



## POLICY REPORT

Report Date: June 18, 2019  
Contact: Jason Olinek  
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: July 9, 2019

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability in consultation with the Director of Legal Services

SUBJECT: Heritage Designation – 4727 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue – Edith and Pat McGeer Residence

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- A. THAT Council instruct the Director of Legal Services to bring forward for enactment, pursuant to Sections 593 and 594 of the *Vancouver Charter*, a by-law to designate as protected heritage property the exterior of the existing building at 4727 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue (PID: 010-866-566; Amended Lot 14 (See 371925L) Block 4 District Lot 140 Plan 6583 (the “site”)), known as the Edith and Pat McGeer Residence (the “heritage building”), which is listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register in the ‘A’ evaluation category.
- B. THAT Recommendation A be adopted on the following conditions:
  - i. THAT the passage of the above resolution creates no legal rights for the applicant or any other person, or obligation on the part of the City and any expenditure of funds or incurring of costs in relation thereto is at the risk of the person making the expenditure or incurring the cost; and
  - ii. THAT the City and all its officials shall not in any way be limited or restricted in the exercise of their authority or discretion, regardless of when they are called upon to exercise such authority or discretion.

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to designate the exterior of the Edith and Pat McGeer Residence at 4727 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, which is listed in the ‘A’ evaluation category on the Vancouver Heritage Register, as protected heritage property.

## **COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

Pursuant to Sections 593 and 594 of the *Vancouver Charter*, Council, by by-law, may designate real property, in whole or in part, as protected heritage property.

Pursuant to Section 595 of the *Vancouver Charter*, if sought, Council is required to compensate an owner of property being designated as a protected heritage property for any reduction in the market value of the property caused by the designation. Often this, along with additional compensation to offset rehabilitation costs incurred, is achieved by way of zoning relaxations so as to permit an otherwise impermissible development.

The proposed heritage designation for the exterior of the heritage building requires Council approval at public hearing and by-law enactment pursuant to Sections 593 and 594 of the *Vancouver Charter*.

The following Council policies are applicable to the project:

- Heritage Policies and Guidelines (May 1986, last amended September 2002)
- *West Point Grey Community Vision*, September 23, 2010

## **GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS**

The General Manager of Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability RECOMMENDS approval of A and B.

## **STRATEGIC ANALYSIS**

### ***Site and Context***

The site consists of a parcel located in West Point Grey in an area zoned RS-1 (see Figure 1), addressed as 4727 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. The heritage building is situated near the front of the large site, with a total site area of 2,139 sq. m (23,029 sq. ft.). There is a 6-metre (20-ft.) wide lane at the rear of the site.

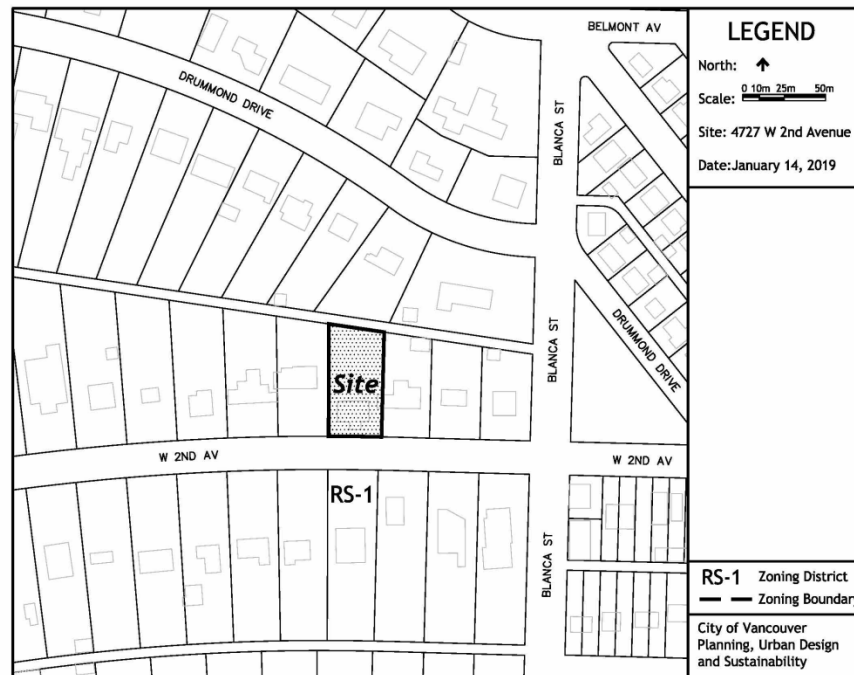


Figure 1: The site and the surrounding zoning

### ***Heritage Value and Character***

Built in 1912-1913, the heritage building is valued as a very good example of early Craftsman design that is notably early in the development of West Point Grey; it is also valued for its association with the earliest owners and its most recent owners, as described below. It was added to the Vancouver Heritage Register as an A-listing as part of the Vancouver Heritage Register Annual update at the Regular Council meeting on December 18, 2018.

