

REPORT
1994 February 07

CITY OF BURNABY

HOUSING COMMITTEE

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS

Re: Conversion of Unused Space at Hillside
Garden Apartments to Rental Accommodation

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council support in principle, the concept of converting surplus space at Hillside Garden Apartments to no more than 15 suites subject to the completion of rezoning the site.

R E P O R T

The Housing Committee, at its meeting held on 1994 February 01, adopted the attached staff report responding to a request from the owner of Hillside Garden Apartments to convert surplus space at the complex to rental accommodation.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor L.A. Rankin
Chairman

Councillor J. Young
Member

Councillor C. Redman
Member

:COPY - CITY MANAGER
- DIR. PLNG. AND BLDG.
- CHIEF BUILDING INSPECTOR

TO: CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS
HOUSING COMMITTEE

1994 JANUARY 25

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

OUR FILE:

SUBJECT: CONVERSION OF UNUSED SPACE AT HILLSIDE
GARDEN APARTMENTS TO RENTAL ACCOMMODATION

PURPOSE: To respond to a request from the owner of Hillside Garden Apartments to convert surplus space at the complex to rental accommodation.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the Housing Committee recommend that Council support in principle, the concept of converting surplus space at Hillside Garden Apartments to no more than 15 suites subject to the completion of the rezoning the site.

R E P O R T

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Planning and Building Department staff have received a request (see attachment) from the owner of Hillside Garden Apartments, located at 7434 Kingsway, to convert some lower floor space that was designed for use as fallout shelters and storage to rental accommodation.

The purpose of this report is to respond to this request.

2.0 THE EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

Hillside Garden Apartments consists of 15 buildings, each with ten suites, on a 4.7 acre site. Eleven of the buildings contain two bedroom units and four of the buildings contain three bedroom units. The development is about 30 years old, and contains facilities such as two outdoor swimming pools, a mini-golf area and a small playground. The owner has recently undertaken extensive renovations including interior common space painting of walls, new exterior siding, improvements to security features such as lighting and fencing and improvements to the landscaping. Good transit services are available on Kingsway, and the Edmonds SkyTrain station is easily accessible.

Each ten unit building contains 4 suites on the top and middle floors and two units with common laundry/storage facilities and fallout shelters on the lower floor. The fallout shelters were encouraged in apartment development plans in the late 1950's and early 1960's by the Federal Department of National Defence and may have been required as part of preferred interest rates offered by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

3.0 THE PROPOSED CONVERSION OF SURPLUS SPACE

The proponent wishes to convert the space that was designated for use as fallout shelters and storage to living accommodation. Each building would still retain ample storage area and common laundry facilities. The result would be each building having an additional suite on the first floor. The two bedroom suites would be about 850 sq. ft. in area, and the three bedroom suites about 950 sq. ft. in area.

Almost all of the proposed suites would be located almost totally below grade. Currently, the spaces receive a small amount of sunlight through small windows and four foot wide window wells. The proponent proposes to increase the size of the windows and increase the size of the window wells.

The owner wishes to create the additional rental accommodation to increase the revenues generated by the development to help offset the rising costs of maintaining and upgrading this affordable family rental accommodation. The owner notes that due to the age of the buildings, the cost of maintaining them is increasing faster than increases in rental revenue. In addition, as the owner has noted in a separate letter appearing on this agenda, he is now facing additional costs due to changes in the way B.C. Hydro is charging for electrical service. The extra revenue will help extend the longevity of this family housing by at least another ten years. The owner has received interest from existing tenants in occupying the converted spaces due to the lower rents being charged for those units and also due to a desire for new fixtures such as appliances and carpets.

4.0 HOUSING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

From a housing policy perspective, the preservation of the existing affordable housing stock, especially housing that is appropriate for families, is a laudable goal. Moreover, the creation of new affordable housing stock without the financial assistance of the senior levels of government, is rare given the high price of land in Burnaby. However, it is the City's duty to ensure that this new housing meets health and safety issues, is livable, does not negatively impact the neighbourhood and meets basic zoning and community planning criteria.

5.0 BUILDING CODE CONSIDERATIONS

A member of the Building Division has viewed the premises in a preliminary manner and found that it is feasible to address the requirements of the Building Code through work that includes moving walls, providing windows in those fallout shelter areas without windows, separating the existing electrical rooms from dwelling units. The owner would have to apply for a building permit through the normal procedures.

