



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee **Date:** September 2, 2020
From: Wayne Craig **File:** HA 20-909844
 Director, Development
Re: **Application by Richmond School District No. 38 for a Heritage Alteration Permit at 8220 General Currie Road (General Currie School)**

Staff Recommendation

1. That a Heritage Alteration Permit be issued that would permit the following work on the General Currie School at 8220 General Currie Road:
 - a) Construction of a wooden accessible ramp;
 - b) Enlargement of the existing stair landing and replacement of the steps;
 - c) Reversing of the door swing to enable access from the ramp; and
 - d) Provision of metal handrails to match those existing.

Wayne Craig
 Director, Development
 (604-247-4625)

WC:pw
 Att. 3

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Policy Planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Staff Report

Origin

The Richmond School District No. 38 has applied for a Heritage Alteration Permit (HAP) to construct a wood accessible ramp to the east entrance of the heritage-designated General Currie School house located at 8220 General Currie Road (Attachment 1). The proposal includes adding the ramp, enlarging the existing stair landing to meet regulatory requirements, replacing the entry steps, reversing the door swing to enable access from the ramp, and providing metal handrails to match the existing design.

The provincial *Local Government Act* requires a HAP application for alterations to property that is protected by a Heritage Designation Bylaw. As the original school house at 8220 General Currie Road is protected by General Currie School Heritage Bylaw No. 3704 (adopted February 12, 1974), a HAP is required for the proposed alterations to the building.

Findings of Fact

Heritage Value of the General Currie School House

The General Currie School house is a one-room, one-storey gabled building with a small gabled front porch on the North side. It is part of a larger complex that includes General Currie Elementary School, a parking lot and playground, and faces the street at the entry to the site. The school has heritage significance as an excellent and attractive example of an early school building, a small scale neighbourhood landmark with high aesthetic appeal and character.

The Statement of Significance describing the heritage value of the building is included in Attachment 2.

Key elements that define the heritage character of the site include:

- the school building serves as a landmark and entry feature to the school complex;
- its monumental character, despite its size, as illustrated by its symmetrical, rectangular massing and articulated heavy timber porch;
- superior craftsmanship and attention to detail as evident in the decorative wooden porch columns, half-timbering in the porch gable, and decorative brackets and bargeboards;
- its association with the evolution of Richmond's school system; and
- its recognition as one of the most attractive small school buildings in the province.

Proposal

The Richmond School Board proposal is to provide universal access for users to the General Currie School house. It will involve:

- the enlargement of the concrete stairway landing by 0.31 m on the east side of the school house and replacement of the concrete steps in conjunction with construction of a 1.5 m x 5.0 m wood ramp extending to the south along the side of the building;
- the door swing to the side entrance will be reversed to allow for safe wheelchair access; and

- the wood ramp will include metal handrails which will match the character and design of existing metal handrails on the stairway.

The drawings illustrating the proposed alterations are shown on Plans # 1 and # 2 attached to the HAP.

In addition to the proposed exterior changes, the School Board is proposing minor interior renovations. A HAP is not required for interior changes.

Surrounding Development

The building is located in the north portion of a site that includes General Currie Elementary School to the east, a parking lot to the west, and a playground to the south. Existing development immediately surrounding the subject site is residential, as follows:

- To the north, across General Currie Road, are townhouses on lots zoned “Medium Density Low Rise Apartments (RAM1)” at 8191 and 8251 General Currie Road;
- To the east, are apartments on a lot zoned “Medium Density Low Rise Apartments (RAM1)” at 8300 General Currie Road/8333 Jones Road;
- To the south, across Jones Road, are apartments on a lot zoned “Medium Density Low Rise Apartments (RAM1)” at 8180/8200/8220 Jones Road; and
- To the west, are townhouses on lots zoned “Medium Density Low Rise Apartments (RAM1)” at 8120 General Currie Road and 8091 Jones Road.

Public Consultation

HAP notification signs were posted on the subject property, abutting both General Currie Road and Jones Road. No communications from the public in response to the sign have been received.

