



# Shaughnessy Heights Property Owners' Association

“Working to enhance the value and quality of living in historic Shaughnessy”

## Fall 2011 Newsletter

我們樂意為閣下把此會訊翻譯為中文。請致電 604 733 2292。

### Current Board of Directors

Mik Ball - Michael Balshine - Dennis Baxendale - John Chan - Anthony Chu - Sam Coval - David Cuan - Erika Gardner  
Ruth Hamilton - Sandra Kelly - Gillian Kirkby (editor) - John Madden - Moshe Mastai - Angela Woo - Phil Yacht

### Vancouver City Council Candidates Meeting

**Tuesday, October 25th 7pm - 10pm**  
**Hellenic Community Centre,**  
**4500 Arbutus Street**

(Co-sponsored by SHPOA and ARCCA)  
Refreshments will be provided.

The municipal election will be held on November 19th. Don't miss this opportunity to meet candidates from all political parties and hear their views on issues affecting our neighbourhood.

The candidates will take questions from the audience during the second half of the programme.

### Laneway Houses Come to Shaughnessy!

There are now four laneway houses in Shaughnessy, located on 1000-block West 33rd Avenue, 1400-block Minto Crescent, 4700-block Hudson Street, and 1000-block Devonshire Crescent. The laneway house on West 33rd Avenue is visible from the street; to see the others you have to go through the lane.

So far, plans for 370 laneway houses have received city approval and approximately 200 - 220 have been built.

Some of the chief concerns that the City has received about specific laneway houses relate to loss of privacy, shadowing, and the fact that, since living quarters are usually on the second floor, windows overlook neighbouring houses and back gardens. Parking is also an issue, as only one parking space is required for a lot containing a laneway house.

The City thinks there may be greater support for one-storey laneway houses than for the current typical two-storey structure.

About two-thirds of laneway houses are being built as part of a redevelopment, namely demolishing an existing house and building a new one. One-third are being built where there is an existing house and roughly one in eight new houses includes a laneway house.

The City reviewed the project in March, 2011, after the first 100 laneway houses had been built. City planners will conduct a review focussed on "neighbourliness" and the size and massing of these laneway houses. This review is expected in early 2012.

Following this, the city will review the project in greater depth and release another report in mid-2012.

For more information, go to the City's website, [vancouver.ca](http://vancouver.ca) and search "laneway houses".

Ruth Hamilton

### First Shaughnessy By-Laws

The recent trend for large home developments in First Shaughnessy has prompted the City of Vancouver to consider the issuance of a By-Law Administrative Bulletin to clarify and limit some provisions of the existing Official Development Plan (ODP) for the neighbourhood.

A draft of the bulletin is now in circulation for review within the Planning Department, First Shaughnessy Advisory Design Panel and the SHPOA Board.

The document stresses the importance of retaining pre-1940's buildings and the estate-like character of First Shaughnessy. To promote buildings with suitable massing to complement existing adjacent homes, exclusions to the Floor Space Ratio (FSR) calculation are limited to a 400 sq.ft maximum each for mechanical rooms and parking stalls located at or above grade within the main house.

Home designers are reminded that, although the use of "double-height" spaces is not regulated nor addressed in the existing zoning by-law, their unfettered use in a building design could result in an overly bulky building mass that negatively impacts the estate-like character of the area.

Some residents are disappointed that the upcoming bulletin is not more comprehensive and restrictive in addressing the "loopholes" in the existing ODP for First Shaughnessy. These residents would like to double the FSR calculation for any areas having a ceiling over 3.7m (12.14 ft.) and remove any Floor

Space Ratio (FSR) calculation exemptions for mechanical rooms and parking stalls located at grade within the main home. Some also favour limiting the maximum FSR allowed on single lots to 1,208 sq.m. (13,003 sq.ft.)

David Cuan

## Definitely Not Buried Treasure!

### Do you have one in your back garden?

If you live in a house built prior to the 1970s, the original heating system was likely an oil-fired furnace with fuel provided from an underground oil tank. The tank was probably buried in the back garden near the house and it may still be there!

