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Development, Building, & Licensing – City of Vancouver
515 W 10th Ave
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1145 Union Street Design Rationale

Thank you for your time reviewing our proposal.

Stuart Howard Architects is seeking a Development Permit for 1145 Union Street on behalf of our client. The proposal is to perform necessary structural repair of the existing building by constructing a proper foundation, raise the building by approximately 1'-0" to allow for a basement suite, relocate the building onto its own property, construct a rear addition and upper floor dormers, and replace the existing accessory building with a lane accessed single storey garage.

The existing building on this site, The Carmichael House, is a Designated Heritage Building on the Vancouver Heritage Register and was constructed in 1901. It is a 1 ½ storey single family house with 1 bedroom on the main floor and 2 bedrooms on the upper level. The house has an FSR of 0.4 and the height of the house, measured from existing grade, is approximately 27.00'. It has a front setback of 9'10" from the south property line and a rear yard setback from the principal house of 66'0". Being over 100 years old, the house is existing non-conforming with regards to side yard setbacks. The building width is 22'6" and as originally constructed is located approximately 6" onto the neighbouring site over the east property line. It is setback approximately 3'-0" from the west property line.

The site is approximately 25.00' x 122.07' thereby yielding a total site area of 3052.50 sq.ft. The site has an elevation drop of approximately 6.9' in elevation North to South. There is an existing accessory building in the rear with a standard City of Vancouver 20' lane. The lot is in the RT-3 zone which permits a maximum floor area ratio of 0.75 FSR and a maximum building height of 3 storeys and 35.10' (10.7m). The required setback for the principal building front yard is based on the average depth of the two adjacent site front yards which is 13'4" for this site. The required rear yard is 55.61' and the required side yard setback is 10% of the site width which is 2'6" for this site.

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The general neighbourhood character is a mix of light industrial land uses and residential. Per the Strathcona/Kiwassa RT-3 Guidelines, it is one of the oldest residential districts in the city with approximately 60% of the existing buildings original construction. With a standard lot width of 7.6m this area is characterized by buildings with narrow widths, narrow side yards, and a high building height to width ratio.

The 1100 block of Union street is bookended by two industrial zoned buildings with a cluster of character houses and designated heritage houses in between. Directly to the north of the lane is a mix of character and heritage houses as well as a 3 storey multi-family residential building. Directly to the south is Venables Street, to the west is Glen Drive, and to the east is Vernon Drive all of which are predominately light industrial land uses. There is a school 2 blocks to the north of the subject site as well as Strathcona Park 2 blocks to the east.

The RT-3 Guideline's stated intent is to ensure buildings with "character merit" are retained, to improve character of less distinguished historic, and ensure all development is compatible with surrounding buildings and neighbourhood as a whole. The guideline also classifies certain streetscapes under broad categories for their heritage value, either A or B. The subject site is located on a street classified as Streetscape A which is defined as an important streetscape with buildings intact that should be retained.

We recognize the value of heritage buildings especially on the noted streetscapes in this zoning. In acknowledgement of this the alterations proposed maintain the integrity and appearance of the original building as seen from the street. Furthermore, the proposal is consistent with the intent of the heritage protection as well as the Zoning Bylaw and Guidelines. As the existing heritage house is on a wood foundation and located over the east property line, alterations are necessary to maintain this important heritage asset. Additionally, the existing site is underdeveloped by approximately 0.35 FSR per RT-3 Zoning Bylaw. This proposal includes a new concrete construction basement suite to not only increase the density (within the existing building width) to the allowable maximum but most importantly provide a proper foundation for the heritage house to ensure long lasting retention. The main floor is proposed to be raised by 1'0" to allow for the basement suite with a small revision to the existing rear addition. The existing uppermost floor due to the small floorplate and steep roof slope has small bedrooms with minimal head height on the sides. In order to create more useable space for our client a rear addition and modest dormers in keeping with the historic style are proposed.

As the property is a designated heritage house, we understand a Heritage Alteration Permit (HAP) will be required for the proposed alterations. With this in mind, in late 2023, we began discussions with James Boldt of the Heritage Department in advance of this application. Per these meetings and correspondence, Heritage would be supportive of the proposed alterations to increase density to the zoning allowable 0.75, raise the building by 1'-0", relocate the building fully onto its own property, and provide a pathway beneath the main floor for access to the rear of the site. The proposed dormers are setback from the main façade to maintain the streetscape relationship and character. The existing house is of modest height in relation to the existing streetscape and our proposal to minimally raise

the building will not have significant impact on the street character. The pathway to the lower level secondary suite will be concealed by a gate, designed to appear as an extension of the patio, in order to maintain the integrity and appearance of the original building as seen from the street.

The existing building width is 22’6” and the site width is 25’0”, once relocating the building fully onto its property it will remain existing nonconforming with regards to side yard widths. Notwithstanding the aforementioned minimum side yard we believe that our proposal conforms to all applicable plans, policies and guidelines. The proposal is for a 2 storey with basement suite single family house with an FSR of 0.75 and a lane facing garage. The proposed principal house meets required rear yard setbacks, maintains allowable front yard setback, allowable height, open space separation to the accessory building, and FSR. The proposed accessory building meets required rear yard setback to centre of lane, required side yard setbacks, allowable FSR exclusions for off-street parking, and allowable height.

Please find the attached architectural drawings including site plan, floor plans, elevations, perspective views, and sections.

Sincerely,

Daniel Silver, Architect AIBC

STUART HOWARD ARCHITECTS INC.