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Zoning Considerations

The site is currently zoned RM2 (Multiple Family Residential). The development is legally non-conforming in terms of its zoning designation and with 171,000 of gross floor area, it exceeds the maximum Floor Space Ratio (F.S.R.) of 0.7 by about 28,000 sq. ft. of floor area or .14 F.S.R. The Edmonds Town Centre North Community Plan designates the site for RM2 development, recognising the existing development.

Staff believe that from a zoning perspective, the proposed conversion of surplus space could be achieved through rezoning the site to Comprehensive Development (CD) based on RM3 guidelines. This would allow a Floor Space Ratio (F.S.R.) of up to 0.9 and would allow the development of the approximately 175,000 sq. ft. of floor space (representing a F.S.R. of 0.86) required to accommodate the converted space. The RM3 designation in essence, recognizes the existing and proposed floor space, but would not create excessive pressure for redevelopment that could happen if the property was upzoned to a higher density.

The project currently has 82 parking spaces, and therefore does not meet current bylaw requirements with respect to off-street parking. The owner has stated that his tenants do not have a high rate of car ownership. Excellent transit service is located on Kingsway and the Edmonds Skytrain Station is easily accessible. Additional parking could not be provided on-site without infringing on the on-site facilities that the owner feels makes the development appropriate for families. In view of these circumstances, it would be necessary to give consideration to relaxation of the parking requirements for the additional units through the CD rezoning process.

6.2 Livability Issues

90 Planning and Building Department staff are concerned about the livability of the proposed units. The units would be entirely below grade. Currently those that are designated as fallout shelters have no windows and those that are storage areas have three small windows located five feet from the floor on one wall. Because the windows are entirely below grade, they have exposure to light wells that are about four feet deep. In each of the proposed units, one of the window wells is covered by the balcony of the unit above, leaving a one foot gap with direct sunlight access.

The Zoning Bylaw does not permit the siting of dwelling units in cellars. This provision of the bylaw recognizes that cellars, which are mainly underground, do not provide adequate living environments in terms of sunlight and fresh air penetration. However, the owner has stated that he is willing to substantially upgrade the cellar spaces by expanding window areas and increasing the size of window wells.

The owner has presented three different options for increasing the size of windows and window wells. The options range from:

- increasing the size of the windows,
- increasing the size of the windows and stepping back the upper portion of the window well wall, from 3 feet to between 5 to 7 feet or,
- increasing the size of the windows and enlarging the width of the entire window well from 3 feet to between 5 to 7 feet.

In response to staff's concern about the livability of the units, the owner has stated that there has been ample interest from existing tenants to fill the space. He also notes that the tenants are willing to trade-off windows and light penetration for new appliances and carpets and a lower rent.

Staff believe that to make the units as livable as possible, the window wells and windows should be enlarged as much as feasible, subject to the physical site restraints such as walkways and landscaping. Considering that the site circumstances affecting each unit is relatively unique, different units may require different solutions in terms of the windows and light wells. Therefore, it is suggested that, if the Housing Committee and Council agree with the proposal in principle, satisfactory resolution of the light penetration issue be achieved as part of the preparation of the plan of development that is required before a Public Hearing.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Hillside Gardens is one of the largest family oriented affordable rental developments in Burnaby. It is recognized that the development itself is somewhat unique, and the proposal to convert the unused space to living accommodation is highly unusual. The owner has demonstrated his commitment to the future of the complex through substantial upgrading of the buildings and grounds.

Planning and Building Department staff believe that the proposal is supportable in terms of adding to the existing affordable housing stock, as long as the proponent can demonstrate that the units are livable and appropriate for families.

Planning and Building

Re: Conversion of Unused Space at Hillside

Garden Apartments to Rental Accommodation

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It is proposed that the Housing Committee recommend to Council that the concept of allowing conversion of the existing fallout shelters and storage space to no more than 15 suites at Hillside Garden Apartments be supported in principle, subject to the rezoning of the property to Comprehensive Development (CD) based on RM3 (Multiple Family Residential) guidelines, and the redesignation of the site to RM3 development in the Edmonds Town Centre North Community Plan. The issue of adequate sunlight penetration for each proposed suite would have to be resolved prior to the Public Hearing.

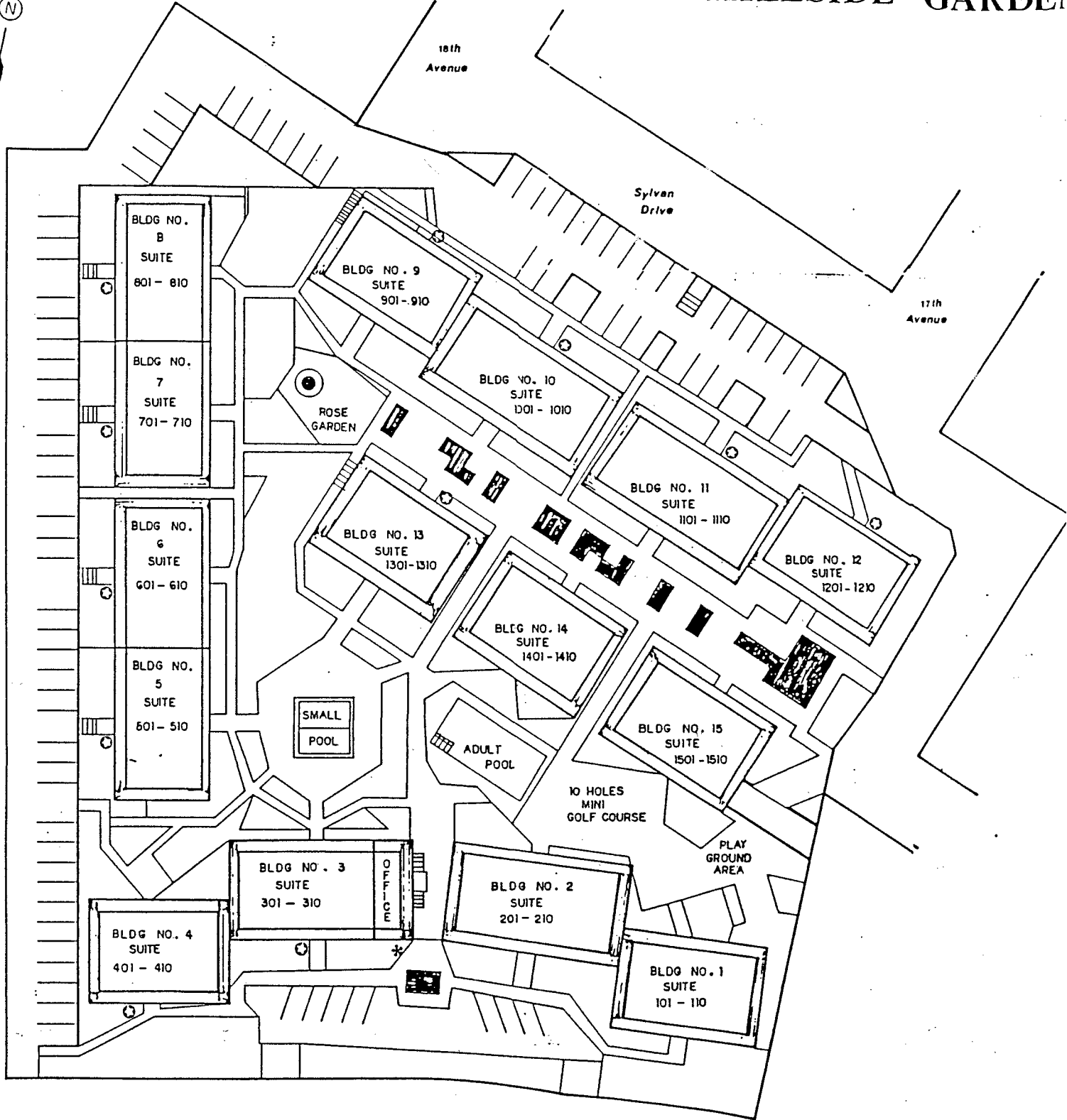


D.G. Stenson, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

BG\db

cc: Chief Building Inspector

HILLSIDE GARDE



23904

Ref: 86799
49233E
49233E

Approved in the Land Registry
Office at New Westminster, B.C.
This City of Vancouver 106

