



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 22, 2006
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RTS No.: 5825
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Meeting Date: July 11, 2006

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Director of Current Planning

SUBJECT: Heritage Designation and Heritage Revitalization Agreement - 658 Keefer Street

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council authorize the City to enter into a Heritage Revitalization Agreement for the site at 658 Keefer Street to:
- secure the rehabilitation of the heritage house;
 - vary the RT-3 District Schedule of the Zoning and Development By-law in order to bring existing non-conforming conditions into conformity with the By-law, and to permit an increase in floor space ratio from permitted 0.6 to 0.9; and
 - permit four dwelling units in a multiple conversion dwelling in place of the current limit of two,
- as described in detail in this report and as indicated under Development Application DE409469.
- B. THAT the Chan House, listed in the "B" category on the Vancouver Heritage Register at 658 Keefer Street, be designated as Protected Heritage Property.
- C. THAT Council instruct the Director of Legal Services to bring forward for enactment a by-law to authorize the Heritage Revitalization Agreement and by-law to designate the heritage building as Protected Heritage Property.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of Recommendations A, B and C.

COUNCIL POLICY

Heritage Policies and Guidelines state, in part, that:

- The City's long-term goal is to protect through voluntary designation as many resources on the Vancouver Heritage Register as possible.
- Legal designation will be a prerequisite to accepting certain bonuses and incentives.

PURPOSE

This report seeks Council approval to designate and enter into a HRA with the owners to secure the conservation and protection of the Chan House at 658 Keefer Street.

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

The subject site is located in Strathcona, zoned RT-3 (Site Map, Appendix A). The Chan House is a B-listing on the Heritage Register. The owners have submitted Development Application DE409469 to rehabilitate the house that will require variances to the RT-3 District Schedule of the Zoning and Development By-law. In exchange for protection of the house, and to make the rehabilitation viable, the owners are seeking variances to convert it to a four-unit multiple conversion dwelling and to vary the permitted FSR.

DISCUSSION

Heritage Value: The Chan House at 658 Keefer Street, built in 1906, is of heritage value principally because of its association with early and long-term owners. As an example of early workers' housing, its original occupant was David Inches, an Engineer, from 1906 to 1920. Beginning in 1958 it was owned by Chinatown merchant Walter Chan and his wife Mary. Mary Chan, listed as sole occupant since 1974, was a community leader whose work included preventing the freeway through Strathcona. It was at this house where such activism created the Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association.

The house is also a good example of Edwardian design, featuring a full width porch with turned columns and a bay window projecting on to the porch.

Revitalization Program: The proposed changes include restoring key heritage features, a new basement to replace the existing, an addition to the rear and internal reconfiguration to convert the house to four units. Rehabilitation work on the exterior includes removal of asbestos shingles, retention of original cladding that exists underneath, a second floor porch at the rear and a new detached garage adjacent to the lane. New materials will be similar to, but subtly distinguishable from, the original. Key interior elements are also proposed to be retained.

Compatibility with Community Planning Objectives: The intent of the RT-3 District Schedule includes encouraging the retention and restoration of existing character buildings. Emphasis is placed on modifications that are in keeping with the historic architectural character of the area. The proposed rehabilitation of this heritage house meets the intent of the zoning and guidelines.

Economic Viability: To make the rehabilitation of the house economically viable, the owners have requested increases to the maximum floor area beyond what is permitted under the RT-3 District Schedule and to increase the number of dwelling units from two to four. To achieve this, the owners are prepared to enter into a Heritage Revitalization Agreement and designate the house. They have agreed that the variances to the Zoning and Development By-law represent fair and complete compensation in exchange for the designation of the property and have waived their rights to further compensation.

Staff analyzed the project and determined that the land lift from the increase in floor area and strata titling to four units does not provide the owners with undue profit, noting the scope of heritage rehabilitation, as described in this report.

Zoning Variances: The relaxations to the RT-3 District Schedule include an increase in the maximum Floor Space Ratio (FSR) from 0.6 outright to 0.9. The existing FSR is 0.76, and is proposed to be increased to 0.9 as a result of adding 564 square feet of living space at the rear of the house.

In addition, four dwelling units are proposed as part of a Multiple Conversion Dwelling in place of the current maximum permitted two units. The heritage revitalization agreement will also address existing non-conformities including height and west side yard.

Notification: As part of the standard Development Application review process, 48 property owners were notified, along with the Strathcona Residents Association. The only response received was from Residents Association, which expressed support in principle including a request for a higher level of retention and restoration of original materials.

On August 8, 2005 the Vancouver Heritage Commission reviewed this development application and zoning relaxations. The Commission supports the proposal in principle subject to the addition being distinguishable from the original house and improvements to the conservation plan.

Comments from both these groups will be addressed by way of conditions of the development permit, including more detailed documentation of the existing exterior elements and design development of the proposed addition.

As part of the Public Hearing process, the Director of Legal Services has prepared the necessary Heritage By-law and requirements have been met for notification as specified by the *Vancouver Charter*.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

CONCLUSION

The Chan House at 658 Keefer Street has a strong association with neighbourhood activism of Strathcona and is a good example of the early workers' housing common to the neighbourhood. The owner has accepted the FSR and dwelling unit variances as full and fair compensation for designation of the house. Therefore, staff recommend that Council support the requisite Heritage Revitalization Agreement and designate the Chan House at 658 Keefer Street as Protected Heritage Property.

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