



Corporate Report

NO: R016

COUNCIL DATE: February 11, 2008

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor and Council DATE: January 31, 2008
FROM: General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture FILE: 6140 - 20/K
SUBJECT: Lodge Building on the Park Site Formerly Known as Camp Kwomais

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information;
2. Authorize staff to retain the Lodge (Dining Hall) Building on the Camp Kwomais park site while the park master plan is being developed, which will establish whether there is an adaptive re-use for the building that is complementary to the park site and whether the benefits of such adaptive reuse of the building are sufficient to justify the costs of restoration of the building; and
3. As part of the master planning process, authorize staff to document the heritage values of site through the development of a Statement of Significance.

INTENT

The intent of this report is to advise Council of the findings of a preliminary heritage assessment of the Lodge (Dining Hall) building on the Kwomais Park lands, and to recommend a course of action in respect to determining the merits in retaining the Lodge building over the long term as part of the master park plan for the site and to recommend that the heritage value of the park site be documented in the form of a Statement of Significance.

BACKGROUND

At the Regular Council meeting of December 17, 2008, Council received a Corporate Report regarding the site, formerly known as Camp Kwomais, that the City recently acquired for park purposes. (A brief history of Camp Kwomais is contained in Appendix 1.)

The report provided an assessment of the value of the existing buildings and other structures located in the site and made recommendations with respect to the demolition of certain buildings. Council adopted the recommendations of that report, which included the retention of the Manager's house and the Sanford Hall for future civic uses, and the demolition of the other buildings and structures on the site, including the Lodge building. At that meeting, Council raised a question about the age and heritage value of the building known as 'the Lodge' (sometimes called the Dining Hall) and whether an adaptive re-use had been considered for that building. This report addresses that question.

City records show that the buildings at Camp Kwomais were reviewed in 2003 – 2004 as part of the Heritage Register Phase III Review process conducted by Donald Luxton and Associates Inc., a firm specializing in the management of historic resources. Mr. Luxton's work was intended to identify sites that owed their heritage value to buildings and structures. The notes from Mr. Luxton's assessment indicate that the buildings should not be included in further detailed evaluation and the creation of Statements of Significance, owing to the extent to which they have been altered. The alterations that were noted included structural additions, addition of vinyl siding, and alteration of original windows. Based on this assessment, the buildings on the camp were not included in the Surrey Heritage Register.

DISCUSSION

The Luxton review did not indicate the feasibility of restoring the Lodge, nor did it identify its age. While the 2007 Wasser report on the building estimated that the lodge was constructed in 1956, other historical information indicates that the Lodge may have been constructed as early as 1933, and altered in the 1950's.

Although no formal adaptive re-use has been identified for the Lodge, members of the community have indicated that they would like to see it continue to be used for evening socials. Based on the recent evaluation of the condition of the buildings on the site, staff has determined that the adjacent building, "Sandford Hall", should be retained and utilized for programming on the site.

Based on the significant community interest in the possible use of the Lodge building, staff is of the view that the Lodge should be retained while the master plan for this site is developed. Through this process, the local community and other stakeholders can provide input into the potential uses for the building and how the building can be managed if it is to be retained. If the through the master planning process a reasonable use and management approach for the building are identified that is consistent with other activities that are to be programmed on the site, an estimate for heritage restoration of the building will be undertaken. A decision will then be made in relation to a recommendation around the future of the building in the context of the draft master plan for the park. The master plan for the park site including a recommendation regarding the Lodge building is expected to be forwarded for Council consideration in the Fall of 2008.

Given the history of the Camp Kwomais site, it is considered important that a heritage Statement of Significance be developed for the natural landscapes of the park as part of the park master planning process. In this regard, a representative from the Heritage Advisory Commission has been invited to participate on the Park Master Plan Steering Committee.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council:

- Authorize staff to retain the Lodge (Dining Hall) Building on the Camp Kwomais park site while the park master plan is being developed, which will establish whether there is an adaptive re-use for the building that is complementary to the park site and whether the benefits of such adaptive reuse of the building are sufficient to justify the costs of restoration of the building; and
- As part of the master planning process, authorize staff to document the heritage values of site through the development of a Statement of Significance.

Laurie Cavan
General Manager,
Parks, Recreation and Culture

Appendix 1

Brief History of Camp Kwomais

- The lands in question form the southwest point of the Semiahmoo Peninsula. Kwomais or Point Kwomais was once used by the Semiahmoo Salish Tribes for spiritual renewal. In Salish, the name place means “a place of vision.”
- Early navigation charts identify this site as a prominent landmark.
- The fractional quarter section (about 61 acres) formed by 16 Avenue on the north, 128 Street to the east and the oceanfront on the south and west was granted by the Federal Crown to John McGrath in 1890. (See attached Legal Plan 2834 from 1914).
- Former Methodist Minister W. Pascoe Goard acquired a 136-acre portion of land, including the point, in 1905. He planned to open a Methodist Centre.
- In 1914, a “syndicate” was formed developing “Ocean Park” as an ocean side resort consisting of two small lot enclaves, focused on an open space (now City-owned “Fun Fun Park”). At about the same time, residents built a shed along the rain lines and convinced the Great Northern Railway to make this a stop for the community and the Camp.
- Goard’s proposal did not come to fruition immediately. Beginning in 1910, the site was used as a summer school, with students sleeping in tents and cooking on their own. The first structure was built in 1912 and known as the “Tabernacle”. It was also used as a community centre until the Ocean Park Hall was built in about 1925.
- Full camp operation began after the church union creating the United Church of Canada in 1925. This Camp is the oldest camp in BC operating in the same location. Camp Elphinstone is three years older, but was moved. Literature from the Camp indicates about 120 civic and community groups make use of the facilities.
- Some of the Buildings constructed include:
 - 1929 – 8 of the first 11 cabins.
 - 1933 – the Dining Hall and Kitchen opened.
 - 40’s or 50’s – 2 classroom buildings and kitchen remodelling.
 - 1963 – swimming pool.
 - 1960’s – bathrooms and showers.
 - 1989 – the Sanford Hall.
- Acquired by the City in 2007 for park purposes.

Sources:

“Camp Kwomais” on page 2 of the September 2000 issue of The Ocean Parker.

“The Ocean Park Story” by O.M. Sanford.

“Ocean Park” Surrey History on Jack Brown’s Webpage.