



Supports Item No. 2
P&E Committee Agenda
October 22, 2009

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: September 21, 2009
Contact: Liza Jimenez
Contact No.: 604.873.7975
RTS No.: 08349
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: October 22, 2009

TO: Standing Committee on Planning and Environment
FROM: Managing Director of Social Development Department
SUBJECT: Single Room Accommodation Permit for 31 W. Pender (Pender Hotel)

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve an SRA Permit for the Pender Hotel, located at 31 West Pender Street, to convert 40 units in order to create 23 self-contained SRA rooms.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

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

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager RECOMMENDS approval of the aforementioned.

COUNCIL POLICY

On October 21, 2003, Council enacted the Single Room Accommodation By-law ("SRA By-law") to regulate the conversion and demolition of single room accommodation. Owners wanting to convert or demolish SRA-designated rooms must apply for and obtain a conversion/demolition permit. Council decides each application on its own merits and may refuse the permit, approve the permit, or approve the permit with conditions.

On October 23, 2003 Council amended the Zoning and Development By-law to require an SRA Permit prior to the issuance of a Development Permit.

SUMMARY & PURPOSE

This report is seeking Council's approval to issue an SRA Permit for the Pender Hotel (31 W. Pender St.) to convert 40 rooms into 23 self-contained rooms with cooking facilities and bathrooms. This property is owned by BC Housing and will serve to house senior aboriginal

people at risk of homelessness. All of the units in the building will remain SRA-designated regardless of issuance of an SRA Permit.

BACKGROUND

In October 2003, Council enacted the Single Room Accommodation (SRA) By-law to regulate the conversion and demolition of single room accommodation. An owner wanting to change the configuration of an existing SRA-designated unit must apply for and obtain approval from Council for an SRA Permit, which must be issued prior to the issuance of a building or development permit. Council assesses each application and may refuse the permit, approve the permit outright, or approve the permit subject to conditions such as a Housing Agreement, a Heritage Revitalization Agreement, and payment of a fee towards the City's replacement housing fund.

This application proposes to create 23 new self-contained rooms at the Pender Hotel (31 W. Pender Street) by renovating and combining the existing 40 sleeping units.

DISCUSSION

The Pender Hotel is a 3-storey building, identified as a category "B" on the heritage registry. It is located at 31 W. Pender in the Downtown District (DD), on the north side of Pender Street between Abbott and Carrall Street, see Figure 1 below. The second and third floors serve as a residential hotel with 40 rooms. The ground floor consists of a vacant commercial retail unit that eventually will be leased. BC Housing purchased this building in 2008.

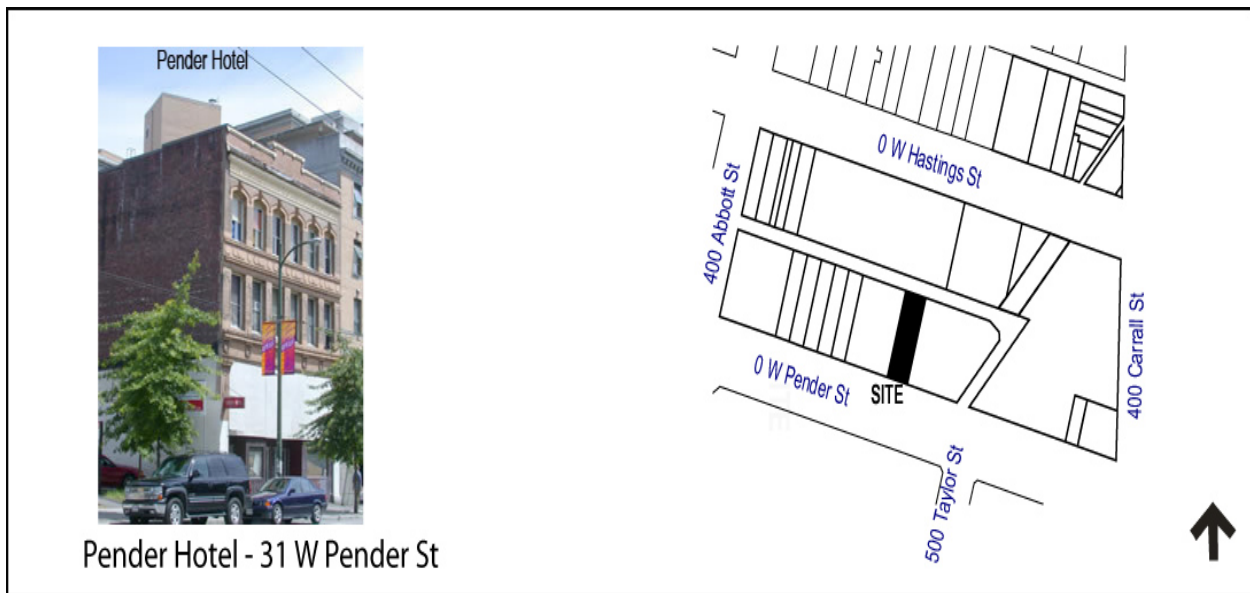


Figure 1: Pender Hotel, 31 W. Pender Street

The applicant is proposing to do renovations in order to construct 23 self-contained rooms with cooking facilities and private bathrooms.

As outlined in the Vancouver Charter, Council is required to consider a number of factors in deciding whether or not to grant an SRA conversion or demolition permit. These factors include:

1. Accommodation that will be available to the tenants affected by the conversion or demolition;
 2. Supply of low cost accommodation;
 3. Condition of the building;
 4. Need to replace and improve single room accommodation in the city; and
 5. Recent history of the land and building, and the use and occupancy of the building.
1. **Accommodation for Affected Tenants:** There are no affected tenants as the Pender Hotel is vacant.
 2. **Supply of Low-Cost Accommodation:** The low-income stock in the DTES is estimated to have declined by just over 1% between January 2003, when the by-law was enacted and the end of April 2009. The low-income housing stock was approximately 10,000 in 2003 and 9,890 by April 2009; a 110-unit decrease. By the end of 2009, with new non-market housing coming on stream the low-income stock will increase to over 10,500 units.

Recent new construction of social housing for singles in the DTES includes:
 - Woodward's (131 West Hastings): 125 self-contained rooms for low-income singles currently under construction.
 - The Lux (65 East Hastings): 92 self-contained rooms recently opened and operated by Raincity Housing and Support Society for people who are homeless or at-risk. This project is on City-owned land, funded by the Provincial Homeless Initiative with BC Housing providing the capital and operating funding and Vancouver Coastal Health funding support services.
 3. **Condition of the Building:** Like many buildings constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Pender Hotel requires upgrades. The owner, BC Housing, is renovating the building to improve the life and safety measures such as providing new exterior windows, new mechanical ventilation system, new flooring, new elevator lift, and security system.
 4. **Need to Improve and Replace Single Room Accommodation:** Since the enactment of the SRA By-law in 2003, there have been 7 SRA conversion or demolition permits issued for SRA buildings in the DTES, which resulted in a net loss of 88 SRA-designated rooms. This includes the loss of 26 units at the Pennsylvania Hotel in order to convert sleeping units into fully renovated, self-contained rooms dedicated for low-income singles and operated by a non-profit organization. Granting this SRA Permit for the Pender Hotel will not affect its SRA designation; all the rooms would remain SRA-designated including the new ones.

Regarding improving the stock, the Province and the City have purchased and/or secured leases for 25 SRO buildings in the DTES over the past few years - the Pender Hotel is one. The City has provided \$5 million for renovations to 10 hotels; the Pender is not one of these. These recent purchases serve to improve and secure the *existing* stock from potential closures, unnecessary vacancies, and re-development, while providing safe, supported, and guaranteed low-income housing.

5. **History of Building and Land:** This property has a history of poor maintenance and as a result was ordered to be closed by the Chief Building Official because it was unsafe to occupy in February, 2006. Provincial Rental Housing Corporation (BC Housing) purchased the vacant building in 2008.

Staff supports this SRA Permit application because improving the existing stock of SRO units is a housing objective in the DTES Housing Plan. The renovations to the Pender Hotel will make the units more livable by providing private bathrooms and cooking facilities. It is important that tenants have the ability to prepare their own meals as access to good nutrition is important to health and wellbeing. The units will be part of the centralized Supported Housing Registry (SHR) where tenants will pay rents equivalent to 30% of their income.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommends approval of an SRA Permit to convert 40 units in order to construct 23 self contained units with private bathrooms and cooking facilities. The loss of 17 rooms will be offset by the gain of better quality rooms. The building is undergoing major renovations to ensure improved life and safety measures and will be operated by a non-profit housing provider. Pender Hotel will be part of the central Supportive Housing Registry (SHR) offered by BC Housing and rents will be geared to 30% of incomes.

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CITY OF VANCOUVER
COMMUNITY SERVICES
Housing Centre

**SINGLE ROOM ACCOMMODATION
CONVERSION* or DEMOLITION*
PERMIT APPLICATION**

SR No. SR400026

Civic Address: 31 West Pender Street
 Legal Description: Lot B & lot 31 Subdivision _____ Block 29 District Lot 541 Plan 210
 Building Name: Pender Hotel

This area must be completed by the person signing this application.

Your Name: JAMES WELDON You are the:

Mailing Address: #1701 4555 Kingsway 01 Property Owner
 City: BURNABY BC 02 Agent for Property Owner
 Postal Code: V5H 4V8
 Phone Number: 604.456.8841
 Company Name: PROVINCIAL RENTAL HOUSING CORPORATION

Note: If the applicant is NOT the property owner, a letter of consent signed by the owner must also be submitted.

