

## **ROBERT JOHNSON, ARCHITECT**

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## **DESIGN RATIONALE – 420 ST. GEORGE ST., New Westminster, B.C.**

### **OVERVIEW**

This application concerns retaining an existing heritage house, moving it slightly to allow subdivision of the existing 66 foot wide property into two lots of 36- and 30 foot widths, then constructing a new heritage-sympathetic dwelling on the 30 foot lot. Two, two-car garage structures are proposed off Liverpool St. (lane) for the two dwellings. There are no significant landscaping features on the existing property. To this end, the owner intends to enter into a Heritage Revitalization Agreement with the City of New Westminster.

### **EXISTING HOUSE**

The Burton-Taylor House was built in 1890 with subsequent additions. For full description see the Statement of Significance and Conservation Plan prepared by Birmingham & Wood Architects, dated \_\_\_\_\_. The owner is enthusiastic about refurbishing this house. A non-contextual rear garage/sunroom will be removed as will the stucco cladding in order to expose the original siding. The enclosed front porch will be opened up to reveal more of the original façade and for continuity of the streetscape, where many houses have open porches. To the rear, a two-storey covered deck structure will be added. The existing openings suggest the original house may have had such a structure. All new posts and railings will be detailed to be compatible with the era of the house. Repainting will be done using the Benjamin Moore True Vancouver Colour palette. The interior will be altered and updated for modern living, but the existing sairs, doors, casings, electrical fixtures and fir floors will be retained. As the house will be shifted eastward approximately 1.5 feet, it will be placed on a new foundation with full basement containing a secondary suite. The existing front yard setback of 9.3 feet will be maintained to maintain continuity of the existing street wall.

### **NEW HOUSE**

Siting and street character- The new house has been sited to maintain the existing street wall. The front porch will align with that of the Burton -Taylor House and the neighbor to the west.

Architectural character and massing- The two-storey massing, steeply pitched roof and full width front porch are characteristics common to many houses on this block. The 27.21 foot height is over that allowed in the zoning bylaw, but necessary in order to maintain continuity with the other houses on the block. The Burton-Taylor House height is 28.64 feet and the house to the west is 28.02 feet. The two-storey bay window pays homage to the Burton-Taylor House while also acknowledging the two-storey ones across the street, as a means to foster continuity along the block as well as across the street. Similarly, the dutch gable roof form and recessed upper floor balcony reflect those of the house opposite. Repeated forms and elements foster a greater sense of community.

Entrances, windows and detailing - The front door will be a decorative glazed one, similar to many in the area. Sash windows with 6 inch wood trim, cornerboards, wood columns, beams and railings will be detailed to be sensitive to the period of the adjacent houses.

Materials and colours- Horizontal Hardi-plank siding will be used with a narrow exposure (4"– 6") for a traditional-looking siding. The gables will feature fishscale cedar shingles. Roofing will be profiled asphalt shingles that fit with the colour palette. Colours will be taken from the Benjamin Moore True Vancouver Colours series.

#### ACCESSORY BUILDINGS

The garages are designed to compliment the character of the houses. The steeply-pitched roof gable with the diamond attic window reflects that of the Burton-Taylor House, while the dutch gable roof on the other garage reflects the new house. The roofs are at right angles to minimize the massing and differentiate the two. Doors, windows and trim are decorative and consistent with the houses.

#### LANDSCAPING

Since the Burton-Taylor House has been left vacant for many years, the existing landscape has been neglected and without any significant planting. There are some shrubs that the owner will remove and re-integrate into the new landscaping. The existing fir trees along Liverpool Street interfere with garage siting, so will be removed. New planting beds will be located adjacent to front porches, sidewalks and patios to reinforce these spaces. Food garden plots will be encouraged.

Rob Johnson, Architect AIBC