

Speaker # 6 at public hearing of First Shaughnessy Heritage Conservation Area .. 21 Jul 2015

I do not live in a pre-40 building but I do feel privileged to live in our beautiful city and would like to help with the preservation of First Shaughnessy District abbreviated as FSD.

So, what is heritage? According to the dictionary, it is something inherited from the past, a legacy. Heritage, like beauty, is in the eyes of the beholder. Architects and designers focus on buildings. Landscape architects focus on gardens. Urban planners focus on the streetscape, view corridor, and landscape. Historians focus on the history of the individual mansion. The First Shaughnessy Design Guidelines lay out 5 main principles for the design of FSD:

1. Architectural Design Legacy
2. Estate Scale Legacy
3. Landscaping Design Legacy
4. Streetscape Legacy
5. Automobile Legacy.

Architectural design is just one of the five pillars, but landscape and streetscape treatments remain the strongest overall contribution to the richness of FSD. What distinguish FSD from the rest of the city is the large estate-like properties with long uninterrupted stretches of landscaped streetscape and not individual building.

In the nineties, the owner / developer of 3689 Selkirk St or Rosemary entered into Heritage Revitalization Agreement. Rosemary is a massive 1910 building sitting in the centre of a huge lot. The HRA allowed the developer to subdivide into 4 extra lots. Eventually Rosemary was leased out to film studios operating as a movie location in the past decade or so. The **subdivision broke the Estate Scale Legacy** and the filming operation compromised zoning of the area. It is now almost 2 decades since the HRA, the developer made the money and moved on. The site is still work in progress. The corner at Selkirk and Matthews is still an eyesore. This is a painful lesson of Heritage preservation gone wrong.

A building that is not allowed to be demolished always fetches a much lower sale price. The perspective buyers do not want to have their hands tied with the existing footprint, building height, spending exorbitant amounts of money to replace old parts which may not be available and dealing with toxic materials. Renovating an old old house is a money pit. When no builder can fix a house, no buyer will touch it, and it will simply grow older and more run down over time. Rosemary, a Heritage Register A-listed home is still being revitalized decades after HRA.

I must point out that the **depressed resale value of heritage buildings will decrease the property tax the city can collect. Lower prices equal lower assessment values equal lower property taxes.**

The blanket proposal to ear-mark all pre-40 buildings for protection is over-zealous. The truth is that **not all pre-40 buildings are worth preserving. A lot of pre-40 buildings are poorly designed and built, and beyond repair.** Old buildings with toxic materials may also be harbouring rats , ants , etc .

The **First Shaughnessy Heritage Inventory, prepared in 1993, already lists the buildings in First Shaughnessy that are truly worth preserving. A blanket ban is a great make-work project for heritage architects, but it doesn't serve the needs of the community,** including neighbours like myself who suffer from being forced to live among houses that are dilapidated eyesores. If there are

Nancy Tchou

buildings that have architectural merits, the city can make drawings and specifications for the retention of the architectural elements. If owners fail to comply, they can be fined and delayed in getting the occupancy permit.

The First Shaughnessy Design Guidelines take care of the design. If we wish to change, we may want to beef up the design guidelines. **Heritage Conservation of FSD should include all five design principles for FSD and not just old buildings.**

This lopsided bylaw blindly preserving all old buildings is too restrictive and foolish. The owners should be allowed the choice to retain the old building or demolish and build a new building that is energy efficient and adds to the richness of the area, but **without punitive changes to the current rules and regulations.**

# Proposed Amendments to First Shaughnessy Conservation Area

Brian Hill

July 21, 2015

# Who am I?

Long history in the First Shaughnessy community:

1. Childhood home: s.22(1) Personal and Confidential 

1. First Shaughnessy; my mother still lives there

2. Attended Shaughnessy Elementary

3. Lived and worked in the area my whole life

4. Owner s.22(1) Personal and Confidential 

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Currently live in a 1960s architectural house in Kerrisdale  
Painstakingly renovated to maintain the original:

1. Character
2. Integrity
3. Style of the home

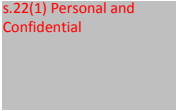
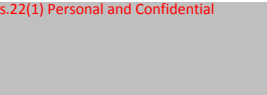
I have been instrumental in preserving the heritage of 611  
Alexander Street where our offices are presently located

I appreciate the importance of First Shaughnessy in our city and understand the value of preserving it.

