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February 21st, 2013

Brian Jackson,
General Manager, Planning & Development,
Vancouver City Hall,
453 West 12th Avenue,
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Mr. Jackson;

On behalf of the members of the Heritage Vancouver Society, I am writing to urge the preservation of a very special house, and carriage house, located in the First Shaughnessy District at 3990 Marguerite Street, and potentially under threat of demolition through redevelopment.

The First Shaughnessy Advisory Design Panel reviewed an enquiry on this property in May of 2012, and urged the retention of this house and carriage house, originally built in 1913-14 for prominent Vancouver businessman George Walkem. The enquiry was for the house to be replaced by another single-family dwelling, bigger but undistinguished, and the Design Panel did not support this proposal. The applicant is now pressing to have his redesign accepted, despite the panel's request for retention of this distinguished residence.

The Walkem house is significant as one of the most important residential commissions undertaken by R. Mackay Frupp, a British-born former resident of Australia and New Zealand, and ardent proponent of Arts and Crafts design who was influenced by the work of celebrated English architect Charles Voysey. The Walkem House shares unique British Arts and Crafts influences with similar Voyseyesque houses with "flattened" facades in Shaughnessy, such as the Hunting House (3689 Angus Drive), the Lord Shaughnessy House (1551 Angus Drive), and *Grey Gables* (1281 Matthews Drive) – all "A" rated houses on the Vancouver Heritage Register.

It has been established that this house bears a remarkable resemblance in massing, site placement, materials, fenestration, predominant rooflines, and other architectural details to Voysey's own celebrated house, *The Orchard* at Chorlwood, Hertfordshire, built in 1899. With its roughcast stucco exterior complete with flanking buttresses, bracketed eaves, flat open gables (a Tudor influence) and large predominant leaded glass window over the front stairwell, the Walkem House indicates that Frupp paid homage to Voysey's landmark house as a masterwork of the British Arts and Crafts movement. The Walkem House, in particular, meets the FSD guidelines preference for "an English Picturesque Aesthetic."

Surprisingly, this landmark house is not listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register, despite being included in many publications such as "Exploring Vancouver." Despite its remarkable design details, the house has suffered from neglect and minor alterations. Although the interior stairwell of the Walkem House was moved to accommodate its communal use during WWII, enough original fabric remains to replicate its original placement (similar to Heritage Award Winner 1699 Matthews Drive). Heritage planners have evaluated this house as a "high B" for inclusion on the Heritage Register and did not support the proposed demolition. We are confident that the house would be evaluated as a Heritage Register "A" once minor alterations are reversed.

In the hands of a skilled architect the house would lend itself to contemporary additions at the back to meet most client requirements. The carriage house, which already contains rental suites, could be expanded gently to increase the number of rental dwelling units.

Heritage Vancouver requests that Planning be instructed to encourage the applicant to work with retention of this distinguished house, through renovation and additions to the rear, in much the same manner as the guidelines and policies that have served Kitsilano's pre-1930 RT-8 areas so well. Heritage preservation – a first principle stated in both the First Shaughnessy Guidelines and Overall Development Plan – needs to be reinforced as preservation is incremental, and demolition is forever.

The goals of the Overall Development Plan specifically say that the Plan is to “preserve and protect all meritorious pre-1940 houses” – and the Walkem House is clearly meritorious. Allowing this highly significant house to become the 52nd heritage character house to be demolished in First Shaughnessy would be a tragic blow to the character of this heritage neighbourhood.

Our Society supports the creative re-use of our historic structures, and works cooperatively to build a future for heritage in Vancouver. We hope that the retention of this significant heritage house will send a strong message to the development community that the principles of the FSD ODP support restoration over landfill.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Keller", with a stylized flourish at the end.

President, Heritage Vancouver

Cc Vancouver City Council
Kent Monro, Assistant Director, Planning
Anita Molaro, Senior Planner
Timothy Potter, Planner
Marco D'Agostini, Senior Heritage Planner
Richard Keate, Chair, Heritage Commission
David Cuan, President SHPOA
First Shaughnessy Design Panel