

Date: Monday, December 11, 2017
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Place: Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

PRESENT:**Board**

A. Law Director, Development Services, (Chair)
P. Mochrie Deputy City Manager
J. Dobrovolny General Manager of Engineering
G. Kelley General Manager of Planning and Development Services

Advisory Panel

H. Besharat Representative of the Design Professions (Urban Design Panel)
H. Ahmadian Representative of the Development Industry
B. Jarvis Representative of the Development Industry
N. Lai Representative of the General Public

Regrets

K. Maust Representative of the Vancouver Heritage Commission
R. Wittstock Representative of the Design Professions
M. Pollard Representative of the General Public
R. Chaster Representative of the General Public

ALSO PRESENT:**City Staff:**

J. Greer Assistant Director of Processing Centre - Development
P. Cheng Development Planner
T. Tenney Project Facilitator
C. Joseph Engineering Services

239 Keefer Street - DP-2017-00703 - HA-1A

Aaron Urion, Architect, Mallen Gowing Berzins Architecture.
Brian Roche, Rendition Developments
Keefer Gardens Holdings Inc., Property Owner

Recording Secretary: K.Cermeno

1. MINUTES

It was moved by Jerry Dobrovolny, seconded by Paul Mochrie, and was the decision of the Board to approve the minutes of the meeting on November 27, 2017.

2. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

3. 239 Keefer Street - DP-2017-00703 - HA-1A

(COMPLETE APPLICATION)

Applicant: Mallen Gowing Berzins Architecture Inc.

Request: To develop this site with an eight storey mixed used building with retail (1st floor and mezzanine), general office (2nd and 3rd floors) and 25 dwelling units (4th to 8th floors) all over two levels of underground parking, having vehicular access from the lane via a car-elevator.

Development Planner's Opening Comments

Paul Cheng, Development Planner, presented the proposal and summarized the recommendations contained in the Staff Committee Report. The recommendation was for support of the application, subject to the conditions noted.

Mr. Cheng took questions from the Board and Panel members.

Applicant's Comments

The applicant team noted a point of clarity related to the comparison of the original and new submission. The original submission was well received in terms of the overall form of development, massing and distribution of space. The majority of comments and concerns raised at that time of the original submission were in regards to the exterior design. The applicant noted they wanted to avoid confusion and clarify the massing and how the building is operating is largely the same.

There was a public consultation in the form of an open house on September 27, 2017. Post cards were sent out by the city. There was a total of 35 people signed in, 14 written comments and 12 were in support. The applicant team noted the feedback from the open house was limited, however they continued to try to incorporate as much as they could from the feedback.

The applicant team took questions from the Board and Panel members.

There was a brief 5 minute recess to inquire about a translator. Planner, Helen Ma will be acting in as a translator. Meeting was reconvened at 4:00pm

Comments from other Speakers

Speaker, William Lim, spoke from a sociology perspective. Mr. Lim noted he would like to speak on the overall architectural design and how it fits in the cultural context. Mr. Lim noted how this building is being proposed in the heart of Chinatown along with many other new developments and simply do not fit in. Mr. Lim noted this change reminds him of a journalist who once stated the ship has sailed on saving Chinatown. Mr. Lim noted that all these new developments appear beneficial however will have a long term social implication on the community. Mr. Lim referenced the example of chemical DDT on the environment. Chemical DDT appears to have many benefits but what individuals refuse to see is the detrimental unchanging long term effects to the eco system. In that context this proposal is not very different; all these unaffordable modern developments have a long term effect on the communities. Mr. Lim noted he is not in favour.

Speaker, King-mong Chan, from the Chinatown action group, primarily spoke in his native language followed by in English. Mr. Chan asked the board to reject the development application. Similar to 105 Keefer St, both locations are within the same zoning district, should

not be built in a working class district. Mr. Chan noted the site sign was placed after the open house. It appeared the intention was not to make the open house apparent. Mr. Chan requested a second open house. Mr. Chan noted it was undemocratic to approve an application that did not allow the proper public feedback. The Chinatown area is losing too many assets due to gentrification and other market housing buildings. Mr. Chan noted this development, along with others, are placing profit ahead of community needs. Mr. Chan noted policies that support reconciliation of the Chinese community are required.