Richmond Heritage Commission

The proposed application was presented to the Richmond Heritage Commission on August 12, 2020 and was supported. An excerpt of the Richmond Heritage Commission meeting minutes is included as Attachment 3.

Analysis

The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada provide guidance to achieve good heritage conservation practice and function as a benchmark for assessing proposed conservation interventions. The proposed alterations to the General Currie School house are categorized by the Standards and Guidelines as a rehabilitation, described as involving “the sensitive adaptation of an historic place or individual component for a continuing or compatible contemporary use, while protecting its heritage value.” The relevant Standards and Guidelines are listed below, along with staff’s assessment of the proposed alterations.

Standard or Guideline	Assessment
<p>Standard #3. Conserve heritage value by adopting an approach calling for minimal intervention.</p> <p>Guideline #17. Modifying, replacing or designing a new entrance, porch or balcony required by a new use or applicable codes and regulations, in a manner that is compatible with the building’s style, era and character.</p>	<p>The proposed alteration is designed to meet requirements for universal access but do not intervene beyond changes required by current standards. The proposal maintains the concrete material and the orientation of the existing landing and stairs.</p>
<p>Standard #11. Conserve the heritage value and character-defining elements when creating any new additions to an historic place or any related new construction. Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place.</p> <p>Guideline #18. Adding new features to meet health, safety and security requirements, such as a new handrail, in a manner that conserves the heritage value of the entrance, porch or balcony and minimizes impact on its character-defining elements.</p>	<p>New handrails are to match the design of the existing handrails to the side entrance. The ramp extends away from the front of the building, making it less visible from the street. The wood structure will be compatible with the building’s heavy timber construction, but will be distinct from the building itself.</p>
<p>Standard #12. Create any new additions or related new construction so that the essential form and integrity of an historic place will not be impaired if the new work is removed in the future.</p>	<p>The proposed ramp will be freestanding and made of wood so it can be easily removed.</p>

Based on this analysis, the proposal reflects good heritage conservation practice and is consistent with the Standards and Guidelines.

Financial Impact


None.

Conclusion

This proposal involves construction of an accessible ramp to the east entrance of the heritage-designated General Currie School house located at 8220 General Currie Road.

Since the proposal improves accessibility while not intervening beyond alterations required by current regulations, and the new and replacement handrails match the design of the existing handrails to the side entrances, it is consistent with Parks Canada’s Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

Staff recommend that the HAP be endorsed, and issuance by Council be recommended. Only the accessible ramp work as shown in the permit is authorized and any further work/changes to the building exterior would be subject to future HAPs.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Whitelaw". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Peter Whitelaw, MCIP, RPP
Planner 3
(604-204-8639)

