



MEMORANDUM

Date: February 15, 2016
Our File: 1010-20-15-084
To: Design Review Committee
From: Lisa Berg, Senior Community Planner
Re: **Heritage Revitalization Agreement No. 15-084 for 1425 Gordon Avenue**

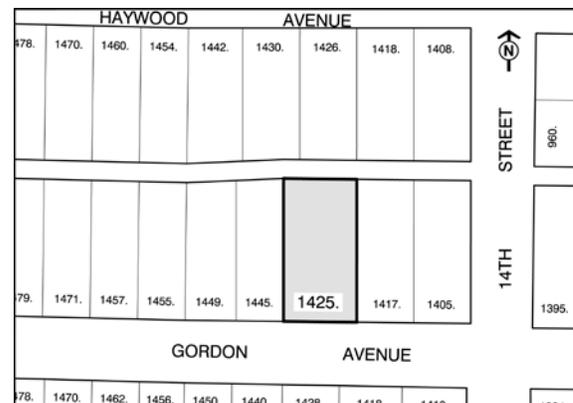
APPLICATION TYPE

This memo deals with an application for a Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) for 1425 Gordon Avenue. The site is currently developed with the “Vinson House,” which was constructed in 1913 and was added to the Community Heritage Register on June 9, 2008. The objectives of the HRA are to make the conservation of significant buildings an economically viable alternative to demolition and replacement, and to support the preservation and enhancement of established neighbourhood character.

SUMMARY

The applicant proposes to enter into a Heritage Revitalization Agreement to:

- legally protect the “Vinson House” and add a garden suite in the basement level of the house;
- add a detached dwelling unit to the northeast corner (laneway cottage) of the property (with an attached garage);
- add a detached dwelling unit at the southeast corner (garden cottage) of the property;
- add two detached garages from the lane – a single garage at the northwest corner of the property for the garden suite, and a double garage in the centre rear of the property for the Vinson House and Garden Cottage.
- move the Vinson House forward approximately 23.5 feet to make room for the rear garages and to create a small court yard.
- vehicle access is from the lane.
- total of 4 strata units, with one enclosed parking space per unit.
- Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.62.



Please see the Project Profile attached as **Appendix A**.

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BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The Vinson House

The Vinson House was built in 1913 for Valient Vinson (b. 1878 – d.1934), who was Reeve of West Vancouver from 1918 – 1920, 1922, and 1927 – 1929 (see Figure 1). It was the first house in the upper Hollyburn Area, and it is a well-preserved and excellent example of the Craftsman Style.

Context

The Vinson House is located at 1425 Gordon Avenue in Ambleside, and is situated toward the rear of this gently sloping and oversized lot, being 11,555 square feet (1,073.5 square metres) in area. The lot is bounded by Gordon Avenue to the south, a rear lane to the north, and two single-family residential lots to the east and west being approximately 9,000 square feet (838 square metres) and 7,450 square feet (692 square metres) in area each respectively.



Figure 1: Valient Vinson, Reeve West Vancouver Archives (1918)



Figure 2: Vinson House, 2015

In addition to the Vinson House, the lot is developed with a detached garage constructed in 1986 located on the northeast corner of the lot and is accessed via the lane. The remainder of the lot consists of garden areas, with an expansive front lawn, four on-site trees, and a stone wall topped with a fence, which separates the front of the property from the Gordon Avenue boulevard (see Figure 2). Two off-site trees are also referenced on the development plans (see page 4).

The existing FAR of the site is 0.28.

1400 Block Gordon Avenue: Subdivision History

The original Vinson House belonged to an estate property that at one time was 5.4 acres (2.2 hectares) in area. The existing lot pattern we see today on the northeast half of the Gordon Avenue block (and up to the south half of Inglewood Avenue) is a result of a subdivision created in 1940. The Vinson House sits on Lot 18 of that original 20-lot subdivision (see Figure 3).

Across the street to the south are single family lots created by a later subdivision in 1947, with lot sizes ranging from 6,800 square feet (633 square metres) to 9,225 square feet (857 square metres). The remainder of the 1400 Block of Gordon Avenue to the west generally consists of approximately 7,240 square foot (673 square metres) lots created by 1913 subdivisions. Some later lot adjustments in the over the years see some reconfigurations to the lots and their areas on Gordon Avenue toward 15th Street.

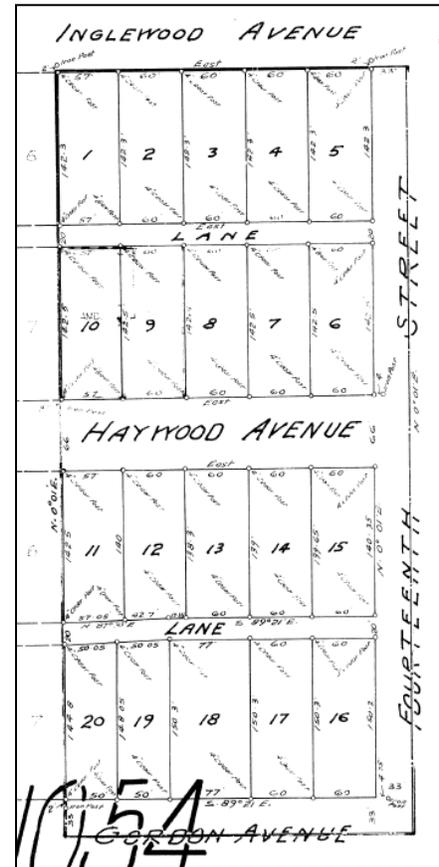


Figure 3: 1940 Subdivision of the Vinson Property (Lot 18)

RS5 Zoning



Figure 4: RS5 Development Potential

The minimum lot area within the RS5 zone is 6,000 square feet (558 square metres) and under the existing zoning, the site could be redeveloped with a new house of approximately 4,044 square feet (376 square metres), not including an in-ground basement or other exempted floor area (see Figure 4).

