



CITY OF VANCOUVER
POLICY REPORT
DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING

Report Date: March 2, 2006
Author: Josh Anderson
Phone No.: 604.873.7005
RTS No.: 05619
VanRIMS No.: 11-3600-03
Meeting Date: March 21, 2006

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Director of Current Planning
SUBJECT: CD-1 Text Amendment Vancouver General Hospital ICORD Building Setbacks

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the application by Jonathan Rider, Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership, to amend CD-1 By-law No. 4472 for Vancouver General Hospital to accommodate architectural features of the ICORD building, and that the application be referred to a Public Hearing and be approved, generally in accordance with Appendix A;

FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to prepare the necessary By-law, generally in accordance with Appendix A, for consideration at the Public Hearing.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

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

COUNCIL POLICY

Relevant Council Policies for this site include:

- *In June, 2000, Council adopted the Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) Precinct Policy Statement, available for review in the City Clerk's office, "...as the guiding policy for evaluation of future zoning and development in the precinct...";*
- *In November, 2001, Council enacted amendments to CD-1 By-law No.4472 (#59), to permit Medical-Tech Uses, Service Uses and Retail Uses, Special Needs Residential Facility - Congregate Housing, and Dwelling Uses in addition to Hospital, and to increase the permissible site coverage and floor space;*

- *In November, 2002, Council adopted the Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) Precinct CD-1 Guidelines to guide development of the precinct. The guidelines will ensure that the design of individual developments is compatible with the overall urban design concept for the VGH Precinct, adjacent developments and future residential neighbourhoods and commercial districts.;*
- *In April, 2004, Council approved the Vancouver General Hospital Implementation Cost Recovery Program to assist VGH by undertaking a review of their proposed changes and to articulate CD-1 text amendments which would be consistent with the VGH Precinct Policy Statement. The Program would also assist with the processing of subsequent applications to amend the CD-1 By-law.*

SUMMARY & PURPOSE

This report recommends amending provisions of the VGH CD-1 By-Law (#59), to accommodate Architectural features of the ICORD (International Collaboration on Repair Discoveries) building in Sub Area B of the VGH precinct which project over the building setback lines.

Figure 1: VGH CD-1 (59) by-law boundary



BACKGROUND

In the Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) Precinct Policy Statement, one of the precinct goals is “to foster greater and more legible ordering with a stronger, less institutional sense of identity”. Presently, and in the past, it has been a concern to “reduce the institutional character of the precinct to make it more welcoming to the public...”. Another goal of the Policy Statement is “to orient and configure new buildings to help define yet not dominate new open space”.

Building setbacks as set out in both the Policy Statement and the by-law restrict the construction of new buildings to a minimum distance from Right-of-Way’s and from the Public

Realm. Building setbacks are "...required to establish the desired Public Realm, public open space, street enclosure continuity and pedestrian amenity objectives with the VGH Precinct". Specific setbacks that impact the ICORD building site include a 2 m setback along the south side of W 10th Avenue, and 12 m setback from what would be the centre line of Willow if a street existed in this block.

Related open space objectives in the Policy Statement for the VGH precinct include maintaining visual and direct access to open space from public street corridors, and adequate building setbacks and facades that are in scale to ensure a welcoming feeling and draw to open space.

The VGH Precinct CD-1 Guidelines outline desirable architectural details and articulation for the precinct. These details included building transparency, highly visible circulation, and vertical circulation elements located to the perimeter of the building. These design elements are noted in the guidelines as elements that bring interest to the building, and are components of good urban design.

The rezoning application associated with this report is one of several text amendments that was forecast, and is covered by the Cost Recovery Program.

The ICORD building as proposed in development permit application DE409911 does not conform to the current building setbacks in the VGH CD-1 bylaw. The original plans for the building (which showed a ramp rising in a figure-8 pattern the height of a glass atrium) were not viable as the dimensions of the ramp were not realistic for wheelchair access or regular use. The current Development Permit Application shows a reconfigured and functional ramp, though the reconfiguration in effect enlarge the atrium space, pushing it outward over building setback lines in three locations. Architectural features of the atrium cross the setback twice along the Willow Street alignment, and once along the south side of W 10th Avenue.

DISCUSSION

Public Realm and Open Space

The Willow Street Corridor is intended to link the neighbourhoods south of the precinct to the Broadway Commercial district. The Corridor also ties the open space proposed between 12th Avenue and the Heather Pavilion to 10th Avenue and Broadway, as one of four public edges that defines the largest central open space in the hospital precinct. The Corridor is integral to the success of this central open space, making the ICORD building significant in the same context of this open space and the Willow Corridor.

It is imperative that the treatment of the building's façade be consistent with the urban design and open space goals and objectives set out for the precinct (as noted in the background section). Staff believe that the ICORD building successfully meets these objectives. The building does not block visual or direct access to open space, and it maintains a public edge to the Corridor that is in scale with its surroundings. The curving glass wall invites interest to the façade and the surrounding area.

