

Date: June 12, 2023
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Place: Council Chambers/Town Hall Meeting Room City Hall/WebEx (livestreaming)

PRESENT:

Board

C. Okell Director, Permitting Services
A. Law General Manager, Development, Buildings & Licensing
L. LaClaire General Manager, Engineering
T. O'Donnell General Manager, Planning, Urban Design & Development

Advisory Panel

C. Taylor Representative of the Urban Design Panel
G. Song Representative of the Design Profession
K. Krangle Representative of the General Public
M. Gordon Representative of the Heritage Commission

Regrets:

D. Pretto Representative of the Development Industry
J. Carreira Representative of the Development Industry
M. Joko General Public
C. Vaness General Public
M. Moore General Public

ALSO PRESENT:

City Staff:

J. Olinek, Development Planning
S. Black, Development Planning
J. Greer, Development Services
C. Chant, Engineering Services
D. Autiero, Development Services
J-L Borsa, Development Services

105 Keefer St – DP-2017-00681– HA-1 (COMPLETE APPLICATION)

Recording Secretary: K. Cermeno

Comments from Speakers

Speaker Zhong Rong Xu went on to quote a known poet amongst the Chinese community who speaks on behalf of all of them. Zhong noted the following: I support a development that provides housing for the low income. The true spirit of Canada is to include everyone. More than a century ago, the Chinese helped to build Canada and contributed a lot more over the years to the history of Canada. Administrators should listen to the voice of the people and grasp the struggles of the people. Those on low income should have a warm and comfortable place to live in. We believe righteousness will be victorious and our reason of voice will blossom and read the fruits.

Speaker Bing Yan Wei came to Canada in 2006 and has lived in Chinatown ever since. Bing Yan noted the following: Chinatown has a long history going back to 1850 when the railway workers were contributing to the construction of the railway. They have sacrificed a lot. In 1970, Canada designated Chinatown a heritage site. Bing noted he wrote a book title 'Vancouver Chinatown,' which highlights the landmarks of Chinatown and others where one can learn and see the history and culture of Chinatown. Bing noted East Pender Street has a number of buildings that reflects nothing of the Chinatown culture or history. So many of our buildings have been destroyed this needs to stop as they are important to the community and tourism.

Speaker Paul Lee noted the style of architecture is not sensitive to Chinatown and its surroundings. Paul noted the following: There are no heritage characteristics visible. This is a negative building design. In the Strathcona area there are no typical modern buildings, they are vintage so why allow a modern condominium in the heart of Chinatown by the memorial square. If approved, this project will set a precedent and Chinatown will vanish to the point of no return. Not against development, however the City should look at the unique nature of this parcel and work with the community and developed to approve a respectful and complimenting building.

Speaker Debbie Gosselin noted solidarity with the citizens of Chinatown. Debbie noted a condominium tower does not belong in Chinatown, if this application is permitted Chinatown will become a community of haves and have-nots. Gentrification will push people out. This is the seventh time the people of Chinatown have had to fight against this project. Debbie opposed the proposal.

Speaker Karen Tsang noted her opposition for the proposal. Karen noted the decision makers do not appear to be living in Chinatown or understand those that live in Chinatown. Karen noted she married a Chinese man whose ancestors came to Canada before them. Karen noted that Hogan's Alley is an example of a development that erased the history that was present and degraded the buildings that were presently there. Those who had money were forced to leave and those could not afford to were left behind in the shantytowns. When we erase each other or erase those are low income what does that say about us as a City? There are individuals who live in Chinatown and have no direct family therefore Chinatown is there only family. Karen asked the decision makers to make the effort to know and understand those from the community. Support change and understand it has to happen but in a disrespectful manner that displaces so many individuals

who are in need. Consider who the development this is for and is it right to make money off the misery of others.

Speaker King-mong Chan noted his opposition for the proposal. King-mong urged the board to refuse the application. This site is located in a culturally sensitive location due to its proximity to the square. The square is a memorial to the hardship, racism and discriminated endured by the Chinese community. In 2017, it was opposed what meaning it would have to approve it today. The Chinese still face racism and discrimination today especially when for profit projects are celebrated. The rising rental costs is already pushing the people out. Beedie refuses to listen; the application is a symbol of racism and disregard to the historical discrimination. The 9 ft. height is already too tall for this location; the landscape plan does not show 25 percent of what was proposed, this goes against the requirement. Most importantly, the building goes against the COV policy of creating an inclusive diverse community.

Speaker Cecilia Wang noted the priority for Chinatown’s residents, DTES is affordability, and functionality of building design therefore the City of Vancouver should review its Chinatown HA-1A Design Policies and remove the height restriction for buildings in Chinatown. Cecilia Wang, suggested to Beedie a design that is practical, a mix of social and market units, brutalism architecture style to match the Chinese Cultural Centre, to honor Chinese Canadian pioneers have a painting of mural on the side of the building adjacent to the memorial plaza. Cecilia Wang noted harm reductions strategies - reduce harm resulting from displacement of current residents from the neighborhood due to rising costs of living. Educate incoming residents about the DTES and foster a collaborative approach, support residents to find alternative accommodation in affordable locations where they can still access social services and language support.

