



Date: March 4, 2004

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: AQUARIUM RENOVATION/EXPANSION

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approve the Development Permit application No. DE408234 for the renovation and expansion of the laboratory and related work stations at the Aquarium.

POLICY

Section 4(h) of the current Aquarium Agreement specifies that the Aquarium must seek Park Board approval of any additions or alterations that require a development permit.

BACKGROUND

The laboratory space for the Aquarium is an internal area of the building complex. It is one of the older portions of the building and the infrastructure is essentially worn out.

Over the years, the Aquarium research staff has increased, resulting in cramped and inefficient work stations for most of the staff.

The proposal contained in the development permit application is to address these shortcomings by redeveloping the laboratory and workstations area and expanding it with a second storey addition.

DISCUSSION

Renovation of the laboratory space in itself would not have triggered a need for a development permit and hence Park Board approval. The change in vertical elevations and the added floor space created the requirement.

The total increase in floor space proposed in the permit application is 331m². All of the expanded area and renovation work falls within the existing aquarium footprint as defined in Schedule A of the Aquarium Agreement.

The impact on the park will be limited to a visual change in the building appearance which will be noticeable on two of the four sides; from the Lumbermen's Arch lawn looking south and from the Avison Way parking lot looking west. Computer simulations of the changes are attached. The new roof elevations are similar to the heights of the existing shark tank display and the clamshell wing of the complex. Screening around new roof top mechanical units is slightly higher but is seen as an aesthetic improvement over the exposed air handling equipment.

There will be short term impacts on the park space. The construction will create the need for a temporary work yard north of the Aquarium service lane on the Lumbermen's Arch lawn immediately north of the building. This compound will be 20 x 30m and will be surrounded by a 3m fence and green mesh screening. No trees or shrubs will be affected but the lawn area will require replacement when the compound is removed. Displaced staff will share the compound with the construction team. The duration of the construction is anticipated to be eight months.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommend the approval of the development permit application for the following reasons:

- a) The changes are all contained within the existing approved footprint of the Aquarium.
- b) The visual impact of the changes will not be significant in that they block no existing views, but do increase the building profile, particularly when viewed from the north.
- c) The changes will not create any significant increase in aquarium activity which might impact park traffic flows or parking.
- d) The construction impact on the park will be limited to a 640m² area lawn which is easily repaired.

Prepared by:
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