
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: December 14, 2005
File No.: 6530-18
To: City Manager
From: Director of Planning and Corporate Services
Subject: C7 Design Guidelines

Report prepared by Patrick McCormick

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council endorse the design guidelines for the C7 Zone attached to the Planning and Corporate Services report dated December 14, 2005;

AND THAT staff be directed to use the C7 Design Guidelines as a basis for evaluation and discussion regarding Development Permit applications pertaining to any property zoned C7;

AND THAT staff be directed to use the C7 Design Guidelines as a basis for preparing Design Guidelines for C4-zoned properties.

BACKGROUND

Allowable building heights in the C7 zone were increased in 2002. This change has necessitated an update of the existing *Downtown Façade Guidelines (November, 1995)* to address the form and character of larger buildings, as the 1995 guidelines essentially do not address buildings taller than three storeys.

While the proposed guidelines are consistent with the spirit and intent of the existing guidelines, they build on the Downtown Façade Guidelines by emphasizing ways in which buildings can enhance retail occupancies within the C7 zone, in recognition of the role that retail plays in enhancing streets and making Urban Centres vital pedestrian precincts.

DISCUSSION

The form and character of buildings can have an enormous impact on the aesthetics of urban environments and on their appeal as places to work, shop, and live. Moreover, the form and character of buildings can impact perceptions of Urban Centres as community focal points.

Recognizing this impact, the Local Government Act gives municipalities the ability to formulate design guidelines towards influencing the form and character of commercial and multiple-family buildings to help achieve desired outcomes.


Consultation

The proposed guidelines (Attachment 1) were drafted with the input of Current Planning staff as well as industry and community stakeholders. The draft guidelines were circulated to local building designers as well as to sign and awning designers. A draft document was reviewed by the Urban Development Institute and the Downtown Kelowna Association.

Urban Design Principles

The guidelines are founded on urban design, as opposed to architectural principles. That is, they look at projects in terms of how they relate to the public realm. The over-riding consideration is whether or not buildings project an inviting and welcoming face to the street. The elements and features that contribute to this impression are outlined in the guidelines document.

Intent of Design Guidelines

The guidelines are intended as the basis for discussion between the  of Kelowna and property owners and their design consultants, about the elements of quality project design.

The guidelines are extensive and cover all aspects of building and site design. However, it is not expected that every proposed project meet all the guidelines. Rather, it is expected that the project generally meet the *intent* of the guidelines to create pedestrian-oriented streets.

Document Layout

The first four sections of the document provide background regarding use of the guidelines. Aspects of those portions of buildings up to fifteen metres are then discussed in Section 5.0. Portions of any building beyond that height are addressed in Section 6.0.

Other sections of the document are devoted to buildings in the Downtown Heritage Area, large lot developments, buildings within the Cultural District, parking structures, and buildings without commercial space at grade, as these projects all have special considerations that set them apart slightly from the considerations addressed in Sections 5.0 and 6.0.

A glossary and a checklist are included in the proposed document to aid applicants in using the document.

The attached draft will be illustrated with photos or hand-drawn illustrations pending Council's approval of the text.

Facade Grants

Earlier discussion at an Urban Centres Implementation Committee meeting centered around the potential for the City to offer incentives for facade improvements to existing buildings. Current provincial legislation does not allow municipalities to provide grants. However, such grants could be offered through a business improvement association.

Application of Design Guidelines to Other Areas of Kelowna

The C7 Guidelines would apply to all areas zoned C7. Currently, the properties with such zoning are all located within the City Centre. It is possible, however, that in the future other parts of the City will also have C7 zoned properties.

Additionally, the C7 Design Guidelines could be readily modified to apply to C4-zoned properties, as the underlying principles are applicable. To this end, staff recommend that, as workloads permit, design guidelines also be prepared for the C4 commercial areas.

SUMMARY

The attached Design Guidelines are recommended as a tool to evaluate and influence the form and character of future projects within the C7 zone.

Signe K. Bagh, MCIP
Manager
Policy, Research, and Strategic Planning

PJM/pm

Approved for inclusion

R.L. (Ron) Mattiussi, ACP, MCIP

ATTACHMENT 1:

