



**Committee of the Whole Report
For the Meeting of July 27, 2017**

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** July 13, 2017

From: Jonathan Tinney, Director, Sustainable Planning and Community Development

Subject: Rezoning Application No. 00588 for 1002 Vancouver Street

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council instruct staff to prepare the necessary Zoning Regulation Bylaw Amendment that would authorize the proposed development outlined in Rezoning Application No. 00588 for 1002 Vancouver Street, that first and second reading of the Zoning Regulation Bylaw Amendment be considered by Council and a Public Hearing date be set, subject to:
 - a. Preparation of the following documents, executed by the Applicant to the satisfaction of City Staff:
 - i. Legal Agreement to secure the following criteria with respect to supportive and affordable rental housing on the subject property:
 - a maximum of 78 supportive housing units
 - a maximum of 15 affordable rental housing units
 - all residents must be over the age of 50
 - potential supportive housing residents will be subject to a VAT (Vulnerability Assessment Tool) assessment to determine their eligibility, and only those who meet a low-to-moderate support requirement will be admitted
 - illicit substance use will not be permitted on the premises
 - 24/7 staffing, including a fulltime client services worker to assist supportive housing residents
 - ii. Statutory Right-of-Way of 3.67m on Rockland Avenue in accordance with the 2003 Greenways Plan.
 - b. Revise the site plan to show the Statutory Right-of-Way of 3.67m and relocate the garbage enclosure to the satisfaction of staff.
 - c. Establishment of a legal mechanism to secure the landscape security deposit for onsite hard and soft landscaping in accordance with the landscape plan dated May 23, 2017 to the satisfaction of staff.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

In accordance with Section 479 of the *Local Government Act*, Council may regulate within a zone the use of land, buildings and other structures, the density of the use of the land, building and other structures, the siting, size and dimensions of buildings and other structures, as well

as, the uses that are permitted on the land, and the location of uses on the land and within buildings and other structures.

In accordance with Section 483 of the *Local Government Act*, Council may enter into a Housing Agreement which may include terms agreed to by the owner regarding the occupancy of the housing units, and provided such agreement does not vary the use of the density of the land from that permitted under the zoning bylaw.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present Council with information, analysis and recommendations for a Rezoning Application for the property located at 1002 Vancouver Street. The proposal is to rezone from the R-K Zone, Medium Density Attached Dwelling District, to a new zone in order to convert the existing building to a multiple-dwelling consisting of 78 supportive units and 15 affordable rental units for seniors over the age of 50.

The following points were considered in assessing this Application:

- the subject property is designated *Core Residential* in the Official Community Plan, which supports a diverse mix of housing types including low and mid-rise multi-unit residential up to six storeys and a floor space ratio (FSR) up to approximately 3.5:1
- the proposal is consistent with the Cathedral Hill Precinct Plan
- the Applicant is proposing to heritage-designate the existing building (currently on the Heritage Register)
- supportive housing units would have access to a range of onsite, non-clinical support services such as life skills training, and connections to primary health care, mental health or substance use services. The applicant is willing to secure details related to the operation of the facility through a legal agreement with the City
- the affordable rental units would be fully self-contained and meet Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's 80th percentile in terms of the average rental rate in the region
- the subject property is in close proximity to shops, facilities and support services.

BACKGROUND

Description of Proposal

This Rezoning Application is to rezone the subject property from the R-K Zone, Medium Density Attached Dwelling District, to a new zone in order to convert the existing building to a multiple-dwelling consisting of 78 supportive housing and 15 affordable rental units for seniors over the age of 50.

The following changes from the current zone are being proposed and would be accommodated in the new zone:

- change the use from a nursing home to allow for a greater mix of housing types
- increase the floor space ratio from 0.60 to 1.20:1
- reduce the site area per unit.

Affordable Housing Impacts

The Applicant proposes the creation of 78 supportive housing and 15 affordable rental units for seniors over the age of 50, which would increase the overall supply of housing in the area. A legal agreement is being proposed to ensure residents meet specific criteria to reside at Mount Edwards and that specific operating obligations are established.

