



Date: January 2, 2003

**TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation**  
**FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: Dr Sun Yat-Sen Classical Garden Society - Approval of Final Design for the Enhancement Project**

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## RECOMMENDATION

**THAT the Board approve the final design for the enhancement project at the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Gardens.**

## BACKGROUND

The Dr Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden was the first full scale classical Chinese Garden built outside China. It was built in 1985 and 1986 on City owned land (1/3 acre) using 52 craftsmen from Suzhou, China and is a permanent public park. The cost of the Garden was \$6 million and was funded through all levels of government as well as through private donations.

On July 21, 1986 the Board approved a 15 year operating agreement with the Dr Sun Yat-Sen Garden Society of Vancouver.

On July 19, 1999 the Board gave approval in principle to the Society to expand the Classical Garden in front of the present gift shop on Carrall Street for the purpose of an education / presentation hall, public washrooms, a volunteer/meeting room and a larger gift shop. A plan of the Garden site is attached as Appendix 'A'.

On October 15, 2001 the Board approved a 15 year renewal to the operating agreement with the Dr Sun Yat-Sen Garden Society of Vancouver, with the rent remaining at \$1.00 per annum and any changes being subject to the approval of the General Manager and Director of Legal Services.

## DISCUSSION

The Garden receives approximately 100,000 visitors a year and is among the top ten tourist attractions in Vancouver and a designated museum. It is also a cultural link between the Chinese and non-Chinese communities both within and outside Vancouver. Active programming at the Gardens includes volunteer led tours, musical performances, art exhibits, horticultural displays, poetry readings, lectures and the celebration of Chinese festivals.

The Dr Sun Yat-Sen Society is a non-profit society, formed in 1981 with the purpose of raising funds for the development of the Garden. In 1985 the Society requested authority to operate and administer the Garden and this was approved by the Board. It currently has a membership of about 500 who each year elect a Board of Trustees to oversee the affairs of the Garden.

The Board has a close relationship with the Society and has a designated Commissioner who sits on the Society's Board as a liaison representative. In addition, one of the Board's management staff is the staff liaison and attends their monthly meetings.

### **A Brief History of the Expansion Project**

In 1995 the Society identified a need for washrooms, educational programming, meeting and reception facilities and in July, 1999 the Board gave approval in principle to the expansion.

In July 1999 the architect, Joe Wai, applied for a Development Permit on behalf of the Society. The Development Permit process included neighborhood notification and a public meeting which was advertised in the Vancouver Sun and the Ming Pao daily newspapers and attended by about 30 people.

The Society's membership was also consulted extensively throughout the planning process and kept up to date through newsletters and meetings.

In May 2001 the Society's Building Committee obtained accurate cost estimates, assessed the project's viability and prioritized all the components.

In September 2001 VanCity proposed the offer of a loan to the Society to help finance the project and in June 2002 the Board of Trustees approved a \$72,000 budget for building permit applications and \$8,000 to hire a quantity surveyor to provide detailed cost estimates.

In September 2002 a Development Permit was issued. The estimate for construction costs is \$1,600,000 and total project costs and expenditures including financing costs are \$2,075,000.

### **Project Highlights**

The retention of Joe Wai who designed the original building, to design the expansion has resulted in an overall cohesiveness to the project. The following are the main components of the expansion:

- **Public Restrooms.** There are presently no public restrooms and visitors have had to use off site rented facilities at the Chinese Cultural Centre.

- An **Education / Presentation Centre** of 1,443 sq ft. This multi-purpose, heated and enclosed facility would house education programs, exhibitions and be available for rental as function space. It will enable year-round programming for the first time.
- Expansion of the **Gift Shop** from 500 sq ft to 930 sq ft. It is conservatively estimated that there will be a 25% increase in sales due to the increase in shop size.
- A **Volunteer / Meeting Room** of 423 sq ft. Currently volunteers share space with Gardens staff in a crowded ticket office. This area is often congested and not conducive to learning and preparing for tours.
- **Administrative offices and storage** on the second floor with a total of 1,200 sq ft. Up until this time staff have been renting space off site near the Gardens.
- There will be a **covered walkway around the open courtyard** of 400 sq ft.

In total the expansion will be:	Ground Floor	3,650 sq ft
	Covered Walkway	400 sq ft
	Upper Floor Offices	<u>1,200 sq ft</u>
	Total:	5,250 sq ft

The project will be monitored by our own facility development staff through all stages of construction.

### **Project Financing**

The Society will be funding the project through both private financing and their own revenues and there will be no cost to the Board.

### **Estimated Project Timeline**

Building permits application	December, 2002
Building permits issued	May, 2002
Construction commences	September, 2003
Construction completed	June, 2004

## **SUMMARY**

Approval of the final design will allow the Dr Sun Yat-Sen Classical Garden Society to proceed with their enhancement project.

When completed, many aspects of the facility will be greatly improved and provide a higher level of service to Garden visitors and at the same time improve revenue generation opportunities for the Society.

Prepared by:

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