



**CHINATOWN HISTORIC AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2019**

Minutes of the meeting of the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee (CHAPC) held on Thursday, September 12, 2019, in the Boardroom of the Chinese Cultural Centre, 50 East Pender Street, Vancouver, BC.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Edmund Ma, Chinatown Property Owner (Chair)  
Sarah Ling, Member-at-Large  
Fang Liu, Architectural Institute of BC  
Inge Roecker, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Garden Society  
(arrived 5:55 p.m.)  
Leslie Shieh, Planning Institute of British Columbia  
Eric Siu, Chinatown Property Owner  
Michael Yu, Chinatown Merchants Association

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Albert Lam, Heritage Vancouver  
Andrew Larigakis, Architectural Institute of BC  
Grace Wong, Chinatown Merchants Association

**LIAISONS PRESENT:** Allan Wong, Vancouver School Board Trustee  
(arrived at 6:57 p.m.)

**STAFF:** Dear Bhokanandh, Downtown Eastside Group  
Amber Knowles, Staff Liaison  
Marie Linehan, Urban Design  
Thien Phan, Rezoning Centre

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Roberta Pak, Mosaic Writing Group

**Call to Order**

Edmund Ma, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:44 p.m.

**1. Adoption of Agenda and Minutes**

MOVED by Leslie Shieh  
SECONDED by Sarah Ling

THAT the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee:

1. Adopts the agenda for the September 12, 2019 meeting; and
2. Adopts the minutes of the July 11, 2019 meeting, as presented.

CARRIED

## 2. 728 – 796 Main Street Rezoning Resubmission

Thien Phan, Rezoning Centre, City of Vancouver, introduced the rezoning resubmission and provided historical policy context for the application.

Tomas Wolf, Studio One Architecture Inc., presented the revised rezoning application and highlighted key changes in the resubmission:

- Retail units:
  - The large canopy protects the sidewalk to allow for storefront merchandise to spill out from the retail units in a traditional Chinatown manner
  - Narrow façades in keeping with traditional Chinatown retail frontage
- Building height:
  - The building height has been significantly reduced by approximately 35.7 feet
  - The top section of the building is set back from the building mass
  - Base zoning allows for a 90-foot building height:
    - Rezoning policy allows up to 150-foot building height
    - The original application was 150 feet in height
- Housing units:
  - 19 social housing units and 75 strata units are included in the application
  - The social housing entrance would be very distinct and would utilize materials such as the original brick and stone
  - Second and third floors are for social housing and include a common hub area
  - The outdoor area on the second floor views the lane area
  - Additional floors are market housing.

In response to questions from members of CHAPC, the following was noted:

- The revised design has strengthened the mezzanine area
- Under Council approval in 2018, this is the only application that will be grand-parented and considered under the old Chinatown Rezoning Policy:
  - The proposed development is within the height limitations of the now rescinded policy
- This application captures the desire for improvement to livability of Single Room Occupancy Units (SROs) in Chinatown by establishing larger, self-contained units
- Ownership:
  - The social housing units would be owned by the City of Vancouver or a social organization
  - The development company will own the retail units and would be able to encourage small scale retail businesses
- Consideration of this application as a gateway:
  - With the removal of the viaducts and the new North East False Creek (NEFC) Plan, the gateway to Chinatown should be visually strong
  - The middle section of the proposed building is visually strong
  - The top section appears weak due to:
    - The setback
    - The color
    - The use of glass and the resultant glare
    - The penthouse form does not align with historic usages
- Suggestion for future renderings to be considered by CHAPC to include the depiction of neighboring buildings already approved, but not yet built

- Arches are not included in this design, as previous buildings were very square although the arches were added to the Brickhouse
- Landscape planning will incorporate landscape brick patterns designated for the Main Street area
- Consideration of including a transition area to the laneway
- The need for an address on the lane to activate lane activities, such as retail.

Following the presentation, a roundtable discussion ensued:

- Laneway concerns:
  - The desire to advocate for micro-spaces suitable for small businesses, by having a laneway address, but recognition that that is also a larger issue citywide
  - The importance of adding lanes to emergency servicing
  - Support for designs which increase eyes on the lane area
- Importance of the building as a gateway to Chinatown:
  - The top level of this building is not a suitable introduction to Chinatown in a gateway location
  - There should be a strong cornice aspect to the roofline
  - There could be greater height difference to facades to emphasize the sawtooth
  - The top two floors should be better integrated with the main building mass
  - The streetscape along Union Street is fairly generic and, with the removal of the viaducts, this property has the opportunity to be a departure in design
- Design notes:
  - The articulation of the middle section is suitable
  - The glass balconies are not the correct response to the Chinatown street façade
- Collective support for:
  - Property managers encouraging a thoughtful business mix
  - The concept honoring the history of the area
  - The narrow facades versus general massing
  - The residential units on the mezzanine level.

MOVED by Edmund Ma  
 SECONDED by Michael Yu

THAT the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee:

1. Requests improvement of the following:
  - A. That as a Chinatown gateway location, the top setback section of the building be integrated into the main building mass, to create a strong expression at the top; not weakening through receding;
  - B. Replacing glass balconies with a material alignment with Chinatown heritage characteristics;
  - C. That the design of the entrance to the land facing commercial unit be expressed with architectural prominence and be treated as the main entrance; and
  - D. For future retail occupants to reflect Chinatown community values, in support of the City's pursuit for UNESCO world heritage designation;

2. Supports, in principle, the proposed design at 728–796 Main Street rezoning resubmission if the above requests are met; and
3. Welcomes the applicant to present a response that addresses the points above.

CARRIED

**3. Adjournment**

MOVED by Leslie Shieh  
SECONDED by Inge Roecker

That the meeting of the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee meeting held September 12, 2019 be adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

CARRIED

**Next Meeting:**

Date: October 10, 2019  
Time: 5:30 p.m.  
Place: Chinese Cultural Centre Boardroom, 50 East Pender Street

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Certified correct:



Edmund Ma, Chair

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Date Approved