The City of Vancouver requires that any oil tank be removed if it is unused for two years or more. This is in the Vancouver Fire Bylaw No. 8191, section 4.10.3 and the Sewer and Watercourse Bylaw No. 8093, section 5.3.

Many homeowners are unaware of the bylaw, and, so far, the City has not been aggressive in locating obsolete oil tanks and forcing homeowners to remove them; however, if you plan to sell your house, you will almost certainly have to remove the tank prior to selling, or guarantee that the tank will be removed before the sale completes. Insurance companies may refuse to insure a house with an oil tank, and banks may be reluctant to offer a mortgage.

### Why are old oil tanks such bad news?

It is extremely likely that the tank may have rusted over time, allowing ground water to seep in and releasing oil into the surrounding soil. At the time when the heating system was modernized, the underground tank should have been pumped out; however, even if it was, a small amount of residual oil could cause contamination once the tank has rusted through.

A tank that has been pumped probably won't cause much contamination and, any there is, will be likely be in the immediate vicinity of the buried tank. Fuel oil left in the tank can result in major contamination and an expensive clean-up. Other factors affecting the scale of the problem include the permeability of the surrounding soil and the slope of the lot. In the worst case, the contamination may travel a long distance or contaminate ground water. There may also be a fire hazard with the leaking oil and fumes.

The Vancouver Fire Department keeps a record of oil tank removals in Vancouver; however, if you suspect there is an oil tank on your property, call in an oil tank removal contractor. For around \$150 they will sweep your property with a metal detector. If nothing is found, they will provide a report to this effect.

If a tank is found in a location that makes it impossible to remove, such as under part of the house or embedded in the roots of a large tree, the City may, in rare cases, allow the tank to remain. In such a case, the tank must be cleaned out, if possible, and filled with sand and gravel.

Removing an oil tank is disruptive and potentially very expensive, but not removing it can be even more of an issue. If you

leave an oil tank in place and it causes contamination, you may be liable for the damage, even if you no longer own the property.

Tank removal contractors generally quote a price for the basic tank removal service, in the \$1,200 to \$2,000 range. They will warn that the cost will increase significantly if oil has escaped. Tank removal involves digging down a few feet to expose the tank, cutting open the top of the tank, pumping out any liquid, potentially at an extra cost, and then digging out the tank. If there is no contamination, beyond the legally allowable limit, the hole is filled with sand and soil and it is time to call in a gardener to repair the aesthetics. The basic removal and fill service can be done in a day; replanting your prize roses may take longer!

The basic tank removal fee includes the Vancouver Fire Department permit (\$300.00 at present), all the digging necessary, trucking the tank away, disposing of it in an environmentally correct way, filling the hole, cleaning up the mess, and writing a report certifying that the job was done. Hand digging may be requested to limit the damage to your lawn and garden; however, no matter how careful the job, be prepared for a mess!

If there is contamination, and it doesn't take much oil spillage to make it a "contaminated site", it can get costly. The contaminated soil has to be removed and taken to a remediation centre where it will be treated to remove the contamination. Expect to pay around \$1,000 per truckload for trucking costs and processing. Other costs include the remedial consultant, the excavation, which can end up being significant, repeated soil tests, and reports.

You should ensure that your contractor has filed the appropriate reports on completion of the job. One report goes to the Vancouver Fire Department to confirm that the tank has been removed and the site is free from contamination. The other report, in the case of contamination, is the "Notice of Independent Soil Remediation" and this is filed with the B.C. Ministry of the Environment.

### How do you keep the costs down?

Because tank removal is a venture into the unknown, it is hard to predetermine what it will cost. If there is any contamination, you may be looking at a cost of several thousand dollars. By all means shop around for a contractor, but be sure they are licensed to work in Vancouver and have experience. Get several estimates and follow up on references.

Google and the Yellow Pages list a great number of contractors and environmental consultants; however, your insurer, bank or a realtor may recommend someone. Although the contractor won't be able to quote an exact figure for removal if contamination is found, you should be able to get a quote for the basic removal and the hourly rates, equipment rates, trucking costs etc. for dealing with contamination.

