



REFERRAL REPORT

Report Date: June 9, 2020
Contact: Theresa O'Donnell
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: June 23, 2020

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability in consultation with the General Manager of Arts, Culture and Community Services

SUBJECT: CD-1 Text Amendment: 475 Alexander Street (Japanese Hall)

RECOMMENDATION

A. THAT the General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability be instructed to make an application to amend the text of CD-1 (Comprehensive Development) District (337) By-law No. 7434 for the Japanese Hall at 475 Alexander Street [*PID 018-834-477, Lot B Block 38 District Lot 196 Plan LMP17696*] to increase the maximum floor space ratio from 2.17 to 2.21 to allow for a mezzanine to be added to one of the existing buildings for programming and storage space, and that the application be referred to public hearing, together with:

- (i) draft CD-1 By-law amendments, generally as presented in Appendix A; and
- (ii) the recommendation of the General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability to approve the application;

FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to prepare the necessary amending by-law generally in accordance with Appendix A for consideration at public hearing.

B. THAT Recommendation A be adopted on the following conditions:

- (i) THAT the passage of the above resolution creates no legal rights for the property owner or any other person, or obligation on the part of the City; any expenditure of funds or incurring of costs is at the risk of the person making the expenditure or incurring the cost;

- (ii) THAT any approval that may be granted following the public hearing shall not obligate the City to enact a by-law rezoning the property, and any costs incurred in fulfilling requirements imposed as a condition of rezoning are at the risk of the property owner; and
- (iii) THAT the City and all its officials, including the Approving Officer, shall not in any way be limited or directed in the exercise of their authority or discretion, regardless of when they are called upon to exercise such authority or discretion.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report assesses an amendment to the CD-1 (337) By-law for 475 Alexander Street. This CD-1 district, created in 1995, contains two buildings owned and operated by the non-profit organization, The Vancouver Japanese Language School and Japanese Hall (Vancouver Nihon-Go Gakko Narabi Ni Nikkei Jin Kaikan) (the “Japanese Hall”). The amendment proposes an increase to the floor space ratio (FSR) from 2.17 to 2.21, or increase in floor area of 66.9 sq. m (720 sq. ft.), to accommodate the addition of a mezzanine to provide storage and programming space. Staff recommend that the application be made and be referred to a public hearing with the recommendation of the General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability to approve it, subject to the public hearing.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- CD-1 (337) By-law No. 7434, (enacted June 6, 1995, amended March 1, 2011)
- Downtown Eastside Local Area Plan (2014, amended 2019)
- Community Amenity Contributions Policy for Rezoning (1999, amended 2020)
- Development Cost Levy By-law No. 9755 (2008, amended 2019)
- Assessment of Community Serving Spaces Bulletin (2018, amended 2019)
- Making Space for Arts and Culture: Cultural Infrastructure Plan (2019)

REPORT

Background/Context

1. Site and Context

The site is located on the northwest corner of Alexander Street and Jackson Avenue, directly adjacent to the Paueru Gai/Powell Street neighbourhood within the Downtown Eastside. It is developed with two buildings, owned and operated by the Japanese Hall, to deliver community programs.

Shown in Figure 1, the surrounding context includes the Railtown I-4 (Historic Industrial) District to the north. This zoning district holds one of the city’s first industrial zones and is developed with low and mid-rise industrial buildings with the exception of a six-storey supportive housing building. South of the site is the Downtown-Eastside/Oppenheimer Official Development Plan (DEOD) area, containing a mix of heights and uses for social housing, rental housing, older one-family dwellings, commercial retail, industrial and Oppenheimer Park.