The early Craftsman style of the heritage building is reflected in the use of river rock, large wooden posts and brackets, and stucco cladding. It features a central-set front porte-cochere, decorative “buttresses” and river rock pillars, a deep inset entry porch, leaded glass windows, an open porch on the west side and the original single car garage on the east side. A low stone wall frames the front of the site and the dual-entry driveway (Appendix A). The heritage house is one of the first houses built in this part of West Point Grey which was beginning to open up to development in the early 1910s (Appendix B).

Its original owners were Frederick W.C. Sterling, who operated a wholesale woollens shop in Gastown, and Katharine M. Sterling. Its current owners are Edith and Pat McGeer, who have resided here since 1960. Edith McGeer is a renowned neuroscientist and researcher at the UBC Faculty of Medicine, a professor emeritus, and Pat McGeer is similarly known for work in neuroscience, as a UBC professor emeritus and as a former Liberal/Social Credit MLA (1962-1986). He led the BC Liberal Party (1968-1972) and subsequently served as a Social Credit cabinet minister for 10 years. Together,

Edith and Pat McGeer have authored 760 scientific publications. In 1995 they received a lifetime achievement award from the Science Council of British Columbia and the Order of Canada. In 2012 they founded Aurin Biotech Inc. as part of their on-going medical research (Appendix C).

### ***Compatibility with Existing Zoning and Land Use Regulations and Community Plans***

The *West Point Grey Community Vision* was adopted by Council on September 23, 2010. The proposal to retain this heritage building is consistent with the Vision, particularly:

*14.1 Retain Buildings on the Vancouver Heritage Register (VHR)  
“For buildings listed in the VHR, the City should encourage retention by implementing additional incentives which are suitable in West Point Grey.”*

The intent of the RS-1 District Schedule of the *Zoning and Development By-law* is generally to maintain the single-family residential character of the RS-1 District, and also to permit one-family dwellings with secondary suites. The conservation and long-term protection of the heritage building meets this intent and is consistent with the Council-adopted *West Point Grey Community Vision*. There is no development application for this site.

### ***Condition and Economic Viability of the Heritage Building and Conservation Approach***

The heritage building is in excellent condition. The owners have, on their own volition, maintained the heritage house and only minor alterations have been made over the years. Staff have concluded that the work is consistent with the federally adopted *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. The heritage building retains its original character, including form, cladding, some original leaded glass windows and original entry. No further rehabilitation is proposed or necessary.

### ***Implications/Related Issues/Risk***

#### ***Financial***

As the owners of the heritage building have requested the heritage designation of their own volition and are not seeking compensation for this action, there are no financial implications arising from this proposal.

#### ***Environmental***

There are no environmental requirements as part of this voluntary heritage designation, and the *Green Buildings Policy for Rezoning* does not apply in this case.

#### ***Legal***

Section 595 of the *Vancouver Charter* requires that, if sought, Council must compensate an owner for any reduction in the market value caused by a heritage designation. In this case, the heritage designation is voluntary and the owners

are not seeking compensation. They have indicated that they want the designation to ensure that the heritage building will be protected as a heritage property for the long-term. The owners are in the process of signing an agreement to be registered on title to the site explicitly waiving any claim to future compensation as a result of the heritage designation of the heritage building. The agreement will be signed by the owners prior to enactment of the Heritage Designation By-law. The agreement will be signed by the City and registered on title following enactment.

## **CONCLUSION**

The approval of the heritage designation of the exterior of the Edith and Pat McGeer Residence at 4727 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, an A-listing on the Vancouver Heritage Register, will ensure that the heritage building is protected from exterior alterations which affect its heritage value, and from demolition. The owners, who have brought forward this voluntary designation, have agreed to accept the heritage designation without any further compensation required. Therefore, it is recommended that Council approve the heritage designation of the exterior of the heritage building.

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**PHOTOGRAPHS**



4727 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue – Edith and Pat McGeer Residence



*Beautiful Homes: Vancouver, British Columbia.* Vancouver: Saturday Sunset Presses, Undated (c.1912). "Residence of Mr. F.W. Sterling, West Point Grey, Vancouver, B.C."

MAPS



1912 Fire Insurance Map – 4727 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue (circled)



ARCHIVAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Pat and Edith McGeer celebrate his Victory as MLA in a 1962 by-election.



Liberal MLA Pat McGeer, Victoria, February 1964



Pat McGeer elected BC Liberal Party leader, October 1968.



Three Liberal MLAs who joined Bill Bennett's Social Credit party to form a coalition – each became a cabinet minister when the Socreds won the 1975 election. Left to right: Allan Williams, Pat McGeer, Bill Bennett and Garde Gardom. October 1, 1975.



Provincial Minister of Universities, Science and Communication, Pat McGeer holds part of a pressure-reducing regulator, part of a compressed natural gas conversion kit. April 11, 1980.

Source: Vancouver Sun