Sustainability Features

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

Active Transportation Impacts

The application proposes to provide 20 Class 1 (secure and enclosed) bicycle parking spaces in the underground parking area and a bicycle rack in front of the building on Rockland Avenue to accommodate at least six bikes.

Public Realm Improvements

No public realm improvements are proposed in association with this Rezoning Application.

Land Use Context

The area is characterized by a mix of single-family dwellings, duplexes, multiple dwellings and the Christ Church Cathedral.

Existing Site Development and Development Potential

The site is presently transitional housing accommodating 38 residents on the first floor of the building. Under the current R-K Zone, Medium Density Attached Dwelling District, the property could be developed as a nursing home, hospital or townhouses.

Data Table

The following data table compares the proposal with the existing R-K Zone. An asterisk is used to identify where the proposal is less stringent than the existing zone. Two asterisks are used to identify where the proposal is non-conforming.

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	Zone Standard R-K Zone
Site area (m ²) - minimum	2927.00	555.00
Site area per unit (m ²) - minimum	31.00*	185.00
Density (Floor Space Ratio) - maximum	1.20:1* (slight increase due to additional stairwell)	0.6:1
Lot width (m) – minimum	59.30	18.00
Height (m) – maximum	12.55** (top of building) 9.35 (to ceiling)	8.50 (to ceiling)
Storeys - maximum	3 + basement**	2.60
Site coverage % - maximum	43.00**	33.00

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	Zone Standard R-K Zone
Setbacks (m) – minimum:		
Front	4.84** (building)/3.55**(solarium)/ 0 (stairs)	6
Rear	6.66	4
Side (north)	3.25**	4
Side (south)	5.48	4
Eave Projection	0.95**	0.75
Parking - minimum	12*	21
Bicycle parking stalls (minimum)		
Class 1	20	4
Class 2	6	6

Relevant History

The Mount Edwards Court Apartments were originally built as market residential units in 1911; however, the Baptist Housing Society operated the building as a care facility for more than 30 years until the fall of 2014. During its time as a care facility, the building contained 83 independent residential rooms and ancillary facilities.

In 2016, the Province acquired the subject property in response to the “tent city” crisis. The Victoria Cool Aid Society was chosen by BC Housing to operate the building, and on February 23, 2016, the Province exercised their senior government authority to over-ride the *Zoning Regulation* Bylaw to reopen the first floor of Mount Edwards to provide 38 residents with transitional housing. However, the current Rezoning Application is for supportive and affordable rental housing (no restrictions on length of stay).

Community Consultation

Consistent with the *Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC) Procedures for Processing Rezoning and Variances Applications*, the Applicant has consulted the Fairfield Gonzales CALUC at a Community Meeting held on April 24, 2017. A letter received on May 23, 2017 is attached to this report.

ANALYSIS

Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan (OCP) Urban Place Designation for the subject property is *Core Residential*, which supports a diverse mix of housing types including low and mid-rise multi-unit residential up to six storeys and a floor space ratio (FSR) up to approximately 3.5:1. The proposal is to retain the existing three-storey heritage-registered building and convert it to multi-unit residential in the form of supportive and affordable rental housing, and slightly increase the FSR to 1.4:1 due to an additional stairwell on the roof. This proposal is consistent with the objectives pertaining to land use and density in the OCP.

The OCP supports a range of seniors housing and innovative care options across the city and within neighbourhoods. It also encourages new seniors' housing, transitional housing and non-market rental housing within close proximity to the Urban Core to enable easy access to services and facilities necessary for daily living. The OCP further reinforces the importance of supporting a range of transitional and supported housing options, with an emphasis on the delivery of support services and establishing units directed towards specific groups in core need.

This proposal is to provide supportive and affordable rental housing for seniors over the age of 50 in close proximity to shops, facilities and support services. The supportive housing units would have access to a range of onsite, non-clinical supports, such as life skills training, and connections to primary health care, mental health, or substance use services. This proposal fulfils the housing objectives in the OCP with respect to providing seniors housing in the community.

Local Area Plans

The *Cathedral Hill Precinct Plan* supports the inclusion of housing on sites with existing institutional land uses, including Mount Edwards, and supports the retention and conservation of heritage buildings in the precinct. The Application meets these objectives outlined in the Plan.