Figure 1 – Site and surrounding area

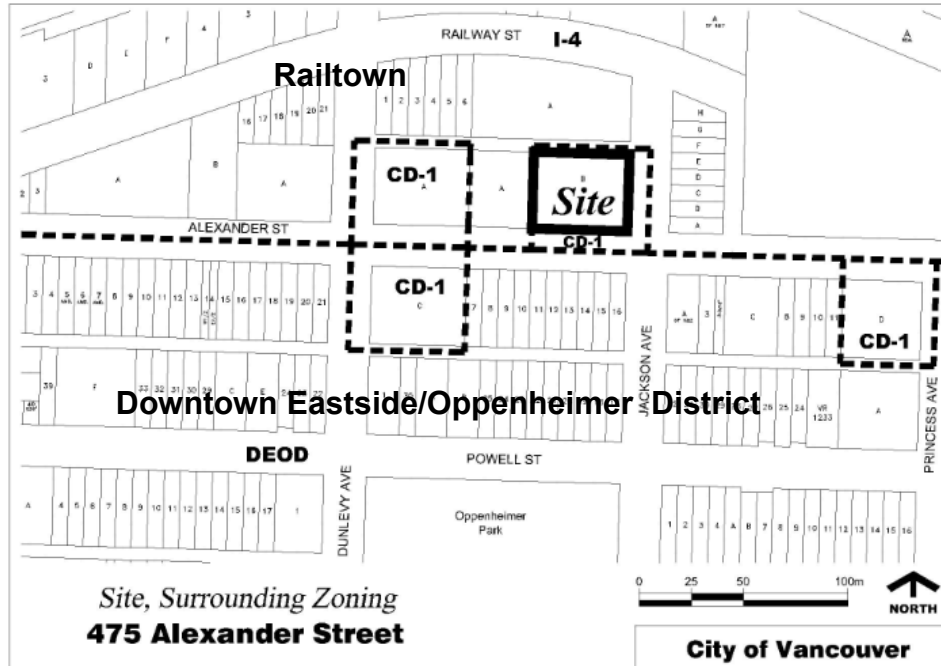


Figure 2 shows the two existing buildings on the site. The two-storey building to the west, labeled “1928 Japanese Hall” was built in 1928 (the “1928 Building”). It is listed as Class ‘B’ in the Vancouver Heritage Register and is designated as a National Historic Site by the Federal Government. The building to the east is the four-storey “2000 Japanese Hall”, built in 2000 (the “2000 Building”). Changes associated with this text amendment are only contained within the 2000 Building. No alterations to the 1928 Building are proposed.

Figure 2 – Aerial view showing the two buildings, the 1928 Building and the 2000 Building



Originally housed in a wooden structure in 1906, the Vancouver Japanese Language School actively used the 1928 Building from 1928 to 1941. During World War II, when Japanese Canadians were forcibly removed and interned, the 1928 Building was included in the Canadian Government confiscation of Japanese Canadian-owned properties and businesses. Once Japanese Canadians were eventually allowed freedom of movement and settlement in 1949,

the community re-opened the 1928 Building in 1953. The 1928 Building was the only building returned to Japanese Canadians after the internment. The organization erected the adjoining 2000 Building half a century later. Since opening its doors, the non-profit has delivered valuable social, cultural, and educational programs to the community. In 2019, the 1928 Building was designated as a National Historic Site.

2. Policy Context

Approved in 2014, the *Downtown Eastside Plan* creates a framework of policies, programs, and plans towards a more liveable, safe, and supportive place for a diversity of residents. Policies within the Plan seek to better support Japanese Canadian culture and heritage through events, community programming, and strategic development. The proposed amendment is consistent with these policies for revitalization and creation of celebration opportunities for Japanese Canadians.

