

Vancouver Character House Network

February 23, 2020

City of Vancouver
Mayor Stewart and Council

Dear Mayor Stewart and Councillors:

Re: Public Hearing - Increased Passive House Incentives in Bylaws

Public Hearing Tues. Feb. 25, 2020 6:00 pm: <https://council.vancouver.ca/20200225/phea20200225ag.htm>

Referral Report <https://council.vancouver.ca/20200121/documents/rr2.pdf>

The Character House Network is in principle supportive of Passive House building standards. However, we have concerns about how this is proposed to be implemented which undermines heritage and character house incentives for retention. Therefore, please register us as being **opposed to the zoning changes unless the following amendments are added.**

We have a **petition on Change.org** that has now over **8380 plus paper signers** at the time of writing.

<https://www.change.org/p/city-of-vancouver-mayor-and-council-save-vancouver-s-character-houses>

And the Vancouver Vanishes Facebook has **13,450 likes**, also as a form of support for retention.

<https://www.facebook.com/VancouverVanishes/>

Clearly the public wants to see policies that encourage character house retention, and the city has programs to encourage this through heritage and character house incentives. The incentives for Passive House should not be implemented because they compete with the other City policy for retention incentives that help to provide more housing choice, affordable rentals, and sustainability through adaptive reuse.

Passive House incentives should not be used as a further incentive to demolish heritage and character houses. This undermines existing City programs for their retention.

Houses that are listed on the Heritage register are still allowed to be demolished until they are registered on title at the discretion of the owner. So they are still vulnerable. And character houses are particularly vulnerable in RS zones since there are no disincentives to demolish. The proposed Passive House 16% increased FSR for detached houses and 18% for duplexes would be roughly greater or equal to retention options incentives for FSR, plus other relaxations proposed, thereby making the character house retention options completely ineffective.

Please amend Recommendation A as follows in red:

- A. THAT Council approve the application to amend the Zoning and Development By-law provisions for Certified Passive House projects (except laneway houses), as generally set out in Appendix A of the Referral Report dated December 9, 2019, entitled "Simplified and Expanded Zoning and Development Regulations for Passive House Projects", **including the following amendment:**
 - **10.23A.6 That the above provisions of 10.23A Passive House not apply on properties listed on the Heritage Register and qualified Character Houses, as defined by the City of Vancouver, unless those houses are retained as part of redevelopment.**

While we are pleased to see Passive House being accommodated, however we request the suggested amendments above be made in order to ensure that this doesn't override other City initiatives for heritage and character house incentives that help to provide more housing choice, affordable rentals, and sustainability through adaptive reuse.

Yours truly,

Elizabeth Murphy, Leslie Leader, Marion Jamieson, Carol Volkart

On behalf of Vancouver Character House Network

Reference:

1. TEXT AMENDMENT: Simplified and Expanded Zoning and Development Regulations for Passive House Projects

- Summary and Recommendation PDF <https://council.vancouver.ca/documents/phea1summary.pdf>
- Draft By-Law - Zoning and Development PDF <https://council.vancouver.ca/documents/phea1bylaw-ZD-Amend.pdf>
- Referral Report dated December 9, 2019 PDF <https://council.vancouver.ca/20200121/documents/rr2.pdf>