



CITY OF VANCOUVER

POLICY REPORT DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING

Report Date: August 25, 2009
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TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Director of Planning
SUBJECT: Rezoning Policy for 7165 Granville Street (Shannon Mews)

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council is prepared to consider an application to rezone the Shannon Estate site at 7165 Granville Street from RS-6 to CD-1, provided that:

1. any application must be for comprehensive, not piecemeal re-development of the entire site;
2. the preliminary development principles set out in Appendix A of this report form the basis for staff review of any application;
3. the owner hold at least one public open house in the community, prior to the submission of an application, to seek public input into refining the development and design principles for the redevelopment of the site;
4. any application contain several distinct development alternatives for the site, including one that only explores "approved" and "uncertain" Arbutus Ridge/Kerrisdale/Shoughnessy (ARKS) Community Vision directions; and
5. following any application, the owner and City staff conduct a thorough public consultation process including, but not limited to, a facilitated community design workshop.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

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

COUNCIL POLICY

Relevant Council Policies for this site include:

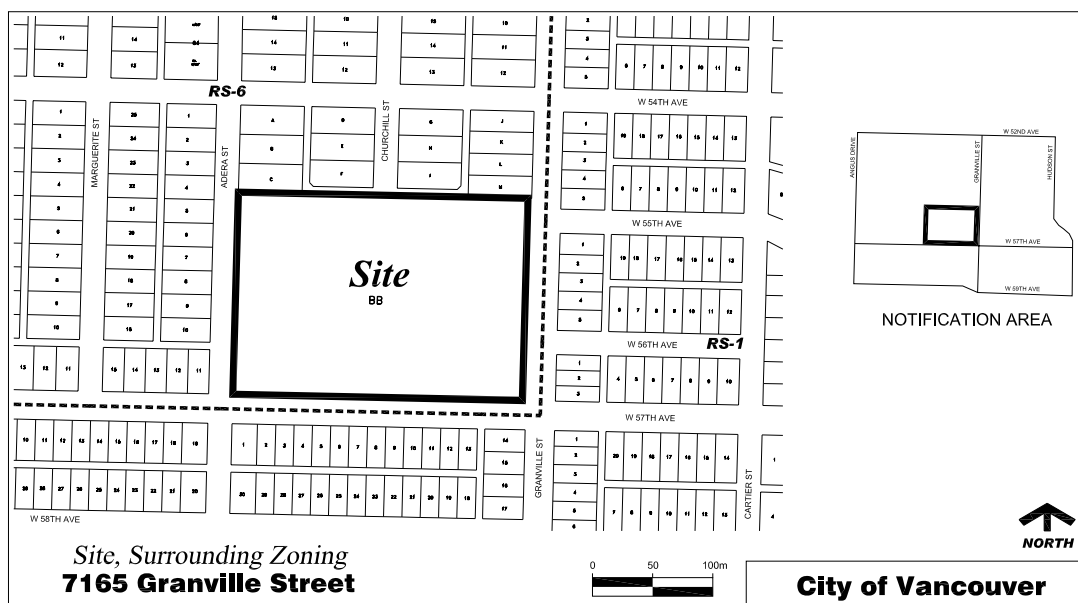
- Existing and surrounding Zoning - RS-6 (0.6 FSR, 10.7 m. height or 2 1/2 storeys);
- Arbutus Ridge/Kerrisdale/Shoughnessy (ARKS) Community Vision;
- Sect 14: Changes in CD-1 Zones;
- Community Amenity Contributions - Through Rezoning;
- Heritage Policies and Guidelines;
- Eco-density Charter and Actions;
- Action Item A-1: Rezoning Policy for Greener Buildings;
- Action Item A-2: Rezoning Policy for Greener Larger Sites (8 000 m²); and
- Short Term Incentives for Rental (STIR).

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to:

- Advise Council that a rezoning enquiry for this site has been made and what issues it may present;
- Advise Council of the unique circumstances and history of the site;
- Identify the Council priorities that are served by accepting a rezoning application;
- Outline for Council how treating this as a large site will provide an appropriate planning context to achieve Council approved policies;
- Recommend that Council direct staff to accept and review a rezoning application for comprehensive redevelopment of the site so that future planning for the site can be done through the rezoning process;
- Establish principles to guide comprehensive development and public discussion; and
- Recommend a process for public consultation.

Figure 1 - Site and Surrounding Zoning



BACKGROUND

Enquiry

Staff have received an Enquiry from Wall Corporation, the owners of the Shannon Estate (also known as Shannon Mews) concerning rezoning and redeveloping their 10 acre site. The site would normally be considered under various City policies for the redevelopment of large sites (over 2 acres). The Arbutus Ridge/Kerrisdale/Shaugnessy (ARKS) Community Vision requires a rezoning process for large sites zoned CD-1, but is silent on large sites not zoned CD-1, such as this one. Council direction is required for staff to consider a rezoning application of this site under the City's policies regarding large sites. Council endorsement of a process to guide the review of any application is also required.