Other Policies

Heritage Designation

The Applicant is willing to heritage-designate the Mount Edwards building to ensure that the heritage property will be conserved for present and future generations. A separate report regarding heritage designation has been prepared by staff and presented to the Heritage Advisory Design Panel and will be brought forward for Council's consideration at a later date. The Applicant is proposing minor exterior repairs to the building including the reinstatement of the front balcony to its original appearance and the addition of a small rear upper enclosed stairwell to provide access to the third storey (fire exit). The exterior finishes of the upper storey stairwell would include painted masonry to match the existing building.

Regulatory Considerations

Statutory Right-of-Way

Rockland Avenue is identified as a People Priority Greenway in the approved 2003 Greenways Plan and it currently lacks boulevards, sidewalks with a clear 1.5m width, and other infrastructure typical of a local road and a Greenway. Given these current conditions, staff recommends for Council's consideration that a Statutory Right-of-Way of 3.67m on Rockland Avenue is provided as a condition of Rezoning. A SRW will also ensure that the existing shed containing garbage and recycling located in the proposed SRW would be relocated.

Other Considerations

The housing development at Mount Edwards is a response to an immediate need for supportive housing for seniors over the age of 50 individuals in the City of Victoria who are homeless now, or at risk of being homeless. The use of Mt. Edwards to house individuals in immediate housing need is supported by the Housing First approach, which has been endorsed by the Government

of Canada as well as multiple social studies including the nationwide *Chez Soi/At Home* project. One of the key principles of Housing First is to integrate housing into the community in order to respond to client choice, minimize stigma and encourage social integration. Other Housing First principles the Mt. Edwards project supports, includes the provision of rapid housing with supports, providing tenancy rights and responsibilities, and housing that is strength-based and promotes self-sufficiency.

It was brought to staff's attention through the provision of two Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) research papers, one an examination of Fairway Woods, a supportive housing facility for formerly homeless seniors (also operated by the Cool Aid Society) and another a *Research Highlight* by CMHC looking at housing options for elderly or chronically ill shelter users, that one of the components of a successful housing development for this population group, or a desired element of this type of housing, was buildings that range in size from 30-50 units. However per the broader *CMHC Research Highlight*, "the ideal residential facility for elderly and chronically ill homeless people has less to do with the building and more to do with validating [the residents] as human beings, respecting their dignity, and supporting them with a range of care options." The CMHC study also notes that "generally, the downtown area is a preferred location" for better proximity to services such as affordable meals and medical facilities.

Meanwhile, the Fairway Woods case study emphasizes that its success appears to be a combination of four main factors: Cool Aid's experience in providing housing and support to homeless persons over many years; the 'personal passion' of individuals, including Cool Aid personnel; the staff; and tenanting. The study does note that the quiet suburban setting is a contributor to tenants' quality of life in this development, but other factors such as the inclusion of social supports, proximity of shops and services, and 24-hour staff support outnumber this point. Other literature on issues specific to homeless seniors emphasize that seniors' homelessness is informed by social exclusion and isolation; that rapid re-housing is best practice and mitigates risk factors of depression and suicide, and access to enhanced services are also strategic approaches. Mt. Edwards meets each of these by being inclusive, promoting a housing first approach, and providing access to appropriate services for its residents.

While years of planning and development mean purpose built facilities can carefully consider issues such as location and building size, Mt. Edwards was selected for conversion to housing because it was in the City of Victoria, available for immediate purchase, had no existing tenants to displace, and could be converted into housing in the shortest time possible to address homelessness now. Other projects that have been established for the same purpose have demonstrated that several other elements of a building housing vulnerable tenants can mitigate neighbourhood concerns and create a development that integrates well into the community. Important factors include:

- A staffing complement adequate in size, hours, and skillset and based on best practice in other buildings of this type
- Consideration to the security measures of the building including restricted (staff controlled) access, 24-hour staff coverage, and regular physical building rounds
- A balanced tenant mix (more vulnerable alongside more independent tenants)
- An experienced operator with a commitment to and demonstrated history of improving the lives of tenants and building community with surrounding neighbours
- Appropriate supports available on-site for tenants
- The development of a sense of community through social programs and other activities.

