

MEMORANDUM

February 7, 2008

TO: Mayor Sullivan and Councillors

CC: J. Rogers, City Manager
J. Andrews, Deputy City Manager
J. Ridge, Deputy City Manager
S. Baxter, City Clerk
J. Forbes-Roberts, General Manager of Community Services
F. Connell, Director of Legal Services
T. Timm, General Manager of Engineering Services
B. Toderian, Director of Planning
M. Flanigan, Director of Real Estate Services
L. Best, Director, Corporate Communications
J. Young, Assistant Director, Corporate Communications

FROM: V. Potter, Senior Rezoning Planner

SUBJECT: 1402 McRae Avenue, 3238 Granville Street - Rezoning Application

At City Council's Regular meeting of January 15, 2008, the above referenced rezoning application was approved for referral to a Public Hearing. At that time, Council asked for clarification and additional information on a number of items pertaining to the proposal. These included:

1. Information on the financial assessment undertaken to ascertain the compensation required for heritage retention;
 2. An understanding of what other development schemes were explored and the criteria used to evaluate them;
 3. An understanding of the precedent approval of this project might set for similar rezoning requests in First Shaughnessy;
 4. An assessment on the potential impact of the project on First Shaughnessy's stormwater capacity;
 5. An evaluation of environmental impacts that might occur as a result of the project, particularly with respect to the loss of existing trees.
1. Council received a "yellow memo" dated January 31, 2008 which reported back on item 1. This memo was posted on the City's website, and staff met with the Shaughnessy Heights Property Owner's Association (SHPOA), as well as a group of interested property owners, to further discuss this item.

2. The staff report dated January 2, 2008 provides, in Appendix F1-F4, sample variations of other development schemes explored during the pre-application phase of this project. At least 20 development schemes in total were explored with the applicant during the pre-application process, most representing variations on those included in Appendix F. Every pre-application scheme explored was evaluated against key criteria, including the scheme's ability to:

- Retain the "A" listed heritage house;
- Retain the "A" listed house and grounds in situ, as "best heritage practices" suggests;
- Achieve a good urban design and site planning response, taking into consideration potential neighbourhood impacts and a desire to achieve a high aesthetic quality;
- Provide adequate compensation to the owner; and
- Achieve other Council policy objectives (i.e., consistence with Community Vision, First Shaughnessy Official Development Plan).

Some schemes were immediately abandoned if they included heritage retention, but did not adequately compensate the developer. Other schemes were abandoned if the urban design and planning response was felt to be too severely compromised. Every scheme resulted in some Council policy to take precedence over another. For example, moving the "A" listed house close to The Crescent, as shown in Appendix F2, would have been contrary to several Council Policies which specifically seek preservation of heritage buildings *and* landscapes. (ARKS Vision direction 13.1; Heritage Policies and Guidelines). On the other hand, this type of scheme might have allowed for development of the remainder of the site more in keeping with the "predominantly single-family" form of development expressed in the First Shaughnessy Official Development Plan (FSODP).

At least five schemes, including those in Appendix F of the staff report, were shared with the co-design group brought together at the pre-application stage. That group, too, assessed these schemes against many of the criteria above. The proposal as shown in this application was among those assessed, and, on balance, seemed the most favoured of those explored and was the one chosen by the applicant to submit as a rezoning application. As discussed throughout the staff report, staff feel this rezoning application meets many of the key criteria listed above.

3. Shaughnessy residents who participated in the co-design meetings and who responded to neighbourhood notification expressed concern that approval of this rezoning application would set a precedent for other similar rezonings. Council asked staff to assess the likelihood of this. To do this, staff identified sites in First Shaughnessy that currently possess characteristics similar to the 1402 McRae Avenue/3238 Granville site, characteristics that under current policy make rezoning supportable. These characteristics include:

- a) Contain an "A" listed house on the Vancouver Heritage Register that is not yet protected from demolition through legal designation;
- b) Situated on an arterial (i.e. Granville Street, King Edward Blvd.);
- c) Situated near a shopping area;
- d) On a large site.