Site Development and Planning History

The Shannon Estate is a 10 acre property on the west side of Granville Street and the north side of West 57th Avenue. It was developed for BT Rogers between 1915 and 1925 with a Beaux-Arts mansion, elaborate Italianate gardens, a gatehouse and coach house, and surrounded by a stone and concrete wall. The estate is listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register in the "A" category. The mansion and the perimeter wall are designated Heritage structures.

The site was rezoned to CD-1 in 1968 to permit the development of 2-storey rental townhouses which were built under a Development Permit issued in 1972 and Building Permits issued in 1973. The mansion, gate house and coach house were converted to residential suites and the formal gardens next to the mansion and wall were retained. The property was not subdivided.

Council repealed the CD-1 By-law in May 1973 and the RS-1 zoning was re-instated, making the current residential multi-family development non-conforming. The current RS-6 zoning was established in 1996 along with the neighbourhood to the north and west.

DISCUSSION

Staff is left without formal Council approved guidance on how to assess a redevelopment proposal and rezoning application for this site since the existing zoning does not address the particular characteristics of the site and the ARKS Vision policy that addresses large sites applies to existing CD-1 sites only.

A standard zoning category, such as the current RS-6 zoning, contains inherent assumptions about standard lot sizes and dimensions, setbacks, street frontages, etc. It cannot and is not intended to provide useful guidance as to the appropriate nature and form of a redevelopment proposed on a large site that does not conform to that pattern. Shannon Mews, with its particular characteristics (designated mansion and perimeter wall, large formal gardens and public streets only on the perimeter), is a large site that requires a more comprehensive process to guide consideration of land use change as well as its own design and development guidelines.

The ARKS Community Vision does not set out specific uses, height or densities for any of its large sites. Section 14.1 of the ARKS Community Vision requires that redevelopment of large sites zoned CD-1 proceed through a rezoning process “in order to ensure appropriate community consultation and to provide the City with the ability to deny or impose conditions on the proposed development”. Council could direct that the 10 acre Shannon Mews site proceed through a rezoning process that would determine uses, overall site design, height and density.

City Practice for Large Sites

It has been City policy and practice to use the potential of large redevelopment sites to achieve comprehensive new communities that are sustainable environmentally, socially, economically, and culturally. The new communities created on larger sites should provide a full range of services and amenities, be socially inclusive, and enrich the larger neighbourhoods of which they are part, as well as the city as a whole.

Many of the planning policies across the City identify sites over 2 acres as “special sites”, “large sites”, or “CD-1s” and do not specifically prescribe densities or heights, but rather provide direction on land use or the rezoning process that would be followed in the event that redevelopment is proposed. Height and density are determined through a comprehensive rezoning process.

Eco-Density Charter, Sustainability and Rezoning Policy for Greener Larger Sites

The City’s Ecodensity Charter and Actions also recognize the value and opportunity that sites over 2 acres provide for advancing the City’s sustainability ambitions through the rezoning process.

Considering a rezoning application for this site would invoke Action Item A-2 of the Ecodensity Charter that all rezoning applications that involve land generally two acres or more will require:

- A business case analysis to explore the viability of campus or district energy systems;
- An overall site design with layout and orientation approaches that reduce energy needs, facilitate passive energy solutions, incorporate urban agricultural opportunities, and replicate natural systems where feasible;
- A Sustainable Transportation Demand Management Strategy;
- A sustainable rainwater management plan that utilizes sustainable strategies to use and manage rainwater on site;
- A solid waste diversion strategy; and
- In residential development, consideration of a range of unit types and tenures, enhanced affordability and opportunities for the development of non-market housing.

Housing

There are currently 162 rental housing units on the site with 15 apartments in the original buildings. The rest are large 2-storey townhouses and apartments built in the 1970’s. Rental vacancy rates in Vancouver are very low and any development of the site should address the replacement of the existing number of rental units. A rezoning application for the entire site provides a good opportunity for the City to ensure that rental units are replaced or increased,

that the opportunities in the Short Term Incentives for Rental (STIR) programme are available and that a range of affordable and non-market housing can be considered.

Heritage

The Heritage values of the site are well documented in the Statement of Significance that the owner has submitted to the City. As indicated above, the mansion and the perimeter wall are designated structures. The coach house, gatehouse and gardens have heritage value.

