

January 11, 2012

Director, City Clerk's Office
City of Richmond
6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond, BC
V6Y 2C1

Re: Notice of Application for a Development Permit DP 10-538908

I strongly oppose the application to permit the construction of a two-storey building for a licensed child care facility for approximately 60 children at 8851 Heather Street on a site zoned Assembly (ASY) and to vary the provisions of Zoning Bylaw 8500 as specified in the notice.

I have lived at 8700 Dolphin Court with my family for over 10 years. Our property is one of the properties directly adjacent to the back yard of 8851 Heather Street. We moved here specifically because it was a quiet residential neighbourhood of single-family homes. We have very much enjoyed living here – gardening or having a morning coffee in the back yard to the sounds of song birds, the wind in the trees and small planes overhead. I have often remarked to my husband that it is so wonderful that it is so quiet in our neighbourhood. It is something that I really value. If this application for a development permit is approved, it will significantly change the character of our neighbourhood as well as the serenity in our yard in particular.

Along with our neighbours, we made presentations to the Richmond Development Permit Panel at their meeting on July 13th 2011. Pictures were distributed by one of our neighbours so that the Development Permit Panel could actually see how narrow Heather Street is and how completely inappropriate it would be to increase the traffic in this area as a result of the construction of a business that would result in a significant increase in traffic at peak times of the day.

Along with our neighbours, we submitted a petition outlining our opposition to this development permit for the following reasons:

- Increased traffic through this portion of Heather Street
- Traffic flow
- Ditches
- Lighting and sidewalks
- Business vs residential

Our cover letter concluded "We believe that this proposal seriously impacts the safety, well-being and cohesiveness of our neighbourhood."

We participated in discussions at an Open House on September 8th hosted by the Vancouver Star Daycare and Doug Massie, Architect, Chercover Massie & Associates Ltd and we, as well as our neighbours, expressed our concerns about this proposal.

It seems that nobody is listening.

I understand that there is a proposal to install speed bumps on Heather Street as a solution to our concerns about traffic safety. I am convinced that this is not a solution at all. In fact, it will only make matters worse because if speed bumps are installed on Heather Street, it will only be a matter of time before a vehicle ends up in the ditch resulting in significant injuries or death.

My husband and I, along with our neighbours, are fully aware that this proposal does not fit well into our single-family neighbourhood. Although we very much appreciate the opportunity to address this Panel, it is very frustrating that we have not been heard to date.

I ask you to reject this proposed development for the following reasons:

1. **Size of the site.** It is very clear to me that this site is not an appropriate size for a child care facility for 60 children. In fact, it is clear to the developer and property owner also that this property is not an appropriate size for the building they propose because they are asking to vary the provisions of the Zoning Bylaw 8500 so that they can reduce the minimum interior side yard from 7.5 to 1.2 metres and reduce the minimum public road parking setback from 3 metres to 1.5 metres. They are also asking for a variance regarding the parking because they know that the property is not large enough to accommodate the parking that they should be providing. It is also not large enough to provide the typical one-way drive-through that schools and large childcare facilities have to ensure the safety of the children when they are being dropped-off and picked-up. In addition, they know that the property is not large enough to meet their playground requirement so they intend to count on the use of Dolphin Park, a small park with an exceptionally small playground, across the street. Adding so many additional children to the playground will affect the families in the neighbourhood who use this playground on a regular basis. Another strategy the child care provider suggested was that she just keeps the children inside. Neither of these suggestions meet an acceptable standard for quality childcare.
2. **Size of the building.** In order to accommodate a childcare business for so many children, they propose a building that is approximately twice the size of the largest homes that currently exist on the street. What would be more appropriate for consistent development of the neighbourhood would be to subdivide the property and put up two large houses on that site. That would be a plan that would maintain the character of the neighbourhood.
3. **Location.** This part of Heather Street is exceptionally narrow and has a ditch on the east side of it so when there is a need for two-way traffic, there is very little clearance. There is also very little room on the shoulder of the street for the parking that would inevitably be required during drop-off and pick-up for the childcare business. A strategy to widen Heather Street to accommodate the

additional traffic and the additional parking spaces that will be required is also not likely because of the ditch and the adjacent park.

