

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026

**TIME:** 3:00 pm

**PLACE:** Teams Meeting

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Tony Osborn (Chair)  
Allyse Li  
Ana Maria Llanos  
Aaron Petruic  
Mariyeh Sharifisaraei  
Grant Brumpton  
Scott Mitchell

**RECORDING P. ANALYST:** E. Garrido

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. <b>80 Powell St</b>

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Chair Tony Osborn called the meeting to order at 3:00pm acknowledging that we are on the unceded traditional and ancestral territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples. Noted the importance of the historic route of the railway, as an integral part of the settlement of this country which resulted in the displacement of indigenous communities.

**1. Address:** **80 Powell St**

**Permit No.:** DP-2025-00672

**Description:** To develop a 13-storey mixed-use commercial building on site, consisting of: Hotel use from ground to 12th floor; restaurant use on the 13th floor; former railway ROW preserved and enhanced as public open space; a proposed Floor Space Ratio of 7.58 for the site; a proposed floor area of approximately 60,569.45 sq. ft. / 5,627.08 m<sup>2</sup>; a proposed height of 137.5 ft./ 41.91 m; all over one level of underground parking, with vehicular access from the lane.

**Application Status:** Complete Development Application

**Review:** Second

**Architect:** RH Architects

**Delegates:** James Wu, RHA; Rick Michaels, John Atkin, Joseph Fry, HAPA.

**Staff:** David Cha, Development Planner; Elijah Sabadlan, Heritage Planner.

## **EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (6/1)**

### **Planner's Introduction:**

David Cha, Development Planer, presented the revised development application, detailing changes made in response to previous Urban Design Panel feedback. explained the site's location along the historic CPR railway corridor, emphasizing its significance for public access, amenity, and legibility, and the city's practice of securing publicly accessible open space in exchange for additional building height.

### **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

John Atkin highlighted the site's unique diagonal alignment and its historical role as a portage route for local First Nations, reinforcing the importance of maintaining the open right of way. James and Joseph Fry described the revised design, including increased pedestrian access width, relocation of the parkade ramp, activation of blank facades, and integration of landscape features such as a green wall and tidal water feature; the ground floor and rooftop restaurant were positioned to maximize public space and connectivity, with material choices referencing Gastown's heritage and the Dominion Building.

**Advice from the Panel on this application is sought in the following:**

- Please comment on how the revised proposal responds to the UDP's consensus recommendations.

**Applicant and staff took questions from Panel.****Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **Allyse Li** and seconded by **Scott Mitchel** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel Recommend **Support with recommendations** to the project with the following recommendations to be reviewed by City Staff:

1. Consider a more meaningful integration of the site's history, specifically regarding the sacrifices of the Chinese Canadian community.
2. Further study development of the building elevations to rationalize the randomness and integrate it within its heritage context.
3. Further study servicing needs, especially to ensure they don't conflict with the experience of the public plaza.
4. Exterior lighting to be further developed especially on the ground floor.

**Panel Commentary:**

The Urban Design Panel provided detailed feedback, raising concerns about historical reconciliation, facade articulation, operational clarity, public realm activation, and technical details, culminating in consensus recommendations for further design development and integration of site history.

Panelists questioned the hotel's operational details, including service access, mechanical systems, elevator overruns, and code compliance; Applicant clarified that service rooms and mechanical equipment would be in the basement, with allowances made in the design, and alternate code solutions such as water curtains were discussed for exit protection.

Emphasis was made on the need for the project to address the site's historical context, including the sacrifices of Chinese Canadian workers and indigenous displacement, suggesting that programming at the ground and second floors should integrate gestures of reconciliation and historical dialogue.

Panelists also critiqued the randomness of the fenestration and facade articulation, questioning the departure from Gastown's grid and advocating for a more rationalized, contextually grounded approach; recommendations included further study of window placement and material rigor.

Further develop unresolved issues regarding hotel servicing, lighting strategy, green wall

viability, and integration of mechanical and service elements, recommending that these aspects be carefully resolved to avoid conflicts with the public realm and ensure long-term durability.

Panelists acknowledged improvements in pedestrian circulation and ground floor openness but called for more robust strategies to ensure the space functions as a place for people to stay, not just pass through; suggestions included enhancing lighting, landscape detailing, and programming to support real users and activity over time.

The chair commented that the development of the upper portions of the building are positive but agreed with the rest of the panelists that they needed to be further justified and rationalized with their relationship to the heritage character of the neighborhood in which they exist.

The chair also commented that the building servicing needs lacked design development, especially as they might affect the pedestrian experience of the plaza. This project should serve as an anchor point or gateway to the collected series of public spaces on this rail line terminating at International Village. However, the utilitarian quality of the architecture and its footprint on the ground prevent it from functioning as the important gateway this site warrants.

The chair summarized the panel's consensus items, recommending support with conditions:

- Meaningful integration of site history
  - Rationalization of the random patterning on the building facades
  - Careful study of servicing needs, and
  - Further development of exterior lighting.
- **Site History Integration:**  
Consider a more meaningful integration of the site's history, specifically regarding the sacrifices of the Chinese Canadian community, into the project design and programming.
  - **Facade Design Development:**  
Further study and rationalize the randomness of the building elevations to better integrate with the heritage context.
  - **Servicing and Public Plaza Interface:**  
Further study and resolve servicing needs, especially to ensure they do not conflict with the experience of the public plaza.
  - **Exterior Lighting Strategy:**  
Further develop the exterior lighting strategy, especially at the ground floor, to ensure safety and ambiance.

The motion was moved, seconded, and supported by all panelists except The Chair.

**Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments.