

St. Francis of Assisi Parish
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Design Rationale – Proposed Pergola Structure

1. Project Overview

The proposed pergola is an architectural enhancement to the established garden area at St. Francis of Assisi Parish, providing a level, sheltered, dry, and durable surface that supports safe and comfortable outdoor use for parishioners—particularly seniors and individuals with mobility limitations, or sensitivity to sun exposure. By strengthening the functionality of the gardens and ensuring reliable use throughout seasonal conditions, the structure reinforces the heritage character of the parish grounds and supports the long-standing patterns of use that define the space. As part of maintaining the heritage character of the grounds, all existing trees are to be maintained and protected according to the arborist's report. Arborist's supervision will also be provided as identified. Lastly, to further enhance the usability and functionality of the pergola, new gravel and pavers will be installed in the future, allowing patrons full safe access from the church to the pergola.

2. Intent and Functional Purpose

The pergola addresses practical needs within the garden by providing a stable walkway and surface for seating and mobility devices and offering protection from direct sun and rain, allowing parishioners to participate comfortably and safely in outdoor activities already customary to the parish. Currently, that area of the garden has no accessibility and becomes muddy and unusable in the wet months. Accessibility and usability will be enhanced for existing assembly events that occur within the yard and will be facilitated by the covered gathering space, without altering the scale or nature of established gatherings. It is not intended to expand programming or increase activity levels, but rather to stabilize and improve an existing gathering space in a manner consistent with the site's architectural and landscape context.

3. Illumination and Lighting Approach

Integrated lighting will support safe use during periods of low natural light. Illumination will be limited to times when the pergola is in active use and will consist of soft, ambient fixtures that complement the garden environment. The lighting is intended for visibility and atmosphere, not extended evening programming, and will be selected to minimize glare and spillover to neighbouring properties.

4. Noise Management and By-law Compliance

Activities under the pergola will continue to reflect the respectful nature of parish use. The parish remains committed to being considerate to the neighbours and will do so by maintaining compliance with the City of Vancouver Noise By-law and will take reasonable measures so that noise levels remain within allowable limits. As such, we will ensure that all users of this space are aware of this prior to signing the rental agreement. Most of our events are family oriented and involve seniors or small children and tend to wrap up by the late afternoon or early evening. If there is a gathering that predominantly involves adults such as an engagement celebration, a wedding reception, a wake, or an anniversary, we will take extra precautions to note to the users

that should they be in violation of City of Vancouver By-laws, it may impact their ability to rent from us in the future and additional costs may be imposed as a result of any complaints received.

5. **Height Rationale**

The pergola's height has been carefully considered in relation to the RT-5 District Schedule, which permits rear buildings up to 7.7 m in height, compared with 10.7 m for principal buildings in front yards. Although the site is double-fronting and presents two front yards, the pergola functions as a rear building within the overall site organization. Within this context, its height is modest and remains lower than adjacent and surrounding residential buildings, maintaining an appropriate and subordinate scale relationship in the neighbourhood.

6. **Contextual Fit and Neighbourhood Compatibility**

The pergola's form, placement, and materials are designed to integrate with the existing parish grounds and landscape. While this is an accessory building, the structure has been intentionally setback from Parker Street to respect the required front yard setback of the District Schedule and has been situated as far as possible from the immediate neighbouring property while allowing for safe tree retention areas. As the structure supports established use rather than expanding it, along with the existing fence and large trees on the north and west property line, no additional impacts related to traffic, noise, views, or activity are anticipated. The pergola maintains compatibility with the surrounding neighbourhood and reinforces the architectural and environmental character of the site.

7. **Summary**

The pergola is a context-responsive improvement that enhances accessibility, safety, and comfort within an existing garden space. It supports traditional parish use, aligns with municipal expectations for well-integrated site enhancements, and maintains the established heritage character of the parish grounds and surrounding neighbourhood. The intent is not to create a new venue, nor increase the capacity of the space. Given the internal circulation of the church and hall, the garden and hall are rented as a unit because the only way to access the garden is through the hall. Furthermore, access to the washroom facilities from the garden is through the hall. Due to the nature, interconnectedness of the existing facility, and the maximum permitted occupant load, there is not the capability for differing rental events. Hence, the pergola cannot be rented separately in addition to another event taking place at the church.

Sincerely,



Fr. Juan Lucca
Pastor, St. Francis of Assisi Parish