



P.O. Box 3336, Vancouver, BC, V6B 3Y3, (604) 254-9411

July 28, 2009

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

Dear Mayor Robertson and Councillors;

Re: 1450 McRae Avenue.

Heritage Vancouver is disturbed to learn of the Vancouver City Council's decision on July 7, 2009 to refer the development application for 1450 McRae Avenue to the Development Permit Board for a formal review, including further public delegations. In March 2009, the Director of Planning approved the development application for this site subject to a number of conditions. Subsequently the proponent met these conditions and the project was signed off by the Director of Planning. In good faith, the proponent completed all of the work to designate the A-listed heritage building on this site. On July 7th, if the usual process had been followed, this project would have received Council approval. The community has had ample opportunity to comment on this project, the rezoning has been approved and the development conditions have been met. To send the project to the Development Permit Board at this stage in the process serves no obvious purpose and appears only to delay the project and create unnecessary economic hardship for the proponent.

This decision sends the wrong message regarding the preservation of heritage buildings. It signals a lack of certainty in the city's heritage procedures and in the negotiation of heritage incentives. With the current freeze on the Heritage Density Bank, there are fewer and fewer incentives available for developers interested in preserving significant heritage buildings. This lack of clarity in heritage procedures creates unnecessary delays that impose further financial hardships and make it increasingly difficult to convince proponents to enter into Heritage Revitalization Agreements with the City.

We urge Council to expedite this significant heritage project, and to examine ways to streamline the heritage application and negotiation process. In difficult economic times, we should be removing, rather than creating, roadblocks to investment in our heritage sites.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "don luxton".

Donald Luxton, President

Cc: Marco D'Agostini, Senior Heritage Planner
Penny Ballem, City Manager
Brent Toderian, Director of Planning