Ruth Hamilton

## A Time for Mind Altering?

So we are once more immersed in our triennial civic election. What, one might ask, is on Vancouver's priority to-do list?

Our Mayor, not unreasonably, suggests affordability of housing and long term adaptation of our industry to green technologies, currently the fastest growing industry segment world-wide, as being very high on his list. Finding housing for the homeless is another important pre-occupation. His major opponent has proposed a moratorium on bike lanes and the installation of street-cars downtown with, presumably, more suggestions yet to come.

None of this is unreasonable, but it completely ignores the festering sore of illegal drug traffic, which makes criminals of far too many of our inexperienced and impressionable youth, and instant millionaires of far too many predatory low-lifers. In my view, this is still Vancouver's greatest social problem, with serious consequences for all of us, but most particularly for a significant fraction of our young people, too many of whom have permanently ruined lives. Crushed by poverty and addiction, they live a hellish life which is hard for most of us even to imagine.

Yes, drug addiction is a tough problem to tackle, and yes, it is much more than just a municipal problem. A long term "solution" clearly requires co-operation from our provincial and federal governments, with the latter under quixotic pressure from south of the border, where many professed "big-government-hating" citizens have nonetheless empowered a massive, gun-toting bureaucracy intent on a solution by force of arms. Of course, it is unlikely that there is a "solution" for drug addiction, only a least harmful compromise, perhaps based on compromises we have already reached with alcohol and nicotine addictions. Two of our past mayors, Phillip Owen and Larry Campbell, led from the front, and motivated a lot of good work towards a best solution. The recent Supreme Court ruling reversing the Federal government's decision to close Insite was, in substantial measure, a direct result of their prior leadership and support of the search for practical ways to alleviate and reduce substance abuse, albeit backed by many highly dedicated professionals and volunteers.

Well, the good news is that the same voters who vote municipally also vote provincially and federally, and the drug problem is not unique to Vancouver, or even to big Canadian cities. And in the US, there is now much more vigorous questioning of federal drug policy than ever before.

So why can't we continue to show leadership from the Mayor's office in finding an acceptable long term solution to mind altering drug abuse? It is a tough, time-consuming job, but an eminently worthy task. Whining that we need support from Victoria and Ottawa will get us precisely nowhere.

I think Vancouverites need and deserve better.

John Madden

## Shannon Mews Rezoning Approved

After 3 evenings of Public Hearings held in the last week of July, where most speakers were opposed to the rezoning application of Shannon Mews, the project was approved by Council with amendments to the original proposal.

Highlights of the approved project are as follows:

- FSR: 1.60 maximum;
- Site Coverage: 33% of site area;
- Building types: 7 new building blocks of 3-9 floors (6 blocks of strata apartment units and 1 block of apartment rental units), some with strata townhouse units fronting Adera and 57th. New strata apartment units in the rehabilitated heritage structures;
- Building Heights: 9 floors maximum;
- Public Park: 2/3 acre fronting 57th Ave.;
- Parking: 839 spaces in 2 underground parkades;
- Parking Access: 2 off 57th Ave. and 1 off Granville.
- Heritage Retention (and rehabilitation of the existing heritage elements): mansion, gate house, perimeter wall, coach house, formal access off Granville, formal gardens located south and east of the mansion, perimeter landscaping, copper beech trees.

The approval for the changes in land use and density offers the following public benefits:

- Development Cost Levies (DCLS) of about \$6,848,000;
- Contribution to the Public Art Program of approximately \$1,190,000;
- Community Amenity Contribution (CAC) of approximately \$20,000,000;
- Heritage Preservation at a cost of \$9,430,000 to the developer.

David Cuan

## Window Pain

Many homes in Shaughnessy have old leaded glass windows. Some of these feature attractive patterns and coloured glass. These old windows are usually made from hand-cut glass embedded in lead came and secured in the lead by cement. "Came" is name given to the "H" or "U" shaped strips that hold the glass. Over the years the lead came deteriorates and curls up, particularly in sunny locations, and the cement crumbles and falls out.