[Signature]
Registrar

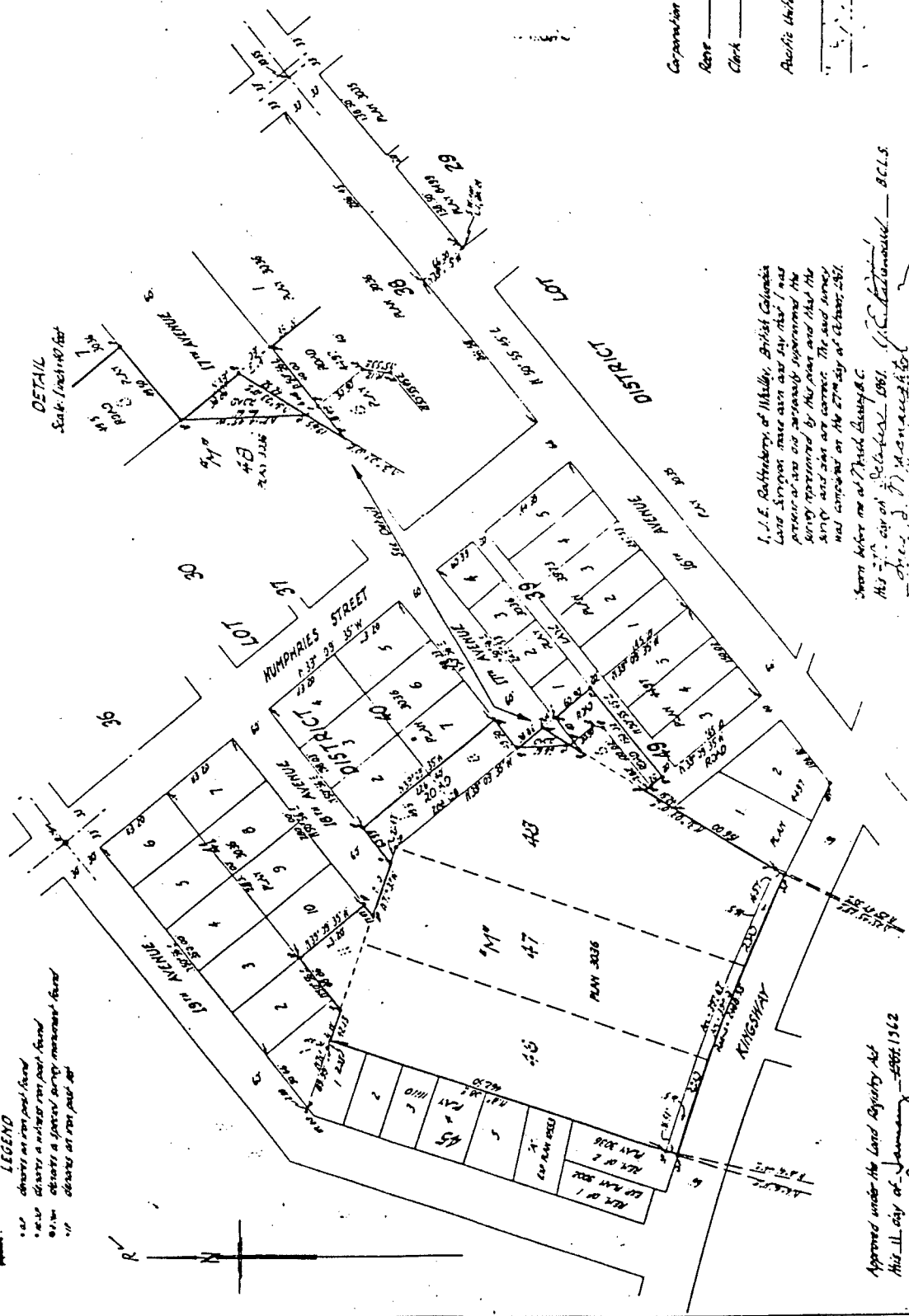
LOTS 1 AND 8 OF BLOCK 40, LOT 11 OF BLOCK 41, PLAN 3036, AND LOT 6 OF BLOCK 49, PLAN 4497
LOT 30, GROUP 1, NEW WESTMINSTER DISTRICT

Astronomic bearings are derived from Plan 3036

Scale: 1 inch = 100 feet

LEGEND

- shows street, post-bound
- shows a street, not post-bound
- shows a street, survey measurement found
- shows a street, not post-bound



DETAIL
Scale: 1 inch = 40 feet

94

Corporation of the District of Burnaby

Rate _____

Clerk _____

Pacific United Developers Limited

I, J.E. Raftery, of Malibu, British Columbia
Law Society, make oath and say that I am
present and personally supervised the
survey represented by this plan and that the
survey and plan are correct. The said survey
was completed on the 27th day of October 1961.

Shown before me at Third Quarry B.C.

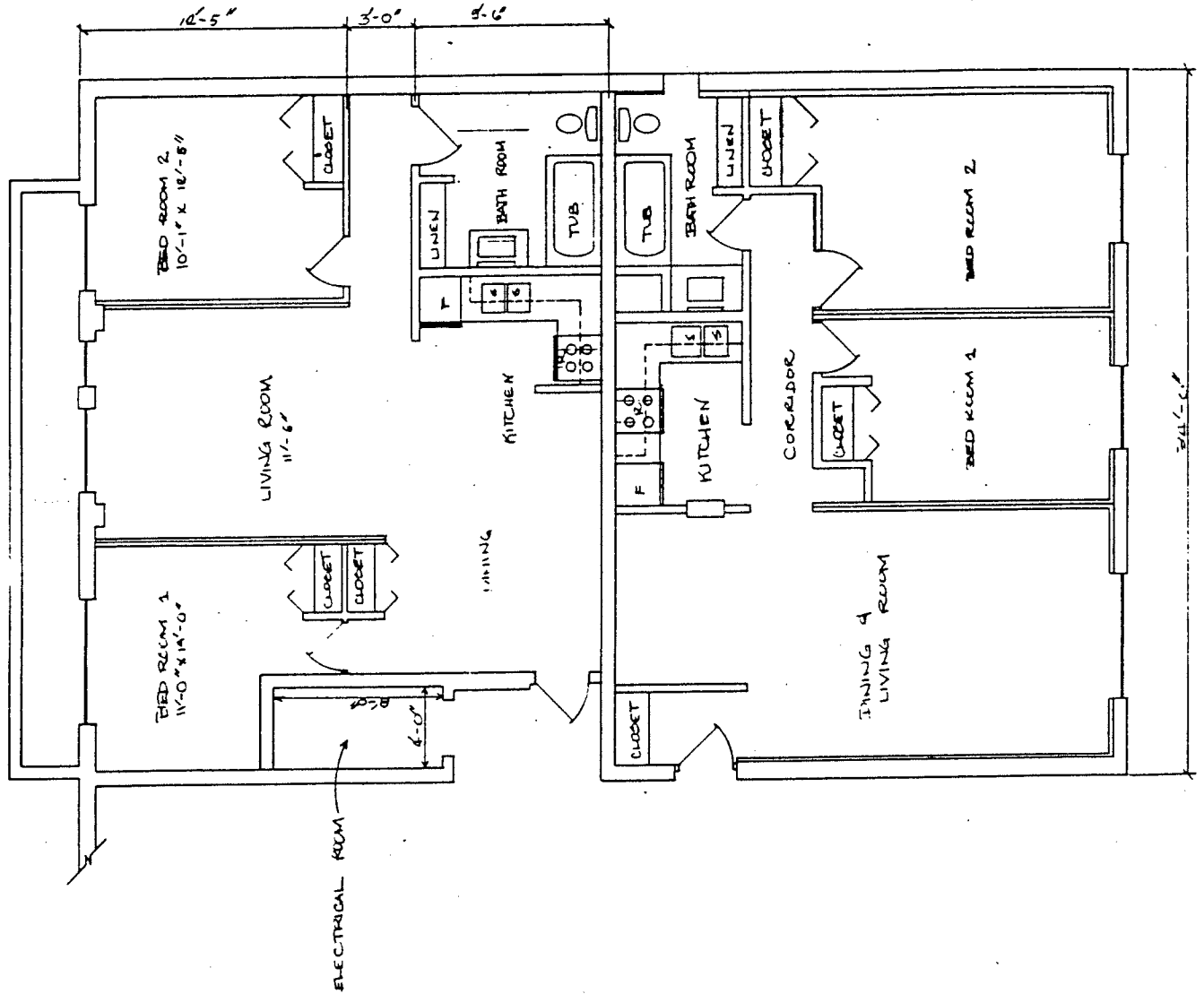
This 27th day of October 1961. *[Signature]* S.C.L.S.

