



**CONCLUDED
PROBLEM REPORT
PS-1**

Problem ID: 46

Reporting Division : DOWNTOWN

District:

Neighbourhood:

Address: 11202- 94 ST

Reg	Rank	Last Name	First Name
977	CST	MCMECHAN	TERRY

Key Description : PROBLEM APARTMENT BUILDING

Problem Description:

The Locke Apartments (more commonly called "The Locke") first appeared in the Henderson Directory in 1924. At that time it was listed under the name of Locke Apts. Some of the local people that Cst. McMechan spoke to indicated that the Locke was once a hotel, however, he could not find any reference to that effect. City Archives did not have any readily available information on it.

Prior to the Norwood area becoming a CAD. (Community Assigned District) in May 1993, the area around 95 Street was looked after by beat constables. They indicate that during their tenure the Locke was mostly inhabited by older residents. Most of the problems experienced by the beat members at that time were alcohol related problems associated to "rubbie types", ie; intoxication, trouble with drunks, sick or injured man, type complaints. These types of complaints were of a chronic, nuisance type nature which had the potential to escalate. Although these types of complaints were a concern to the neighbourhood, they were no where near the problems that would soon surface.

Problem solving strategies and results :

The owner at that time was the owner that currently owns the property. The Locke was suffering from many years of neglect. The beat men enlisted the aid of various city departments, like Fire, Health and Building Inspections to conduct inspections to bring the property up to code. This resulted in the property being shut down on a couple of occasions to rectify various problems like broken windows, raw sewage in the basement and substandard living conditions. With the shutdowns came the eviction of the tenants. These were short term solutions and with the property not being kept up, problems would re-occur.

The property was brought up to meet the minimum standards by the owner and was then sold in December of 1991. The new owner, for what ever reason, did nothing to improve the situation. The previous caretaker was retained. This caretaker did nothing more than collect the rent, and was not particular in who he rented to.

The temporary shutting down of the Locke had the desired effect of improving the property somewhat, but with that came more problems. We had solved or diminished one problem but unknowingly created a new and much greater problem.

Some of the previous tenants which were evicted had found other lodgings and very few moved back in. The caretaker, not being too particular to who he rented to, and likely under pressure from the owner, whose sole desire was to make money from the property, now rented to everyone and anyone. This resulted in a younger and less desirable clientele moving into the Locke. This was the start of the present problems. The Locke soon became the residence/hangout of drug users, buyers, and sellers. Since drugs were readily available, prostitutes began to frequent the area because of their habit of plying their trade within easy access of their drug supply. This manifested itself in the prostitutes establishing a "track" in the area. The Locke itself is one block off of a major street and intersection. The prostitutes, following good business practises then established themselves in the area where they would be most visible and accessible to their customers. They established a track right at the major intersection. Unfortunately, the north-west corner of that intersection is occupied by an elementary school. Used condoms, syringes, soon littered the area and school children were being propositioned. The children's safety was in jeopardy by potential infection from needles and condoms, and criminal actions by "johns".

A series of events then took place which led to prolonging finding a solution to the problem and then to the

situation being resolved to the benefit of all concerned. Firstly, the current owner, due to constant attention from the beat men, could no longer afford the payment for the property. The icing on the cake was a \$7,000 fire alarm system required as a result of a fire inspection. The previous owner re-established ownership of the property through the courts. This occurred in November of 1993. Secondly, with the original owner back in possession of the property, a new caretaker was hired. The previous caretaker had disappeared, likely being scared off by the drug dealers which had essentially taken over the building. The present owners decided to put some money into the building in order to attract suitable tenants and also possibly to avoid the attention the Locke was receiving from media, local citizens, police, other city departments, and social agents.

While this was occurring, the police service inadvertently prolonged the problem being dealt with in a timely manner. The beat men were replaced in May of 1993 with C.A.D. constables. At that time, we were still in "reactive policing" mode and were not yet "on board" to respond to the needs and complaints of the community and to apply problem solving initiatives to the area. However, with some assistance from the community leaders coupled with utilizing resources and expertise within the Police Service we soon began to deal with the problem in an effective manner.

The main credit for the present success of the Locke Apt can be attributed to the present caretaker. The caretaker brought with him excellent organizing, budgeting and renovating skills. He set about renovating the building suite by suite. He had to operate within a limited budget and often found needed materials at auctions and used building material outlets. He used his woodworking and renovation skills to fabricate many needed parts and trim. He even used his own form of problem solving by getting some of the tenants involved in the renovation of their rooms so they would have some "ownership" and not be so eager to damage the property that they helped fix. He also was very selective in who he rented to and was quick to evict troublemakers. In addition, he attended the local crime and safety meetings to meet the community leaders and to advise on the progress of the renovations and to address any concerns the community had about the Locke.

The management of the Locke was not without problems however. The caretaker was assaulted several times while dealing with tenants. During two assaults he received various cuts, bruises, and black eyes. He was also arrested once when it was alleged he used excessive force in dealing with a tenant.