New is new  
Good is good  
Old is old  
Bad is Bad

Old doesn't necessarily mean good.  
New doesn't necessarily mean bad.

# My objective

1. I support the creation of the Heritage Conservation Area
2. An amendment to the Regulations & Guidelines to deal with properties like mine, or s.22(1) Personal and Confidential  s.22(1) Personal and Confidential  is specifically excluded

A pre-1940 site with no heritage value



# About

1. 1910: Built
2. 1982: Substantially destroyed inside & out in a poorly executed major renovation

There are no drawings or evidence of the house in its original form.

# About

When I purchased this house in 2007, it was in a state of disrepair.

There is nothing worth saving.

1. Poor design: Property positions, interior layouts, horrendous facade
2. Disrepair: Foundation, framing, roof

# About 3738 Cypress

1. Not a revenue generating property: unrentable
2. I pay both the taxes and for someone to live there to keep it safe.
3. I believe that if you came to see it ( please do!), you would understand.

Exterior



Modern Casement Windows



Plain Stucco & Exterior Gutters



1980s Brickwork



False Half Timbering





Porte Cochere



Staircase to no where



Sunshine Kithchen



1970s Bathrooms



Characterless Ceilings &  
Carpet on Plywood Throughout

These changes:

1. Have no aesthetic value, and
2. Do not contribute to the heritage character, value or character-defining elements of First Shaughnessy.

Allowing a new house on this site

One that complies with proposed FS HCA  
General Guidelines

Would be a benefit to the overall objectives  
of the Heritage Conservation Area.

My neighbors have written and submit letters in support of this request:

1. Jennifer Neale,

s.22(1) Personal and Confidential

2. Stanley Dee,

s.22(1) Personal and Confidential

3. Andrew B. MacDonald,

s.22(1) Personal and Confidential



I urge you to do two things:

1. Remove s.22(1) Personal and Confidential from the List of Protected Properties in Appendix A4
2. Amend the First Shaughnessy District Schedule (Appendix E) by adding the following *Relaxations of Regulations*

## *Relaxations of Regulations*

*5.5 The Director of Planning may consider a Development Application which would result in the demolition of pre-1940 building included in the List of Protected Heritage Properties where it is demonstrated that the building has no heritage value and does not contribute to the overall value of the First Shaughnessy HCA, having considered:*

- a. the submissions of any advisory group, property owner or tenant*
- b. the intent of this District Schedule and all applicable Council policies and Guidelines*

Thank you

As a resident of a pre-1940 house in First Shaughnessy for over 20 years, I would like to state that I oppose the proposal to include all pre-1940 houses into the “protected heritage property” category. While there are pre-1940 houses that are worth maintaining and warrant protection, there is already a system in place to protect them, namely the First Shaughnessy Heritage Inventory Adopted by the Council on January 11, 1994. If there are further isolated houses that warrant such protection, they can be dealt with on an individual basis and reclassified as Class A, B or C buildings using the already established Inventory list.

Although I agree that some characteristics of the neighbourhood are worth maintaining, I do not think a blanket demolition ban on all pre-1940 houses is the correct way to go. It can be better achieved by putting in aesthetic and architectural guidelines for all new houses. If a certain house is to be demolished, the new replacement could be required to be built to specific character, styles and designs that would blend in or even improve the neighbourhood.

Another issue that needs to be considered is that old houses can have a lot of health and environmental risks. Mold, lead paint and pipe, asbestos and UFFI are not uncommon problems, just to name a few. Floors settling in old houses sometimes leave spaces big enough for mice and ants to gain access. And it is almost impossible to detect all such openings to get rid of the pest problems. Many long time residents cannot afford the huge amounts of money that it would cost to deal with these problems, or don't want to spend the money that way. It is almost always safer and less costly to build new than repair and maintain existing buildings.

I appreciate the spirit of the new proposal. My family and I have benefited from the quiet beauty of First Shaughnessy for the past 20 years. But I have found that recent constructions have only made Shaughnessy better and more beautiful. It would be a shame to cut off any kind of progress -- environmental, aesthetic or otherwise -- in pursuit of a false historical standard.