By investigating how the building footprint crosses the building setback line, it is apparent that as a result of the curvature of the glass wall, the building is not built out to the setback line in all locations. On the eastern edge of the building, there is more Public Realm area

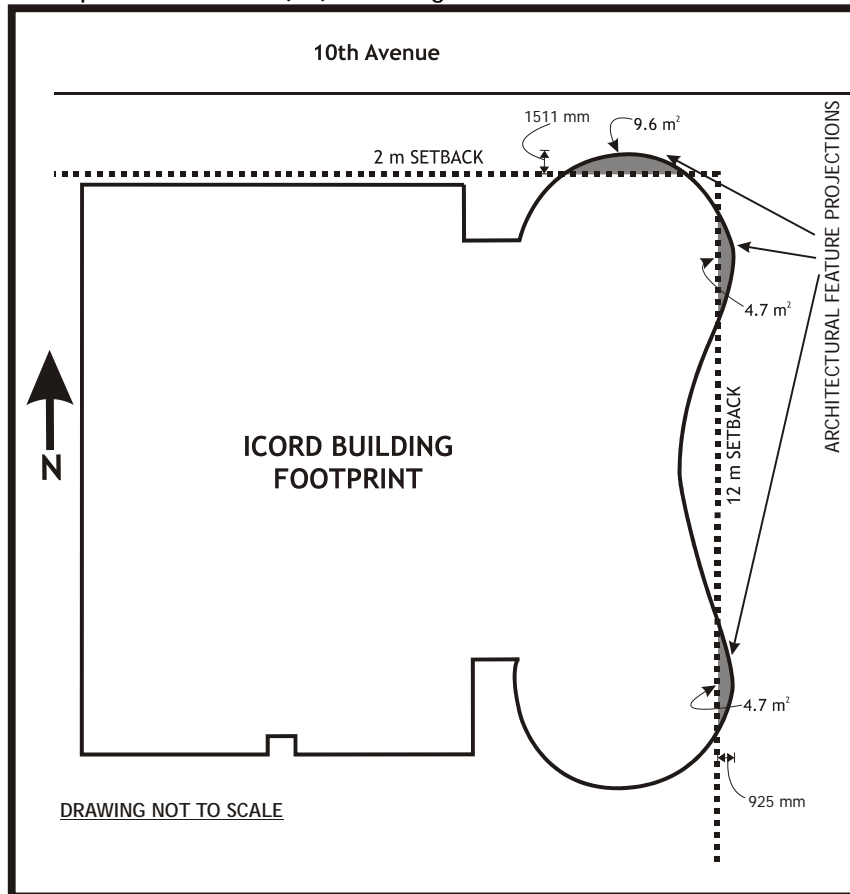
within the building site, than there is Public Realm area that is taken up by the architectural projections over the setback line. This is also true for the projection on the north façade. Therefore there is no “net” loss of Public Realm (see Figure 2).

Architectural and Urban Design

ICORD’s eastern façade crosses the setback in two locations along the Willow Street alignment, and also crosses the northern setback in one location along 10th Avenue. The projections do not encroach on public rights-of-way. The ground area occupied by the projections is relatively small (approximately 101 sq. ft along Willow, and 103 sq. ft along 10th Avenue). The curving façade facilitates a seating and a break/out space for the atrium lounge, coffee bar, and passing pedestrians, providing a good transition into the Public Realm.

Architectural details mentioned as desirable in the CD-1 guidelines are fully realized in the atrium space design of the ICORD building, including but not limited to a fully transparent atrium space containing a highly visible rising, spiralling ramp. This highly sculptural element of the building successfully brings visual interest to the building, and that with no “net” impact it will be one the key architectural interest points of the VGH Precinct. Staff believe that these projections over the setback lines are acceptable, and have little or no negative impact on the Public Realm.

Figure 2: ICORD footprint and CD-1 (59) building setbacks



FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications

CONCLUSION

Staff support an amendment to the CD-1 by-law (59) for VGH, accommodating architectural features of the ICORD building that project over the building setback line along the Willow Street alignment, and W 10th Avenue. The building's design is consistent with CD-1 Guidelines and with the Policy Statement, and does not negatively impact the Public Realm.

* * * * *

CD-1 BY-LAW (#59) NO. 4472 for Vancouver General Hospital - DRAFT AMENDMENT

Note: A by-law will be prepared generally in accordance with the provisions listed below, subject to change and refinement prior to posting.

8.1.2 2 m from the north boundary of lots adjoining the south side of 10th Avenue, from the imaginary extension of the center line of Willow Street, to a point 116 m east of Laurel Street, except that if any building meets VGH Precinct CD-1 Guidelines for building articulation, and fits into the overall urban design goals for the Precinct, the Development Permit Board may reduce this setback to no less than 0.4 m between the distances of 13.9 m and 23.4 m from the imaginary extension of the center line of Willow Street.

8.1.3 12 m west of the imaginary extension of the center line of Willow Street, from the north boundary of lots adjoining the south side of 10th Avenue extending southward to a point 40 m south of the north boundary of lots adjoining the south side of 12th, except that if any building meets VGH Precinct CD-1 Guidelines for building articulation, and fits into the overall urban design goals for the Precinct, the Development Permit Board may reduce this setback to no less than 11 m between the distances of 4.1 m and 12.5 m, and between the distances of 33.0 m and 41.7 m from the north boundary of lots adjoining the south side of 10th Avenue.

Note: Figure 4 in CD-1 BY-LAW (#59) NO. 4472 will be replaced with the following Figure 4.

Figure 4. Setbacks

