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Subject: Heritage designation/revitalization 7828 Stanley Street
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June 24, 2023

Mayor and Council

Re: Heritage designation/revitalization, 7828 Stanley Street

One million, three hundred thousand dollars to build a porch? If that cost seems out of line to you, then you must reconsider the Burnaby Heritage Revitalization Agreement Bylaw No. 1, 2023, Bylaw No. 14574. This bylaw will allow for the subdivision and development of the heritage property at 7828 Stanley Street. Not only is the subdivision likely unnecessary, but it will also have negative consequences up and down the street.

How much will building a porch and repairing or removing some windows and other features cost? The heritage report is silent on costs, which one would expect to be vital information to help Council reach a reasonable and just decision.

The information must be there because the heritage consultant, in her report, knows where to find just the right windows and other appurtenances. These costs are important because, for the relatively modest program of work required—the house is in good shape—perhaps a property tax holiday is the appropriate remedy and the neighbours—we live two doors away at 7798 Stanley Street—can rest easy.

A cost-benefit analysis should be a required element of any heritage report.

Before you approve the subdivision, there are some concerns you should consider.

First is overbuilding. Most dwellings on the street are modest in size on moderately sized lots. This is what gives the heritage house its architectural impact. An additional house will be oversized compared to existing houses on the street and will undoubtedly subtract from its heritage value, which is based not only on the house's design, but also on the spacious, treed environment within which it exists.

A small lot with a 3000-square foot house. That's almost twice the size of our house.

If there was a heritage tree inventory, the stately Weeping Willow would certainly be on it. It will be tragic if that beautiful tree is removed and chipped to become waste not wood.

The best view of the house is coming down the street from Canada Way. A second house will surely block this view. The house's heritage qualities will only be appreciated by standing in front of it. Otherwise, look at a crowded-in house without windows on one side.

City staff may be unaware of the underground water issues in the area. One could make the case that the true heritage feature is the system of underground streams that have now been buried but are still active.

The City policy seems to be to develop the area with mega-houses. That's what happened on Hazelmere Street behind us, with its display of 4500-square foot monsters and a large AirBnB complete with swimming pool. Those large single-family houses are out of line with the City's stated goal of affordable multi-family homes.

If an off-the-shelf developer special is allowed to be built cheek-by-jowl beside the fine lines and sensitive massing of the heritage house, then what's the point?

It's time to go back to the drawing board. Start with a cost-benefit analysis.

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