



## POLICY REPORT

Report Date: July 29, 2019  
Contact: Jason Olinek  
Contact No.: 604-873-7492  
RTS No.: 13331  
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: September 10, 2019

TO: Vancouver City Council

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

SUBJECT: Heritage Designation – 1517 Comox Street – George 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 structure and exterior of the existing building at 1517 Comox Street (the “heritage building”) (PID: 015-761-185; The East 1/2 of Lot 14 Block 47 District Lot 185 Plan 92 (the “site’’)), which is listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register in the ‘B’ 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 structure and exterior of the George Residence at 1517 Comox Street, which is listed in the “B” evaluation category on the Vancouver Heritage Register, as a protected heritage property.

As incentive and compensation to the owner for the heritage designation and conservation of the heritage building's structure and exterior, the Director of Planning is prepared to approve a relaxation in parking requirements to one car-share spot, as set forth in the Development Permit Application Number DP-2017-01277 (the "DP Application") and as described in this report. The General Manager of Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability is prepared to approve the DP Application should Council approve the recommendations of this report.

### **COUNCIL AUTHORITY**

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 structure and 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 infill building which is proposed as part of the DP Application is permitted under the RM-5 District Schedule and is not part of the approvals being sought by Council.

The following Council policies are applicable to the project:

- *Heritage Policies and Guidelines* (May 1986, last amended September 2002)
- *Heritage Action Plan* (December 2013)
- *West End Community Plan* (November 2013, last amended November 2017)

### **CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS**

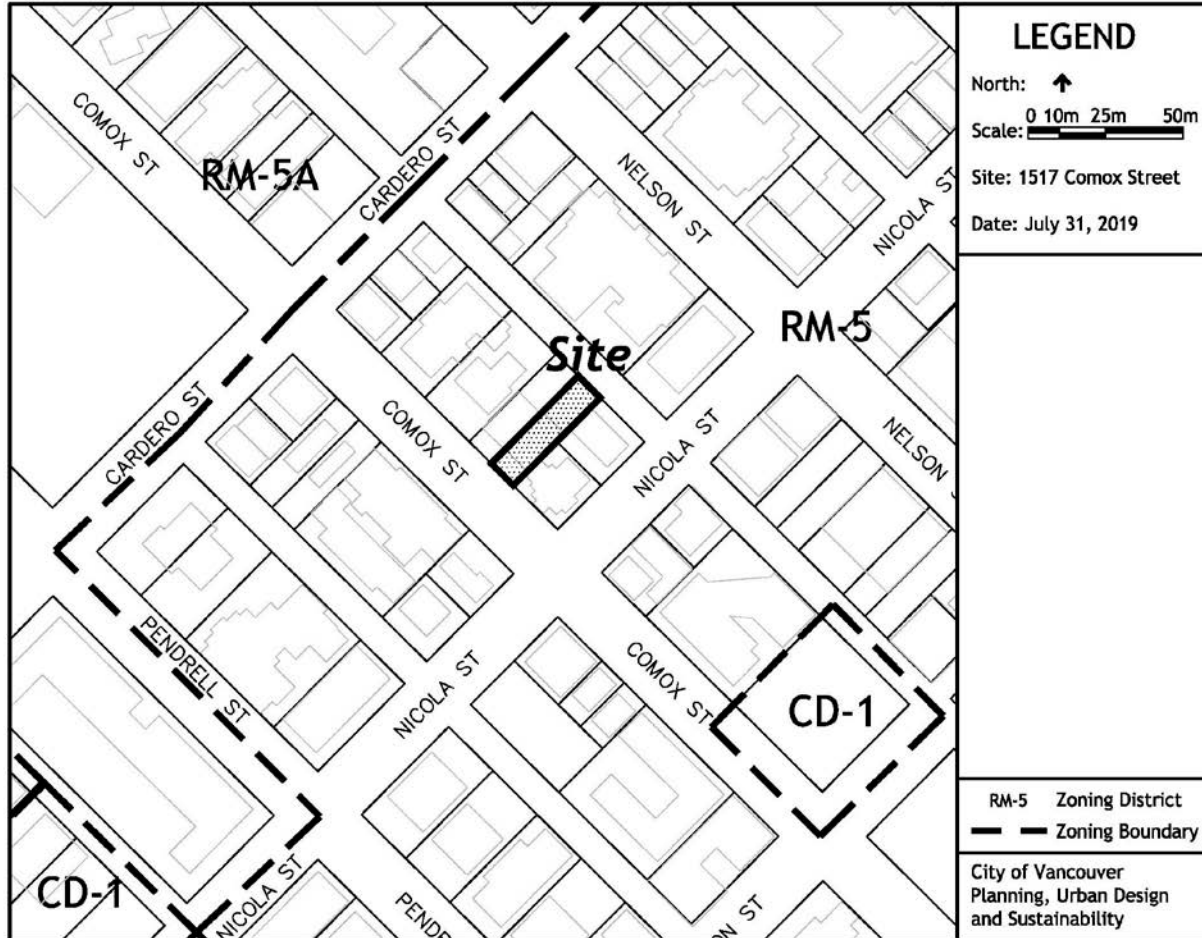
The General Manager of Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability RECOMMENDS approval of A and B.