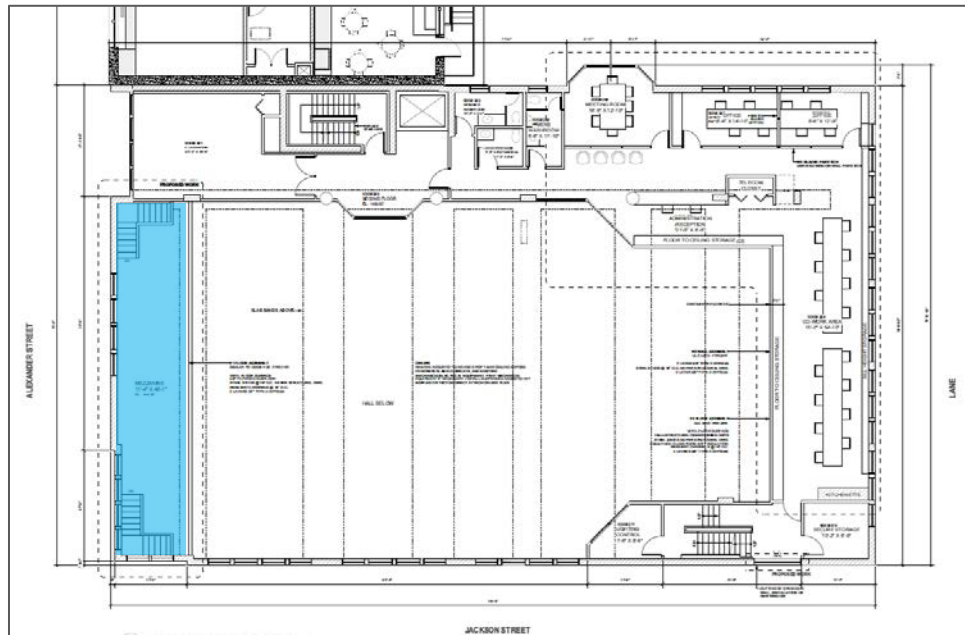
In 2019, Council approved *Making Space for Arts and Culture: Cultural Infrastructure Plan* as part of Vancouver's culture plan, *Culture/Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture*. *Making Space* lays out the City's long-term vision and commitment to address acute space challenges, and sets a 10-year target of 800,000 square feet of new, repurposed or expanded affordable cultural space, as well as policies and tools to support no net loss of space. It prioritizes support for cultural heritage and recognition of cultural redress in neighborhoods where communities have suffered from discriminatory policies and actions, including the expropriation of land and property. The plan outlines support for the Japanese Canadian community in exploring space opportunities and preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Strategic Analysis

1. Proposal

The application proposes to amend the CD-1 (337) By-law to increase the floor space ratio from 2.17 to 2.21 or the maximum allowable floor area from 3,627 sq. m to 3,694 sq. m (39,044 sq. ft. to 39,764 sq. ft.). The increase in floor area of 66.9 sq. m (720 sq. ft.) would allow a mezzanine to be built at the ground-level atrium space in the 2000 Building, shown in blue in Figure 3. The proposal would not alter the 1928 Building.

Figure 3 – Floor plan showing proposed mezzanine (in blue) with atrium and second floor (in white)



The modest expansion will allow for more sufficiently sized programming space to better meet the needs of the organization. The mezzanine will accommodate cultural programming opportunities and include break-out space for language classes, co-working space, and storage space for chairs, tables, and recreation equipment used in the adjacent atrium space for events, classes, and activities, including the activities of the child care facility located in the building.

The exterior wall under the mezzanine will provide space for a digital interactive screen, as shown in Figure 4. The Japanese Hall plans to project historical and cultural information pertaining to the Japanese Canadian experience, creating an interactive experience for visitors.

Figure 4 – Rendering showing proposed mezzanine with interactive screen below



In addition to the amendment to the FSR, a further amendment is proposed to address an existing under-height basement space located in the 1928 Building. This space is mostly earthen floor with a ceiling height that is lower than normal, but higher than the 1.2 m height that typically allows for exclusion of the floor space. This non-habitable space has been excluded from the FSR calculation in previous development permits issued for the site, although the CD-1 (337) By-law does not make specific provision to do so. Staff propose adding a provision to exclude this floor space and have included one in the draft by-law in Appendix A.

2. Transportation and Parking

The CD-1 (337) By-law contains a minimum requirement for 25 off-street parking spaces and one loading space, which are provided in the existing development. Given the minor increase to the floor area to allow for programming and storage space, staff do not propose any changes to the CD-1 (337) By-law parking section.

PUBLIC INPUT

A rezoning information site sign was installed on the property on December 10, 2019. Application information and an online comment form was provided on the City of Vancouver Rezoning Centre webpage (vancouver.ca/rezoning). Staff received no public comments.

PUBLIC BENEFITS

Development Cost Levies (DCL) – Development Cost Levies (DCLs) collected from development help pay for facilities made necessary by growth, including parks, childcare facilities, replacement housing (social/non-profit housing) and engineering infrastructure.

The proposed additional floor area is subject to the City-wide DCLs and City-wide Utilities DCL. Based on the rates in effect as of September 30, 2019 the expanded floor space is expected to qualify for a nominal DCL charges totalling \$20 as a cultural community centre.