A preliminary review by the Vancouver Heritage Commission and a special sub-committee also identified that there was value and interest in the over-all layout and concept of the site design of a formal mansion with related gardens, the outdoor “rooms” created by buildings and gardens and the overall sense of enclosure that is provided by the wall. New buildings should be sited to add and enhance the views to the mansion and be respectful of the scale of the mansion. These are valuable elements to retain and require the site to be considered in its entirety as a “large site” through any consideration of redevelopment.

POSSIBLE PUBLIC BENEFITS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

In addition to the issues specifically raised above, the following have been identified by City staff as being worthy of consideration as potential public benefits generated by any rezoning:

- an upgrade to local seniors centre facilities;
- addressing the active parks needs for new and existing residents;
- addressing the community needs regarding indoor recreation supplied by community centres; and
- the purchase of heritage density from Density Bank.

This is a preliminary list and other potential public benefits and infrastructure needs will also be raised and discussed through any rezoning process.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The policies of the ARKS Community Vision and Ecodensity Action A-2 as well as long-established City practice would require considerable public engagement throughout an application process, including early dialogue with the community prior to preparation of alternative options. This would be appropriate for this site. In addition, all rezonings must include formal Public Hearings and be approved by City Council.

Recommended Process:

1. at least one open house, prior to any application, run by the proponent - based on the Principles in Appendix A;
2. a formal rezoning application - identifying options for development and illustrating adherence to principles, including one option that explores only “approved” and “uncertain” ARKS Community Vision directions; and
3. at least one extensive, facilitated community design workshop to review principles and identify and develop site development options and opportunities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

CONCLUSION

Planning staff conclude that the appropriate way to consider redevelopment of this site is through an application to rezone the site for comprehensive development and a CD-1 by-law.

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SHANNON ESTATE - PRELIMINARY REDEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Revitalization of the Shannon Estate property would enhance City goals on Housing, Heritage, Sustainability and Social Development.

This large 10 acre site with its Beaux Arts brick mansion, formal Italianate gardens and mature landscape stands out as a unique site in this area of Vancouver.

The Shannon site requires comprehensive re-development to preserve and further enhance the heritage value inherent in the property that is in line with the City of Vancouver's EcoDensity Charter and evolving Greenest City Goals. The re-development of the site as a contiguous parcel can achieve significant community benefits.

Site Development Guiding Principles

1. Replace and increase the amount of market rental housing units and provide a variety of housing types to accommodate a range of income levels and household types.
2. Design must pursue best practices in sustainable design for large sites. Development to strive to incorporate the following:
 - Achieve LEED Gold or equivalent;
 - Campus or district energy system;
 - Passive solar design;
 - Urban agriculture;
 - Incorporate water efficient strategies including limiting potable water use for landscaping;
 - Replication of natural systems; and
 - Facilitate pedestrian, bicycle and public transit systems enabling Transportation Demand Management.
3. Creative design to address the visual impact of development on residential neighbours.
4. Respect the historic values of the site and explore retention & conservation of the maximum amount of "Character Defining Elements" described within the "Statement of Significance" including:
 - the Mansion - designated Heritage structure;
 - perimeter wall - designated Heritage structure;
 - Gate house;
 - Coach house;
 - formal access off Granville Street;
 - formal gardens to south and east of mansion;

- perimeter landscaping;
- Copper Beech trees; and
- spatial relationship between the mansion and the landscaping, etc.

New development should seek to compliment the existing “secret garden” aspect of the site, while providing axial sight lines to the mansion and permitting discreet access points onto the property for the use of the public

5. Provide public park amenity on site that offers a diversity of recreational activities including active and passive uses and provides accessibility and interest for all age groups and physical abilities. The neighbourhood park standard is 2.75 acres per 1,000 new residents.
6. Fully consider and test higher density options to achieve sustainability, complete-community and public benefit goals, with a high standard for design creativity that addresses other guiding principles.
7. Maintain and improve the garden character of the whole site - this includes minimizing the building footprint and increasing the pervious surfaces over the current condition.
8. Organize building massing to:
 - create new axial sight line views of Mansion from flanking public sidewalks and streets;
 - create well proportioned private, semi-private, public courtyards and public rooms; and
 - avoid overcrowding of the mansion and its contiguous historic gardens.
9. Design of new development should respect the various eras of the site's history as part of an “evolved cultural landscape” while offering architectural variety and a contemporary interpretation (not replication) of older forms and detailing. New buildings should be of their time and should have distinct forms, providing a richer architectural expression.
10. Limit access to underground parking to 57th Avenue and minimize surface parking areas; vehicular access to be located away from public park areas.
11. Investigate the potential for other appropriate uses including retail opportunities at Granville Street and 57th Avenue.