



Heritage Vancouver

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July 27, 2016

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

RE: Grandview Woodland Community Plan

Dear Mayor Robertson and Members of Council,

In the past several years, Heritage Vancouver Society has commented on Commercial Drive, the Grandview Woodland neighbourhood, and sites in it on a number of occasions. It has been on our [Top10 Watch List](#) since 2012 and we also [submitted comments](#) on the *Goals, Objectives and Emerging Directions* document in August of 2013. As such we are deeply concerned about the impacts this proposed plan will have on one of Vancouver's most unique streets and the surrounding area.

Due to the relatively short timeline for a decision on the Grandview Woodland Draft Plan since its release and our summer schedule, Heritage Vancouver has not been able to have a thorough review and discussion of the potential heritage impacts of the proposed plan.

Nonetheless, we do have a few points thus far that we would like to make:

1. 11.1 Heritage Character Resources states that "through the planning process, concerns were expressed regarding... a desire to see the definition of heritage broadened to include more than just specific buildings- such as streetscapes, landscape features, and elements of social, cultural, Aboriginal and economic history." This desire also corresponds to the recommendations of the Heritage Action Plan.

While it is important that this recognition of the intangible traits of heritage be made, we believe that this section of the plan needs to have more specific direction regarding how heritage policy will not just recognize these intangible traits, but also how heritage policy will be augmented with new tools that can have a consequential effect on maintaining assets such as the cultural vitality of the core section of Commercial Drive.

We believe that creative planning mechanisms and tools including and beyond those existing need to be considered to allow for the protection of the unique character of The Drive. There are limitations to mechanisms that aim to protect structures and regulate design in that they are ineffectual in protecting long-time institutions and one-of-a-kind small businesses from such threats as increases in rent and possible evictions due to land price pressures. These institutions and businesses make up the city's non-architectural heritage.

2. Consider special designation for key blocks as 'Heritage Streetscapes' along with concrete guidance on streetscape design.
3. There are unique structures throughout Grandview Woodland that require specific identification. Some examples on Hastings include:

- **The Three Halfies** (1768, 1756, 1736 E Hastings St), a set of curious Quonset-hut style half-moon structures unique to the corridor
- **The Value Village Building** (1820 E Hastings St) an interestingly transparent modernist structure
- **Star Tile** (2121 E Hastings St) (b.1964) with its unique ceramic tile facades
- **Dayton Boots** (2250 East Hastings St) (b.1946), a historic Vancouver shop and boot maker

These heritage assets face development pressure with the policies set forth for Hastings Plateau, Hastings Slopes and Hastings Hilltop. The loss of these cultural and/or architectural pieces would detract from the urban fabric of the East Hastings corridor as well as the city. We recommend that assets such as the above be specifically identified and included in the Heritage Register update and that measures for retention be considered when/if development applications for these sites come forward. Others would include the **Rio Theatre** on East Broadway and **The Canada Post Building** at 2160 Commercial Drive which is a modest but significantly located example of post-war modernism in Vancouver.

In fact, despite the cultural, historic and architectural value of The Drive, almost none of these buildings have heritage recognition or protection; only **seven** of them are listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register. (Our listing of Commercial Drive on Heritage Vancouver's 2016 Top10 Watch List can be read [here](#).)

4. Our membership has also expressed concerns about the impacts that the proposed changes to single family and RT zones in the area have. We have not yet had time to fully review these potential impacts. However, we note that the plan does not appear to give generous enough incentives to encourage retention and upgrading of the existing heritage housing stock (i.e. the number of units allowed, the house and FSR bonuses may not be enough to incentivize retention).
5. We reaffirm our position that the most significant part of Commercial Drive be recognized as the cultural and historically-significant hub of the Grandview neighbourhood. Accordingly, we strongly urge the immediate consideration of a more formal heritage protection framework for historic Commercial Drive.

Sincerely,



Bill Yuen
Manager
Heritage Vancouver Society