

ITEM

MANAGER'S REPORT NO.

COUNCIL MEETING 1983 08 08

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RE: HART MANSION - CORRESPONDENCE FROM MR. L. MC DONNELL, CHAIRMAN,
C.P.M.A. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MUNICIPAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the recommendations of the Director Planning & Building Inspection be adopted.

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TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER 1983 August 02

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING &
BUILDING INSPECTION

SUBJECT: HART MANSION - CORRESPONDENCE FROM MR. L. McDONNELL,
C.P.M.A. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council authorize a restaurant proposal call for the Hart Mansion based on the Terms of Reference previously adopted by Council.
2. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the Parks and Recreation Commission for its concurrence.
3. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the C.P.M.A. Board of Directors.

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to evaluate a proposal by the Century Park Museum Board of Directors for the Hart Mansion against other possible options including renting or leasing it out for residential purposes. Because of the cost implications of restoration for either heritage or residential purposes, this report recommends that Council authorize one final restaurant proposal call for the Mansion.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Council, at its meeting of 1983 July 11, received a letter from the Century Park Museum Association Board of Directors indicating it was prepared to restore and operate the Hart Mansion if Council provided the necessary funds. The Board has estimated the cost of restoration and furnishing would be approximately \$500,000 and a further subsidy of approximately \$50,000 per annum would be required to operate the Mansion as a display. At the Council meeting of 1983 July 25, Council adopted a motion that directed staff to take steps to rent or lease the house. The purpose of this report is to evaluate these proposals against other possible options.

2.0 PRESENT SITUATION

The Mansion itself is vacant, although there is a resident caretaker in the caretaker's cottage. The rationale for keeping the Mansion vacant was to maintain maximum flexibility in accommodating an appropriate use for the Mansion as soon as one was found to be suitable. Through weathering and recent vandalism, the condition of the Mansion has deteriorated. Additional measures are currently being taken to protect the Municipality's investment from further vandalism and deterioration.

3.0 THE CONCEPT

Because of the stature of the Hart Mansion and its strategic location on Deer Lake, it has been viewed as a major public focus in the development of the Town Park around Deer Lake. A restaurant was considered to best provide this focus and added public amenity. In that the restaurant proposal call was unsuccessful, the question that has arisen is what other short or long term uses may be suitable.

4.0 THE OPTIONS

OPTION 1: RESTORATION AND FURNISHING AS A HERITAGE MANSION

The C.P.M.A.'s proposal of 1983 June 01 to restore the Hart Mansion to its original appearance and furnish it in the style of the period had considerable merit. Such a use, if appropriately developed and managed, would ensure that the principle of maintaining the Hart property as a major public focus and public use facility in Deer Lake Park could be maintained.

Council, in considering the C.P.M.A. proposal, adopted the following recommendation:

"THAT the feasibility and implications of the proposal by the Century Park Museum Association Board for the use and operation of the Hart Mansion be considered by Municipal Staff and the Board as part of the Heritage Village Museum Master Plan presently underway."

Although the Master Plan work is still underway, the C.P.M.A. Board advised Council (1983 June 30) that it is prepared to restore and furnish the Mansion at an estimated cost of \$500,000 and to operate the facility at an annual cost of \$50,000 if Council provided the necessary funds. The Board has also stated that it "would not be upset if an alternative use is decided upon".

The Director of Heritage Village Museum has advised that the \$500,000 is made up of \$250,000 to restore the building and \$250,000 for furnishing, displays, etc. The Engineering Department has confirmed that the \$250,000 restoration costs are not unrealistic. The Municipality could make application to the B.C. Heritage Trust for funds to assist in the exterior restoration of heritage or historic buildings. The once only grant of this program is \$50,000 if the Municipality made at least an equal contribution.

Given the costs to restore and operate the Mansion, it was felt that alternative uses should be considered prior to responding to the C.P.M.A. proposal. These alternatives follow:

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OPTION 2: RESIDENTIAL RENTAL OR LEASE

The Mansion is not rentable in its present condition. The Engineering and Planning and Building Inspection Departments have assessed that as a "ball park" estimate it would cost between \$70,000 - \$80,000 to bring the Mansion up to a minimum standard for rental purposes. If the Mansion were to be brought up to a standard that one might reasonably expect from such a property, approximately \$150,000 - \$200,000 would have to be spent.

Given the above costs, the high vacancy rate and property taxes and heating costs which would be the responsibility of a potential lessee, the Legal Department has advised that it would be extremely difficult to secure a tenant for the Mansion at a rental where we might recoup some of our investment.

OPTION 3: USE BY RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Recreation and Cultural Services Department has advised that it continues to not require the use of the Mansion at this time.

OPTION 4: ANOTHER RESTAURANT PROPOSAL CALL

The last restaurant proposal call for the Hart Mansion was in 1982 June. In response to the proposal call, Council approved Municipal staff to work with George Frankel and Associates to further develop their restaurant proposal. Mr. Frankel then decided not to proceed with the project.

Since that time several restaurateurs have assessed the Mansion although none has made a formal submission. It would appear that this renewed interest has stemmed from falling interest rates and some signs of an improved economy. The Legal Department is of the opinion that because of these factors we would likely get a better response to a proposal call if we readvertised at this time.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

It is our opinion that given restraint and the priorities for limited funds, any use for the Hart Mansion should, if possible, be essentially self-supporting at this time. With this principle, it would not presently be possible to recommend the expenditure of \$500,000 for the heritage restoration of the Mansion, or \$70,000 - \$80,000 for the residential rental of the Mansion without first attempting to find a suitable self-supporting use.

In that there appears to be renewed interest in a restaurant and the economic factors seem more favourable, it is recommended that Council authorize one final proposal call for the Hart Mansion. The costs for restoring and furnishing the restaurant has always been seen as the responsibility of the restaurateur.

For the present, the measures that have been and are being taken to maintain and additionally secure the Mansion are considered adequate.

BLS:js
cc: Director Rec. & Cult. Services
Municipal Solicitor
Director Engineering
Director Heritage Village Museum
Chief Building Inspector



A.L. Parr,
DIRECTOR PLANNING &
BUILDING INSPECTION