The lot is just under the minimum amount of area (445 sq ft) to qualify for a conventional two-lot subdivision.

THE PROPOSAL

The proposed Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) would enable redevelopment of the property with four units as an incentive for ongoing legal protection (Heritage Designation) for the “Vinson House” to be retained on the lot. The proposal includes:

- alterations to the existing heritage building (2,697 sq ft) including the addition of a strata suite in the basement level (1,928 sq ft) in accordance with a conservation plan;
- the construction of two detached dwelling units: 1,447 sq ft (plus 217 sq ft basement) and 1,724 sq ft each; and
- and laneway garages (two detached and one attached totalling 887 sq ft) (see Figure 5).



Figure 5: Proposed Site Plan

The original appearance of the Vinson House will be conserved and restored to the extent possible and the design of the infill units are done to complement the character of the main house by incorporating traditional details (see Figure 6). The proposed landscape plans include rebuilding the front stone wall and creating a pedestrian network through the site to the various buildings. An outdoor patio area/courtyard is created for each unit and an “Edwardian” garden concept is proposed to link the buildings to each other and the historical past of the Vinson House.

The development proposal is attached as **Appendix F¹**.



Figure 6: Proposed South Elevation

The applicant has provided background materials for your information, including a site survey, an arborist report and a storm water management plan (**Appendices C to E**). The arborist report details the retention of two of the four on-site trees and suggests the removal of one of two off-site trees. The applicant is exploring alternative construction methods that would impact this off-site tree in order to see its retention.

¹ Source information provided by the applicant.

Background on Heritage Revitalization Agreements (HRA)

The “Vinson House” is listed on the West Vancouver Community Heritage Register, and is eligible for municipal conservation tools and incentives enabled under Part 15 (Heritage Conservation) of the *Local Government Act*. Per Council-approved guidelines for the application of such incentives, an HRA would be used as the legal framework for drafting the conservation agreement between the property owner and the District, and municipal heritage designation is to provide ongoing legal protection for the Vinson House.

An HRA is the principal planning and administrative tool for facilitating heritage conservation proposals (and is typically supported by a Conservation Plan, including a Statement of Significance). It is a formal voluntary written agreement negotiated by a local government and an owner of heritage property that outlines the duties, obligations, and benefits negotiated by both parties to the agreement.

An HRA may:

- Detail the timing of the agreement terms;
- Vary or supplement the provisions of a zoning bylaw including use, density, siting, and lot size;
- Vary or supplement the provision of a bylaw concerning land use designation;
- Vary or supplement a permit under Part 14 of the *Local Government Act* (Planning and Land Use Management);
- Vary or supplement a bylaw or heritage alteration permit under Part 15 of the *Local Government Act* (Heritage Conservation); and/or
- Include other terms agreed to by the local government and the property owner.

The final agreement is included as a schedule to an enabling bylaw. An HRA bylaw is typically considered in tandem with a heritage designation bylaw, which provides for ongoing legal protection of the heritage resource. In the absence of a municipal tree protection bylaw, and with limited powers to protect trees outside of riparian areas, an HRA or Section 219 Covenant can be used to protect significant landscape resources on individual sites – if these are deemed to have heritage value, or are character-defining elements of a heritage resource or property. As a result of an approved HRA, any proposed future alterations or additions to the buildings or changes to the landscape would be subject to a Heritage Alteration Permit.

A Conservation Plan, including a Statement of Significance (SOS) for the Vinson Residence was prepared by Don Luxton and Associates (October 2015) (see Figure 7) and is included for your review and reference as **Appendix B**. The SOS describes the heritage resource, includes a statement of heritage value, and outlines the “character defining” elements of the house and the site.

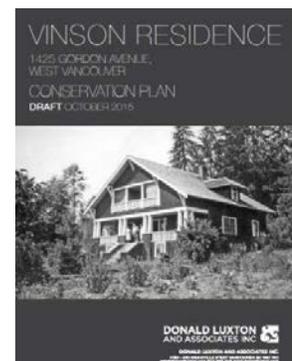


Figure 7: Vinson House Conservation Plan

Specific Items to Address

1. Issues related to site development:
 - a. Compatibility of architectural design with the Vinson House;
 - b. General site development (such as tree retention/removal, new landscaping, vehicle access, etc);
 - c. Sustainability initiatives; and
 - d. Storm water management.
2. Appropriateness of the proposed changes under the Conservation Plan vis-a-vis on the character defining elements of the Vinson House.
3. 'Fit' of the proposed developments within the established neighbourhood character, and within the site and relationship to the Vinson House.
4. Does the purpose and quality of the proposal justify an alternative building envelope, site coverage and density?

Appendices:

- A. Project Profile
- B. Conservation Plan (includes the Statement of Significance)
- C. Survey
- D. Arborist Report
- E. Storm Water Management Plan
- F. Proposed Development Plans (*see booklet for full project description - full-sized plans are included for your convenience*)