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<i>COUNCIL AGENDA</i>	
Date: <u>March 8, 2021</u>	Item: <u>5.1.</u>



DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER
750 17TH STREET, WEST VANCOUVER BC V7V 3T3

5.1.

COUNCIL REPORT

Date:	March 2, 2021
From:	Mark Chan, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Subject:	Navy Jack House Update
File:	0500-01

RECOMMENDATION THAT:

1. in order to facilitate private fundraising, the matching amount to a maximum financial contribution of up to \$1 million from the Community Amenity Contribution Fund referenced in part 5 of the October 5, 2020, Council Resolution, also apply to funds raised by the Navy Jack House citizen group and any other privately raised funds for the purpose of conserving and repurposing the Navy Jack House;
2. Staff work together with the West Vancouver Streamkeeper Society to start detailed design now in 2021 on the creek restoration project based generally on Option 1 as presented by the West Vancouver Streamkeeper Society and as explained in the March 2, 2021, Council Report titled “Navy Jack House Update” with completion of the creek restoration project in 2022;
3. the District proceed with a feasibility analysis (considering factors such as size, siting, access, integration with John Lawson Park and the Spirit Trail, cost, funding sources, rent revenue and commercial interest) based on a full time commercial use (food and beverage establishment) for the House, for two scenarios:
 - a. a smaller ground floor footprint based generally on the original form (approx. 800 to 1,000 sf); and
 - b. a larger ground floor footprint based on the original form plus an approximate 1,400 sf addition; and

a third scenario suggested by the citizen group of a coffee shop and gift shop area (approx. 800 sf) that could also be used for multi-use purposes (including: heritage exhibit space, local art/craft sales, education, concerts, etc), with a 1,000 sf annex building to the south connected by a breezeway of approx. 400 sf;
4. Staff engage with Musqueam Indian Band, Squamish Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation on both the creek restoration project and the House, including discussions about potential uses, and how to commemorate the historical and cultural significance of the Navy Jack site, and report back on the progress of the discussions; and

5. Staff report back by July 2021 to provide Council with the information necessary to determine: use, size, siting, funding and other key project elements relating to the House; and design, cost, funding and other information necessary to plan for completion of the creek restoration project in 2022.

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Navy Jack House project and discuss next steps. The next steps are intended to gather critical information that will allow Council to make key decisions necessary to move both projects forward in a timely manner.

2.0 Executive Summary

This report provides information about the creek restoration project, the restoration of the House, and First Nations engagement. The project area is high profile and very well used with the adjacent John Lawson Park, waterfront and foreshore path leading to the Seawalk to the front, and the multi-modal Spirit Trail to the rear. The House and site have important historical and cultural significance for First Nations, and represent a significant opportunity to work collaboratively with First Nations, and also commemorate the unique story of Navy Jack, the House and site as it relates to First Nations.

The Project represents a tremendous opportunity, but careful planning is required to ensure successful integration with the park and environment, a sustainable use for the House moving forward, and how to commemorate the history of the House and site.

The creek restoration project has been discussed for several years, and is supported by existing District policy including the Ambleside Waterfront Concept Plan (2016). The creek restoration project is an important project that will improve the environment, the creek, and the park user experience.

This report recommends that Staff work together with the Streamkeepers now on detailed design, permitting and other technical aspects in order to complete the creek restoration project in 2022.

The restoration of the House also offers a significant opportunity to recognize the history of Navy Jack and First Nations. In 2019, the District conducted public engagement on the Navy Jack House, and there was support for commemorating the historical and cultural significance of the Navy Jack site. During that time, Staff also met with representatives of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Squamish Nation who expressed interest in being involved in the process given the history of the House and its significance to both First Nations. Council recognized this, and specifically directed Staff in the October 5, 2020, Council Resolution to “*respectfully and meaningfully engage with First Nations regarding their connection to Navy Jack House, including archeological considerations*”. It is essential that the District engage with First Nations to discuss the

creek restoration project, the House, possible uses, and the development of a plan for appropriate commemoration that celebrates the history of Navy Jack and the site.

This report also recommends that Staff continue to engage with the citizen group, the heritage consultant, and the Heritage Advisory Committee on the restoration of the House.

In order to proceed expeditiously, information needs to be gathered now, and decisions will need to be made on a timely basis for both the creek restoration project, and the restoration of the House.

This report therefore recommends five main actions, all intended to move both projects ahead expeditiously:

1. Confirm that the District's matching amount of \$1M applies to any funds raised by the citizen group or other public fundraising;
2. Staff work together with Streamkeepers to start the design process in 2021, and complete the project in 2022 based on Option 1 for the creek restoration project;
3. Staff proceed with feasibility analysis on three scenarios for possible uses and configurations for the House;
4. Staff engage with Musqueam Indian Band, Squamish Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation on the creek restoration project, the House, possible uses, and how to commemorate the historical and cultural significance of the Navy Jack site, and report back on the progress of the discussions; and
5. Staff report back by July to provide Council with the information necessary to determine: use, size, siting, funding and other key project elements relating to the House; and design, cost, funding and other information necessary to plan for completion of the creek restoration project in 2022.

3.0 Legislation/Bylaw/Policy

The Navy Jack House ("the House") is listed in the District's Community Heritage Register as one of 171 buildings formally recognized by the District of West Vancouver for its heritage value and character. The Community Heritage Register is a tool for understanding and managing a community's heritage resources, and for accessing heritage conservation and incentive tools enabled by the *Local Government Act*.

4.0 Council Strategic Objective(s)/Official Community Plan

Council Strategic Objectives

The Project is not part of Council's Strategic Objectives. The Navy Jack House was intended to be demolished. At the October 5, 2020, Council Meeting, Council rescinded the resolution to demolish the Navy Jack House.

Official Community Plan

The District's Official Community Plan contains supporting language in several areas relating to heritage preservation (2.1.9 – Protect buildings, structures and landscapes on the District's Heritage Register), natural environment, local economy and enhancement of parks and recreation spaces (see sections 2.1, 2.3, 2.6, and 2.7 of the Official Community Plan).

The Official Community Plan also contains specific language relating to the Navy Jack House in Policy BF-C 4.7 which states:

“Heritage values of the Navy Jack House and the Ferry Building should be preserved. Residential use of the Navy Jack House should be maintained while also allowing for other uses within the building.”

5.0 Financial Implications

There are significant potential financial implications (both capital and operating) for the District associated with the Project. The cost estimate submitted as part of the recent CERIP grant application for the Project was \$3.8 million.

More recent order of magnitude cost estimates are:

- \$100,000 for moving the house with no changes being made to the house;
- \$2,000,000 for moving the house and deconstructing it generally to its original form with no addition; and
- \$3,000,000 for moving the house, deconstructing it generally to its original form, and adding a new modern addition (approximately 1,400 sf) to the south side of the building.

*NOTE: The above estimates do not include the costs for park enhancements/improvements resulting from the relocation of the House into the adjacent John Lawson Park area.

The West Vancouver Streamkeeper Society (“Streamkeepers”) has provided an order of magnitude cost estimate for the creek restoration work at approximately \$285,000 which does not include potential archaeological and First Nations expenses.

Staff will be in discussions with Streamkeepers to understand more fully the scope of their \$285,000 cost estimate and whether it includes, for example, the necessary improvements to the park in and around the creek restoration area.

More detailed costing will be required when there is a concrete design for the creek restoration, and when there is a definitive plan for the use, size and siting of the House.

6.0 Background

The detailed background and history for the Navy Jack House are set out in: (1) the report dated June 30, 2020 titled “Navy Jack Nature Centre – Community Consultation Results”; and (2) the report dated September 22, 2020, titled “Navy Jack House – Next Steps”.

Below is a bullet point summary of the background since June 2020:

- June 2020 Closed Meeting: Council decides to deconstruct the House;
- July 2020 Council Meeting: Demolition postponed to allow the Navy Jack House citizen group to provide additional information;
- October 2020: Council passes nine-part Council Resolution including rescinding the demolition order;
- October 2020: District submits CERIP grant application seeking \$1M funding;
- November 2020: Council Report and Council Meeting with update on the House;
- November 2020: Hazmat (hazardous materials) remediation begins;
- January 2021: Selective Deconstruction is completed to allow heritage assessment and order of magnitude costing;
- January 2021: “Preliminary Heritage Investigation” report issued by Donald Luxton & Associates Inc; and
- February 2021: Streamkeepers provides additional information regarding creek restoration project.

The Nine Part October 5, 2020 Council Resolution

The October 5 Council Resolution was an important resolution that provides a useful framework for the Project and is reproduced below in italics with brief comments:

1. *the demolition order for Navy Jack House be rescinded*

This has been recorded in the Council Minutes.

2. *that Council allocate up to \$150,000 from the Community Amenity Contribution Fund to determine the feasibility and cost of restoring and relocating the Navy Jack House; and*

staff report back to Council with an update regarding the feasibility and cost of restoring and relocating the Navy Jack House as soon as possible

The \$150,000 allocation has been allocated. Feasibility and costing work started in November 2020.

3. *that staff work toward legally protecting the Navy Jack House via a heritage designation bylaw*

The heritage designation bylaw needs to take into account the anticipated restoration work and potential improvements to the House, and so more work needs to be done by Staff and the heritage consultant before proceeding with the heritage designation bylaw.

4. *a District staff member be identified to work with the Navy Jack House Citizen Group to complete a Heritage BC (CERIP) application by October 29, 2020, which envisions a flexible multi-use facility for public benefit, with a potential commercial element so as to not create a revenue deficit for the District*

The Deputy CAO is leading this project. The CERIP grant application was submitted on October 29, 2020.

5. *a matching amount to a maximum financial contribution of up to \$1 million be allocated from the Community Amenity Contribution Fund toward the costs of conserving and repurposing the Navy Jack House pending a successful CERIP grant application, recognizing that an overall funding strategy will be required to cover all project costs*

The italicised wording above refers to a matching amount by the District of \$1M “*pending a successful CERIP grant application*”. Council will need to consider if the \$1M matching amount also applies to amounts raised through private fundraising.

6. *Staff develop a plan to respectfully and meaningfully engage with First Nations regarding their connection to Navy Jack House, including archeological considerations*

Staff will be engaging with: Musqueam Indian Band; Squamish Nation; and Tsleil-Waututh Nation. Some discussions have already commenced. This is a fundamental part of the Project, as representatives of the First Nations have already expressed interest in being involved in the Project. Staff look forward to those discussions about the Project generally, including possible uses, and how to commemorate the historical and cultural significance of the Navy Jack site.

7. *Staff identify the optimal structure, including terms of reference, for how to best work with the citizen group to move the project forward, and report back to Council by November 30, 2020, and*

Staff have been working closely with representatives of the citizen group. The Deputy CAO met with the citizen group representatives on: October 15; October 27; November 10, December 17; January 13; January 28; February 10; and February 24. This report raises a number of important issues for Council to decide now on the Project.

Following Council's consideration of this report, Staff will start work on identifying the optimal structure.

8. *the Navvy Jack House be either relocated or removed, subject to the underlying condition and movability of the 1907 form, prior to the anticipated start date of the Lawson Creek Restoration Project in order to ensure that the Project can proceed as intended; and*

On February 20, 2021, Streamkeepers informed the District of their recommended alignment for the creek restoration project (Option 1 of four options). While a detailed design has not yet been prepared, Staff will be meeting with Streamkeepers during the week of March 8 to begin a detailed Engineering and Parks review of the technical aspects of the Streamkeepers concept, in order to proceed to a detailed design and costing. Staff will also discuss with Streamkeepers how to address budget, funding and procurement.

9. *staff prepare a brief report by November 30, 2020 outlining the impact of this project on Council's identified goals and objectives, including what Council goals and objectives will have to be removed to accommodate this project.*

This is the second update on the Project following an earlier Council Report in November 2020.

7.0 Analysis

7.1 Discussion

CERIP Grant Application

In October 2020, the District applied for a provincial CERIP grant (Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program) under the Unique Heritage Infrastructure stream requesting \$1M funding for the Project.

On February 22, 2021, the District was advised that the application was denied and that the jury was unable to recommend any financial assistance.

The program was substantially oversubscribed at almost five times the available funds of \$20M. A total of 68 recipients received funding all across British Columbia in municipalities of varying sizes.

Preliminary Heritage Investigation Report

The District engaged Donald Luxton and Associates Inc to prepare a heritage assessment. That "Preliminary Heritage Investigation" report ("the Luxton Report") was received in late January 2021 and is attached as **Appendix 1** to this Report, with the key findings summarized below.

- *"Surprisingly, there was more extant original material than expected". A summary of intact 1872 elements is below:*

Structural

- Original balloon framing, intact in the second-floor gables and partially intact on the lower level
- Main Floor beams and joists
- Second Floor beams and joists
- Partially intact second floor front roof structure and nailing strips

Exterior

- Intact drop siding in the second floor gables
- Partially intact second floor front roof with original shingles
- Intact window openings on the second floor

Interior

- Main floor planking; other floor finishes unknown
- Wooden plank ceiling throughout Main Floor
- Later fir floors throughout Second Floor.

- Now that the original portions of the house have been uncovered, a Conservation Plan can be developed. Documentary evidence exists to allow reconstruction of missing features such as the windows, front dormer, front door, front verandah and verandah columns.
- The Luxton Report contains images and photos showing the intact areas of the House.
- *"The evidence, and its further exploration, will allow an accurate and credible restoration of the original Navvy Jack Thomas House, and the ability to interpret its history and evolution."*
- *"A program should be developed for the use of the house, prior to the preparation of architectural concepts."*
- *"This program should recognize the extreme fragility of the original components, and the potential impacts of any building code upgrading... Notably, the second floor elements are generally intact or restorable, while the ground floor has been almost completely rebuilt except for the plank ceiling. This may provide an opportunity for a rehabilitated ground floor that provides an appropriate use, while the second floor would be incredibly difficult to upgrade without losing all the extant original material. The provision of access to the second floor could also have a major impact, plus the restoration of the front dormer would also reduce usable square footage. The structural remnants of the rear addition possess only minor heritage value, and it may be possible to consider a larger, contemporary addition at the rear. [emphasis added]"*
- Staff's discussions with Mr. Luxton are summarized below relative to the underlined portions immediately above:
 - the original ground floor area is a total of around 800 sf;

- the original second floor area is much smaller due to the restored roof slope and would be a maximum of 300 sf (before taking into account the required space for stairs and access);
- the ground floor is a significant opportunity to create a single large room as the interior demising walls can be documented, but do not need to be reconstructed;
- investment into the second floor has limited value due to: its small size; the financial cost and loss in square footage for allowing accessibility; and the significant damage the upgrade would cause to the extant original material;
- accordingly, the second floor should be kept relatively untouched but could be used for purposes such as an office to support the ground floor use; and
- the addition to the rear on Argyle Avenue is also not original, and would be recommended for removal, which creates an opportunity to build a potential larger (around 1,200 to 1,400 sf), contemporary addition on the ground floor that is complementary, but not identical, to the original design of the House. This addition would significantly increase the ground floor area from approximately 800 sf (i.e. the original ground floor area) to around 2,000+ sf, which creates significantly more flexibility for the use of the House.