4. **Character of the neighbourhood.** According to the Official Community Plan for Richmond, "Broadmoor has many stable well-kept residential neighbourhoods and is well served by local parks, schools and services." We want to keep it that way. It seems to me that this childcare business is forcing itself into our quiet residential neighbourhood simply because the site is zoned Assembly (ASY) and they counted on this being an easy route to setting up their business. The previous church group that gathered occasionally at the small house (not a typical church building) on that property fit in nicely with the neighbourhood. The building looked like a typical house. Although there could be several people there at one time, it was not unlike any of the neighbours having a group of family or friends over for a BBQ. The sounds of people talking and laughing were no more dominant than other conversations in the neighbourhood. Their yard was maintained similar to the properties in the neighbourhood, for example, the lawn was mowed on a regular basis. The 15 foot cedar trees that grow just on the other side of our fence at the back of our yard, were trimmed on a regular basis. On the other hand, the new owners have neglected their yard for more than 6 months. The lawn is no longer mowed on a regular basis and has grown to 3 feet tall. Prior to the meeting on July 13th, they removed the lower branches of the row of trees on the other side of our 6 foot fence to just above the fence so this has diminished our privacy since you can now see between the trees above our fence where the branches have been removed. In addition this has diminished the effectiveness of the natural sound barrier that the tall row of trees provided. To make matters even worse, the new owners have just left the large branches in the yard where they have since turned orange in colour and this has contributed to their property being an eye-sore in the neighbourhood for several months. Many of us go for walks throughout the neighbourhood and admire the well-manicured yards and colourful flowers that are typical in our neighbourhood. Residents take pride in the appearance of their yards. The property at 8851 Heather Street is an extreme exception. The building itself was essentially stripped months ago and has since been abandoned. The yard is completely neglected.
5. **Number of people** The number of people they propose to occupy the premises on a daily basis is excessive for our neighbourhood. To have 60 children, in addition to the staff, as well as parents coming and going, defines this as an institution. It is clearly not another house in a residential neighbourhood. If the owner was proposing a family daycare in a house of similar size to the houses in the neighbourhood, I am confident that this would be well received. There is clearly no objection to children in the neighbourhood nor to a childcare facility. However what they are proposing is to dominate the neighbourhood with an oversized institution in an undersized yard that is overpopulated according to the neighbourhood standards. This is completely inappropriate for the neighbourhood and unwelcomed.

6. **Community Benefits** I would like to refer to the Staff Report that was attached to the Report to the Development Permit Panel from Brian J. Jackson, MCIP, Director of Development, dated June 16, 2011. In the section on Community Benefits, it is clear that the number of children proposed for the business at 8851 Heather Street far exceeds the number of child care needs for toddler and 3–5 year olds in the Broadmoor area. As identified in the 2009-2016 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy, the estimated additional child care spaces needed by December 1, 2016 in the Broadmoor area are 23 spaces for 18 months to 2 years old and 9 spaces for 3-5 year olds. It is extremely objectionable that we should be subjected to a 60 child institution in our neighbourhood when the anticipated needs of the entire Broadmoor area are met by less than half the number of children proposed.

7. **Dolphin Park** I would like to clarify again that to the east, across Heather Street from 8851 Heather Street, is Dolphin Park, not Heather Park as has been referred to on more than one occasion during this permit application. In the Staff Report that I referred to earlier, on the first page, in the section titled “Background”, it again refers to the park as “the city-owned Heather neighbourhood park, which contains a children’s playground, zoned School & Institution Use (SI)”. My husband and I went to Heather Park and discovered that it had a much more substantial playground for children than Dolphin Park. I would respectfully ask that this be looked into so that there is no misrepresentation of the facts when you consider this permit application. In addition, I request that Vancouver Coastal Health also be informed that in fact it is Dolphin Park, not Heather Park that is across the street.

8. **Noise** According to the staff report, “the proposal includes only 67% of the outdoor play area requirement for 60 children” and the “outdoor children’s play area is provided in the rear yard 212.9m2 (just on the other side of our fence) and on the second floor deck (69.25 m2). According to the Staff Report dated October 7th, 2011, up to 24 children at a time will be scheduled to be in the outside play area on site at a given time and the applicant is proposing to schedule the use of the outdoor play area to meet the daily outdoor play needs of each of the four child care rooms. This will have a significant negative impact on our quiet neighbourhood on a daily basis.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my strong objections to having an institution forced on our quiet residential neighbourhood. I ask you to reject this application.

Barbara Thomas-Bruzzese
8700 Dolphin Court, Richmond BC





