



CITY OF VANCOUVER

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ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 19, 2008
Author: Rob Whitlock
Phone No.: 604.873.7432
RTS No.: 07504
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Meeting Date: July 8, 2008

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Director of Housing Centre, in consultation with the Directors of Planning and Development Services

SUBJECT: Request for Increased Floor Space for a Social and Supportive Housing Project and Social Service Centre at 1601 West 7th Avenue

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council advise the Development Permit Board that it supports a density increase of up to 0.88 FSR (929.0 m² or 10,000 ft.²) as provided in Section 5.3 of the C-3A zoning district schedule, to allow development of the social service (community resource) centre on the ground and second floors of the social and supportive housing project at 1601 West 7th Avenue (DE412144), to be operated by Motivation Power and Achievement Society (MPA).

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing recommendation.

COUNCIL POLICY

The City's social housing priorities are low and modest income families with children; seniors on fixed incomes or in need of support; SRO residents; and the mentally ill, physically disabled, and others at risk of homelessness.

Council's policy is to acquire sites for non-market housing development and to lease them to non-profit community groups for 60 years. The market value of a 60 year lease is considered to equal 75% of the freehold market value. Council will lease sites for non-market housing development for a nominal prepaid rent, subject to approval of the necessary capital grant.

Council approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the City/Province Social and Supportive Housing Partnership on December 19, 2007, which commits the City to leasing 12 sites for social and supportive housing for 60 years at nominal prepaid rents.

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Council support of a density increase for the social service centre to be developed on the ground floors of the social and supportive housing project proposed for the City's site at 1601 West 7th Avenue.

BACKGROUND

The City purchased the 1601 West 7th Avenue in 2005 for social housing purposes in 2005. In early 2006, it came to the attention of City staff that the Community Resource Centre (CRC) operated by MPA was seeking to relocate because of re-development plans for the existing building at 1733 West 4th Avenue.

In December 2007, Council approved the City/Province Social and Supportive Housing Partnership which included leasing the site to a non-profit housing sponsor for 60 years at nominal rent and inclusion of the MPA CRC.

The MOU included an outline of the proposed project at 1601 West 7th as follows:

- *70 +/- studio units, with a third to a half of the units would be occupied by persons with a mental illness; all units will be tenanted by core-need singles with a priority for those living in Fairview and Kitsilano; and*
- *The MPA's mental health drop-in centre on the first and second floor of up to 10,000 ft.².*

Site and Development Description: The site is situated on the northwest corner of 7th Avenue and Fir Street, fronting the Fir Street off-ramp from the Granville Bridge.

The proposed project is comprised of 62 units of supportive housing and a social service centre.

The non-market housing will be operated by the Katherine Sanford Housing Society (KSHS). The social service centre is to be operated by Motivation, Power and Achievement Society (MPA) as a resource centre for mental health clients. The proposed CRC would be 919.7 m² (9,900 ft.²) on the main and second floors of the building. The Centre consists of a kitchen and dining room, social lounge, multi-purpose room, library, computer room, games room and arts room, and administrative office space. MPA will also provide services and support to tenants in the housing component, when needed.

The building includes one-level of underground parking with 8 stalls. Access to the garage and a loading bay is from the lane.

Appendix A shows the location of the site and elevation view of the proposed building and a site plan.

Zoning Provisions for Increased Density: The site is located in the C-3A zoning district which allows a maximum FSR of 3.0. Section 5.3 of the zoning states that an increase in density may be considered where the need for a public or social facility is demonstrated, as follows:

“Where a need for any public, social or recreational facility has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Development Permit Board, the Board may permit for any one building, which includes one or more of such facilities, an increase in the maximum floor space ratio or density of a building and may require that any such facility be preserved in the public domain by way of a registered agreement and operated by the City or its delegates.