### **STRATEGIC ANALYSIS**

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

The site is located in the West End neighbourhood in an area zoned RM-5 (see Figure 1). The parcel is 10 m. (33 ft.) by 40 m. (131 ft.) and the total area of the site is 402 sq. m. (4,327 sq. ft.). The rear of the site is on Henshaw Lane, which is 10 m. (33 ft.) wide. The heritage building is located mostly on the front half on the site with a garage in the rear.

Figure 1: The site and surrounding zoning



### **Heritage Value**

Built in 1907, the heritage building, known as the George Residence, is valued for its association with the growth and development of the West End neighbourhood and for its Edwardian-era architectural features.

The George Residence was constructed at the beginning of a major wave of development in the West End neighbourhood in the early twentieth century. It continued to represent the needs of the West End neighbourhood by converting to a rooming house in the early 1940s during the further densification of the neighbourhood.

The heritage building is also valued for its Edwardian-era architectural details, including its bay windows, decorative wood finishes, gabled roof with embellished peak, full-width porch, and wooden windows with diamond multi-pane upper sashes (Appendix A). The heritage building and its neighbour at 1523 Comox Street were designed and constructed by local carpenter and active Edwardian-era builder, Thomas J. Lighthouse.

1517 Comox Street is currently listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register in the 'B' evaluation category.

### **Development Application and Proposed Incentives**

The zoning applicable to the site is RM-5, which permits density up to 1.5 floor space ratio (FSR). If approved, the incentives and compensation to be provided to the owner for the heritage designation of the heritage building will be in the form of a relaxation to the *Parking By-law*, allowing for one car-share parking spot instead of the required four parking spots, as set forth in the DP Application which are within the discretion of the General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability and are further described below (see Appendix C for a full technical summary).

**Table 1: Relaxation Summary**

Site Area = 402 sq. m. (4327 sq. ft.)

<b>Parking By-law</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Permitted or Required</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Parking Spaces	3	4	1 car-share

<b>Zoning and Development By-law</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Permitted or Required</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Minimum Unit Size	Four units of 20-24 sq. m. (213-262 sq. ft.)	37 sq. m. (398 sq. ft.)	Three units of 30-36 sq. m. (321-394 sq. ft.)

<b>RM-5 District Schedule</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Permitted or Required</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
South-East Side Yard*	0.66 m. (2.15 ft)	2.1 m. (6.89 ft)	0.66 m. (2.15 ft)
North-West Side Yard*	0.38 m. (1.25 ft.)	2.1 m. (6.89 ft)	0.38 m. (1.25 ft.)
Rear Yard	16 m. (51 ft.)	2.1 m. (6.89 ft)	0.61 m. (2 ft.)

\* Existing non-conforming

The DP Application proposes retention and protection of the heritage building and construction of a three-storey infill building of approximately 170 sq. m. (1826 sq. ft.) containing two units in the rear of the site. There would also be an interior renovation of the heritage building, converting six units to five units. Dormers are proposed to be added to the roof which would add an additional 10 sq. m. (106 sq. ft.) to the heritage building (Appendix D).

The side yards are existing non-conforming and relaxations to the rear yard, minimum unit size, and Horizontal Angle of Daylight are being sought. The Director of Planning is prepared to approve this under section 3.2.5 of the *Zoning and Development By-law*.

The General Manager of Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability has considered the intent of the *RM-5 District Schedule*, the results of neighbourhood notification, the condition of the heritage building, and the proposed relaxations and is prepared to issue the development permit subject to Council approval of the recommendations of this report.

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

The intent of the *RM-5 District Schedule* of the *Zoning and Development By-law* is to:

“... permit a variety of residential developments and some compatible retail, office, service and institutional uses. Emphasis is placed on achieving development which is compatible with

*neighbouring development with respect to streetscape character, open spaces, view retention, sunlight access and privacy.”*

The *West End Community Plan* was adopted by Council on November 20, 2013 and was most recently amended on November 15, 2017. Section 11 of the plan, titled “*Heritage*”, specifies:

*“Sites listed on the Register on private lands are eligible for consideration under the City’s Heritage Incentive Program which can include development benefits in return for heritage conservation and protection.”*

The proposed protection of the heritage building is consistent with the *RM-5 District Schedule* and the *West End Community Plan*.

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

The property is in good condition. The heritage consultant has provided a detailed Conservation Plan and staff have concluded that the work is consistent with the federally adopted *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* (Appendix E).

The heritage building retains much of its original Edwardian-era character, including form, decorative features, and cladding. The proposed exterior interventions on the heritage building involve adding a door on the southeast façade, removing one door and replacing four doors on the rear façade with historically appropriate doors, and adding dormers on the roof. The original Edwardian-era features will be unaltered.

### ***Results of Neighbourhood Notification***

Notification for the DP Application was sent to 737 addresses and 44 responses were received, one in favour and 43 opposed. 36 of the responses were from outside the notification area. The concerns expressed can be summarized in the points noted below:

1. Retention, protection and recognition of the heritage building.
2. Loss of green space at rear of the property.
3. The design of proposed infill building.
4. Loss of on-site parking.

In response to the results of the neighbourhood notification, heritage designation became a condition of development to ensure the heritage building is retained, protected, and recognized. The heritage building will be legally protected through a heritage designation by-law and the property will receive a plaque identifying its status as a protected heritage building.

### ***Comments of the Vancouver Heritage Commission***

On May 13, 2019, the Vancouver Heritage Commission reviewed the DP Application and unanimously supported it with comments (see Appendix F).

## **Public Benefits**

**Development Cost Levies (DCLs):** DCLs collected from development help pay for facilities made necessary by growth, including parks, childcare facilities, replacement housing (social/non-profit housing) and engineering infrastructure.

This site is subject to City-wide DCLs and City-wide Utilities DCLs on the additional 180 sq. m. (1933 sq. ft.) of residential floor area of the proposed infill and dormers. Based on rates in effect as of September 30, 2018, total DCLs of approximately \$27,294 would be anticipated from this development.

DCL rates are subject to future adjustment by Council including annual inflationary adjustments. DCLs are payable at building permit issuance based on rates in effect at that time. A development may qualify for 12 months of in-stream rate protection from DCL rate increases, provided that an application has been received prior to the rate adjustment. See the City's [DCL Bulletin](#) for details on DCL rate protection.

See Appendix G for a summary of the public benefits that would be achieved should this application be approved.

**Heritage:** The owner has offered to conserve the heritage building and to accept the designation as protected heritage property, which is a highly valued community feature. As incentive and compensation, the owner would be permitted relaxations to the parking requirements of the *Parking By-law*.

## **Financial Implications**

The heritage building at 1517 Comox Street is in good condition and is not currently in need of exterior rehabilitation work, therefore there is no financial value for the on-site heritage conservation component. The public benefit of retention and legal heritage designation in exchange for a relaxation in the parking requirement is deemed sufficient by staff and the applicant.