[Signature]
Notary Public for British Columbia

Approved under the Land Registry Act
This 11th day of January 1962

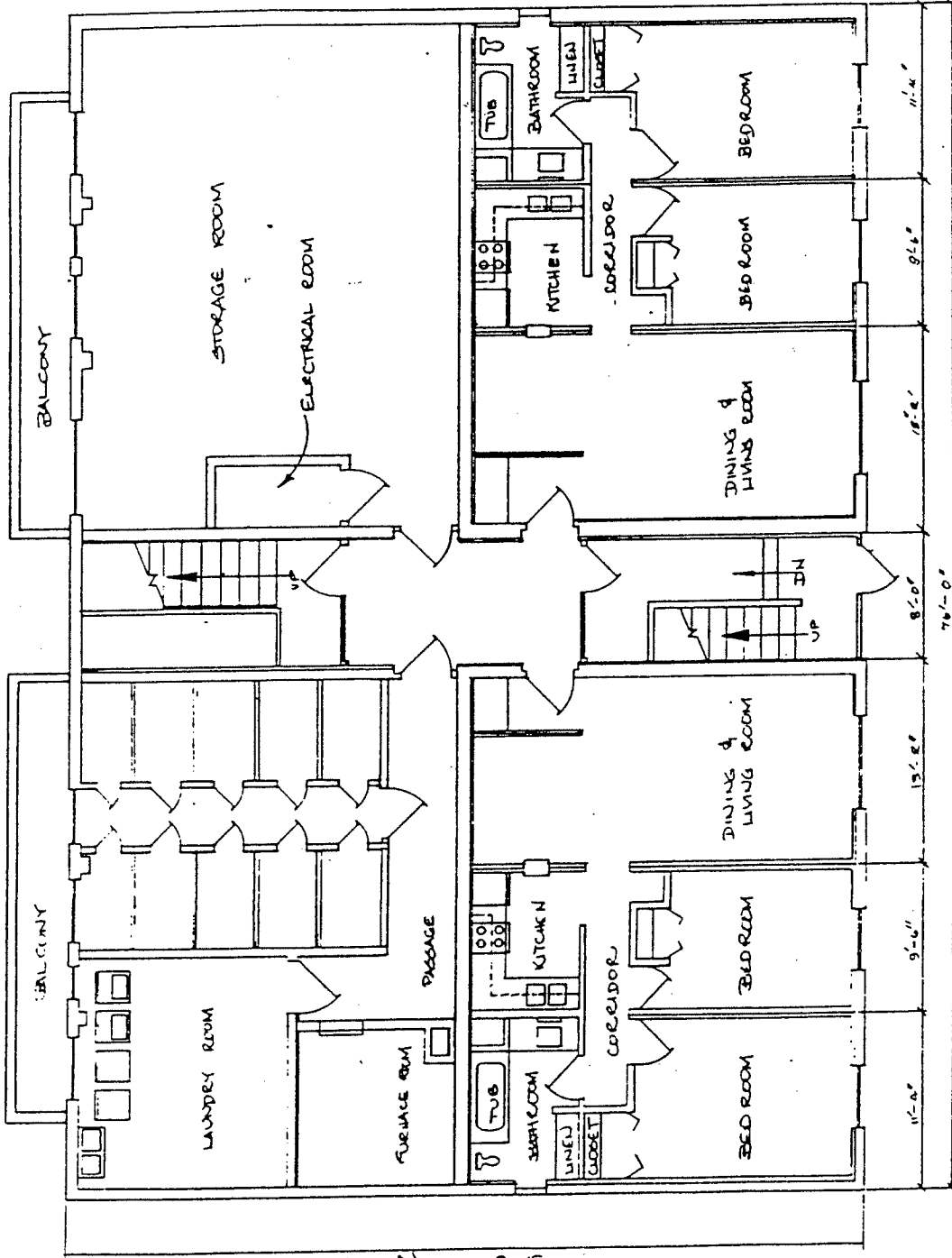
[Signature]
Registrar

Applied and returned
B.C. Land Registry
2777 New-Cassan St.
North Surrey, B.C.



NEW 2 BEDROOM OUTE
 IN PLACE OF STORAGE KRM.M.
 HILL SIDE GARDEN
 745A KINGSDWAY E. BY B.C.