In determining the amount of the increase in floor area or density that may be permitted, the Development Permit Board shall consider:

- (a) the construction cost of the facility;
- (b) any costs to the developer of continuing maintenance required for the facility;
- (c) the rental value of the increased floor area;
- (d) the value of any authorized relaxation of other restrictions; and
- (e) the opinion of City Council.”

DISCUSSION

The City site at 7th and Fir has an area of 1 058.0 m² (11,388 ft.²) and can accommodate 3 173.9 m² (34,164 ft.²) of development without invoking Section 5.3 of the C3-A zoning schedule. A project consisting of social and supportive housing and the community resource centre would result in approximately 44 units. This would be less than the optimal number of units from an operating perspective or in terms of meeting the need for social and supportive housing for low income singles including those suffering from mental illness in area. Utilizing Section 5.3 will result in a project up to 4 104.9 m² (44,185 ft.²) or 3.88 FSR that would include 62 units of small studio units for low-income singles. In order to allow the CRC to be built in addition to the social housing, a density bonus of up to 919.7 m² (9,900 ft.²) or 0.87 FSR is being requested (to be rounded to 0.88 FSR and 929.0 m² [10,000 ft.²]).

Providing additional floor space to accommodate both the housing units and a social service centre has been utilized before, in the case of Seymour Place at 1221 Seymour Street, which includes a mental health community resource centre that serves Downtown South.

The factors set out in Section 5.3 are more relevant to a market project where additional revenue generating floor space is provided to cover the cost of the public or social facility. In this case, as was the case for the Seymour Street project, the project is a non-profit and non-market project that will be fully funded by the public sector and will not include revenue generating space. Consequently, the appropriate increase in density is the amount required for the community resource centre itself, and staff recommend that Council advise the

Development Permit Board that it supports the use of Section 5.3 of the C3-A zoning district schedule (Zoning and Development Bylaw No. 3575) to provide up to 929.0 m² or 10,000 ft.² of additional density.

The community resource centre will be secured as a public facility through the lease to Vancouver Coastal Health. The lease will require that the facility be operated by a non-profit society as a community resource centre providing mental health services to the west side of Vancouver.

The Development Permit Board will consider the application on July 28th. The Urban Design Panel voted on June 4th to unanimously support the project.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The MPA mental health community resource centre (CRC) has served in this community for over 21 years. It provides services for registered members, including life-skills programs, vocational and job skill training and links to affordable housing, work and volunteer opportunities and health services. The advocacy function of MPA is also located at the current location.

It is important to maintain the distribution of community mental health supports in different parts of the city. The existing distribution facilitates access for people across the city:

- MPA in Kitsilano/Fairview;
- Coast with two locations, one serving Downtown and the other Mount Pleasant and adjacent areas;
- Triage serving the Downtown Eastside; and
- Kettle providing support in Grandview Woodland and eastern neighbourhoods.

In early 2006, when MPA had been served notice to vacate their site by the owner and been unable to find any sites within their service area, City staff contacted the Society about the site at 7th and Fir.

Locating the CRC at this location will allow MPA to continue to provide services to its core membership of 60 to 80 persons a day and will provide improved space which is designed to meet the needs of their membership. Co-location with the proposed supportive housing will provide for 24 hour, 7 days a week coverage of both on site and off-site activity.

CONCLUSION

This non-market housing project will serve 62 low-income singles who suffer from mental illnesses, who may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, in the Fairview and Kitsilano area. In addition, the project includes a 919.7 m² (9,900 ft.²) mental health resource centre which will provide a wide range of social and recreational services to people with mental health problems living in those communities.

To fully optimize this site for both functions, an increase in floor space of approximately 929.0 m² or 10,000 ft.² is recommended.

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Site Plan and Rendering for 1601 West 7th Avenue



City-owned site

Address: 1601 West 7th Avenue

Neighbourhood: Fairview

Site Area: 11,388 sq ft

Legal Description: LOT J BLK 289 DL 526 GROUP 1 NEW WESTMINSTER DISTRICT PLAN BCP23168



Prepared by Neale Staniszki Doll Adams, Architects:

