ITEM	07
MANAGER'S REPORT #	57
COUNCIL MEETING	95/12/04

TO: CITY MANAGER 1995 November 30

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

SUBJECT: **TREE PRESERVATION**
REZONING REFERENCE #34/95
5201 OAKMOUNT CRESCENT
OAKALLA DEVELOPMENT PLAN

PURPOSE: To inform Council about the alternatives of tree preservation or tree replacement on the site of Rezoning Reference #34/95.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** this report be received for information purposes.

R E P O R T

1.0 BACKGROUND:

At the 1995 November 20 Council meeting a delegation representing the developer of 5201 Oakmount Crescent (Rezoning Reference #34/95) spoke regarding the desire to replace the existing mature trees on the site rather than preserve them and Council requested a report on the alternatives.

The trees in question are a compact linear group of 12 m (40 ft.) high conifers which are basically in good condition. They are the only group of significant trees remaining on this site. Some new, small, mainly deciduous trees have been planted in the covenant area adjacent to Deer Lake Park by British Columbia Building Corporation as a condition of the original rezoning, although some of these trees have not survived and are being replaced.

The applicant is concerned that the preservation of these trees will have a detrimental effect on the design and siting of the proposed townhouses. At present the developer's proposed grouping of the dwellings without tree preservation is 4 fourplexes, 1 triplex and 11 duplexes. With the preservation of these trees the proposal would be 8 fourplexes, 2 triplexes, 1 duplex and 1 single "gatehouse" unit. For comparison, the adjacent project (Rezoning Reference #25/93) to the east with a similar, slightly higher density has a mix of 9 fourplexes, 5 triplexes and 5 duplexes.

Either configuration could offer a workable siting solution, subject to the suitable resolution of fire access and visitor parking. The discussion at the Council meeting indicated that some members of Council prefer the proposal that features duplexes along Oakmount Crescent. However, this option would require the removal of all the existing trees on the site.

The applicant, as noted in their submitted letter to Council, is proposing to compensate for the tree removal by planting 16 replacement deciduous and coniferous trees of comparable size and of species deemed more suitable to the development proposed. Large scale deciduous trees, 16 cm to 24 cm $\pm$ caliper, are available at nurseries with Pin Oak or Tulip Tree species recommended. Coniferous trees, 9 m $\pm$ in height, would be oversized nursery stock or salvaged material from other sites. Such trees require considerable effort to locate, transport, install and monitor and would require the deposit of a substantial bonding guarantee to equal the value of these trees and the extension of such bonding amounts beyond the usual one-year maintenance period due to the size of such replacement trees and their poorer than average survival rate.

The initial suggested location for the new trees mainly conifers was in the covenant area around the walkway. This, in effect, would have enclosed the walkway, diminishing the public's view and compromising safety along the walkway down to Deer Lake Park. An improved arrangement, discussed with the developer, would incorporate 8 deciduous trees in a double row along the walkway and 4 dispersed pairs of conifers at the top of the walkway, in the middle of each section of site adjacent to Oakmount Crescent, and near the top of the linear parkway.

2.0 DISCUSSION:

Throughout the various phases of development in the Oaklands, preservation and continuity of any trees of any significance have been achieved. This development is one of two proposals constituting the last phase of the Oaklands development. For example, in this last phase, Rezoning Reference #39/95 on "Enclave 6" has been advanced to a Public Hearing on 1995 December 19 with a carefully formulated plan that arranges buildings in a variety of unit configurations so as to save an existing cluster of trees and another tree between buildings. Overall, creative site planning solutions around existing mature trees have added beneficial character to new developments. On balance, this department considered the retention of these trees on the subject site to be appropriate.

However, in appearing as a delegation before Council on 1995 November 20, the developer has indicated that circumstances are different on their site. Staff are of the opinion that since these trees are mature, in good condition, form a coherent group and are the last remaining ones of any significance on this large site, they merit retention; however, tree replacement on the scale suggested by the developer might be a possible suitable alternative.

If the tree replacement were pursued, then a variety of conditions should be met to ensure the trees' survival including, but not necessarily limited to:

- the submission of a letter of undertaking not to remove the existing trees until after Final Adoption;

- the new replacement trees being of the size assured by the developer and being planted prior to the release of any occupancy permits;

- the protection of such replacement trees by covenants;

- transplanting of trees to occur after completion of construction at the optimum time for the trees;

- the close supervision of the trees' selection, transplanting and maintenance by the developer's arborist;

- sufficient bonding being deposited to cover the full cost of new replacement trees of equal size should the initial ones fail, to be released two full growing seasons after time of planting.

3.0 CONCLUSION:

Thus, although this is a singular group of mature trees that are basically in good condition, should Council so direct, staff will work with the applicant to develop a suitable plan of development incorporating a replacement tree approach in accordance with the locational criteria and landscaping guarantees discussed above.

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Director Planning and Building

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cc: Chief Building Inspector