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CITY OF VANCOUVER

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ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: February 26, 2008
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Meeting Date: April 1, 2008

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Director of Planning

SUBJECT: 801 West Georgia Street (Hotel Georgia) - Replacement of the Heritage Revitalization Agreement

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council authorize the City to enter into a replacement Heritage Revitalization Agreement for the designated heritage building at 801 West Georgia Street (Hotel Georgia), containing registrable charges to secure the rehabilitation and long term protection of the building; and
- B. THAT Council instruct the Director of Legal Services to bring forward for enactment the by-law(s) to authorize the Heritage Revitalization Agreement.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services recommends approval of A and B.

COUNCIL POLICY

Vancouver Charter, Section 592(1) - Council may, by by-law, enter into a Heritage Revitalization Agreement under this section with the owner of heritage property.

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval of a replacement Heritage Revitalization Agreement to reflect the heritage conservation as proposed in the current development and building permit applications and to replace rather than amend the 1998 Heritage Revitalization Agreement as amended in 2002 and related charges which reflect an earlier proposal.

Section 592(1) Of the Vancouver Charter requires a by-law for the City to enter into a heritage revitalization agreement with the owner of heritage property. The owner of the 801 West Georgia Street property has agreed to the proposed form of replacement Heritage Revitalization Agreement.

This matter does not require a Public Hearing as the replacement Heritage Revitalization Agreement does not propose any change to the use or density of use on the site that is not otherwise authorized by the applicable zoning of the property.

BACKGROUND

In 1998, Council authorized a Heritage Revitalization Agreement to ensure the retention and restoration of the Hotel Georgia, and vested a significant heritage density bonus on the site, to be used in the development of a new hotel tower immediately north of the heritage building. The development application related to that form of development did not proceed and was ultimately withdrawn.

In 2002, the site was rezoned from DD to CD-1, to allow for residential use in the proposed new tower, as well as additional height and density, which were incorporated into the CD-1 by-law. The 1998 Heritage Revitalization Agreement was modified to relate to the CD-1 rezoning and supplemented by further registered charges securing the proposed seismic upgrading.

In 2006, the Hotel Georgia and new development site were acquired by the present owner, who has obtained approval for a new development application, with a revised form of development in accordance with the CD-1 by-law. The revised form of development included additional heritage conservation work, involving the dismantling and reconstruction of the Spanish Ballroom and adjoining Promenade on the second floor of the Hotel. Conservation of this interior space was not previously secured. The developer offered this additional level of restoration work in exchange for being able to change the use of the area previously identified as above-grade parking into additional hotel space. The parking will now be supplied by underground parking beneath the ballroom quadrant of the heritage building. There was no additional compensation necessary as a result of this new level of work. Council granted approval to the final form of development on December 11, 2007.

DISCUSSION

In reviewing the existing legal agreements on title to ensure that they remain relevant to the revised form of development and respond to the new Heritage Conservation Plan which will form part of the permit approval, staff have concluded that a replacement Heritage Revitalization Agreement is preferable to a further modification of the existing documents.

The updating to occur by the replacement Heritage Revitalization Agreement will reflect applicable development permit conditions, including implementation in accordance with the new Heritage Conservation Plan and supervision by a qualified heritage consultant, as well as minor "housekeeping" items such as references to the current permit numbers, all within the format of the City's current "standard approach" to Heritage Revitalization Agreements, which has evolved since the original 1998 Heritage Revitalization Agreement and 2002 modification agreement were registered.

The owner has agreed to the draft replacement Heritage Revitalization Agreement which has been prepared by Legal Services in consultation with the Planning Department.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

CONCLUSION

Given the past history of this site and the previous modification of and supplements to the 1998 Heritage Revitalization Agreement and related charges on title, staff believe that it is advantageous to replace the existing documents with a new Heritage Revitalization Agreement which reflects the revised form of development and new Heritage Conservation Plan, as well as updated language that is more consistent with the City's recent approach to heritage documents.

Staff therefore recommend that Council approve the replacement Heritage Revitalization Agreement.

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