The site is subject to the City-wide DCL and the City-wide Utilities DCL and it is anticipated that, based on rates in effect as of September 30, 2018, the applicant will pay approximately \$27,294 in DCLs should the DP Application be approved and the project proceed.

## **Environmental**

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

## **Legal**

The relaxations proposed will provide an improved development potential on the site. The owner's proposal to retain the heritage building's exterior in exchange for obtaining these relaxations for that improved development potential will be appropriately secured as legal obligations in an agreement to be registered on title to the site so as to enable the City to enforce those obligations and ensure that they will be fulfilled at the owner's expense. City staff and the owner have negotiated an agreement, which includes retention and conservation obligations on the part of the owner and enforcement provisions for the City.

Section 595 of the *Vancouver Charter* requires that, if sought, Council must compensate an owner for any reduction in the market value of property caused by a heritage designation. The owner is in the process of signing the agreement noted above and in doing so will explicitly accept the minor relaxations to be provided, and the resulting development advantages to be gained thereby, as full compensation for the heritage designation of the heritage building's exterior and the obligations to rehabilitate and conserve the heritage building. The agreement will be executed by the City and registered on title to the site before a development permit for the project may be issued.

### **CONCLUSION**

The George Residence, a B-listing house on the Heritage Register at 1517 Comox Street, is proposed to be protected by heritage designation based on its cultural and aesthetic values. This will secure the building from demolition and exterior alterations which affect its heritage value. The owner has agreed to accept the proposed relaxations as compensation for the proposed Heritage Designation By-law and the potential encumbrance on market value created by that by-law, and for the heritage building's continued conservation. The General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability is prepared to approve the DP. Therefore, it is recommended that Council approve the recommendations of this report.

\* \* \* \* \*

1517 COMOX STREET – GEORGE RESIDENCE  
PHOTOGRAPHS



Front façade of house



1523 (left) and 1517 (right) Comox Street in 1985,  
Vancouver Archives: COV-S639-1-F54-: CVA 790-170



1517 COMOX STREET – GEORGE RESIDENCE  
FIRE INSURANCE MAP



1912 Fire Insurance Map detail showing 1517 Comox Street (circled)

1517 COMOX STREET – GEORGE RESIDENCE  
TECHNICAL ZONING SUMMARY

**Table 1: Summary of RM-5 District Schedule of Zoning and Development By-law**  
Site Area: 1517 Comox Street – 402 sq. m. (4,327 sq. ft.)

RM-5 District Schedule	Existing	Permitted or Required	Proposed
Section 4.5 South-East Side Yard*	0.66 m. (2.15 ft)	2.1 m. (6.89 ft)	0.66 m. (2.15 ft)
Section 4.5 North-West Side Yard*	0.38 m. (1.25 ft.)	2.1 m. (6.89 ft)	0.38 m. (1.25 ft.)
Section 4.6 Rear Yard	16 m. (51 ft.)	2.1 m. (6.89 ft)	0.61 m. (2 ft.)

