



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

September 19, 2011

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

Re: Deconstruction By-Law

On behalf of Heritage Vancouver, I am writing to urge council to reconsider certain elements of the proposed Deconstruction by-law. Heritage Vancouver supports sustainability initiatives, and agrees that demolition of housing material that fills up our landfill without any "sober second thought" should be avoided. At the same time, the Deconstruction by-law as proposed has the potential for drastic unintended consequences for the heritage assets of our city. The heritage community raises the following questions:

- What does "heritage status mean? In the staff presentation it would appear this means only those properties on the register (approximately 1700 houses of the outright districts out of the current 2200 listings) would be protected from outright demolition. Since council has agreed that the Register is deficient and needs to be revisited, some sort of transitional arrangement or review process would appear to be essential.
- What is the definition of a "heritage character" building? Many of the buildings in our older neighbourhoods have significant heritage character and contribute to streetscapes and community value, but no legal description exists in the planning lexicon to describe heritage character buildings. How will heritage character buildings be considered, or will they be destroyed with no recorded assessment of their value?
- How will significant interiors to be dealt with under this by-law?
- How will the monitoring of the impact of these deconstruction measures be carried out?

Although Heritage Vancouver supports the idea of a Deconstruction By-Law, we urge council to defer any decisions until further development and refinement of the proposal has been carried out. This should include, at a minimum, a monitoring procedure to allow an understanding of the initial impact of any of these measures. This would be similar to the reporting procedures for Laneway houses, which includes reports back to Council at sequential stages.

Thank you in advance for considering the concerns of the heritage community in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "don luxton", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Donald Luxton, President
Heritage Vancouver

cc. Penny Ballem, City Manager
Marco D'Agostini, Senior Planner, Heritage Group
Brent Toderian, Director of Planning
Members of the Heritage Commission