The results of this analysis were mapped, in Appendix 1 to this memo. As is evident, only three properties (indicted by dark circles) meet criterion a-c, although none are as close to the South Granville shopping area as is the current application. None of the three properties meets criterion "d", as each is on a single lot, approximately one-third the size of the 1402

McRae properties. It is possible that future land assemblies around these three sites could be achieved. This may not be economically viable, given all of the sites surrounding the three properties are already developed, unlike the situation with the current application.

It is important to note that each rezoning application is assessed under the policies applicable at the time. Council policy could change in the future.

4. Staff assessed the impact this project would have on First Shaughnessy's stormwater management system, and conclude that the results are actually net positive. The requirement for stormwater storage is set out in the First Shaughnessy Guidelines, where controlled rates are set for the discharge of stormwater to the existing combined sewer system. A stormwater storage system must be designed to prevent any flooding so a negative impact does not occur. Staff requires that a professional engineer design a system that controls the discharge and considers the potential for the site to generate water runoff and then design a holding tank system to ensure the sewer system is not over run by stormwater discharge. The design must consider all hard surfaces (impervious surfaces) and the storage capacity must provide for the capture of that runoff. This application, as any in First Shaughnessy, is expected to fully comply with this rigorous requirement and therefore be a net positive.

5. The staff report indicated that one positive environmental impact of this application was that more density is located nearby transit and shopping, thereby potentially reducing dependency on the auto. Council also asked what impact the removal of the treed area on the lower half of the site might have.

Tree removal could have two effects. One would be to the drainage capacity of the property, with the loss in the root system and replacement over approximately 35% of the property with impervious materials. As discussed in #4 above, staff has stringent requirements about how all stormwater from the site is handled, and does not anticipate the end result in this case to be negative.

A second effect of tree removal could be to air quality, with less vegetation to absorb carbon dioxide. The applicant's arborist reviewed this concern, and advised that there will be a 44% increase in the number of trees on site following project completion, not including shrubbery and other under-planting. As noted in the staff report, the arborist's conclusion was that, given the moderate to poor condition of the existing trees, selective tree retention would result in unacceptable safety risks. A full copy of the arborist's report is attached in Appendix 2.

We hope this additional assessment of the application is helpful.

