



MEMORANDUM

July 19, 2005

TO: Mayor Campbell and Councillors

COPIES TO: J. Rogers, City Manager
S. Baxter, City Clerk
J. Forbes-Roberts, General Manager of Community Services
D. Jackson, Chief Building Official

FROM: L. Beasley, Director of Current Planning

SUBJECT: CD-1 Rezoning - 2950 Celtic Avenue

The purpose of this memorandum is to report back to Council on requests for information made on July 12, 2005 regarding the CD-1 rezoning at 2950 Celtic Avenue. Council requested staff provide the following:

- further details of flooding issues, including flood levels at Oak Street and at the Celtic Avenue rezoning site during the 1894 Fraser River flooding;
- a heritage evaluation of the subject site; and
- a copy of the Southlands Plan to be made available to all Councillors.

1. Additional Information on Fraser River Flood Levels

Engineering staff report that, based on an independent study completed in 1999, water levels at Oak Street, and at Blenheim Street in Southlands, during a Fraser River freshet flow of 17,000 m³/sec (1894 Fraser River flow) are not influenced by the Fraser River freshets but by tides, and are therefore independent of the amount of flow in the Fraser River. Fraser River freshets influence water levels in the Fraser Valley from approximately upstream of the Oak Street Bridge. During a combined high tide and Fraser River flood event, water levels at Oak Street and Blenheim Street would be the typical high tide level, in which a typical high tide is 1.9 m above geodetic datum. During Strait of Georgia storm surges associated with low pressure systems and high winds, tide levels may rise. This is illustrated by the highest tide recorded at Point Atkinson which was 2.7 m above geodetic datum in 1982.

It is noted that the flood construction level in Southlands and for this rezoning is 3.5 m (geodetic datum). Engineering staff, therefore, reiterate their conclusion of the previous memo dated June 3, 2005, that the Celtic Avenue rezoning application should proceed based on the current design elevations.

At the July 12th Public Hearing, Councillor Bass enquired whether the current flood proofing level which is based on a 1:200 year flood event should be reviewed. The City's flood proofing policy is incorporated into the Vancouver Building By-law. The Deputy Chief Building Official has advised that an update to the Building By-law will be undertaken in early 2006, during which public consultation will take place. At that time, a review of the flood proofing policy by public stakeholders and professionals will be completed.

2. Heritage Background and Review

At the beginning of the rezoning process staff determined that this subject site is not on the Vancouver Heritage Register, nor on the provincial archaeological sites list. The Musqueam Band has owned the land since the late 1980s and their representatives have advised the site is not a sacred First Nations' site. During the extensive two year planning process, the surrounding community did not identify any heritage values associated with the site.

Staff have more recently researched and clarified that the structures on the rezoning site do not form part of the historic Celtic Shipyards legacy. Some Celtic Shipyards structures still exist, but they are located at the foot of Blenheim Street to the west of the subject site. In 1986 the Celtic Shipyards (not the rezoning site) structures were included in the Heritage Inventory (now the Heritage Register) as a "C" listed resource. However, in 1988 Council removed them along with all the other isolated "C" resources from the Inventory.

All existing structures on the subject site were developed starting in 1942 to serve as the BC Forest Service Maintenance Depot. This depot was used by BC Forest Service from the 1940s to 1988 to repair and service provincial ministry boats that would go up and down the coast monitoring the forest industry activities. The buildings served as marine ways for hoisting up boats, as well as machine shops, other maintenance buildings, and administrative buildings.

In the context of the approach to identifying heritage value that is emerging across Canada, these buildings speak to the history of industrial use along the shoreline and to a portion of BC Forest Service's history. In this regard they have some social/economic heritage values in the modest to medium range, noting that this recent industrial and forestry history is also told throughout BC through many other sites, marine vessels, and continuing forestry and marine activities.

While the buildings are believed to be in good physical condition for serving their original industrial uses, adapting them legally to artist studios, residential, or other uses compatible with the surrounding residential area does not appear to be economically viable. Substantial alteration and renovation with commensurate significant costs would be required for conversion to artists' and residential uses. To offset these high costs through a private commercial venture would likely result in a large amount of new vehicular traffic in the area - something not supported in the Southlands Plan and by most residents in the area. If a private economic use was not found, and noting the owners have indicated they are not interested in pursuing this alternative, the only way to save the buildings would be for the City to purchase them. Their heritage value is not considered significant enough to make them a City priority, and again the adaptive reuse to justify such an expenditure would likely result in a substantial increase in traffic to the site.

For these reasons a commemorative approach is recommended.

3. Southlands Plan (1988)

Planning staff deposited a copy of the Southlands Plan with the Councillors' Secretariat on July 15, 2005, for the reference of Mayor and Council.

Larry Beasley

LBB/AR/ws

Q:\Clerical\NRZ\Memo\2005\2950-3190 Celtic Ave Yellow Memo2.doc