Speaker, Wan Ling Ling, a member of the Chinatown concern group, expressed opposition to the development because it does not meet the needs of Chinatown. The existence of Chinatown did not come easy. It is a very meaningful place that took a lot of blood and sweat to build. Due to years of effort it is now a cultural preservation. Ms. Ling is opposed to a developer who doesn't respect Chinatown's history and its residents. Ms. Ling noted that as a community we cannot allow discrimination to continue against low income people and the Chinese people. Chinatown is a special location. The developer cannot only care about their own profits. We need to stop designing buildings that are for luxury. Ms. Ling noted that buildings should not be more than 50 ft. tall. Ms. Ling asked the panel and the developer to provide minimum 50 percent low cost housing. Low cost housing meaning welfare rates or 30 percent of the market rate. On the ground floor there should be affordable and good quality supermarkets, stores, restaurants, and parking in basement. Ms. Ling stated she wished for the government and developer to consider Chinatown's future as well as its culture and way of living.

Speaker, Hui Qing Chen, noted she is a member of the Chinatown concern group. Ms. Chen noted she does not see it as wrong for a developer to do their business but Chinatown is not the right location. Ms. Chen asked for the government to respect Chinatown. The concern group has done research, and Vancouver should follow similar to San Francisco and develop 5 storey buildings. The development at 239 Keefer is proposing 8 storeys and 25 housing units. This development has 2 levels of underground parking and is the site of the former Chinatown supermarket which was the only place to do shopping. Ms. Chen stated a lot of efforts were put into establishing the Chinatown community, (i.e. railway workers). The government already said they would like to apologize for past discrimination. The apologies should be matched with actions. There are 25 market rental housing units half of them should be low income housing as there are homeless people on the street. Ms. Chen referenced 105 Keefer St and noted there have been 5 open houses and still no decision on what will happen. A lot of seniors have put in a lot of effort and it is very tiring. The 105 Keefer St process is disruptive to the community.

Speaker, Bo Raifan, a resident of South East False Creek, noted his support for the project. He is ten minute walk to Chinatown and frequents Chinatown on a regular basis to shop and work. Mr. Raifan noted his enjoyment for the historical culture. Mr. Raifan supports the project because it meets the demands for additional residential units and commercial space. This will attract and increase the number of local businesses. Residents or tenants from neighbouring communities will support these local businesses (Chinatown businesses).

Panel Opinion

Panel members offered a range of comments on the proposal, including:

Ms. Besharat noted at the second review of the Urban Design Panel, the panel found the project had improved and the panel was supportive of the project.

Mr. Ahmadian noted his support for the project. Mr. Ahmadian noted adding 25-26 residential units to the area meet the need for housing supply.

Mr. Ahmadian noted he would like to continue the discussion of borrowed light for the bedroom units. If the city would allow some sort of compromise with borrowed light from the other windows of the building this can generate for smaller units which would contribute to affordability.

Mr. Jarvis noted his recommendation for the panel to support the project.

Mr. Jarvis noted the second rendition of the project seems appropriate to the debate around the right architecture for Chinatown.

Mr. Jarvis noted concern to emerging policy. There is zoning that outlines the lands has rights that exist today on an outright basis and the developer appeared to be a proactive and willing partner. However, these emerging policies have yet to be open up for consultation with the industry and public and to be adopted. Mr. Jarvis recommended the panel be careful with this.

Mr. Jarvis noted if the City could offer some flexibility with borrowed light bedrooms, similar to the Housing Reset and perhaps emerging policy can touch on this as well.

Mr. Lai noted his support for the proposed development. The HA-1 zone stipulates certain requirements and appreciated the developer working with the City and taking into account some of the public opinion by providing mixed uses along with residential units, and reducing the height and area floor ratio.

In regards to the design, Mr. Lai noted he found this to be subjective and will rely on the decision and comments from the Urban Design Panel.

Mr. Lai noted the retail uses in the building will also support the needs of the area.

Mr. Lai expressed he is sympathetic to the issue of social housing but understands the HA-1 zone does not state any requirements.

Mr. Dobrovolny noted he would like to clarify a couple things and if staff can confirm with the motion going forward.

The first issue of clarification was in regards to the issue about continuous weather protection. Mr. Dobrovolny noted the need to have a method to connect so there are no drip lines along the corridor.

The second issue was in regards to the gate in the laneway and mesh size. Mr. Dobrovolny noted the concern was about security with the added glazing on the end wall, as it is all wide open. If staff can ensure the fence is substantial and the mesh size will not allow for garbage getting pushed through the mesh.

Staff confirmed these clarifications and replied yes.

Mr. Kelley asked the applicant if the retail space will be turned it a strata and sold off.

The applicant noted this was correct.