PW:blg

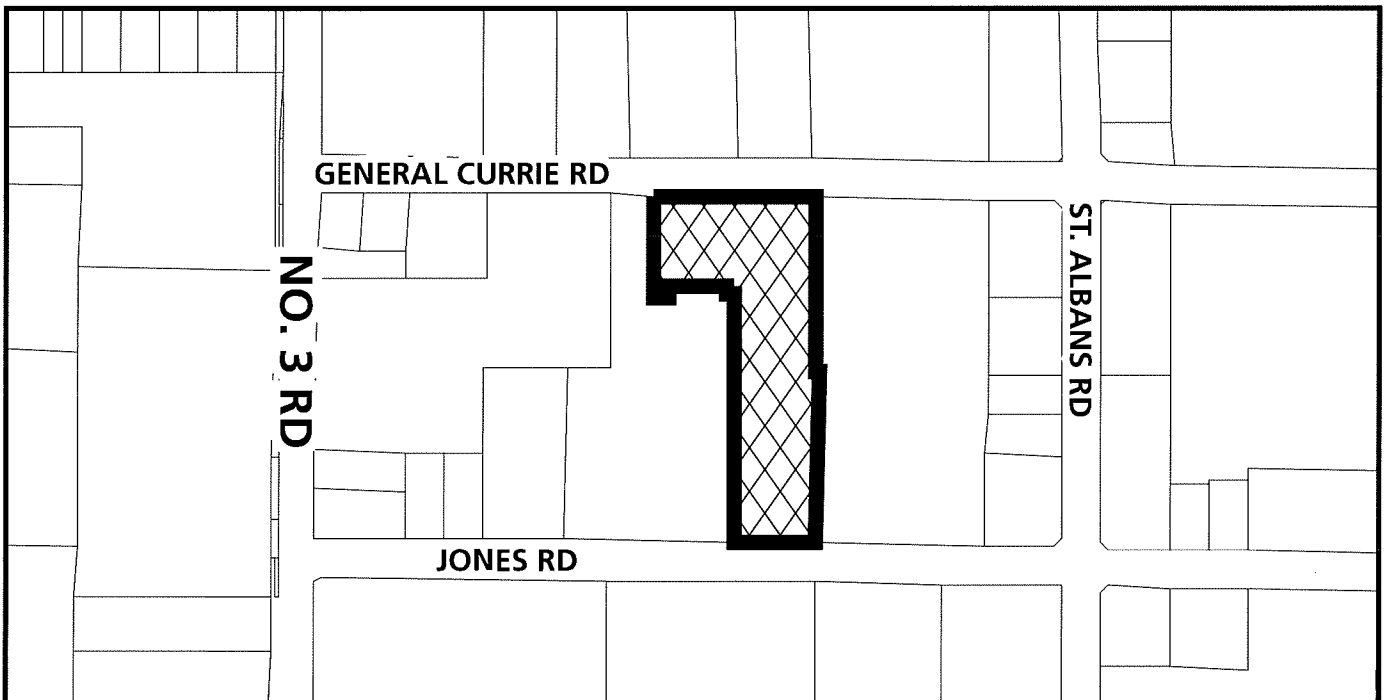
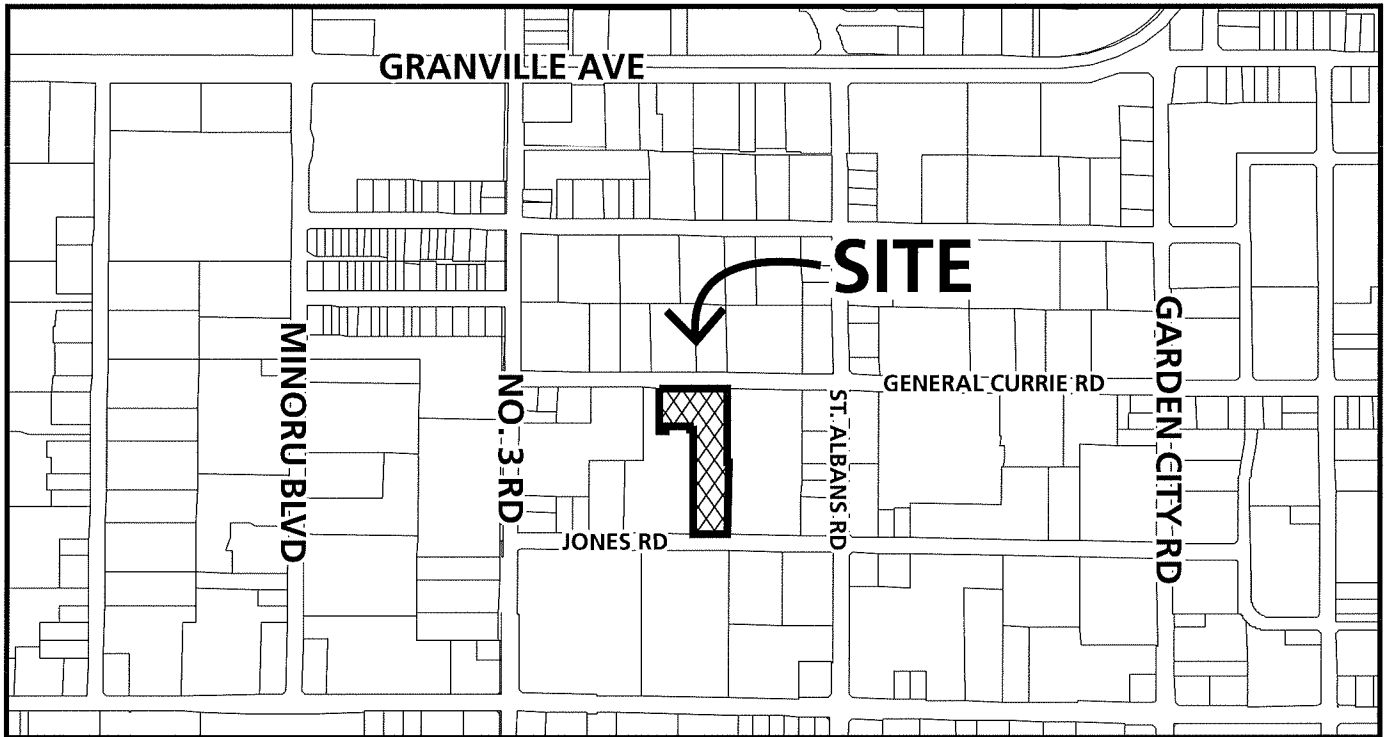
Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Location Map/Aerial Photo of the Subject Site at 8220 General Currie Road
- Attachment 2: Statement of Significance for the General Currie School House
- Attachment 3: Excerpt from the Draft Minutes to the August 12, 2020 Richmond Heritage Commission Meeting



