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March 12, 2009

Mayor Gregor Robertson and Council
Vancouver City Hall
453 W. 12th Ave.
Vancouver, BC, V5Y 1V4

The Walter C. Nichol House - 1402 McRae Avenue

On behalf of Heritage Vancouver, I am writing to express our Society's support for the retention and preservation of the Walter C. Nichol House at 1402 McRae Avenue in First Shaughnessy. The Nichol House is an "A"-listed heritage resource within the First Shaughnessy District, an area listed on Heritage Vancouver's 2009 Top Ten Endangered Sites.

Over the past 27 years, fifty-one pre-1940 heritage houses have been demolished in First Shaughnessy District, despite the Overall Development Plan's stated goals to preserve the heritage character of this neighbourhood. We urge council to preserve and designate this outstanding example of an Arts and Crafts residence – a prime illustration of the "English Picturesque Aesthetic" as outlined in the First Shaughnessy Design Guidelines, and widely-recognized as one of famed architect Samuel Maclure's finest houses. This is an opportunity to reverse the path of demolition that has swept through the east side of First Shaughnessy (32 demos vs. 19 for the west side).

The Lutyens/ Jeckyll-inspired garden and house has been featured on the front cover of Heritage Canada and is amply illustrated as a heritage character icon in the Design Guidelines and the Housing Style brochure put out by the Shaughnessy Heights Property Owners Association. Flanked by two outstanding Tudor Revival houses, the Nichol house anchors a perfect Crescent of pre-1940 houses – one of the few intact streets left in First Shaughnessy.

The current plan accepts the home's non-conforming position straddling two lots, meaning that it will not be necessary to strata title the house, avoiding the requirements for so that rain screening (which would destroy the exterior), and sprinklering and other code requirements (which would tear up the meritorious period interior). Rezoning the lower lot for townhouses is a similar solution as was achieved in preserving *Hycroft*. As one councillor previously remarked when walking around the Crescent, the proposed HRA/CD-1 lot would have no visual impact on the Crescent. As for the underground parking, the same scale of parking is underneath the Chinese Consulate around the corner on Granville Street and has met with no resistance from Shaughnessy Heights Property Owners Association.

Heritage Vancouver recognizes that the developer, Brian Bell, is very sensitive to this type of development. Mr. Bell, a First Shaughnessy resident for over 25 years, lives in the meritorious renovated garage/stable that was part of the *Greencroft* estate. One has only to talk to the neighbours of his heritage development, at 45th Avenue and MacDonald, who are now very supportive of this earlier controversial project, to realize that we have the chance to preserve forever an "A" listed structure and site while meeting new densification pressures.

Heritage Vancouver urges Council to continue to support this unique development for the enrichment of all Vancouverites who admire this city,

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "don luxton". The signature is fluid and cursive, ending with a small flourish.

Donald Luxton, President
Heritage Vancouver

Penny Ballem, City Manager
Marco D'Agostini, Senior Planner, Heritage Group
Brent Toderian, Director of Planning
Vancouver Heritage Commission