Mount Edwards would deploy the above best-practices and bespoke elements, which in combination, will work to reduce the impact of this type of housing development on the neighbourhood. In addition, the Applicant is willing to enter into a legal agreement, which would establish specific criteria with respect to supportive and affordable rental housing on the subject property:

- a) a maximum of 78 supportive housing units
- b) a maximum of 15 affordable rental housing units
- c) all residents must be over the age of 50
- d) potential supportive housing residents will be subject to a Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT assessment) to determine their eligibility, and only those who meet a low-to-moderate support requirement will be admitted
- e) illicit substance use will not be permitted on the premises
- f) 24/7 staffing, including a fulltime client services worker to assist supportive housing residents.

In terms of the proposal's proximity to Christ Church Cathedral School, staff note there are several developments housing individuals experiencing homelessness that have been established in close proximity to schools. Examples include:

- The Biltmore, operated by RainCity Housing Society: 95 units of low-barrier housing for previously homeless adults located 146m from Florence Nightingale Elementary School. (Vancouver)
- My Place temporary shelter, operated by Our Place Society: 40 shelter spaces for campers from Victoria's Tent City located directly across the street from Central Middle School (Victoria)
- Mole Hill Community Housing Complex (Mole Hill Community Housing Society): 170 units designated for individuals 'hardest to house' and those living with mental illness and HIV; directly across the street (70m) from Lord Roberts School Annex (Vancouver).
- Nicholson Towers: 220 units of subsidized housing for low-to-moderate income individuals, vulnerable seniors, and people with disabilities operated by The Bloom Group; across the street from Lord Roberts School Annex (Vancouver).

Specific to the Victoria example above, My Place temporary shelter in Victoria was established as a response to Tent City in Victoria, and was initially met with trepidation and concern from Central Middle School; however, by the time the shelter closed in May 2017, the relationship between the school and the shelter had transformed. Students organized donations of meals and items of necessity, and developed the 'Faces of Victoria' project where they engaged firsthand with individuals experiencing homelessness, addictions, and mental health issues. The school was a recipient of the Victoria Health Authority's Mental Health Substance Use Community Service Award for their work in engaging with the shelter.

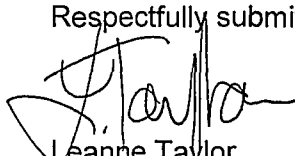
CONCLUSIONS

The proposal to convert the existing heritage-registered building to a multiple-dwelling consisting of 78 supportive housing units and 15 affordable housing units is consistent with the OCP and the *Cathedral Hill Precinct Plan*. The Applicant has demonstrated how the proposal will minimize impacts on the neighbourhood. The Applicant is also willing to heritage-designate the existing building and reinstate some of the character defining elements of the original building. Staff recommend for Council's consideration that the application proceed to a Public Hearing.

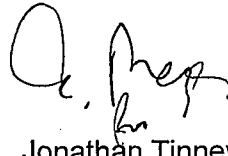
ALTERNATE MOTION

That Council decline Rezoning Application No. 00588 for the property located at 1002 Vancouver Street.

Respectfully submitted,

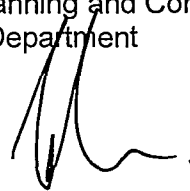


Leanne Taylor
Senior Planner
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Jonathan Tinney, Director
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Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:



Date: July 20, 2017

List of Attachments:

- Attachment A: Subject Map
- Attachment B: Aerial Map
- Attachment C: Plans date stamped May 23, 2017
- Attachment D: Letter from Applicant to Mayor and Council dated July 12, 2017
- Attachment E: Letter from Applicant to Mayor and Council dated May 19, 2017
- Attachment F: Information from Public Open House on April 18, 2017
- Attachment G: Community Association Land Use Committee Comments received May 23, 2017
- Attachment H: Correspondence (Letters received from residents).

List of Attachments:

- Attachment A: Subject Map
- Attachment B: Aerial Map
- Attachment C: Plans dated stamped May 23, 2017
- Attachment D: Letter from applicant to Mayor and Council including the Parking Analysis dated June 12, 2017
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