City of
Richmond

ATTACHMENT 1



HA 20-909844

Original Date: 08/12/2020

Revision Date:

Note: Dimensions are in METRES



City of Richmond



HA 20-909844

Original Date: 08/12/2020

Revision Date:

Note: Dimensions are in METRES

General Currie School

General Information

Type of Resource: Building
Also Known As:
Address: 8220 General Currie Road
Neighbourhood (Planning Area Name): City Centre
Construction Date: 1919
Current Owner: Provincial Government
Designated: Yes



Statement of Significance

Description of Heritage Site: General Currie School is a beautiful little one-room, one-storey gabled structure with a small gabled front porch. It is situated in a residential neighbourhood, fronting directly onto the sidewalk of General Currie Road. It is part of a larger school complex consisting of an existing, newer school, a new school building under construction, parking lot, and playground.

Statement of Heritage Values: The school has significance as an excellent and attractive example of an early school building, a small scale, neighbourhood landmark with high aesthetic appeal and a character all its own. Designated by the City of Richmond as a heritage site, this building is of superior design, and is the only school in Richmond still in its original state and location. General Currie School is associated with evolution of the school system in Richmond after World War I, when growth in population, improved transportation and support for education saw expansion of the education system and construction of schools. Most small schools were built to a standard Department of Education plan, and General Currie may have influenced the design of new school buildings.

Character Defining Elements: Key elements that define the heritage character of the site include:

- The presence of this little school building as a small landmark of great character which serves as an entry feature to the school complex in this residential neighbourhood
- Its monumental character, despite its size, as illustrated by its symmetrical, rectangular massing and the beautifully articulated heavy timber porch
- Superior craftsmanship and attention to detail as evident in the decorative wooden porch columns, half-timbering in the porch gable, and decorative brackets and bargeboards
- Its association with the evolution of Richmond's school system
- Its consideration as one of the most attractive small school buildings in the province.

History

History: The school is named after General Sir Arthur Currie, who was born in Ontario in 1875, and taught school in Sidney and Victoria. He joined the Canadian militia in 1897, and distinguished himself as a soldier in the World War I. In 1920 he became the Vice-Chancellor of McGill University, and died in Montreal in 1933. It would be interesting to explore the local trends in school name selection. The land for the school was purchased from Mr. Wilham for \$1,500 and plans were commissioned from the architect Joseph H. Bowman, who also designed the Sir William Van Home and Richard Mc Bride schools in Vancouver. The building was heated by a wood and coal burning potbellied stove at least until 1924 – one can imagine that this made the little one room school building very cosy. The building was designated by the City in 1979.

Excerpt from the Draft Minutes to
The Richmond Heritage Commission Meeting

Held Wednesday, August 12, 2020 (7:00 pm)
Via Cisco Webex

Heritage Alteration Permit Application at 8220 General Currie Road (HA 20- 909844)

Staff summarised the Heritage Alteration Permit (HAP) application by Richmond School District No. 38, highlighting the key points of the proposal, which involves construction of an accessible ramp and handrail, enlargement of the existing stair landing, and replacement of the steps at the east side entrance to the heritage-designated General Currie School house located at 8220 General Currie Road.

