



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: October 30, 2007
Author: Annetta Guichon
Phone No.: 604.871.6627
RTS No.: 06971
VanRIMS No.: 11-3400-30
Meeting Date: November 15, 2007

TO: Standing Committee on Planning and Environment

FROM: Subdivision Approving Officer

SUBJECT: Strata Title Conversion: 19 - 23 and 55 - 59 North Renfrew Street

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the application to convert the previously occupied buildings at 19 - 23 North Renfrew Street and 55 - 59 North Renfrew Street (Lot E and Lot N of 14, THSL, Plans LMP4690 and LMP29710) to strata title ownership be approved in principle, but that pursuant to Section 242(5)(a) of the Strata Property Act, the strata plan shall not be signed unless the following conditions have been met within one year of the date of this approval:

1. Arrangements are made to the satisfaction of the City Engineer and the Director of Legal Services to allow for the existing parking use and access over the unopened City lane at the rear of the site;
2. Completion of all work required by the City Building Inspector, under the required permits, at no cost to the City, in order that these previously-occupied buildings substantially comply with all relevant City By-laws; and
3. Consolidation of the site.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

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

COUNCIL POLICY

Council policy is reflected in the City's Strata Title and Cooperative Conversion Guidelines, which outline factors which Council will consider in reviewing applications for converting previously occupied buildings to strata title ownership. Council approval is required specifically for all residential buildings containing six dwelling units or more.

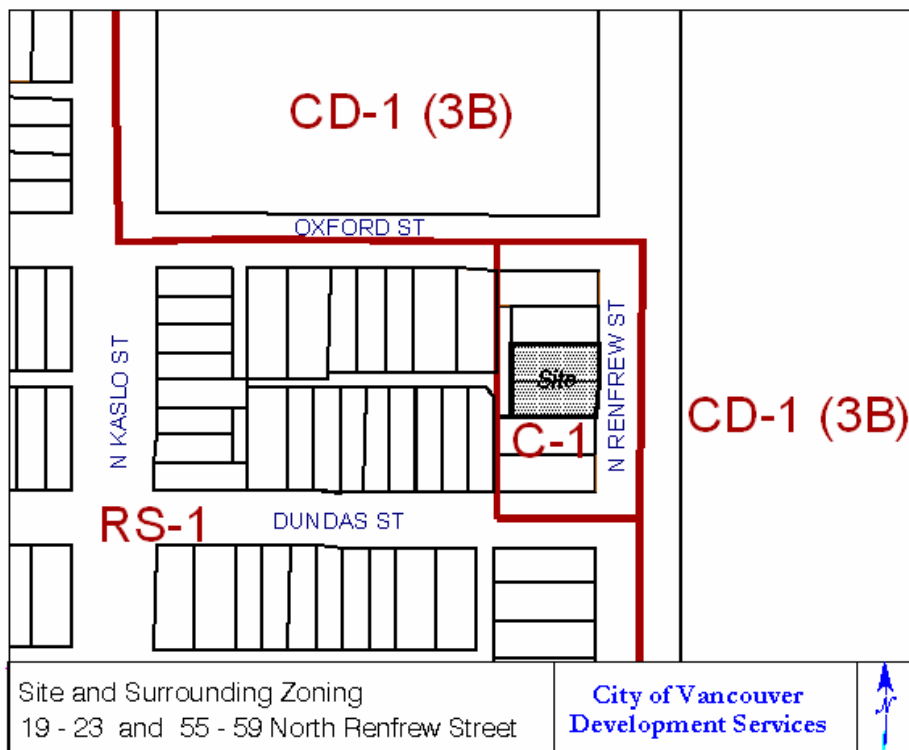
PURPOSE

Council approval is required for an application to convert the previously occupied buildings at 19 - 23 and 55 - 59 North Renfrew Street (Lot E and N of 14, THSL, Plans LMP4690 and LMP29710) to strata title ownership. A total of eight residential strata lots and four commercial strata lots are proposed for the two buildings.

BACKGROUND

The site is zoned C-1 and contains two separate three-storey, mixed-use buildings completed in 1998. The location of the site is shown below.

FIGURE 1



The buildings have been occupied by residential tenants since their completion in 1998. Of the eight units, four units are deemed to be occupied for the purposes of tenant response. Each unit is approximately 92.9 m² (1,000 sq. ft.) in area and rents are \$975.00 monthly. The owner indicates that the rents do not presently service the mortgage debt on the property. If the building remains as rental, rents would likely be raised at least 28% to cover mortgage and renovation financing.

DISCUSSION

In addition to Development Services, the City Engineer, the City Building Inspector and the Manager of the Housing Centre have reviewed this application.

The City Engineer has advised that the site must be consolidated for the strata conversion to be approved. The City Engineer has also advised that a portion of the surface parking at the rear of the two buildings is located on unopened lane, without appropriate authorization. Should the owner wish to maintain the existing surface parking configuration, it will be necessary to make arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager of Engineering Services and the Director of Legal Services for use of the unopened lane portion for parking purposes until such time as the lane portion is required for civic purposes.

The City's Strata Title and Cooperative Conversion Guidelines state that at least 2/3 of the tenants occupying the building must give written consent to an application to convert a previously occupied building to strata title ownership before Council can give favourable consideration to the proposal. Eight units were tenanted at the time the strata application was originally submitted, in May, 2005. The applicant submitted notarized declarations from five of the eight tenants, all of whom indicated support for the proposed conversion. Staff notified the existing tenants of the proposed conversion and the same five tenants again indicated support. The three other tenants in the buildings did not respond to the staff notification.

Currently, there are four tenants residing in the two buildings. All four tenants are in support of the proposal to convert the buildings to strata title ownership.

The Manager of the Housing Centre has the following comments:

"The Director of the Housing Centre has reviewed this application and supports the approval of the strata title conversion of 19 - 23 and 55 - 59 Renfrew Street. This support is based on the following reasons:

- The building was originally intended for strata titling, but because the original owner/developer was facing foreclosure and the current owner (then the mortgage guarantor) stepped in to finish construction and finalize the project, strata title registration was not completed;
- Current vacancy rates in the north-east sector of the city are 1.7%;
- The impact of the conversion of these 8 residential units from rental to strata title ownership will have a very small impact on the overall rate of vacancy in the area, noting that three of the present tenants intend to purchase their respective units; and

- All the tenants support the proposed conversion (four units are presently vacant). Two of the tenants hope to purchase their units. The other two tenants are aware that they may have to vacate their units if they are sold.

Taking into account these considerations, the Director of the Housing Centre is prepared to support the application.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing, the Subdivision Approving Officer supports this application.

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