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December 20, 2012

Louis Ng
Secretary to the Board of Variance
Vancouver City Hall, Ground Floor #112
453 W. 12th Ave.
Vancouver, BC, V5Y 1V4

Development Application No. DE415739: Heritage House at 2128 Arbutus in Delamont Park

On behalf of the Heritage Vancouver Society, we are writing to draw your attention to Development Application No. DE415739 to demolish a heritage house dating from “the early part of the 20th century” and replace it with a duplex multiple dwelling. We think that every effort should be made to revise this scheme to renovate the heritage house and incorporate it into a multiple dwelling structure.

The applicant and building owner, William Rudell Architect, states in his detailed “Design Rationale”, Feb. 23, 2012 that he “met with the City of Vancouver Planning Staff on several occasions... to present alternative designs for the renovation of the existing structure... but was unable to acquire sufficient support to justify continuance of an application”. “With the suggestion of one of the planners to “build a duplex”, I gave up the idea of a renovation, deciding in favour of creating a design for a new project”.

The heritage house is extremely significant due to its location in the middle of one of the two blocks of historic buildings on Arbutus Street, in the City-owned Delamont Park neighbourhood. Arbutus Street is the most prominent “gateway” or public façade for Delamont Park, which is a prime candidate for creating a vibrant neighbourhood of affordable housing. Please refer to the excellent submission #37 to the COV’s reTHINK Housing Open Ideas Competition, by Sean McEwen Architect, entitled “Affordable Housing and Heritage Retention – Delamont Park. East Kitsilano, Vancouver.” The concept is inspired by the success of the City’s Mole Hill Neighbourhood, to which Mr. McEwen was a major contributor.

We urge you to act swiftly to direct Planning staff to seek the advice of Council on this important issue and then work with the applicant-owner to develop alternatives that will retain the renovated house as part of an integrated multiple dwelling structure, suited to this important heritage site.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet Leduc", written in a cursive style.

Janet Leduc
Executive Director, Heritage Vancouver Society

cc. Penny Ballem, City Manager
Marco D’Agostini, Senior Planner, Heritage Group
Vancouver Heritage Commissioners