



## CITY OF VANCOUVER

### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: April 4, 2006  
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Meeting Date: April 20, 2006

TO: Standing Committee on Planning and Environment

FROM: Director of Current Planning in consultation with the Subdivision Approving Officer

SUBJECT: Relocation of 2936 West 4th Avenue to 2626 Highbury Street

#### RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council support in principle entering into a Heritage Revitalization Agreement with the owner of 2626 Highbury Street to vary the Subdivision By-law and to secure the on-site rehabilitation and long term conservation of the Black Swan Records Building currently located at 2936 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and proposed to be relocated to 2626 Highbury Street.

#### GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

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

#### COUNCIL POLICY

Heritage Policies and Guidelines state, in part, that:

- The City's long-term goal is to protect through voluntary designation as many resources on the Vancouver Heritage Register as possible.
- Legal designation will be a prerequisite to accepting certain bonuses and incentives.

On October 20, 2005 Council affirmed THAT WHEREAS:

1. The property at 2936 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue is of significant heritage value.
2. City Council is desirous of protecting and preserving Vancouver's heritage buildings wherever possible.
3. The building located at 2936 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue is slated for imminent demolition and redevelopment.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council is prepared to consider transfer of density to any zoning district within the Kitsilano area for the purpose of preserving the Heritage Building at 2936 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and that staff be instructed to work with the applicant toward this end.

On January 19, 2006 staff reported back on using transfer of density to retain the building at 2936 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Council resolved:

THAT Council advise the Director of Planning to proceed with the processing of Development Application DE409471 for 2930-2936 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, noting that Council regrets the loss of the heritage building on the site.

## **PURPOSE**

This report seeks Council support in principle for entering into a Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) to facilitate the relocation and conservation of the Black Swan Records Building on a new site at 2626 Highbury Street. Staff will be subsequently reporting the HRA to Council for its consideration.

## **BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY**

Council has determined that the building currently located at 2930-2936 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and commonly known as the Black Swan Records Building is of significant heritage value. However, at its January 19, 2006 meeting Council concluded that imposing retention of the heritage building on the developer, who advised he was unable to retain the building on site, was not prudent. During the discussion, staff, in response to Councillors' requests, committed to look for receiver sites for the building and the developer committed to cooperating with any receiver site owner that came forward.

BC Hydro, for community and economic reasons, has teamed up with a developer and formulated a proposal to relocate and conserve the heritage building on the BC Hydro property at 2626 Highbury Street. Before investing in moving the structure and proceeding with development and subdivision applications they seek support in principle from Council for entering into a Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) necessary for the scheme to proceed. Should Council be supportive in principle the Subdivision Approving Officer is prepared to provide a preliminary letter of support recommending Council approval of the requisite HRA. The proponents would then disassemble and relocate the structure and prepare development and subdivision applications. After the applications have been reviewed and neighbourhood notification is complete, staff would prepare recommendations to Council regarding the requested HRA by-law. Because the HRA would not be varying use or density it would not require a public hearing.

The receiver site is zoned C-2. The only other heritage incentive that would likely be sought is a parking relaxation which the Director of Planning has the authority to approve when considering a development application that includes the conservation of a Heritage Register building.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Heritage Value:**

Council resolved on October 20, 2005 that the Black Swan Records Building at 2936 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue is of significant heritage value. It is an excellent example of the earliest commercial development that extended through Kitsilano in conjunction with the streetcar lines of the early 1900s (Photograph, Appendix A).

It is a prominent commercial structure built in pioneer vernacular style and has maintained much of its architectural integrity. For many years it housed Black Swan Records which specialized in jazz music, and was itself an extension of the cultural evolution that took place in Kitsilano in the 1960s and 1970s. An evaluation completed by staff indicates that it would qualify for addition to the Heritage Register as a B-listing. If Council supports staff recommendations, Council will be asked to add the building to the Vancouver Heritage Register when staff reports back with the draft HRA.

### **Relocation Proposal:**

The proposed receiver site for the heritage building is 2626 Highbury Street (Site Map, Appendix B), at the corner of West 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Preserving the heritage building would achieve one of BC Hydro's corporate objectives of contributing to the community. At the same time it would also economically benefit the corporation by having an HRA to enable subdivision of the site in exchange for heritage preservation.

The rear 50 feet of the site is encumbered with a long-term rectifier station (see site plan Appendix C). The front 70 feet of the property, facing West 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, has been vacant for some time: the inability to subdivide the property has prevented BC Hydro from selling-off this portion of the site for development. The win-win scenario proposed is to relocate the heritage building to this site enabling an HRA to be employed to vary the Subdivision By-law. The resulting new parcel created at the front of the lands would receive the heritage structure and provide for some moderate new development generating the revenues necessary for the conservation effort. The detailed conservation plan and design of the infill development would be presented to Council when staff report back with the requisite HRA.

The Subdivision Approving Officer is prepared to support an HRA permitting consideration of a subdivision to create two parcels, one for the BC Hydro rectifier station, which is understood to be a permanent necessity in this location, the other to support the City's heritage objectives through accommodating the relocation of the Black Swan Records Building. This would be accomplished through varying the Subdivision By-law by way of an HRA. The HRA would also ensure the retention, rehabilitation and long-term protection of the heritage building.

### **Building Relocation Considerations:**

In order to transport the Black Swan Records Building under the trolley bus and other wires, the proposal is to separate the second floor from the main floor for the move and reassemble

them on the receiver site. The cladding on the main floor is proposed to be carefully removed, inventoried, and re-installed in the same arrangement. The storefront windows will either be retained or reconstructed to match the original and the entry door will be retained and incorporated in the same location.

The heritage building is approximately 25 feet wide and 55 feet deep. As a result, it can be stored on the 55 feet wide receiver site while a new foundation is built. Once placed on its new foundation, the remainder of the site would accommodate some additional commercial/residential development to provide continuity to the streetscape and the necessary economic viability to complete the project. The new development, subject to a development application review, would be to the east and an addition to the rear of the heritage structure.

Relocating is generally considered a last resort option for heritage conservation. However, in two similar instances where a heritage building was threatened with demolition, Council has supported heritage incentives on distant receiver sites. Staff feel this site is well-suited for the Black Swan Records Building: it is on a similar commercial street in greater Kitsilano and has the identical south-east corner siting, allowing the two street facades to maintain their current prominence.

The timing of this proposal is critical. All necessary permits have been issued for the development of the site at 2936 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and this leaves only a few weeks for the proponents to remove the heritage building from the site or it will be demolished.

**Vancouver Heritage Commission:**

On April 3, 2006 the Heritage Commission expressed its support in principle for relocation of the heritage building to the Highbury Street location, the use of an HRA to vary the Subdivision By-law and relaxation of parking by way of the Director of Planning, subject to review of the development application, a full conservation plan and a Statement of Significance for the building.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications.

**CONCLUSION**

BC Hydro in collaboration with a developer has come forward with a proposal to relocate the building at 2936 West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, commonly known as Black Swan Records, to a similarly zoned commercial site at 2626 Highbury Street. A Heritage Revitalization Agreement is the means by which the Subdivision By-law can be varied to accommodate the subdivision of the property into two parcels, one of which would receive the heritage building. Council support in principle for the HRA is sought to give the proponents some comfort to proceed to move the structure which, in turn, enables the subdivision, development applications and HRA reporting processes to begin.

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