\* Existing non-conforming

**Table 2: Summary of Zoning and Development By-Law**  
Site Area: 1517 Comox Street – 402 sq. m. (4,327 sq. ft.)

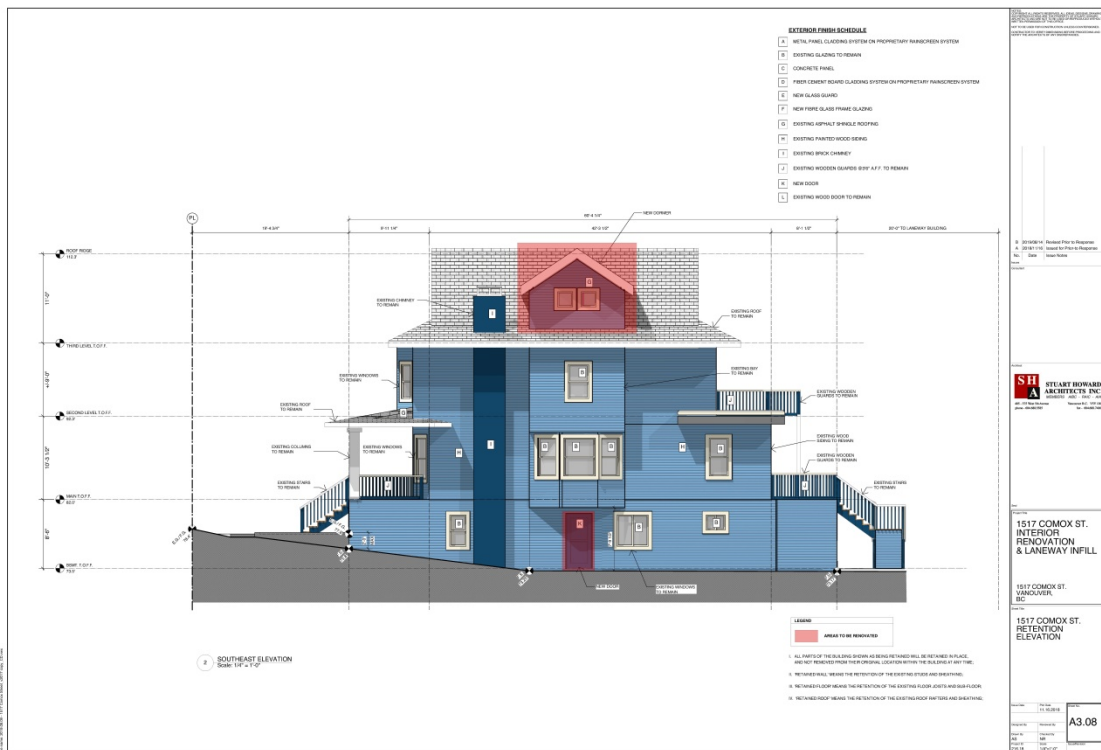
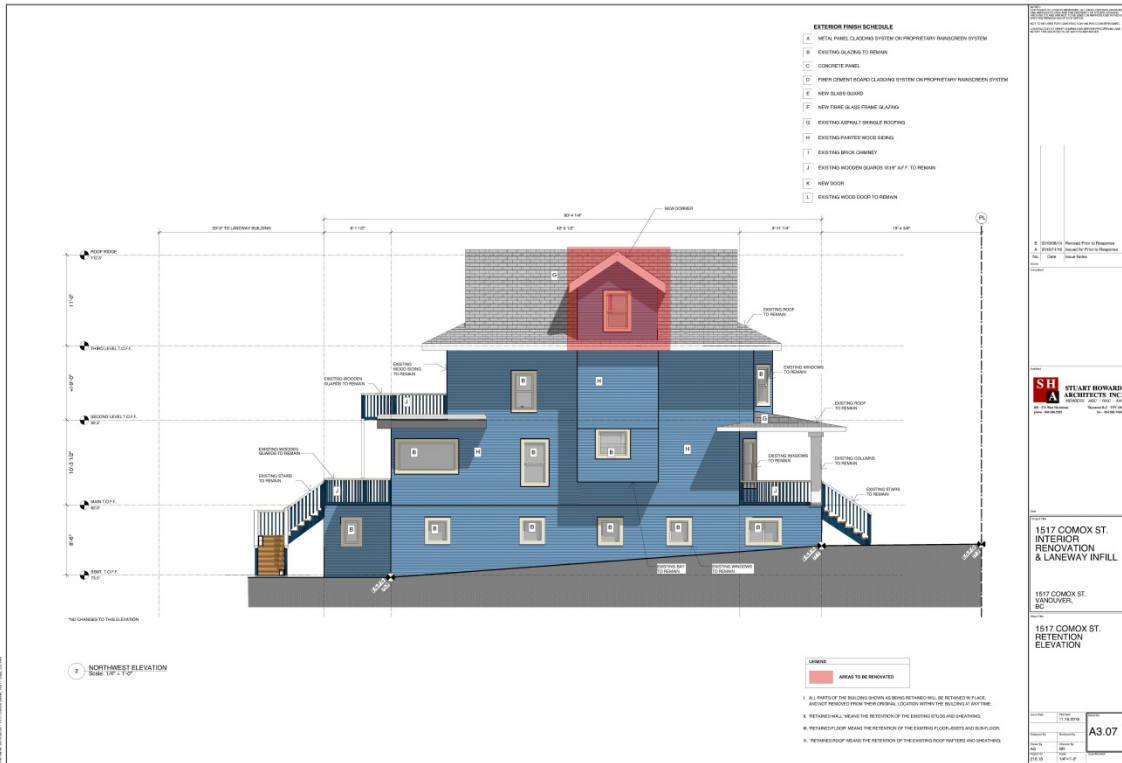
Zoning and Development By-law	Existing	Permitted or Required	Proposed
Section 11.10.2 Minimum Unit Size	Four units of 20-24 sq. m. (213-262 sq. ft.)	37 sq. m. (398 sq. ft.)	Three units of 30-36 sq. m. (321-394 sq. ft.)