The Applicant, Umur Olcay of Richmond School District No. 38, also provided information on the proposed scope of work, as well as the current and proposed uses of the building. Although not subject to a HAP, the applicant also spoke of proposed interior maintenance alterations, which are secondary to the proposed exterior work.

In response to queries from the Commission, the Applicant provided the following information:

- The accessible ramp is not expected to impact the building envelope as it is not proposed to be supported by the exterior wall;
- The ramp handrail is proposed to match the existing handrails at the east and west side entrances (i.e., painted metal);
- The accessible ramp is proposed to be constructed of wood, and designed to consider safety so that the surface is not slippery;

Commission members indicated their general support for adding an accessible entry to the building. Discussion then ensued, as follows:

- It was noted that the handrail to the side entrance of the building was originally wood, and it was further noted that it had been replaced with a metal handrail by the mid-1970's;
- The possibility of restoring the handrail to its original wood material instead of restoring it to match the existing metal handrails at the side entrances to the building was considered;
- The possibility of constructing a more permanent ramp using concrete was also considered, although it was recognized that there is a cost savings in using wood.

The Applicant indicated that the proposal as approved by the School District is for construction of a wood ramp with metal handrail to match existing, however, if concrete were to be considered it would warrant further investigation and approval by the School District.

It was moved and seconded:

That the Heritage Alteration Permit application to construct an accessible ramp and handrail (to match existing), enlarge the existing stair landing, and replace the steps at the east side entrance to the heritage-designated General Currie School house located at 8220 General Currie Road be supported as proposed, subject to any post-approval design changes being reconsidered by the Commission as part of an amended or new Heritage Alteration Permit application.

CARRIED



File No.: HA 20- 909844

To the Holder: Richmond School District No. 38
C/O Umur Olcay, Manager, Facilities Planning
Facilities Services
Planning & Development
5200 RIVER RD
RICHMOND BC V7C 1A4

Property Address: 8220 General Currie Road, Richmond, BC. V6Y 1M1

Legal Description: LOT A SECTION 16 BLOCK 4 NORTH RANGE 6 WEST NEW WESTMINSTER
DISTRICT PLAN EPP41900

(s.617, *Local Government Act*)

- 1. (Reason for Permit)
 - Designated Heritage Property (s.611)
 - Property Subject to Temporary Protection (s.609)
 - Property Subject to Heritage Revitalization Agreement (s.610)
 - Property in Heritage Conservation Area (s.615)
 - Property Subject to s.219 Heritage Covenant (Land Titles Act)

2. This Heritage Alteration Permit is issued to authorize:

- a) Construction of a wooden accessible ramp;
- b) Enlargement of the existing stair landing and replacement of the steps;
- c) Reversing of the door swing to enable access from the ramp; and
- d) Provision of metal handrails to match those existing

At the East entrance to the heritage-designated General Currie School house at 8220 General Currie Road, as illustrated in Plans #1 and #2.

3. This Heritage Alteration Permit is issued subject to compliance with all of the Bylaws of the City applicable thereto, except as specifically varied or supplemented by this Permit.

4. If the alterations authorized by this Heritage Alteration Permit are not completed within 24 months of the date of this Permit, this Permit lapses.