I hadn't taken much notice of the state of our windows until our last dog, Sheba the Terrible, decided to confront the mailman through the leaded glass window beside our front door. Fortunately both dog and man were unscathed, but the window was history.

I thought I would rebuild the panel, and its companion on the other side, adding a pattern at the top, rather than simply having rectangles all the way up. The first step was to remove the panel from the frame. Fortunately it was secured by wooden moulding, rather than putty, and it was moderately easy to remove. Rather more pain was involved in removing the glass from the

lead in an attempt to recycle the glass. Some pieces cracked, but I was able to salvage most of the rectangles of old glass. The old lead came was dispatched to the City's recycling facility.

For a recent project I had to investigate how one goes about repairing a window with a crack in one piece of glass. There are glass artists who will take on repairs, but it is not a popular endeavour and it tends to be expensive. If the window is set in the frame with putty, a heat gun is required to soften the putty and this can cause the glass to crack. It also takes considerable time to extract the glass panel.

If the cracked piece is at the edge of the panel, it is possible to cut the came securing it, replace it and solder in new came; however, the cement is sometimes difficult to remove without causing more damage. I have had some success with vinegar, but stubborn cement made need a dose of muriatic acid (hydrochloric acid) – nasty stuff.

Cracked glass in the centre of a panel usually means a complete rebuild. If the glass is really gorgeous, it may be worth the expensive of a patient, and expensive, salvage effort. In most cases replacing the panel with something new, in a similar style, is far less costly.

Gillian Kirkby

## 3212 East Boulevard - Proposal Modifications

The developer for this proposed "demonstration project", which would put four townhouse units, two "lock-off suites" five garages and two garage apartments on this 54' x 130' property at the southeast corner of East Boulevard and West 16th Avenue, has modified the plan.

Instead of the eight strata-titled units previously proposed, the new proposal provides for only(!) six. The height of the proposed building has been reduced from 41.2' to 37.60' and the floor space ratio (fsr) from 1.31 to 1.20, thus shrinking the building somewhat.

The "lock-off" suites will not be strata-titled as in the original proposal, but will be part of two townhouse units and can be rented out or used as a part of the townhouse.

The next step will be a public hearing on the rezoning application. No date has been set for this. We will keep you informed.

To find out more about this project, go to the City's website, [vancouver.ca](http://vancouver.ca) and search "3212 East Blvd rezoning" to see photographs, plans and a detailed description of the project.

Ruth Hamilton

## No-one at Home?

The landscape of First Shaughnessy is always changing and, in the past couple years, the profile of many homeowners has also changed.

As I walk through the streets of the area, I notice that more and more homes are vacant. Because they are vacant, many of these houses seem in need of significant maintenance and the gardens require extensive care. In contrast, the next-door neighbours have usually taken great care to make their home beautiful. So why should any taxpayer have to live next to this?

The City will respond to a complaint, but this is a long process. My question is: Why is it a neighbour's responsibility to monitor the care of someone else's home?

This disturbing trend is seen, not just in First Shaughnessy, but throughout all of Shaughnessy and other Westside neighbourhoods. I believe the City needs to take action very soon, so there are better, faster procedures and more consequences for those who don't maintain their homes. If not, Vancouver's beautiful Westside neighbourhoods are in jeopardy.

Lori Kozub Hodgkinson,  
Chair, First Shaughnessy Advisory Design Panel

## SHPOA Details

As noted on our website, the Shaughnessy Heights Property Owners' Association (SHPOA) is a resident-run organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of Shaughnessy.

To be effective in keeping an eye on neighbourhood issues and addressing them, we need a strong membership. If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2011-2012, please do so today. Visit [shpoa.ca/membership.html](http://shpoa.ca/membership.html) for details. You may renew online with a credit card or by printing the membership form and sending us a cheque.

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Please encourage your neighbours to join too!