**Table 3: Summary of Parking By-law**  
Site Area: 1517 Comox Street – 402 sq. m. (4,327 sq. ft.)

Parking By-law	Existing	Permitted or Required	Proposed
Section 4.2.1 Parking Spaces	3	4	1 car-share

1517 COMOX STREET – GEORGE RESIDENCE  
SITE PLAN AND ELEVATIONS





## 1517 COMOX STREET – GEORGE RESIDENCE CONSERVATION PLAN (EXCERPT)

1517 Comox Street Vancouver

April 2019 – revised May 2019

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Seismic mitigation: *Rehabilitation* - If considered in the future, structural reinforcing for the purpose of seismic mitigation must be specified by a qualified engineer. The house may have to be lifted above its existing location in order to construct new seismic resistant foundations. The house should then be returned to its exact original location with front and side setbacks; the elevation of the house and its relationship to the street must be preserved. This work must be performed by a qualified contractor.
2. Site: *Preservation* – The historic house should maintain its residential character and its compatibility with the streetscape. The visible massing of the historical houses must be maintained as the site's main feature. Additions and alterations should not undermine the general shape of the historical house viewed from the street. Alterations and additional architectural features should be inspired predominantly by single family residential vocabulary, regardless of the number of units proposed. Doors and windows, in particular, should maintain the heritage value of the house as a historical home.
3. Landscaping: *Rehabilitation* – Front and side grounds should be planted and maintained to enhance the historic property. Defined sidewalks around the house should be safe and compatible with the style of the house. New concrete walkway should have proper bedding and control joints to avoid cracks. The existing cracked concrete should be repaired or replaced.
4. Additions: *Preservation* – The historical place is the whole property and any addition or alteration to the site should not undermine the heritage value of the historic structure. Additional structures from the street should not be greater in presence than the heritage structure. The addition(s) to the site must conform to the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* that states that a new addition should be compatible but distinct from the historic structure. The new addition(s) if any, should stand distinct while compatible in materials, colour and presence. Additions to a historic place should be subordinate to the historic structure.
5. Roofs and roofing: *Rehabilitation / Preservation* – The main roof outline configuration must be maintained. The front attic gable end, hipped-skirt and front porch shed roof must also be preserved. The roof should be inspected by a professional, and repaired and/or replaced where required. Eaves troughs must be repaired where required for a proper drainage. In the future, if the roof needs to be replaced, the owner should consider replacing it with cedar shingles. Tongue-and-groove soffits must be preserved and repaired where required. Discreet soffit vents of compatible material may be introduced in the future.
6. Front porch: *Preservation* – The porch configuration must be maintained. The height and finish of the exterior wall/ balustrade should be maintained and repaired if required. Wooden board floor and tongue-and-groove ceiling should be preserved and repaired if required; substituted material should be matching existing. Edge beams and square columns with decorative capitals should be preserved; framing and posts should be inspected and repaired if required. Running dentils above the porch beams must be preserved.
7. Front stairs: *Restoration* - The front stairs should be finished in a compatible style; the staircase should span the whole width between the two framing columns, like the one at 1523 Comox. Wide solid wood stair with low wide balustrade, compatible with the style of the house, should be restored; an additional discreet railing may be installed on top of the restored balustrade to conform to current codes. The front staircase outer siding should match the existing lap siding. This restoration work can be completed when the stairs need to be replaced.
8. Residence siding: *Preservation* – The wood lap siding and above shingle siding at the front gable end tympanum must be preserved. Details at the head of the attic front window, brackets, bell-cast moulding and decorative shingle pattern must be preserved. The siding mitered corners must be preserved and repaired where required. Damaged siding should be replaced with matching material. Obsolete electrical and communication wires and equipment should be removed from the siding of the historic house.
9. Header and base boards: *Preservation* - The header board and dentils running at the top of the second floor should be preserved, and refinished if required. The stepping base board at grade must be also preserved.

