

Final

Grandview-Woodland Area Council
c/o Britannia Community Centre
1661 Napier Street
Vancouver
BC V5L 4X4

Sunday 18 September 2011

Dear Mayor and Council:

Re: Heritage Revitalization Agreement for 1250 Salisbury Drive (Development Application No. DE414450)

Grandview-Woodland Area Council (GWAC) is the main community association of Grandview-Woodland. GWAC wrote letters about 1250 Salisbury Drive (also referred to by the address 1240 or 1298 Salisbury) on 17 October 2010 to Development Planner Bob Adair and others, 28 October 2010 to architect Timothy Ankenman and others, and 24 February 2011 to Project Facilitator Michelle Au. The letters can be found at www.vcn.bc.ca/gwac/1240Salisbury/index.html.

Having read the City's Policy Report "Heritage Designation and Heritage Revitalization Agreement - 1250 Salisbury Drive – 'The Jeffs Residence' " dated 21 July 2011 (Toderian et al, 2011), GWAC's Directors would like to make some comments about that report with respect to the issues it has raised in its past three letters.

Before doing so, in the interests of full disclosure, GWAC would like to note that the applicant for the Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) is currently a Director of GWAC, having joined the Board of Directors in March 2011, and would also like to note that the applicant did not participate in discussions about this letter, nor did the applicant take part in a vote among Directors as to whether they approved this letter.

1. Correction and clarification of a few points in the staff report

The staff report refers to GWAC as the "Grandview Woodland Area Council" on page 1 of Appendix E, but incorrectly refers to GWAC as the "Grandview Woodlands Advisory Committee" in two other places (page 7 and page 1 of Appendix D).

The report states that GWAC's first letter included "A comparison with the project at 1098 Salisbury Drive ('The Kurrajong House')" (Appendix D, page 1), but the point GWAC made in the letter was that a comparison of the project only goes so far, and that a major difference between the two projects was access provided to underground parking on the two sites.

The staff report notes that 2010 rents at 1250 Salisbury were higher than the average rent for the East Hastings Area (page 5). That may be the case but it's not an apt comparison because 1250 Salisbury is located in a very sought-after part of the East Hastings Area: the RT-5 zone to the east of Commercial Drive, north of First Avenue.

2. Appreciation of the efforts by the applicant and City staff to consult with the community

GWAC appreciates that staff and the applicant have been responsive to community concerns and have lowered the number of dwelling units (from 22 to 20) and FSR (from 1.20 to 1.08).

GWAC would like to acknowledge the efforts made by the applicant to provide some rental accommodation or a co-op on the site (detailed in Appendix E of the report) which included attending a series of GWAC meetings before he became a Director, offering to answer questions and seeking ideas for providing rental accommodation or a co-op.

3. Extent to which GWAC's concerns have been addressed

The staff report characterizes GWAC as having “concerns about the proposal including the loss of rental units and the lack of a viable co-op option for the current owner, traffic impacts, garbage pickup for the site, and the lack of sufficient information at the first open house.” We should like to discuss these issues, somewhat out of order.

5. Lack of sufficient information at the first Open House. This concern has been largely addressed through subsequently providing more detailed plans for the site, and holding a second Open House on 6 June 2011.

1. and 2. Loss of rental units and the lack of a viable co-op option for the current applicant. The loss of 16 rental units remains lamentable — in part because market rental housing is not being built in Grandview-Woodland. (Page 5 of the report notes that only one unit of market rental was constructed, under construction, or in the development permit application stream, between 2001 and June 2011.) As mentioned previously, GWAC acknowledges the applicant's attempts to provide rental accommodation or a co-op on the site.

3. and 4. Traffic impacts and garbage pickup for the site. Both of these concerns relate to the narrowness of the 12-foot wide unpaved north-south lane to William Street, which it is proposed will provide access to the site's recycling and garbage facilities, and underground parking for the 20 dwelling units on site. This narrowness was seen by GWAC as creating two problems: Lack of space for garbage and recycling vehicles to turn at the south end of the lane and lack of space for two vehicles to pass each other in the lane, especially if one of them was a wider vehicle like a truck.

The staff report states that “Engineering Services staff have reviewed the application and although there are challenges with the lane, have concluded that the proposed parking and garbage and recycling pickup will meet the City's requirements subject to certain conditions” (Appendix D, page 4).

GWAC understands that the challenge of turning vehicles at the south end of the lane has been partly addressed by using smaller-than-usual recycling and garbage trucks, and adding a “throat” to the top of the parking ramp, which may also assist with vehicles passing each other. However, it remains to be seen whether there is indeed sufficient space for a truck to turn at the south end. GWAC would appreciate a Councillor asking Engineering staff to address this issue at the public hearing to the satisfaction of Council.

The staff report also states that “The Director of Planning has reviewed all applicable policies and guidelines ... and concludes that the revised application is supportable” (page 4). GWAC would like to draw Council's attention to the following excerpt from its 28 October 2010 letter, which was repeated in its third letter.

As reported in section 2 of this letter, the north-south lane to William Street is 12 feet wide, and that the width of a standard City of Vancouver lane is 20 feet. The first GWAC letter noted that the north-south lane is bounded by the property lines of adjacent properties, so there is no immediate opportunity to widen the lane.

Please also note that Schedule B of the Subdivision By-law (No. 5208), “Standards for Street Configurations” (<http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/BYLAWS/SUBDIV/schedb.pdf>) requires that access lanes be 20 feet wide.

Could a Councillor ask the Director of Planning to explain this apparent difference between a City by-law and the access lane that is proposed for the site? Has the By-law been superseded, or is it not applicable to this development application?

One of GWAC's Directors privately tried to learn from Engineering about any existing sites in Vancouver that had access to a building of similar size down a dead-end lane of similar width. After many attempts to elicit a response from Engineering staff by phone and e-mail, the individual was told of one comparable example: 2020 Alma Street in Kitsilano. On the next page is an aerial photograph of 2020 Alma on the left, with 1250 Salsbury in the right for comparison purposes.

Could a Councillor ask staff whether they know of examples besides 2020 Alma, and whether they see 2020 Alma (and any other sites they know of) as precedents for 1250 Salsbury? (The staff report stresses that at least the HRA aspect of the proposed development will set no precedents. It would be useful to clarify whether non-HRA aspects of the proposed development will be allowed to set precedents.)



2020 Alma



1250 Salisbury

4. Conclusion

Other than lamenting the loss of rental housing and seeking clarification as to why the proposed laneway access is not in violation of current applicable guidelines, GWAC supports the Heritage Revitalization Agreement for 1250 Salisbury Drive (Development Application No. DE414450).

Sincerely,

The Directors of Grandview-Woodland Area Council (GWAC) other than the applicant

(Tom Durrie, Dan Fass, John Flipse, Nati Herron, Eileen Mosca, Craig Ollenberger Richard Penneway, Petronella Vander Valk)

GWAC website: www.vcn.bc.ca/gwac

Cc: Brent Toderian (Director of Planning), James Boldt (Heritage Planner)

Bibliography

City of Vancouver Development Services (2011). 1298 Salisbury Drive - DE414450. <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/developmentsservices/devapps/1298salisburydr/index.htm> (accessed 13 September 2011).

Grandview-Woodland Area Council [GWAC] (2010a). GWAC letter about proposed development of 1240 Salisbury Drive/1841 Charles Street. 17 October 2010. www.vcn.bc.ca/gwac/1240Salisbury/10-10-17GWAC_1240Salisbury.pdf

Grandview-Woodland Area Council [GWAC] (2010b). GWAC letter 2 about proposed development of 1240 Salisbury Drive/1841 Charles Street. 28 October 2010. www.vcn.bc.ca/gwac/1240Salisbury/10-10-28GWAC_1240Salisbury2.pdf

Grandview-Woodland Area Council [GWAC] (2011a). GWAC letter 3 about proposed development of 1240 Salisbury Drive/1841 Charles Street. 24 February 2011. www.vcn.bc.ca/gwac/1240Salisbury/11-02-24GWAC_1240Salisbury3.pdf

Grandview-Woodland Area Council [GWAC] (2011b). GWAC letter 4 about proposed development of 1250 [sic] Salisbury Drive. 18 September 2011. www.vcn.bc.ca/gwac/1240Salisbury/11-09-18GWAC_1240Salisbury4.pdf

Grandview-Woodland Area Council [GWAC] (2011c). Web page about 1250 Salisbury Drive. Last updated 18 September 2011. www.vcn.bc.ca/gwac/1240Salisbury/index.html

Toderian, Brent, in consultation with Frances J. Connell and Brenda Prosken (2011). "Heritage Designation and Heritage Revitalization Agreement – 1250 Salisbury Drive – 'The Jeffs Residence'." City of Vancouver Policy Report: Development and Building. Report date: 21 July 2011. <http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20110919/documents/phea4-HeritageDesignationandHeritageRevitalizationAgreement-1250Salisbury-Report.pdf>. To be heard at Public Hearing on Monday 19 September 2011. Meeting agenda: <http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20110919/phea20110919ag.htm> [Brent Toderian is Director of Planning at the City of Vancouver, Frances J. Connell is Director of Legal Services, Brenda Prosken is Director of Social Development]