

The Corporation of the City of North Vancouver
Regular Meeting of the Heritage Advisory Commission
City Hall, 141 West 14th Street, North Vancouver
Conference Room A
Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Chris Wilkinson, Chair
Chris Carnovale
Ali Nayeri
Kate O'Donnell
Christine Wilson

REGRETS:

Michaela Balkova, Architect
Shervin Shahriari, Councillor

STAFF:

Christa Bulman, Committee and Records Clerk
Emma Chow, Planner 2
Huy Dang, Planner 1

GUESTS:

Mehrdad Rahbar, Architect, Vernacular
Development Corp.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm.

1. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

The minutes of December 13, 2022 and January 17, 2023 were adopted as circulated.

2. REZONING APPLICATION

1036 Grand Boulevard

Huy Dang, Planner 1, provided background on the project.

1036 Grand Boulevard is within one of the City's heritage areas, however, no formal design guidelines have been established. There is no heritage protection program on the property and it is not on the heritage register list. The application is Council referred and will be going before Council for the rezoning component. Staff are seeking feedback on the proposed 26 ft lot configurations and rezoning would allow subdivision. As part of the RS2 rezoning process, feedback will inform staff comments for the applicant prior to the Council deliberation stage.

M. Rahbar introduced the application to the Commission for review, noting the following:

- The site is 52 ft by 140 ft, which is typical in the Grand Boulevard neighbourhood. In terms of site, it is fairly flat with less than a foot of slope moving from West to East and from North to South there's a 1 ft drop.
- Discovered periods of time where development started and stopped. Characterized them as Grand Boulevard phase one (1908), second phase from 1920 and the third 'post-war' phase is when the design of houses drastically change.

- Grand Boulevard was initially designed in 1906 by a British company with the idea to attract more prominent residents on the North Shore. The company owned most of the land in that area from 1906-1961 and later in the 60s, the company dissolved and properties subdivided and sold to individuals.
- Houses in 1909 and 1910 are very large and often followed an unusual style of architectural period. Few houses developed in that period and after the First World War, some development activity resumed with slightly smaller houses but still followed architectural styles this period.
- After 1945 and onward, homes became very modest and housing development changed drastically, due to economic reasoning/when people came out of the war there wasn't much money and had a variety of styles in comparison to earlier houses, which were always following architectural styles.
- Proposal is to introduce a period from 2000 – 2020 and onward. Due to the environmental crisis and housing crisis, it makes sense to have these large lots divided into smaller lots.
- Received a lot of community feedback, mainly regarding the subdivision itself some feedback was regarding the design. After studying the area, picked up some styles of that period and changed the design to steep roofs, recess entry and some balcony on the windows. All were architectural suggestions that was picked up from the streets off Grand Boulevard.
- The two houses we're proposing are not identical but synchronize and are in harmony with the street and history of the street and architectural detailing. The details are not a copy of older times – wood, carriage belts and stained natural cedar but also, wall shakes and board and batten while using off white and light grey shading.
- Facials will be dark grey to match dark grey windows.
- Roof plan proposing to put solar panels on the South facing part of roof.

Questions/Comments from the Commission:

- Are there 2 suites in total? **A:** Yes
- Will this be the tallest house on the block? **A:** We're within the zoning and complying with the new RS2 zoning. The new zoning (RS1 to RS2) is taller and we're still under the maximum height allowed.
- How many post WWII houses are in this character area? **A:** There's close to 30 of those properties still. In the 1980s onward to now, people have purchased war time period properties and built larger houses. More people will buy a property and subdivide it into 2 suites because we're setting precedent or people could tear down their house and build a large house and sell for more. By subdividing and building two homes it's more affordable.
- Regarding the landscaping, when demolishing the old house, are you planning on keeping any trees or the landscape that it there? **A:** North elevation facing the modern house neighbour, we tried to minimize the number of windows and strategically position them so there's less windows facing back area and communicated with the neighbours (modern house) and had no complaint about project. There are hedges 2 or 3 ft inside the property that need to be removed. They will be replaced with an interesting planting system – low shrubs, scented fragrant plants and using these plants in the front and back with a variety of plants that change colours and between evergreen and seasonal. The landscape blends in with what the neighbourhood have as well as an addition of two dogwood trees in the front and 2 fig trees in the back.
- Regarding the existing heritage character and looking at sites that are identified, are there any similar applications or rezoning's in Grand Boulevard that don't include preservation or protection or have a comparable lot front? **A:** This would be the first of its kind. Smallest frontages, some towards the South have about 45 ft frontage, which is as low as there is.