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"	APPROVED BY:
DATE	DRAWN BY
	REVISED
	DRAWING NUMBER

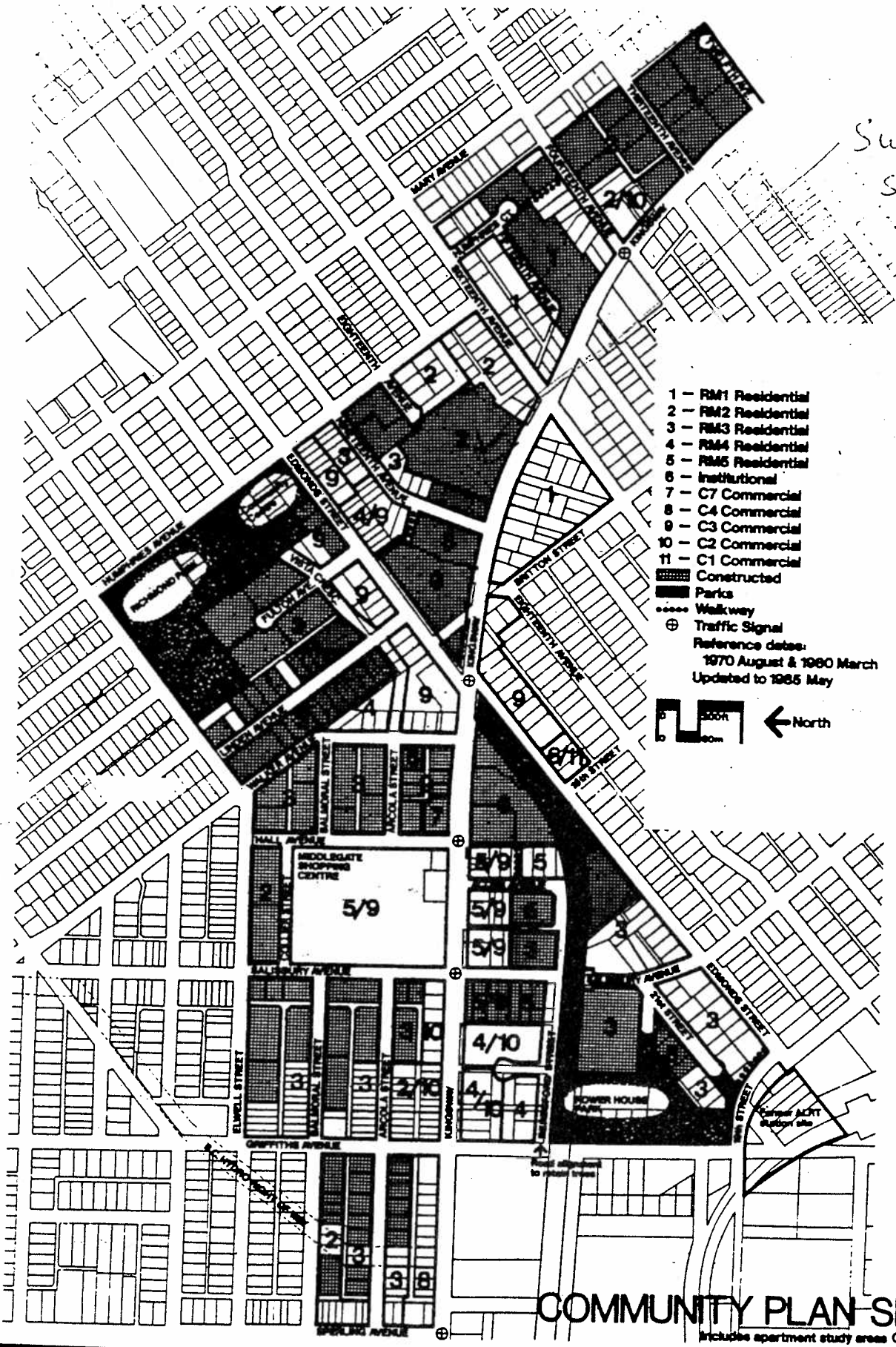


PRESENT GROUND FLOOR
 LAYOUT OF 2 BEDROOM SUITE,
 1484 KINGDAWAY T.B. BY P.C.
 HILL SIDE GARDEN

SCALE: 3/16"	APPROVED BY:
DATE:	DRAWN BY:
	REVISED:
	DRAWING NUMBER:
	1

11.8.52
 P.C.
 5'-0"

Subject site



- 1 - RM1 Residential
- 2 - RM2 Residential
- 3 - RM3 Residential
- 4 - RM4 Residential
- 5 - RM5 Residential
- 6 - Institutional
- 7 - C7 Commercial
- 8 - C4 Commercial
- 9 - C3 Commercial
- 10 - C2 Commercial
- 11 - C1 Commercial
- Constructed
- Parks
- Walkway
- Traffic Signal
- Reference dates:
1970 August & 1980 March
Updated to 1985 May



COMMUNITY PLAN SIX
Includes apartment study areas O & P