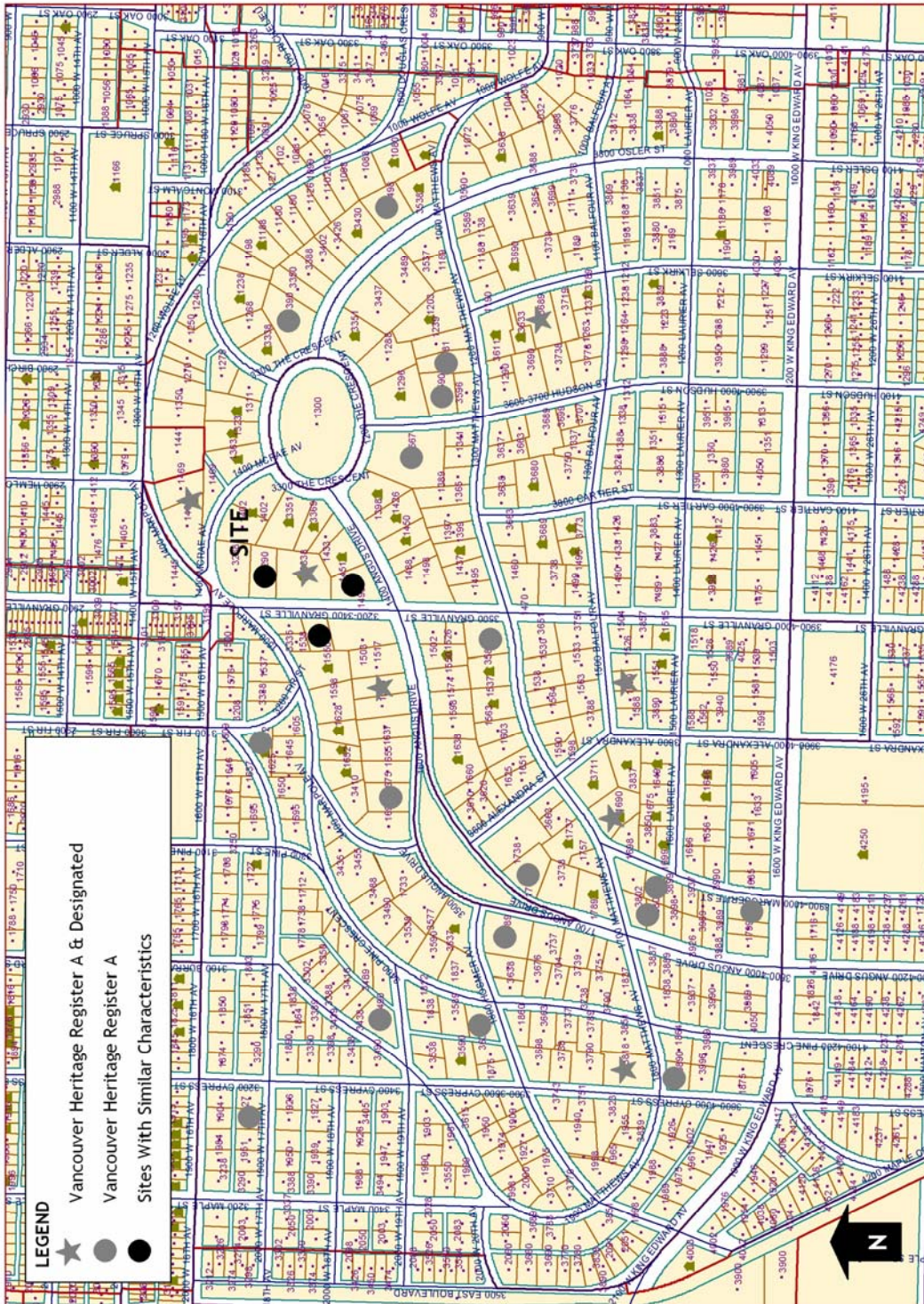
Regards,

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VP/ws

Appendix 1 - Map of Heritage A listed Homes in First Shaughnessy



Appendix 2 - Arborist's Report

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McRae Urban Forest - Tree Strategy

The Mc Rae development site contains 120 trees that are 8" DBH or greater. Dave Walsh, Certified Arborist was retained to assess the site. The arborist was asked to review the trees on site and consider their current health and stability and to comment on their suitability for retention under the proposed development plan. All trees have been rated on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being the highest quality rating. 62% of trees have been rated with a value of 3 or greater, illustrating the average to poor quality of this tree stand.

The greatest quantity of tree is Sycamore Maple which is a grouping in generally good health, unfortunately this grouping has a lean greater than 20 degree from vertical which compromises their long term viability. All the birch trees on site are in decline. The spacing of trees on the site is fairly close creating trees with very little taper. These trees are reliant on their neighbours for wind protection and stability and will need to be further assessed if they are to have long-term viability. Pruning the site for the health of the trees could compromise the integrity of the stand leaving taper less trees very vulnerable to wind damage. The above two paragraphs summarize the arborist's review which is attached.

The proposed landscape development will add 173 trees to the site. The trees slated for removal will be replaced at a rate of 144%, in addition to the proposed shrub and perennial plantings. These trees will be planted in accordance with BCSLA and BCLNA standards.

The trees proposed for the McRae development have been carefully chosen to fulfill important landscape objectives. Tree species are being selected to maximize long-term considerations for the site, views, shade/sun, privacy/open-space planning, etc. Red Sunset Maples will wrap the curve of McRae and guide Shaughnessy residents to Granville Street. A mix of coniferous and deciduous trees will be planted along the South property line will create a dense corridor and provides privacy to the site and their neighbours. There are also many specimen trees associated with this development that will act as focal points in the landscape, providing interest and a level of beauty and sophistication expected by Shaughnessy.