The Police Service and C.A.D. members were able to assist in diminishing the problems at the Locke. Soon after the new caretaker took over the members of the Downtown Division Fortified Drug House Team visited the Locke Apt. Their main target was the third floor of the apt. that had turned into a place where drugs were bought, sold and used. Prostitutes would take their dates to the rooms on the third floor. The team advised the people on the third floor, most of who did not live in the building, that they were no longer welcome in the building. This action was taken as a result of drug dealers attacking two elderly tenants that lived on the main floor of the apt. They had been attacked, stabbed, and slashed with a machete. This had occurred just prior to the new caretaker taking over and when the previous caretaker was too intimidated by the dealers to do anything to protect the property. The visit from the Fortified Drug House Team had the desired effect and once the malefactors were out, the caretaker was able to keep control of the Building. We were able to assist the caretaker with keeping control of the building by paying a lot of extra attention to the building and area. We obtained a key to the building and permission to do a walk-thru at any time. We assisted the caretaker by being available via pagers or cellular phone to immediately respond to any problems that arose in the building and to back up the caretaker if he had any problem tenants he had to deal with.

When the caretaker was arrested for an assault B H, he was given a substantial bail and a condition he have no contact with the person he assaulted. This person lived in the building so the bail condition effectively prohibited the caretaker from going back to the building. With the caretaker gone the building could easily return the way it had been. The owner of the building was contacted. He agreed to give the complainant in the assault an eviction notice as the person was a constant source of trouble in the Locke prior to the assault. The assault occurred when the complainant was drunk and defecated all over the washroom and hallway on one floor in the Locke. An argument and physical confrontation took place between the caretaker and the complainant and resulted in the charges. The owner also agreed to post the bail money for the caretaker. The Boyle Street Housing Registry was contacted and a new residence was found for the complainant. The owner of the building was even persuaded to provide some funds to the complainant if he needed money to pay rent prior to receiving his welfare cheque. Once the complainant was out of the building the Crown Prosecutor was contacted and assisted in expediting the release of the caretaker.

Between CAD members and Morality Unit members the prostitution problem was diminished. Morality Unit ran operations in the area which resulted in charges and the prostitutes going else where to work. The CAD members made constant patrols in the area and advised any prostitutes found in the area that they were "not welcome" in the area and were advised of the area of tolerance to the south of the residential area. Some of the prostitutes that continued to work in the area were then targeted in mini-operations by the CAD members which resulted in their arrest and an area restricting being part of their bail conditions. This was very effective and word soon got around that the area was not a good place to work. CAD members also attended the community meetings and worked with the community to deal with the local problems. Members acted as mediators on occasion between residents of the Locke and the surrounding residents when problems or misunderstandings arose. Further, we had to apply every means at our disposal, from the Safe Housing Committee, to City Bylaws, to the Criminal Code in our efforts to deal with the Locke Apt.

Community leaders assisted with the problem solving by being very vocal and adamant that they would not tolerate the activities occurring at the Locke. They kept a constant eye on the Locke and assisted police by reporting problems as they occurred or making a note of the occurrence and passing the information onto CAD members when

they became available. They welcome the caretaker to their meetings as an ally in dealing with the problem. One community leader even intervened once to prevent an assault on the caretaker outside the building.

Norwood Community Police Station also played a large part in solving the problem. The community station constables would forward any complaints about the Locke to the CAD members or look after the complaints themselves if they were able. The station volunteers assisted by collecting and correlating information, and doing other tasks that freed the CAD members for problem solving initiatives.

There was no one idea or initiative, nor was there any one person that was responsible for the success at the Locke Apt. Instead, it **was** a whole community that consisted of residents of the area, community people, the building owner and caretaker, and numerous city departments and services that all contributed to some aspect of the problem solving. This would be a good example of the success of Community Based Policing. With the problem identified, we were able to employ and coordinate various people, agencies, and units to deal with the Locke Apt. problem on a consistent and ongoing basis until the problem was no longer a concern. Also, we were so successful in addressing the situation because the supervisors and management of the police service recognized the members knowledge and commitment and allowed the members to exercise their discretion and ideas to deal with the problem. The supervisors and management also were readily available, approachable and eager to assist in any way they could to aid the members in their endeavors. On several occasions this aid was instrumental in overcoming obstacles encountered by the CAD members.

Were we successful? Yes! In the first six months of 1993 there was over two hundred calls for service at the Locke for police, fire, and EMS. In the last three months of 1994, there was only three calls for service for police, and likely the same or less for fire and EMS. The Locke Apt. is no longer the main topic of conversation at the Community Crime and Safety meetings. Area residents would ultimately like to see the Locke gone from the area, but are satisfied with the present level of peace in the neighbourhood. At one time the community leaders clamoured for their beat men back to police their area. This is no longer the case. In fact, recently they stated that they now prefer the CAD members and do not want the Foot Patrol back, likely because the CAD members were available 24 hours a day. This was possibly the ultimate compliment. However, we cannot sit back and let the problem come back. We will still have to monitor the area to ensure the problem does not reoccur.