Navy Jack House Citizen Group

As explained above, the Deputy CAO has been meeting regularly with representatives of the citizen group to provide updates on the Project. The citizen group was instrumental in the process leading to the October 5 Council Resolution, and they are firmly committed to the restoration of the House.

The citizen group has started private fundraising efforts, and are finalizing a Vision for the future use of the House.

With respect to fundraising, part 5 of the October 5 Council Resolution states “a matching amount to a maximum financial contribution of up to \$1 million be allocated from the Community Amenity Contribution Fund towards the cost of conserving and repurposing the Navy Jack House pending a successful CERIP grant application, ... [emphasis added]”

As advised above, the CERIP grant application was not successful. Staff recommend that in order to facilitate the private fundraising efforts, the District’s matching amount of \$1 million should be extended to also apply to private funds raised by the citizen group and other members of the public. A proposed motion to this effect is contained at the beginning of this Report for Council consideration.

It should be noted that the ultimate use of the House, as decided by Council, will be an important factor for the citizen group’s fundraising

efforts. For example, it is possible that some members of the public may be more willing to donate to restore a building that will be used for public use, rather than a full time commercial use. Please see the Use section below for more information.

West Vancouver Streamkeeper Society

The West Vancouver Streamkeeper Society was established in 2001 to develop, promote and maintain best practices for protecting and sustaining wild Pacific salmon stocks and stream habitat. Since their creation, Streamkeepers have been strong and effective advocates for environmental stewardship and creek restoration in West Vancouver.

In addition, the Streamkeepers have collaborated with the District on different creek restoration projects throughout the community (Memorial Park Rearing Pond and Hay Park Rearing Pond are two examples). Collaboration with Streamkeepers is fundamental to the success of those projects, and will be for this creek restoration project also.

For many years, Streamkeepers has been trying to move forward with this creek restoration project. There is clear District policy supporting the restoration of the creek and the Streamkeeper's concept. For example, as early as 2016, the Council-endorsed Ambleside Waterfront Concept Plan shows a meandering stream flowing to the west of the House.

Streamkeepers considers it a high priority to move forward quickly with the creek restoration project, and they are understandably concerned about the impact delay may have on their secured funding of approximately \$150,000. As a result, Streamkeepers requested that the House be moved and that the site be prepared including removal of foundations and other material by May 1, 2021 to complete the project during summer 2021.

On February 20, 2021, Streamkeepers provided information to the District explaining that they had conducted a review of four concept options for the creek restoration. Streamkeepers believe Option 1 is the most feasible choice in that it provides the best habitat for spawning opportunities for chum and coho salmon and rearing habitat for juvenile coho salmon. Staff from Engineering and Parks have conducted a preliminary review of the concept, and also support Option 1 which retains the existing concrete flume but also creates a new meandering stream and possible rearing pond to the west of the existing location of the House.

Streamkeepers provided a high level "Class D" cost estimate which includes a 30% contingency (because there is no detailed design yet). That estimate provides for a \$285,000 cost, but does not include potential archaeological and First Nations related expenses. Staff plan to meet with Streamkeepers the week of March 8 to begin the review of the Option 1 concept in detail and discuss scope of works, costing, funding, project management and integration with the park and possible park improvements resulting from the creek restoration project.

This analysis to be conducted by the District is particularly important given the high profile location and environmental aspects of this creek restoration project. The meandering stream will weave through public park land, and is adjacent to one of the District's busiest parks at John Lawson Park. The area to the front is the foreshore path leading to the Seawalk which has around one million users each year, and the area to the rear is the well-used multi-modal Spirit Trail. Accordingly, public consultation will also need to take place on the creek restoration project.

Staff support the creek restoration, and there is supporting District policy. Staff therefore recommend that this project proceed now beyond concept to the design process. The development of a detailed design will allow the development of a detailed cost estimate.

In addition to the detailed design and First Nations engagement, it will also be important to undertake permitting with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Province, and conduct community consultation. These factors impact the Streamkeepers' current desired timeline of commencement in May 1 and completion in 2021, but can be accommodated to allow completion in 2022.

In order to achieve the above, and move forward on a timely basis, this report recommends that Staff work together with Streamkeepers now to begin the detailed design process for the creek restoration project, with completion of the project in 2022.

First Nations Engagement

First Nations engagement will be a fundamental part of this Project given the unique history and story of the House and site. This is reinforced by Part 6 of the October 5 Council Resolution which refers to Staff developing a plan to "*respectfully and meaningfully engage with First Nations regarding their connection to Navvy Jack House, including archeological considerations*". Staff have begun reaching out to the Musqueam Indian Band, Squamish Nation and Tseil-Waututh Nation.

Given the history of the House, this represents a significant opportunity to work collaboratively with the First Nations. Public engagement conducted by the District in 2019 also showed there was public support for commemorating the historical and cultural significance of the Navvy Jack site.

Preliminary discussions with First Nations representatives show a desire to be engaged on both the House and the creek restoration project. In addition to the more typical soil disturbance/excavation, archeological and DFO permitting issues, Staff understand the First Nations also wish to be engaged on the historical and cultural aspects of the House, and how to commemorate the story of Navvy Jack and his history with First Nations.

Staff look forward to engaging with the First Nations on the House, the creek restoration project, possible uses, and how to commemorate the story of the House and site. It should be noted that, like the District and

others, the First Nations also have their own processes and require sufficient time to respond in a meaningful way. This is entirely understandable, and so this should be taken into account when developing a timeline for both the House and creek restoration project.

Use of the House

Part 4 of the October 5 Council Resolution states that the District shall complete a CERIP grant application which “*envisions a flexible multi-use facility for public benefit, with a potential commercial element so as to not create a revenue deficit for the District [emphasis added]*”.

In Staff’s subsequent discussions with Councillors, there has been a continued theme of the importance of generating revenue from the House, and a desire to consider a commercial use such as a food and beverage establishment, so as to not create a burden to the taxpayer.

In order to investigate this direction further, Staff recommend that the District proceed with a Feasibility Analysis to consider factors such as: size, siting; access and integration with John Lawson Park and the Spirit Trail; cost; funding sources; rent revenue; and commercial interest, based on a full time commercial use (food and beverage establishment) for the House, for two scenarios:

1. a smaller ground floor footprint based generally on the original form (approx. 800 sf to 1,000 sf); and
2. a larger ground floor footprint based on the original form plus an approximate 1,400 sf addition for a total of around 2,000+ sf.

The citizen group has suggested three options for the House which include similar options to options 1 and 2 immediately above. The citizen group has also proposed a third additional option as set out below:

- a medium sized coffee shop, and a small gift shop, with a space for rotating educational displays providing a multi-use space in the approximate 800 sf original footprint;
- possible multi-uses to include: heritage exhibit space, local art/craft sales, education, exhibitions, and small concerts or other events to be held in evenings, when the space is not used by coffee shop patrons;
- an additional 1,000 sf annex building to the south to accommodate mechanical equipment, public washrooms, storage and a small commercial kitchen area; and
- a covered breezeway of approximately 400 sf connecting the coffee shop to the annex building that could function as a service area for the coffee shop.

Staff recommend that the District conduct the Feasibility Analysis on all three scenarios (“the Three Scenarios”) mentioned above and report back by July 2021.

As mentioned above, given the history of the Project, and Council's express desire to respectfully and meaningfully engage with First Nations, the upcoming discussions with First Nations are fundamental. Staff intend to discuss the above Three Scenarios and the Project generally with the First Nations, how the history and story of First Nations can be incorporated into the Three Scenarios, what other uses/scenarios may be appropriate, and will report back on the results of those discussions.

This information is an important first step in deciding the future of the House. Use and size need to be considered first before deciding where to site the House, and the Feasibility Analysis mentioned above determines whether the Three Scenarios are feasible, and how the House will be funded.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that proceeding with the Feasibility Analysis for the Three Scenarios does not determine the use now. It allows for the collection of important information to enable Council to decide the use at a later time.

Next Steps

Given the significant outstanding information mentioned above, it is premature to have a detailed discussion of next steps thereafter. In brief, after considering the new information, Council will need to confirm the intended use, size and siting first, after which Staff can report back on other matters which may be required such as: Official Community Plan amendment, Development Variance Permits, and procurement processes such as Requests for Proposals (if necessary) and any associated public consultation processes.

7.2 Sustainability

The Project provides the potential for environmental sustainability (i.e. stream restoration) and social sustainability (i.e. enhanced park, social amenities and heritage preservation), and raises issues relative to financial sustainability (cost and funding).

7.3 Public Engagement and Outreach

Public engagement and outreach was conducted in the earlier stages of the Project, and is summarized in the Council Reports dated June 30 and September 22, 2020.

7.4 Other Communication, Consultation, and Research

Staff have been working with representatives of the Navvy Jack House citizen group, and Streamkeepers on the Project. Staff will also be engaging with the Heritage Advisory Committee moving forward.

Staff from the following divisions/departments have been involved in the Project: Planning & Development Services; Parks, Culture & Community Services; Engineering & Transportation; Environment; Lands; Financial Services; and Communications and Community Relations.

8.0 Options

8.1 Recommended Option

Staff recommend that Council pass the motions at the beginning of this report.

8.2 Considered Options

This project has a multitude of options. If Council does not wish to pass the recommended motions, Council should provide direction on the issues referenced in the recommended motions.

9.0 Conclusion

The Navy Jack House Project and creek restoration provide significant opportunities for heritage restoration, revitalization, park enhancement and First Nations collaboration. While it is a complex project, the intent of this report is to provide a clear and expeditious path forward.

Author:



Mark Chan, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Preliminary Heritage Investigation report from Donald Luxton and Associates Inc.