10. Windows: *Rehabilitation / Preservation*—The exterior wood window frames, sills, crowns and sashes should be preserved. The existing fenestration, at the main, second and attic floors, sizes and locations, must be preserved in front and sides of the house. The window assemblies should be reviewed and assessed by a qualified contractor. Deteriorated outer frames can be replaced if required with matching material. Window sashes should be removed carefully if required and reinstalled after maintenance. Frames and sashes may need to be stripped of paint and refinished. Operating hardware should be removed, repaired or replaced if required. Existing glass should be maintained where possible. New weather stripping may be added to each vent sash in the future. Original material should be maintained where possible. Double hung windows may be refurbished including sash cords and weight to facilitate operation. Interior sills and surrounds should also be maintained or replaced to match the existing if possible. A qualified window conservation contractor should be retained to repair and refinish the existing windows where required. If upgrading the windows is considered, we recommend that interior sash sashes be used to improve the performance of the windows, in order to preserve the existing windows. The diamond shape sash division must be maintained; muntins must be preserved or replaced with matching material where required.
11. Front door: *Preservation*— The front door should be preserved, including side panels and all associated lites. Refinish if necessary to match existing coating.
12. Stained glass sash: *Preservation* – Stained glass window at stair landing must be preserved. Repair and refinish if required; the stained glass and lead came should be reviewed and repaired if required, by a specialist.
13. Brick chimney and flue: *Rehabilitation* – The chimney is an important character-defining element, although it is no longer functional. The current coating prevents the free movement of moisture through the masonry and will in the future cause the disintegration of the mortar. We recommend that the paint be stripped off the brick surface, and the spalling mortar be removed, prior to repointing the brick. The stability of the flue above the roof should be confirmed by a qualified mason and repointed with appropriate mortar. If the stripped brick surface is unsightly, it can be re-painted with a vapor permeable, or “breathable” coating.
14. Paint: *Rehabilitation* – Excessive layers of paint should be removed, before refinishing. Colours should also be used to highlight some of the distinguishing features such as the design of the front gable end. The current colour palette does not correspond to any of the *Historical Vancouver True Colours* developed by the *Vancouver Heritage Foundation*. There is some evidence of previous colours discovered at the George Residence, and the owner may want to consider reinstating the original colours, when the house needs to be refinished. *Historical Vancouver True Colours* should be considered. Further investigation into the original colours is recommended.
15. Site review: We recommend that a heritage specialist be retained to perform periodic site review when alterations are considered in order to ensure the integrity of the historic fabric. The consultant should also be advised of discoveries on site in order to adjust the conservation strategy, if deemed necessary.

### I.3 REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

The proposed development consists in constructing an infill residential structure at the back of the heritage house. The modern design of the infill structure allows for a compact building distinct and subordinated to the heritage site. The distance between the two structures is sufficient to provide privacy and integrity to both structures while maintaining some effective landscaping and access to the back lane. The massing, fenestration and architectural details of the George Residence will remain intact except for the added entrance door on the ground floor of the east elevation. Incompatible contemporary doors at the back of the house will be replaced by vintage doors from the early twentieth century.