Owner's information (if owner is a corporation, provide Incorporation Certificate and names and addresses of all directors & associates):

Property Owner's Name <u>PROVINCIAL RENTAL HOUSING CORPORATION</u>	
Address: <u>#1701 4555 Kingsway</u>	City: <u>BURNABY</u>
Postal Code: <u>V5H 4V8</u>	Phone Number: <u>604.433.1711</u>
Property Owner's Name	
Address:	
City:	
Postal Code:	
Phone Number:	
Property Owner's Name	
Address:	
City:	
Postal Code:	
Phone Number:	

This application is to: (Check applicable box)

001 <input type="checkbox"/> Convert* occupancy of designated room(s)	Total # of storeys in this building: <u>4</u>
002 <input type="checkbox"/> Change term or nature of tenancy of designated room(s)	Total # of SRA rooms in this building: <u>40</u>
003 <input type="checkbox"/> Change frequency of rent payments for designated room(s)	Total # of non-SRA rooms in this building: _____
004 <input type="checkbox"/> Convert* vacant designated room(s)	
005 <input type="checkbox"/> Repair or alter designated room(s)	
006 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demolish* designated room(s)	

*see definitions of "conversion" and "demolition" on reverse side of form under "Explanatory Notes"

Describe nature of the proposed conversion or demolition:

The units will be reprofiled in order to create larger self contained suites that will provide long term housing for independent aboriginal seniors at risk of homelessness

City of Vancouver Single Room Accommodation Conversion or Demolition Permit Application - continued

THIS SECTION MUST BE COMPLETED:	OFFICE USE
Are there any permanent residents needing to relocate as a result of this proposed conversion?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
If Yes, you must provide the following information:	
1. The number of permanent residents that will be affected? _____	
2. A list of names of the residents needing relocation, their room nos. and length of residency	
3. Proposed relocation strategy for existing tenants	
You must also include with this application the following required supporting documents:	
1. An affidavit, sworn by the owner or, if the owner is a corporation, by a director of the corporation, setting out why the owner wants to convert or demolish the designated room	
2. Records required under the Hotel Guest Registration Act or Hotel Room Tax Act, tax <i>N/A</i> assessment records, guest ledgers, and daily rent receipts, for the current calendar year and for the three immediately preceding calendar years, in respect of the designated room	
3. One set of floor plans of the existing and proposed floor layout as described below*	
4. Tentative schedule for construction (if applicable)	

* Explanatory Notes:

- Definition of "conversion" or "convert" means the following under the Single Room Accommodation By-law:
 - "(a) a change in the form of occupancy, intended form of occupancy, or customary form of occupancy of a designated room from living accommodation for a permanent resident to living accommodation for a transient guest or to another purpose,
 - (b) a change in the term or nature of the tenancy to which a permanent resident has the right in respect of a designated room,
 - (c) a change in the frequency of the rent payments a permanent resident must make in respect of a designated room,
 - (d) an occupancy or use, or the suffering or allowing of an occupancy or use, of a vacant designated room for a purpose other than living accommodation for a permanent resident,
 - (e) a repair or alteration to a designated room or any improvement or fixture in it or a replacement of any such improvement or fixture, except for repairs or alterations that are minor in nature and have no material effect on the enjoyment by permanent residents of their living accommodation,
 - (f) a reclassification of a building or any portion of a building from Class 1-residential to any other class referred to in the Assessment Act and its regulations, or
 - (g) a loss of exemption in respect of a designated room from an obligation to pay or remit hotel room tax under the Hotel Room Tax Act and its regulations;"
- Definition of "demolition" or "demolish" means the following under the Single Room Accommodation By-law: "to pull, knock, or tear down or to raze, wholly or partially, a designated room"
- Floor plans must be legible, drawn to a scale NOT less than 1/8" to 1', and must:
 - (a) Include dimensions and layout of all floor levels including basement and underground parking;
 - (b) Identify on each floor:
 - rooms that provide accommodation for permanent residents;
 - rooms that provide accommodation for transient guests (tourists);
 - rooms that provide other non-residential accommodation uses (e.g., lounge, storage rooms, etc.);
 - (c) Indicate on each floor the square footage of all rooms and common areas;

Office Use Only

As owner or owner's agent, I have verified that the information contained within this document and associated applications and plans is correct, and describes a use, a building or a work which complies with all relevant by-laws and statutes. I acknowledge that responsibility for by-law compliance rests with the owner and the owner's employees, agents and contractors. I will indemnify and save harmless the City of Vancouver, its officials, employees and agents against all claims, liabilities and expenses of every kind, in respect of anything done or not done pursuant to this application or fact sheet or ensuing permit, including negligence and/or the failure to observe all by-laws, acts or regulations.

Further, I acknowledge that any information and documents provided with this SRA conversion/demolition permit application will be attached to the report to Council and as such, be made available to the public.

SIGNED AT VANCOUVER, BC THIS 26th DAY OF August 2007  Signature of Applicant

