the language of the Vinson home. Interested to see early the plans study that

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- had the cottages at the back and the Vinson home a bit more forward. Worry about how close the garden cottage is to Gordon Avenue and real precedent in neighbourhood, like to hear more from West Vancouver Planning on that and how they support it. Think it works well when look at planning the whole property but cottage is really much closer to street than any other building in the neighbourhood

The Chair reads comments submitted by Frank Ducote:

- Support the general approach, noting that the density of 0.62 FSR and four dwelling units is accommodated quite well on the site with a substantial formal front yard in keeping with the symmetry of the heritage house. I strongly recommend replacing the central double garage with a surface parking pad or carport in order to give some access to natural light and ventilation to the main house and especially the basement suite.
- Appreciate the effort gone into this presentation and detail of study. Curious to see why abandoned the scheme where have the new addition of cottages at the back. After walking the site one thing clearly see is that the house has a presence of a lot of space around it, and makes it very special because not only just the building but context of where situated with a lot of room around it. Difficulty with garden cottage at front because when you walk along Gordon Avenue not going to be able to see the heritage house at moment have much better approach from distance. Think you abandoned the study prematurely and gone further with it, think heritage should not only be the house but its context and how it's placed within that lot is major significance. Taken heritage of large big lot into a tighter almost a regular lot with a cottage in front of it, some consideration not problem with increasing density but issue with how it sits. When look at the proportion of the house when it slides forward it loses its charm where before placed closer to ground where the porches more in sympathy with the house, now proportions so high, know basement suite have a lot of light but at a cost of how experience whole building from Gordon Avenue.
- The power to the existing house is the fact that the porch is contained in the primary form of the house, and is quite different to the garden houses and wondering if the porch of the garden cottages be part of the primary frame of the house and then setting back from the street could be successful in bringing closer to front yard setback and allow to bring some the views to house itself. Support the general position of the three houses with some fine tuning of the reconsideration of the other pieces.
- Like having front porch details and feel more inviting and welcoming to neighbourhood.

The applicant responds to the comments:

The treatment of the Vinson House is to work with individual shingles, could be some building code relationship issues. The use of flagstone is a good suggestion. Trying to do the right thing with the big front yard and can adjust the grade but don't want to make dramatic steps. Concern with bringing the Vinson House forward to bring more to the back – we lose more in the neighbourhood but we still will have a fifty-foot wide front yard. The garden cottage is on ground and further frames the Vinson House. Understand the term of mimicking and simplifying the architecture.

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Shelly Craig recommended:

Support, but table for future consideration and refer back to the committee.

NOT ADOPTED

It was Moved and Seconded:

THAT the Design Review Committee recommends SUPPORT; SUBJECT to the comments from the meeting be implemented for staff to review.

CARRIED

POLL VOTE CALLED FOR THE VOTE

5 IN FAVOUR

1 AGAINST – SHELLEY CRAIG