Community Amenity Contribution (CAC) – Within the context of the City's *Financing Growth Policy*, an offer of a Community Amenity Contribution to address the impacts of rezoning can be anticipated from the owner of a rezoning site. CACs typically include either the provision of on-site amenities or a cash contribution toward other public benefits and they take into consideration community needs, area deficiencies and the impact of the proposed development on City services.

The *Community Amenity Contributions Policy for Rezonings* policy allows for rezoning applications that are staff-initiated to be considered for a CAC exemption. After considering the circumstances of this proposed minor expansion, staff recommend there be no CAC.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on rates in effect as of September 30, 2019, it is anticipated that the project will generate \$20 in DCLs from the addition of new floor area.

No additional CAC or public art contribution is applicable.

CONCLUSION

Staff have concluded that the proposed increase in floor area by 66.9 sq. m (720 sq. ft.) is supported as it allows for opportunities for greater programming of the community space. The General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability and the General Manager of Arts, Culture and Community Services recommend that the application be made and referred to public hearing, together with the draft by-law provisions generally as set out in Appendix A, and that it be approved, subject to the public hearing.

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475 Alexander Street (Japanese Hall)
PROPOSED BY-LAW PROVISIONS
to amend CD-1 (337) By-law No. 7434

Note: A By-law to amend CD-1 (337) By-law No. 7434 will be prepared generally in accordance with the provisions listed below, subject to change and refinement prior to posting.

1. This By-law amends the indicated provisions of By-law 7434.
2. In section 3.1, Council strikes out “2.17” and substitutes “2.21”.
3. In section 3.3, Council:
 - (a) renumbers subsection (c) as (d); and
 - (b) inserts a new subsection (c) as follows:

“(c) non-habitable floor space in the 1928 heritage building, located below the base surface, including earthen floor;”.

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475 Alexander Street (Japanese Hall)
PUBLIC BENEFITS SUMMARY

Project Summary:

Text amendment to add a mezzanine to increase the maximum permitted floor space area from 3,627 sq. m (39,044 sq. ft.) to 3,694 sq. m (39,764 sq. ft.)

Public Benefit Summary:

The proposal would add 66.9 sq. m (720 sq. ft.) of additional community/cultural space in the Downtown Eastside.

	Current Zoning	Proposed Zoning
Zoning District	CD-1 (337)	CD-1 (337)
FSR (site area = 18,003 sq. ft.)	2.17	2.21
Buildable Floor Space (sq. ft.)	39,044 sq. ft.	39,764 sq. ft.
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Day Care Facility • Hall • School – Arts or Self-Improvement • Accessory Uses customarily ancillary to the above uses 	No change

Summary of development contributions expected under proposed zoning

City-wide DCL ¹	\$10
City-wide Utilities DCL ¹	\$10
TOTAL	\$20

¹ Based on rates in effect as at September 30, 2019; rates are subject to future adjustment by Council including annual inflationary adjustments. DCLs are payable at building permit issuance based on rates in effect at that time. A development may qualify for 12 months of in-stream rate protection; see the City's [DCL Bulletin](#) for details.

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475 Alexander Street (Japanese Hall)
APPLICANT, PROPERTY, AND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL INFORMATION

APPLICANT AND PROPERTY INFORMATION

Street Address	475 Alexander Street
Legal Description	PID 018-834-477; Lot B Block 38 District Lot 196 Plan LMP17696
Applicant	City of Vancouver
Property Owner	The Vancouver Japanese Language School and Japanese Hall (Vancouver Nihon-Go Gakko Narabi Ni Nikkei Jin Kaikan)

DEVELOPMENT STATISTICS

	Permitted Under Existing Zoning	Proposed
Zoning	CD-1 (337)	Amended CD-1 (337)
Site Area	1,672.5 sq. m (18,003 sq. ft.)	No change
Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Day Care Facility • Hall • School – Arts or Self-Improvement, and • Accessory Uses customarily ancillary to the above uses. 	No change
Floor Space Ratio	2.17	2.21
Floor Area	3,627 sq. m. (39,044 sq. ft.)	3,694 sq. m (39,764 sq. ft.)
Parking, Loading and Bicycle Spaces	As per CD-1 (337) and the Parking By-law	No change

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