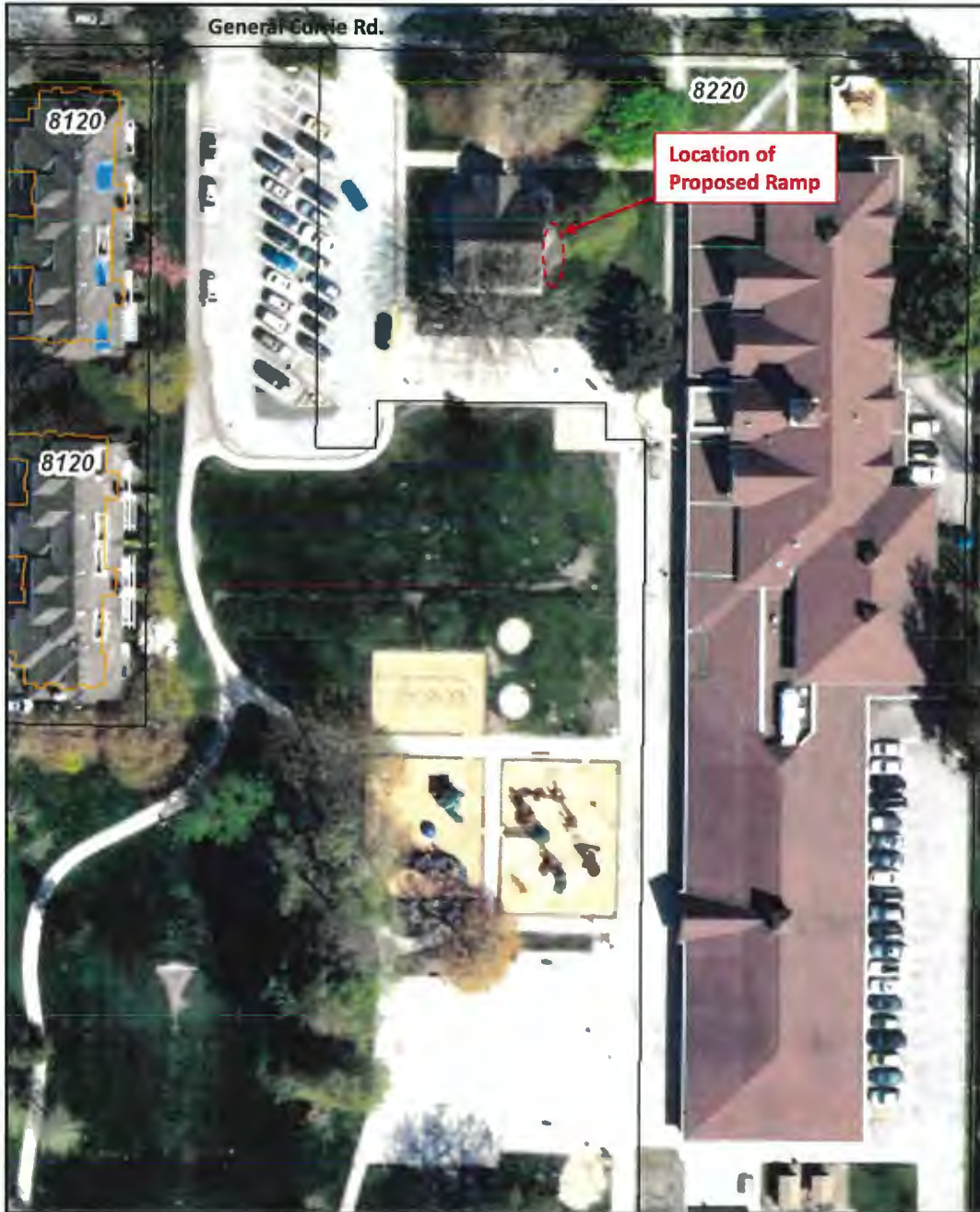
AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION NO. <Resolution No.> ISSUED BY THE COUNCIL THE DAY OF
<Date>

DELIVERED THIS <Day> DAY OF <Month>, <Year>

MAYOR

CORPORATE OFFICER

IT IS AN OFFENCE UNDER THE *LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT*, PUNISHABLE BY A FINE OF UP TO \$50,000 IN THE CASE OF AN INDIVIDUAL AND \$1,000,000 IN THE CASE OF A CORPORATION, FOR THE HOLDER OF THIS PERMIT TO FAIL TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS OF THE PERMIT.



AIR PHOTO
GENERAL CURRIE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



RICHMOND
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 38

Admin.
Building
 7811 Granville Avenue
 Richmond, BC V6Y3A3
 Tel. 604-688-6000

Works
Yard
 5200 River Road
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 Tel. 604-295-7000