Mr. Kelley encouraged the applicant to understand the importance of retailers that fit the cultural context of Chinatown.

Mr. Kelley asked the applicant to describe their approach on potential buyers.

The applicant noted he is a local developer and a long time Strathcona community resident. His office is in Strathcona as well. He was a board member of the Vancouver Heritage foundation. He is very familiar with the area. The applicant noted he is very passionate about his occupation in local development. For these reasons, the applicant team will be looking into local tenants and local respective buyers.

The applicant additionally noted that when they purchased the lot that once was the Supermarket the lot was already a vacant.

Mr. Kelley commented to staff issues that needed resolution such as the façade and massing (intended gentle not a complete restructuring).

Mr. Kelley noted there needs to be somethings that reads stronger about the first four floors, in particular, conditions 1.2-1.4.

Mr. Kelley noted he believes there is still some work to be done to arrive to a satisfactory design.

Mr. Kelley noted his specific concerns in regards to the tripartite massing, the first 4 floors being distinct from the upper portions, and other points mentioned about a stronger corneous line.

Mr. Kelley noted the retail façade could be improved. Additional refinement work is needed on the facades of the first 4 floors (retail, mezzanine, and two office floors) to read as a more prominent presence on the street.

Mr. Kelley noted he wanted to make sure the developer picked up on nuances of what was described.

Mr. Cheng, Planner, noted his understanding of Mr. Kelley's concerns and will look to the wording of the conditions.

Board Discussion

Mr. Mochrie thanked the members of the public, advisory panel, and applicant team.

Mr. Mochrie noted the applicant has taken steps to respond to the issues staff have brought to council.

Mr. Mochrie noted there is some sensitivity that warrants recognition and acknowledgement.

Mr. Mochrie noted the mixed use aspect of the building will be a positive asset to the neighbourhood.

Mr. Mochrie noted staff have provided some robust conditions to the design and with the clarification provided in response to comments by Mr. Kelley and Mr. Dobrovolsky have been helpful.

Mr. Mochrie noted his support for the project on the basis of the conditions and clarifications.

Mr. Dobrovolny noted the developers have done a good job with a design reaching a number of different competing needs and objectives, without compacting the neighbourhood buildings negatively.

Mr. Dobrovolny noted the applicants have been on an interesting path and appreciate their patience and effort with the different sets of direction.

Mr. Dobrovolny noted he appreciated the comments about reaching out and working with the community. He acknowledged the appropriate strong feelings from the community.

Mr. Dobrovolny noted there was clearly a need for more affordable housing, not only city wide but particularly in this neighbourhood. There is a strong message for the need for affordable housing and the impacts on existing residence.

Mr. Dobrovolny noted this is really a call to staff to develop policy to resolve and achieve this need.

Mr. Dobrovolny thanked the applicant team for working well within the framework that they were given and the framework that is being proposed.

Mr. Dobrovolny noted his support for the project and the recommendations as amended.

Mr. Kelley noted his support.

Mr. Kelley noted his appreciation of the applicant's sensitivity to the design concerns.

Mr. Kelley acknowledged the applicants team efforts for providing more details than the policy required, such as less bulk, less density and increase in mixed uses.

Mr. Kelley noted he is taking the applicants' up on their commitment to look for appropriate retail uses. This is critical to how the building will function and acceptance in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Kelley noted the façade design needs some continued work. However, is confident working with staff conditions the applicant team will achieve results.

Mr. Kelley noted this development be a modern culturally sensitive design to the neighbourhood.

Mr. Kelley acknowledged, based on the comments made by the speaker's and Mr. Dobrovolny, there is a need for more affordable housing. However, this zoning does not allow the panel to impose such conditions and thus it is not within the panel's jurisdiction to hold up this particular project on such basis.

Motion

It was moved by Mr. Dobrovolny and seconded by Mr. Mochrie, and was the decision of the Board:

THAT the Board APPROVE Development Application DP-2017-00703, in accordance with the Staff Committee Report dated November 29, 2017, with the following amendments:

Design condition 1.4 (Note to applicant) Change to: The cloth awning system should be designed to achieve CONTINUOUS weather protection, when extended.

Add in CPTED condition:

A.1.20 CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) design development to take into consideration the principles of CPTED, having particular regard for reducing opportunities for;

- theft and nefarious activities in the underground entrance, parking and loading areas;
- residential break and enter;
- mail theft;
- vandalism such as graffiti.

A.2.4 (Note to applicant) strike out 'that states the canopy should drain to the building's internal drainage system.'

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:50pm.