*1517 Comox Street Vancouver*

*April 2019 – revised May 2019*

The front of the house will be preserved as it currently exists. A new walkway will provide access to the new ground floor entrance; as a result, the east side grade will slope down toward the new entrance without a visible impact of the front of the house. We support this development and recommended above a series of maintenance interventions to be completed over time. We believe that the preservation of the George Residence is an asset to the neighbourhood and the City of Vancouver.

**1517 COMOX STREET – GEORGE RESIDENCE  
RESOLUTIONS OF THE VANCOUVER HERITAGE COMMISSION**

On May 13, 2019, the Vancouver Heritage Commission reviewed the Development Permit Application and resolved the following:

WHEREAS

1. The George Residence at 1517 Comox Street has a “B” evaluation on the Vancouver Heritage Register.
2. The proposal to retain and rehabilitate the heritage house generally complies with the principles for adaptation and reuse of historic buildings.
3. The laneway infill building, as presented to the Vancouver Heritage Commission on May 13, 2019, conforms to the RM-5 zoning and is distinguishable in style from the heritage building.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Vancouver Heritage Commission (the “Commission”) supports the proposal to retain, rehabilitate and designate the George Residence at 1517 Comox Street;

FURTHER THAT the Commission supports the addition of the infill building as presented at its meeting on May 13, 2019, including its modern, flat-roofed design;

FURTHER THAT the Commission supports the increase in density from 0.91 FSR to 1.37 FSR in return for the heritage designation of the building;

FURTHER THAT The Commission applauds the applicant for the retention of the existing siding and glazing on the heritage building and for the replacement of the two nonconforming doors at the rear of the building; and

FURTHER THAT the Commission suggests the applicant perform a colour investigation of the original heritage building and consider complementary colours for the infill.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



**1517 COMOX STREET – GEORGE RESIDENCE  
PUBLIC BENEFITS SUMMARY**

**Project Summary:**

Conservation and protection of a heritage building with the development of an infill to the rear.

**Public Benefit Summary:**

The project would result in the conservation and long-term protection of a heritage resource.

	Current Zoning	Proposed
Zoning District	RM-5	RM-5
FSR (402 sq. m. (4,327 sq. ft.))	1.50	1.38
Buildable Floor Area	603 sq. m (6,491 sq.ft.) (new building)	544 sq. m. (5,852 sq.ft.) (incl. existing building and proposed infill)
Land Use	Residential	Residential

Public Benefit Statistics		Value if built under Current Zoning (\$)	Value if built under Proposed DP (\$)¹
Required <sup>23</sup>	DCL (City-wide) <sup>4</sup>	\$58,938	\$17,552
	DCL (Utilities)	\$32,713	\$9,742
	Public Art		
	20% Social Housing		
Offered (Community Amenity Contribution)	Childcare Facilities		
	Cultural Facilities		
	Green Transportation/Public Realm		
	Heritage		
	Housing (e.g. supportive, seniors)		
	Parks and Public Spaces		
	Social/Community Facilities		
	Unallocated		
Other			
<b>TOTAL VALUE OF PUBLIC BENEFITS</b>		<b>\$91,651</b>	<b>\$27,294</b>

**Other Benefits: None**

<sup>1</sup> DCLs would only apply to the added floor area (i.e. the infill) of the George Residence, 1517 Comox Street (180 sq. m. (1933 sq. ft.)) within the value under the Proposed column.

<sup>2</sup> Based on rates in effect as at September 30, 2018. DCLs, Public Art and Social Housing may have exemptions and/or minimum thresholds for qualification.

<sup>3</sup> DCL rates are subject to future adjustment by Council including annual inflationary adjustments. DCLs are payable at building permit issuance based on rates in effect at that time. A development may qualify for 12 months of in-stream rate protection, see the City's [DCL Bulletin](#) for details.

<sup>4</sup> City-Wide DCL revenues are allocated as follows: Replacement Housing (36%); Transportation (25%); Parks (18%); Childcare (13%); and Utilities (8%).