



Heritage Vancouver

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October 21, 2019

City of Vancouver
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

Re: Motion on Notice- **Increasing Affordable Housing Options Through Character House Incentives in RS Zones**

Dear Mayor and Council,

We are writing to express our support for a review and revisiting of the City of Vancouver's character home and neighbourhood retention policies and the retention of character and heritage homes.

Heritage Vancouver has been the independent voice for heritage in Vancouver for over 26 years. As society and the heritage discipline have undergone tremendous change over these past 26 years, we have emerged as a leading voice in the field. Being civic minded and applying reasoned and principled approaches based on best practices to the particular context are two of our key principles.

Concerning character homes, we observe that it appears from the limited data available and from anecdotal stories from our members and the public that the character home retention program passed by council in May 2017 may not be working. We suggest City staff carry out a detailed data gathering and analysis to see about successes and failures in order to review and revise policies related to the retention of character homes and neighbourhood character. We recommend that the review include representatives from the heritage community, Vancouver Building Bylaw experts and affected neighbourhoods at a minimum.

We also observe that character home demolitions are a symptom of a larger challenge related to changing demographics, affordability and other factors in the primarily RS neighbourhoods. We suggest that reviews consider how to revise RS zoning to help retain the character of neighbourhoods as a whole including trees, local serving retail, parks, and schools while still increasing housing options for all, including the addition of low rise, townhomes, and other forms of housing tenure while still keeping significant heritage homes, character homes and streetscapes.

With the above in mind we support the urgent re-examination of the City of Vancouver's policies as related to character home and neighbourhood retention. We would be pleased to participate and support the review process in a technical/stakeholder role. We suggest that these reviews and revisions be carried out immediately so as not to be lost in the overall City-wide Plan process.

Sincerely,

Heritage Vancouver Society