

03 DESIGN RATIONALE

Introduction

This Booklet comprises the resubmittal of the development permit application, of the property at 129 Keefer Street, in Chinatown HA-1A District, Vancouver. The new project team has revisited the proposed design, to address the urban design panel concerns put forward in the April 2 2017 meeting, with special attention to the following:

- Revision of building massing, particularly the setback at penthouse levels.
- Redefinition of the building's architectural character in its entirety as well as details. In response to Chinatown design guidelines, to reach at a contemporary design that is in harmony with its context but does not mimic or replicate its heritage neighbours.
- Introduction of a new finishes' template that is context-sensitive and establishes a hierarchy of visual weight from lower to upper building facades.
- Planning of grade level to resolve issues of safety, code as well as services of residential and commercial components.
- Enhancing livability, with the introduction of roof amenity indoor-outdoor spaces, a skylit residential lobby, and capitalizing on natural daylight available through the adjoining courtyard proposed as part of 105 Keefer development.
- Landscaping, tailored to enhance privacy, space character and architectural setbacks.
- Sustainability, targeting LEED Gold standards.

These are detailed in the booklet hereafter.

Policies

Planning and design of the development has been guided by the following City of Vancouver policies:

- Chinatown HA-1A Design Guidelines
- HA-1 and HA-1A Districts Schedule (Chinatown Historic Area)
- Rezoning Policy for Chinatown South (HA-1A)
- Chinatown Vision Directions

Context:

The site is at the north side of Keefer Street between Columbia and Main Streets. It is currently a vacant site, 50' by 122'.

The adjacent site to the east is a 25' lot with an existing Heritage "C" building of 5-storays with commercial at grade and residential above. The next lot to the east is also a 25' lot with an approved development permit application, for a new 10-storey building with commercial at grade and residential above. To the west is a 150' lot at the corner of Keefer and Columbia which has a rezoning application proposing a 10-storey mixed use building, currently under review.

The proposal is for a new 10-storey building with retail at the ground floor (including a retail unit in the lane), a 2nd floor commercial mezzanine level, and 8 storeys of residential

above. The proposed density has been reduced to 7.25 FSR with an overall height of 90 feet.

Under the Chinatown Design Guidelines, new buildings should reflect the historic scale and character of the neighbourhood. The intent isn't to mimic heritage buildings, but to provide a general sense of alignment with the historical context, in particular:

- The narrow building frontages derived from the typical lot width of 25 feet
- The predominant street wall height of 70 feet

Heights up to 90 feet can be considered, with upper storeys setbacks above the street wall. The upper massing should be clearly subordinate to the street wall and consider adjacent lower buildings and provide a suitable transition.

For the proposal, a street facade is proposed with a height of 70' at the east side and 90' at the west side. Setbacks to the upper massing are provided at 15' from the front while the side is revised to 16'.

A rear setback of 23' is required for residential uses to ensure privacy and livability across the lanes. Yet a relaxation is required to allow the building alignment with the adjacent building at the rear east side, stepping back to provide the required 23' setback to the residential west portion.

Historical buildings in Chinatown also have clear hierarchy in term of the facade composition which should be reflected in the new building design.

Design Rationale

Parcelization Pattern Rhythm

Unlike the previous application, the new design celebrates the 50' wide frontage on Keefer Street, as one uninterrupted building form, which falls within the historic parcelization pattern width.

Among other 50' wide existing buildings, the proposal acts as a casual breather into the dense 25ft pattern along Keefer Street. The rhythm of 25' to 50' wide parcelization is mapped and illustrated within the contextual analysis section within this booklet.

The 70' Facade

The architectural composition of the 50' wide frontage on Keefer Street reinterprets Chinatown's brick wall and cornice heritage composition; the cornice profile is folded and stretched down to grade to create a solid brick frame that defines the 70' high street facade.

Within this contemporary frame, balconies are utilized to create two multi-storey architectural components, which reintroduce the 25' wide pattern as a secondary rhythm, to bring down the composition to a more human scale. To achieve a contextual solution; the composition of those two components make use of heritage projected bay windows, that are found in numerous buildings within Chinatown, while utilizing contemporary components to define its materiality such as colored ceramic frit patterns on guardrails and privacy screens.

The lower Street Facade

Extra attention is given to the lower facade design, where the commercial component is broken down into two individual shopfronts, with paired recessed entries in between. The shopfronts are detailed in relation to heritage Chinatown shopfronts as well as the new developments along Keefer street. The mullion arrangement, base, signage, weather protection, lighting, floor finish and grade level are all addressed with contemporary solutions that aim to enhance pedestrian interest, safety, and material durability.

The 90' Facade

The massing above the 70' street facade, reaches up to 90' high and comprises the penthouses, the rooftop services as well as outdoor patios.

This part of the building has been redesigned to provide a generous eastside setback, that is utilized for two amenity patios. A double-height indoor amenity space is introduced under the top roof service area, overlooking these patios.

The upper massing is architecturally defined as a glass volume which runs horizontally under a white plane that wraps the roof services and folds down the lightwells on the east and west sides of the building. The materiality of this upper massing aims to reduce its visual impact; therefore visually-light materials are utilized: white mullions with capless verticals, translucent spandrels, white lower screening and white standing-seam metal cladding.

Grade Level

The planning of the grade level has been revised to address the issues brought forward by the design panel and City of Vancouver planners.

The narrow breezeway which was previously proposed to connect Keefer St. to the lane, is replaced with a generous indoor access-controlled space, which opens into a double height well-proportioned residential lobby. The lobby is strategically aligned with a skylight at the bottom of the lightwell above, to allow it to act as an amenity seating space.

The previously fragmented commercial front at the lane, has been consolidated to allow flexibility of retail space utilization and to maximize its frontage onto the lane. To achieve that; a solution is proposed for the servicing of residential and commercial components. A service "hub" that is comprised of two independently-operated car lifts serve the parkade below, but can be time-managed to act as platforms to service the recycling rooms behind as well as the loading corridor. An illustration of the functional scenarios is provided within this booklet.

The design panel has also highlighted the need to look into the impact of mechanical services such as exhaust/intake on planning and facades. The new proposal strategizes the routes and terminations of the services required for firefighting, parkade, generator, waste, commercial and residential. These are illustrated in the booklet, and incorporated into the facades and layouts.

Relaxations

The development is seeking relaxation on the following:

- Lane setback
- Small car stalls percentage