Questions/Comments from the Commission – Continued

- Is there any heritage policy that encourages or supports this application? **A:** As exemplified at 910 Grand Boulevard, there was approval for subdivision below lot area. Corner lot subdivided into 3 not fronting Grant Boulevard.
- Any alternative forms increasing density within RS2 that don't require subdivision that can be accommodated? **A:** Under RS1 currently allowed principle building, secondary suite and accessory coach house. Usually this is standard outside of subdivision.
Q: What about a duplex? **A:** Not at this residential level 1 OCP designation. For RS1, it is intended to be a primary singular unit. From Provincial level, on staff level there is consideration for collection of OCP designation, which would open stratification but that's a policy and bylaw change to come in the future.
- Regarding Ottawa Gardens conservation area, are there any comparable to accommodate narrow? **A:** Different land use designation. There's one principle building per lot in this area vs. Ottawa Gardens allows for additional uses like duplex properties.
- Any change in the overall height than in the original design? **A:** The roof deck is in the original proposal but had flat roofs in previous proposal, the roofs are taller now.
- Are the neighbours ok with the proposed height? **A:** The neighbours to the west were worried about the noise and construction but had no concern with the design.
- With the change of design will there be further public consultation? **A:** Not at this time, the DIS feedback was used to seek initial input. However, there will likely be a public hearing to give the public another opportunity to provide feedback.
- Are the solar panels on the front aspect of the property and visible from the street? **A:** Yes, but considering moving the panels back around the garage, which would not be visible.
- This could result in over development like East 3rd street. Not oppose to development but it should be done in accordance with the community and there's more to think about to protect the whole area.
- Appreciate the insight into looking at the projects over time and working in our time with the housing crisis and climate crisis but encouraging staff to continue working to development a policy that encourages the heritage aspects of this proposals. Concern is we have a registry that identifies a character area and this area has zoning in place that is a product of larger frontages. Struggling to support an application that varies in the absence of policy. Encourage to keep advocating for more affordable homes but given this is a heritage character area and the first house to see what the community thinks this is almost a little to innovative. This is the right thing to do but needing to hear from the wider community as a policy discussion.
- Advocating for the development of guidelines that can clearly set-out expectations that the community can rally around. Preference for the original design, it was lower and the adoption of these different buildings into a narrow form can make it look out of place and when comparing to the Ottawa Gardens and heritage conservation plan, very specific to look at forms and these forms are quite alien to this area. I acknowledge this might be the next chapter to Grand Boulevard but it's a very dramatic difference from a low horizontal to a tall vertical big building. It is better to consider having more guidelines.
- A lot of people know Grand Boulevard, concerned this would set a precedent for all the other houses. Appreciate concerns about price range and affordability but I don't see that as reason to remove the history of the building. There are too many properties that are being demolished and replaced with townhouses that look the same. More consideration to overall design and future as heritage character without setting precedent that each lot will be in future.

1036 Grand Boulevard – Resolution

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Heritage Advisory Commission, having reviewed the presentation from Vernacular Development Corp. regarding the property located at 1036 Grand Boulevard, recommends rejection of the application as presented.

The Commission identifies the following as being the major concerns:

- Absence of Grand Boulevard heritage character guidelines and policy direction to support the proposal; and
- Concern with the proposed lot size and dimensions in comparison to other lots within the Grand Boulevard heritage character area.

The Commission further encourages the applicant to work with staff to develop heritage design guidelines for the Grand Boulevard heritage character area as part of new Council adopted policy, as exemplified through the Ottawa Gardens heritage conservation area.

Carried Unanimously

The delegation for 1036 Grand Boulevard left the meeting at 7:27pm.

3. TRI-MUNICIPAL HERITAGE TOUR

E. Chow shared a PowerPoint presentation on Heritage Week, Plaque Program and Policy Update at 7:30pm.

Highlights Included:

- Heritage Week
- Heritage Plaque Program
- Policy Update

4. UPDATES

Nil.

5. ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:53pm.

“Ali Nayeri”
Acting Chair

“March 14, 2023”
Date