APPENDIX 1



NAVY JACK HOUSE

1768 ARGYLE AVENUE, WEST VANCOUVER, BC

PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION
JANUARY 2021

**DONALD LUXTON
AND ASSOCIATES INC**



HERITAGE & CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
www.donaldluxton.com

NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION

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Hollyburn waterfront panorama, circa 1912 [WVA 140.WVA.RAH]

NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION

1. INTRODUCTION

It has long been known the original Navy Jack Thomas House still existed, but was encased by later additions and essentially unrecognizable. The original house was built circa 1872, and remains the oldest surviving known building on the North Shore of Burrard Inlet, and one of the oldest in the Province.

In February 2017, a preliminary investigation of the House was undertaken, based on visible materials but without destructive testing (*Navvy Jack Thomas House Heritage Conservation Assessment*, Donald Luxton & Associates, February 2017). This report outlined the portions of the house that likely survived, and provided options for how to proceed, based on further investigation.

The history and evolution of the Navy Jack House has now been thoroughly documented in the documentation provided by the Navy Jack House Citizen Group (*The Case for Conservation*, Appendix C.). Drawings of the reconstructed appearance of the House have been prepared by Paula Grossman, Architect. This information has been used as the basis of the further investigation of the House, and we thank everyone involved for the preparation and sharing of this invaluable information.

In late 2020, following Council direction, selective demolition began, in order to remove hazardous materials and also to strip away later intrusions to allow investigation of the extent of original material of the 1872 structure. This work proceeded carefully, due to structural uncertainties as well as the necessity to uncover and preserve irreplaceable materials. This work slowly and meticulously revealed the original surviving structure and materials as outlined in this report.

Surprisingly, there was more extant original material than expected. Although the ground floor has been substantially rebuilt, some original framing remains and there is an almost entirely intact plank ceiling that clearly shows the original room layout. Even more surprising is the survival of the gable walls of the second floor, including all the original siding framing and siding, and a portion of the original roof including a large section of the original shingles.

Now that the original portions of the house have been uncovered, a Conservation Plan can be developed to ensure an accurate restoration of its original appearance.

- **Documentary Evidence:** there are archival photographs available that show the early appearance of the house with enough detail to reconstruct missing features such as the windows, front former, front door, front verandah and verandah columns. Archival records clearly document the history of the house.
- **Physical Evidence:** During the selective demolition, the original balloon framing of the house was uncovered, as well as the siding (with original paint and nails), the roofing (with original colour treatment and nails), and the ground floor plank ceiling (with paint layers and some early wallpaper attached).

This evidence, and its further exploration, will allow an accurate and credible restoration of the original Navy Jack Thomas House, and the ability to interpret its history and evolution.

NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION

1.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As a young man, John Thomas sailed for western North America and arrived in the Colony of British Columbia in about 1859, during the Cariboo gold rush. According to his daughter Christine, in conversation with Capt. C.W. Cates in 1938, he had worked in many locations before arriving in Burrard Inlet in 1866. Activity on Burrard Inlet had begun in 1863 with the building of the Pioneer Sawmill on the north shore. By 1866 a corduroy wagon road had been cut through to New Westminster from New Brighton and Hastings Mill was under construction. John Thomas arrived and began a ferry service on the inlet in the spring of 1866 using a five ton sloop to carry passengers and freight between Moodyville, Hastings and the Westminster trail at New Brighton. Thomas operated this ferry service until Capt. Van Bramer arrived with his small steamer *Sea Foam* to begin a scheduled service in 1868 that connected with the new daily stagecoach over Douglas Road that started in October 1866.

Navy Jack Thomas seems to have had an affinity for the transportation business. Undaunted when the *Sea Foam* displaced his ferry operation he began hauling clean river-washed gravel from the mouth of the Capilano River to construction sites around the Inlet. This enterprise appears to have continued for over twenty years. His base of operation in West Vancouver appears to have been in the only secure anchorage near the Capilano, in Swy-Wee Lagoon. This Lagoon also saw the arrival of the second industry when Sewell Moody set up a logging camp just west of the entrance in 1870.

The Navy Jack House appears to have been built as early as 1872, likely by James Blake and acquired by Navy Jack shortly after. It was built using the finest materials available, old growth fir and cedar, with distinctive drop siding and a full width front verandah with lathe-turned columns and scroll cut brackets. The interior in the V-jointed panelling popular at the time.

In the early 1870s, Thomas married Row-i-a [other records give her name as Slawia and she was baptized just before her death in 1888 as Magdeleine], daughter of Quil-eet-rock, granddaughter of old Chief Ki-ep-i-lano. Slawias' elder sister was the wife of Joseph Silvey Simmons who operated the first store on Burrard Inlet. Navy Jack died in the Royal Cariboo Hospital in Barkerville on November 14, 1897. The home and property remained in legal limbo until sold in a foreclosure proceeding for a small mortgage he obtained before going north. The Thomas family lived there until his death, when the property was acquired as settlement of a loan. The house remained vacant until 1905 when it was acquired by John Lawson. Lawson moved the house a short distance west and closer to the water, adding two chimneys and a gable on the front. Lawson sold the house to Mr. Hookham in 1928, who remodelled it further. Although altered many times, the building has retained significant amounts of its original construction materials. This house that was built when the land was first pre-empted) by colonial immigrants, and represents a very significant legacy of the colourful history of this land where two cultures met, the original indigenous inhabitants and the early colonial settlers.

NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION



Elizabeth Lawson and William Pitman wedding reception, 1914. [Above: CVA Out P80; Below: CVA Out P88.]



NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION

1.2 SUMMARY OF EXTANT MATERIAL

The following drawings reflect the general extent of surviving material original to the 1872 construction.

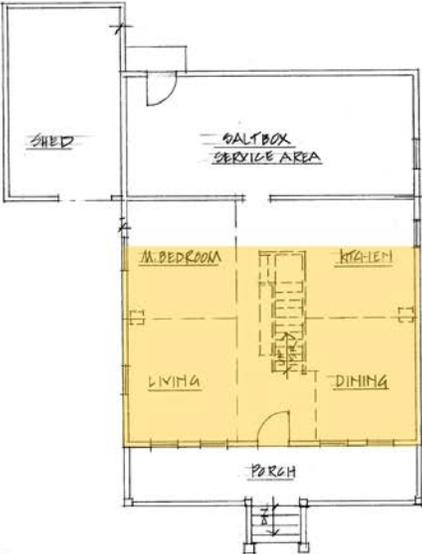


NAVY JACK HOUSE
1768 ARGYLE AVENUE

INTACT ROOF FRAMING,
NAILING STRIPS AND SHINGLES



SOUTH ELEVATION



NAVY JACK HOUSE
1768 ARGYLE AVENUE

SURVIVING PLANK CEILING



GROUND FLOOR
REFLECTED
CEILING PLAN

NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION



NAVY JACK HOUSE
1768 ARGYLE AVENUE

- PARTIALLY INTACT FRAMING
- INTACT FRAMING & SIDING

DONALD LUXTON
AND ASSOCIATES INC 
HERITAGE & CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

EAST ELEVATION



NAVY JACK HOUSE
1768 ARGYLE AVENUE

- PARTIALLY INTACT FRAMING
- INTACT FRAMING & SIDING

DONALD LUXTON
AND ASSOCIATES INC 
HERITAGE & CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

WEST ELEVATION

NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION

2. STRUCTURE

Now that the interior structure is exposed, it is evident that the original house was built of balloon-frame construction. This was typical of the time, especially in a region where wood resources were plentiful, and long sections of timber could easily be milled.

2.1 BALLOON FRAMING:



Ten men building a balloon frame house, Omaha Reservation, Nebraska, 1877 [National Building Museum].

The above construction photo from 1877 shows a structure very similar to that found inside the Navy Jack House. In this form of construction, the wall studs extend all the way up to the roof. The floor joists attach to a “sole plate” supported by the foundation piers. The attic floor joists are supported by a “ribbon” or ledger board attached to the inside surfaces of the side wall studs. The diagonals are temporary supports. A stack of siding or floorboards is in the foreground.

NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION

Until the mid-19th century, houses had no framework at all, as in a log cabin, or they were timber framed (post-and-beam construction). The “skeleton” or frame of a timber-framed house has vertical beams, or posts, usually only at the corners, and horizontal beams, or girts. Each post and girt runs the height or length of an entire section of the house and therefore has to be massive enough to support walls, floors, contents, and roof. Nails would pull out under the load of post-and-beam construction, so mortise-and-tenon joints held together posts and girts. The mortise (a slot or square / rectangular hole in the timber) and the tenon (a protrusion to fit into the mortise) were made “using the mallet and mortising chisel.” The joinery demanded the skill of a master carpenter, for mortise and tenon had to fit snugly to ensure the stability of the house.

Balloon framing, an 1830s innovation from Chicago, rapidly superseded timber framing as being cheaper, easier, and faster. A balloon frame uses multiple smaller timbers to support the building. Because the load is distributed, balloon frames do not depend on massive timbers, and the studs (vertical) and joists (horizontal) can be nailed together rather than joined. The process required fewer skilled workers. Materials were cheaper, since studs and joists could be milled offsite to uniform dimensions for any number of buildings, and nails were no longer hand-wrought but “cut” by machine.



Second floor framing, West Side, 2021.

NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION

3. CLADDING

The house was originally clad in a narrow profile drop siding, which was nailed directly to the stud frame. The siding is completely intact on the second floor gables, but missing at the ground floor level. There is evidence of an early chimney fire in the upper east gable, that has scorched some of the siding as well and the underside of the roof framing.

Some sections of salvaged siding have been nailed to the wall in the basement.



Siding behind later construction, Ground floor East Side.

NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION



Above: Backside of exterior cladding. Below: Evidence of a chimney fire in the East Gable.



NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION

4. WINDOWS

None of the window frames or assembles have survived, but the window openings are clearly evident on the second floor, and provide measurements for how the windows can be restored. Their original double-hung configuration is clearly shown in archival photographs.



NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION

5. ROOF

5.1 ROOF FRAMING:

Although the roof framing has been cut out in several locations, virtually all of the planking that formed the exterior soffits was left in place, and can be traced on the east and west sides of the house.



A substantial section of the roof framing remains in place on the south side of the second floor, complete with nailing strips and cedar shingle cladding.



NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION



Above: Cut-through roof structure that shows original nailing strips. Below: Underside of intact roofing.



NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION

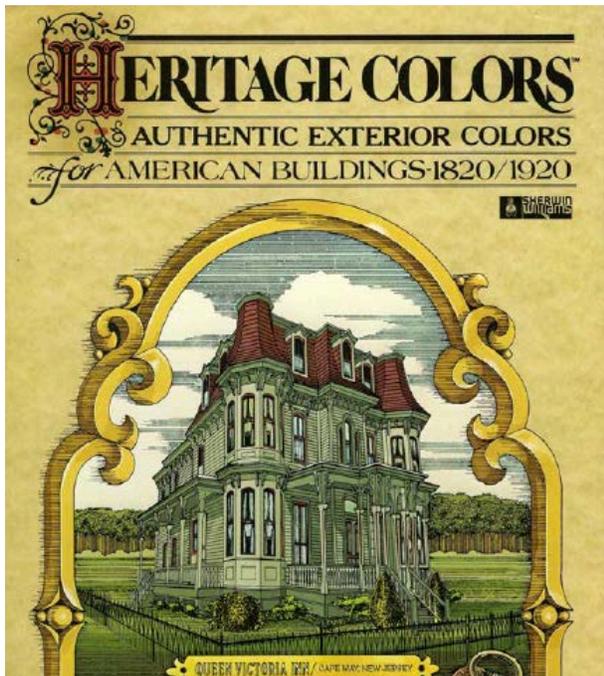
5.2 ROOF CLADDING:

The original roof is partly intact on the south side, and has been covered over by a later roof structure. The original cladding was cedar shingles, approximately 16" long and variable width, laid 5" to the weather with small round, flat-headed nails.



NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION

On the underside of the shingles there is fragmentary evidence of an application of red stain. At the time of the Navy Jack House's construction, it was very common for roof shingles to be stained. This helped conserve the shingles over time, and also provided a colour to the roof that was complementary to the style and character of the house. This is commonly illustrated in paint catalogues and pattern books from the late Victorian era until the 1920s/30s. There are many local buildings where this treatment has been documented.



Sherwin Williams Company, *Century of Colour*, showing typical roof treatments of the Victorian era.

NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION

6. INTERIOR

6.1 GROUND FLOOR:

- Any original floor boards are still covered by later materials, and have not yet been exposed.
- An exposed plank ceiling runs throughout most of the original ground floor.
 - The original wall demising is clearly indicated where paint has not been applied to the planks. This indicates that there was a central hallway about 6 ½' wide, two rooms at the front, and bedrooms behind.
 - Wallpaper remnants remain in what would have been an original bedroom(s)



NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION



Wallpaper attached to plank ceiling, in location presumed to be bedrooms.

NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION

6.2 UPPER FLOOR:

- Exposed stained and varnished fir floors (assumed to be later rather than original) on top of 5 ½" tongue & groove planking.
- Restoration of the original roofline will reduce usable square footage.



6.3 REAR ADDITION:

Based on slope of curved section of original roof, there appears to have been an 8' wide addition across the entire rear of the house. This is based on the curve of the original roof line; this addition was later substantially rebuilt.

NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION

6.4 LATER ALTERATIONS

Remnants remain in the basement of early foundation walls when the house was raised, including exterior shingling. These are not original to the 1872 building.



NAVY JACK HOUSE PRELIMINARY HERITAGE INVESTIGATION

7. NEXT STEPS

1. Until further decisions are made regarding the relocation of the House, it should be protected from any further intervention or deterioration. Relocation will require structural stabilization. At that time, there may be opportunities to remove additional later interventions.
2. The existing original house should be fully documented through as-built drawings, to document the existing dimensions and materials and provide a base for future restoration drawings.
3. Further investigation and documentation should be undertaken of the surviving materials, including ground floor flooring, original colours, wall assemblies, and other components.
4. A program should be developed for the use of the house, prior to the preparation of architectural concepts. The conservation of the heritage value of the house should be an overriding consideration. This program should recognize the extreme fragility of the original components, and the potential impacts of any building code upgrading that would be required to ensure reuse of the building. Notably, the second floor elements are generally intact or restorable, while the ground floor has been almost completely rebuilt except for the plank ceiling. This may provide an opportunity for a rehabilitated ground floor that provides an appropriate use, while the second floor would be incredibly difficult to upgrade without losing all the extant original material. The provision of access to the second floor could also have a major impact, plus the restoration of the front dormer would also reduce usable square footage. The structural remnants of the rear addition possess only minor heritage value, and it may be possible to consider a larger, contemporary addition at the rear. The potential for a new basement is unknown at this time but may also add functionality.
5. A Conservation Plan should be prepared, in conjunction with the proposed architectural restoration of the House.