



Committee of the Whole Report For the Meeting of November 5, 2020

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** October 23, 2020
From: Karen Hoese, Director, Sustainable Planning and Community Development
Subject: **Development Permit with Variance Application No. 00154 for 1002 Vancouver Street**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council, after giving notice and allowing an opportunity for public comment at a meeting of Council, if it is approved, consider the following motion:

“That Council authorize the issuance of Development Permit with a Variance Application No. 00154 for 1002 Vancouver Street, in accordance with:

1. Plans date stamped August 19, 2020.
2. Development meeting all *Zoning Regulation Bylaw* requirements, except for the following variances:
 - i. reduce the rear yard setback from 6.65 metres to 0.3 metres
 - ii. reduce the minimum parking requirement from 31 spaces to 10 spaces
**Development Variance Permit Application No. 00195 reduced the parking requirement from 21 spaces to 12 parking spaces*
3. The Development Permit lapsing two years from the date of this resolution.”

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

In accordance with Section 489 of the *Local Government Act*, Council may issue a Development Permit with a Variance in accordance with the applicable guidelines specified in the *Community Plan*. A Development Permit may vary or supplement the *Zoning Regulation Bylaw* but may not vary the use or density of the land from that specified in the Bylaw.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present Council with information, analysis and recommendations for a Development Permit with a Variance Application for the property located at 1002 Vancouver Street. The building is currently owned by BC Housing and operated by the Cool Aid Society. It contains 78 supportive housing units and 15 affordable rental units for seniors over the age of 50. The proposal is to install a platform lift in the rear yard to move garbage, compost and recycling from the ground level to a basement holding area proposed to be built in the underground parking garage at the foot of the vehicle ramp. The platform lift will allow kitchen staff to safely carry totes from a ground floor kitchen to the basement holding area, without having to walk up a flight of stairs and a steep vehicle ramp. Construction of the holding area

would eliminate two parking spaces and triggers the need for a variance. Construction of the lift structure requires a reduction to the rear yard setback.

The following points were considered in assessing this application:

- the proposal is generally consistent with the Design Guidelines for the Cathedral Hill Precinct under Development Permit Area 14: Cathedral Hill Precinct
- the proposal is generally consistent with the urban design policies in the *Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan (2019)*
- the proposed parking reduction is considered supportable based on observed parking usage and transportation demand management measures already in place.
- the rear yard variance is fairly minor in nature since it relates only to the proposed platform lift, which is a small structure used intermittently and located below the height of a retaining wall separating 1002 Vancouver Street from the adjacent property.

BACKGROUND

Description of Proposal

The proposal is to install a platform lift in the rear yard of the building to move garbage, compost and recycling from ground level to a basement holding area constructed in the underground parking garage.

The proposed variances are related to:

- the construction of the platform lift, which is located at the northwest corner of the existing vehicle ramp to the underground parking area and located 0.3 metres from the rear property line, whereas the Zoning Bylaw requires a minimum rear yard setback of 6.65 metres
- the construction of a garbage holding area in the existing underground parking garage which results in the elimination of two parking spaces and reduces the total number of parking spaces from 12 to 10.

In 2017, Council approved Development Variance Permit Application No. 00195, which granted a variance for a reduction in parking from 21 spaces to 12 parking spaces. Since the approval, Schedule C: Off Street Parking Regulations of the Zoning Bylaw has been updated and the parking requirements are technically higher than in 2017.

Affordable Housing

The existing building contains 78 supportive housing units and 15 affordable rental units for seniors over the age of 50.

Sustainability

The applicant has not identified any sustainability features associated with this proposal.

Active Transportation

Secure, weather protected bicycle parking has been provided in accordance with the original development permit in excess of the Zoning Bylaw requirement. The Zoning Bylaw requires 4 Class 1 spaces. 16 Class 1 bicycle parking spaces have been provided. Showers are available for staff use on the main floor adjacent to the reception.

Public Realm

No public realm improvements beyond City standard requirements are proposed in association with this application.

Accessibility

The platform lift is a feature that is intended to improve safety and accessibility for kitchen staff. Without the lift, kitchen staff have to carry garbage, compost and recycling up a flight of stairs and down a steep vehicle ramp to the waste storage room underground. In the winter months, this could be especially treacherous. While the platform lift is not required under the building code, the applicant notes that it is an improvement to accessibility.

Data Table

The following data table compares the proposal with the existing R-84 Zone – Mount Edwards Court Residential District.

An asterisk is used to identify where the proposal does not meet the requirements of the existing Zone. A double asterisk is used to identify an existing non-conforming condition.

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	Existing Zone
Site area (m ²) – minimum	2927	2900
Lot width (m) (min.)	59.30	n/a
Floor space ratio (ratio) (max.)	1.19	1.20
Total floor area - as defined (m ²) (max.)	3486.00	3525.00
Average grade	23.70	
Height (m) (max.)	Existing	12.30
Storeys (max.)	3 + basement	3.00
Front (Vancouver)	4.84 - building 3.74 - veranda/sunroom 0 - stairs	3.70 (stairs less than 2m= 0m setback)
Rear (west)	6.66 0.30 * - Lift	6.65

Side (South - Rockland)	3.67 **	5.40
side south-stairs	landing: ~1.4 ** stairs: 3.42 **	landing-1.4 into setback stairs - 3.40m into setback
Side (North)	3.25 **	3.20
Eave projection	0.95 **	
Site coverage (%) (max.)	43.00	43.00
Parking	10 *	31.00 (required under new Sched C) 21 (required with previous proposal which was varied to allow 12.)
Class 1 Bicycle Parking	16	4
Class 2 Bicycle Parking	6	6

Relevant History

In 2017, Council approved Development Variance Permit Application No. 00195, which granted a variance to allow for reduction of parking from 21 to 12 spaces. Since the approval, Schedule C: Off Street Parking Regulations of the Zoning Bylaw was updated to include a new use called “Transitional Housing”. Prior to the Schedule C update, the building would have been considered a “Community Care Facility”, with a parking rate of 1 space per 5 beds. The new “Transitional Housing” use category is based on gross floor area instead of the number of beds and is more reflective of the actual parking demand for this type of facility.

Community Consultation

Consistent with the *Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC) Procedures for Processing Rezoning and Variance Applications*, on July 24, 2020 this application was referred for a 30-day comment period to the Planning & Zoning Committee of Fairfield Gonzales Community Association. At the time of writing this report, a letter from the CALUC had not been received.

This application proposes variances, therefore, in accordance with the City’s *Land Use Procedures Bylaw*, it requires notice, sign posting and a meeting of Council to consider the variances.

ANALYSIS

Development Permit Area and Design Guidelines

The *Official Community Plan (OCP)* identifies this property with in DPA 14: Cathedral Hill Precinct.

The construction of a platform lift enables the applicant to construct a waste storage room inside the underground parking garage at the foot of the vehicle ramp that exits onto Rockland Avenue. The location of the waste storage room is minimally visible from the sidewalk on Rockland Avenue and is preferable to a conspicuous location beside the building at street level. The location of the waste storage room conforms to guideline 5(f)(i) of the design guidelines for the Cathedral Hill Precinct, which states that uses that are “dull” to pedestrians, e.g., space devoted to vehicles and service functions be kept to a minimum along all streets and walkways. In this instance, the proposed location is not obvious from public vantage points.

Additionally, the proposed location minimizes impacts to the Heritage Designated Mount Edward Building.

Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan (2019)

According to the *Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan (2019)*, the site is in the Northwest Area of the Fairfield Neighbourhood. Urban design policies for this area include the following:

- 6.2.9. *New buildings should consider use of building elements and building designs that complement the surrounding area.*
- 6.2.12. *Ensure that new development integrates attractive landscaping and building features that create attractive walking environments along the adjacent streets. With the exception of commercial or mixed use buildings on arterial streets, building frontages in this area are typically characterized by landscaped transitional or amenity spaces between the sidewalk and adjacent building.*

The construction of a platform lift enables the applicant to strategically locate the waste storage room underground, in a discrete, concealed location that minimizes impacts to the pedestrian realm along the Rockland Avenue public sidewalk.

Tree Preservation Bylaw and Urban Forest Master Plan

There are no Tree Preservation Bylaw impacts with this application.

Regulatory Considerations

Staff have reviewed the proposed variances and recommend that they be supported and approved. The platform lift is located close to the rear property line and requires a rear yard setback variance, however the lift structure has a small footprint and is below the height of a retaining wall separating the property from its neighbour. It would be used only intermittently during the week, therefore staff do not foresee any nuisance impacts to the adjacent multi-unit residential building. Additionally, the provision of a platform lift enables the applicant to locate the waste storage room in the underground parking garage instead of at street level on Rockland Avenue. This meets a number of urban design and heritage conservation objectives.

The proposed parking variance reduces the amount of parking from the 12 spaces approved under Development Variance Permit Application No. 00195 to 10 spaces. Observed parking demand for the building is low given the building’s use for supportive and affordable housing, and the building contains an excess of secure bicycle parking for staff and building residents therefore, the reduction in parking is reasonable.

CONCLUSIONS

Staff recommend that Council consider supporting the applicant’s proposal to install a platform

lift in the rear yard of the existing building to allow kitchen staff to safely move garbage, compost and recycling from ground level to a storage room in the underground parking garage. In staff's opinion, the underground parking garage is the optimal location for the waste storage room, because it is discrete and minimizes any impact to the public realm along Rockland Avenue and the resulting variances are considered minor in nature.

ALTERNATE MOTION

That Council decline Development Permit with a Variance Application No. 00154 for the property located at 1002 Vancouver Street.

Respectfully submitted,



John O'Reilly
Senior Heritage Planner
Sustainable Planning and Community
Development



Karen Hoese, Director
Sustainable Planning and Community
Development Department

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:



Date: October 26, 2020

List of Attachments

- Attachment A: Subject Map
- Attachment B: Aerial Map
- Attachment C: Plans dated/date stamped August 19, 2020
- Attachment D: Letter from applicant to Mayor and Council dated July 20, 2020