Speaker Anne McMullin noted support for this development, as it will bring a much-needed revitalization to the Chinatown area.

Speaker, Wendy Au Yeung an advocate for the wellbeing of Chinatown and individuals of the downtown eastside. Wendy noted her opposition for the proposal. Wendy noted the following: the design and socio economic intent does not benefit Chinatown. Chinatown already lacks amenities especially for socialization. Many residents have already vocalized places for seniors are limited and the memorial square if the few culturally appropriate spaces they have left, these sites cannot just be replaced and replicated. Consider how this proposal will displace the true culture of Chinatown. Ample space needs to be given in relation to the monument. The current height and mass is disrespectful and hovers over. This is an example of how profit and development interest takes precedent against the need of the people. This will create a precedent with ripple effects. Beedie disregarded the comments from the previous board meeting and continue to push the same for profit proposal. This development will decrease the livability of this area. Any design that is not community informed is not appropriate for this site.

Speaker Tony Letvinchuk noted support for this project. Tony noted the business potentials and benefits this project will provide to the community and businesses in the neighborhood.

Speaker Andrea Lum noted opposition to this project. Andrea noted the historical significance of this site.

Speaker Rose Wu a graduate of UBC noted her opposition for the proposal. Asking to reconsider the application is hypercritical, especially an application that is no different from the previous submission. How can the outcome be different if the criteria is the same? The proposed nine storey has an unreasonable massing with a FSR bigger than the ones surrounding it. To use this site and not respect the area and its historical significances is insulting. The building is an obstacle to the needs of Chinatown and for the generations to come. A lack of consultation from the veterans is an insult.

Speaker Alger Ji-Liang works in Chinatown and is a second generation. Alger opposed the proposal. Urban gentrification has negatively affected Chinatown’s legacy and history. There is an already large social inequality due to the rising costs of living in the City. The City should buy the land to create more affordable housing. Gentrification is a result of the policy makers and decision makers. This building should not be acting as a front yard to the memorial square.

Speaker Debby noted opposition for this project. Debby noted land prices will increase and there is a need to feel a sense of connection and belonging in the neighborhood.

Speaker Melody Pan strongly opposed the proposal. Melody noted there would be long term negative impacts on the wellbeing, sustainability and cultural preservation of the Chinese Community. The monument is besides the proposed building, the monument tis no honor and conserve the legacy of the Chinatown railway workers. The Chinatown community is already losing a lot of its legacy to benefit the wealthy and for profit developers. How can such a proposal be approved when it does not speak to the mandate of preservation, community or heritage. Melody also noted concern that the proposed building will block the sunlight to the legacy and heritage buildings.

Speaker Vanessa Lee strongly opposed the proposal. The building is too close to the monument. It is of critical concern creating an environment that does not fit with the historical context of the environment. This should be a collaborative project. None of the recommendations from the 2017 board were applied. The building mocks the spirit of Chinatown. Vanessa urged the board to consider the roots of Chinatown and its people, past, present and future.

Speaker Sean Cao asked the Board to reconsider approving this project as it poses significant threats to the social fabric, historical significance, and economic vitality of this vibrant community.

Speaker Tim Lam a community member of Chinatown noted his opposition for the proposal. Tim noted the DPB refused the proposal back in 2017 and should refuse it again. Tim along with his family fought hard from having his grandfather evicted by private developers and now see this happening again with low-income individuals. Tim noted you could walk down Chinatown and you see a community, amenities, friends and family, a place where seniors can live with a sense of independence. Beedie undermines the entire community and support system by pricing them out, gone are the services and amenities. In 2017, Mr. Kelley noted there was a lack of engagement with the community and there is

still a lack of engagement.

Speaker Justin Fung opposed the proposal and noted his opposition in 2017. Canada did not treat the Chinese people fairly and they experienced so much racism. Canada denied the Chinese their human rights. Justin read an excerpt from a letter from a friend that is WW2 veteran.

Speaker Dax Heaven noted his opposition for this project as it does not comply with the HA-1A zoning policy and does not protect the cultural heritage of the neighborhood. Dax noted any approval of the application should go through a new DP resubmission process rather than at the discretion of the Director of Planning.

Speaker Karin (speaking on behalf of Beverly Ho) noted Beverley works for an organization where generations come together to help the community and deliver service based tasks such as dropping off groceries to seniors. Through this initiative, they see firsthand the great need there is for seniors and low-income individuals. New developers have pushed out legacy businesses and housing. Unfortunately, gentrification is no longer an unfamiliar work. This is a repeated event that was already opposed urge the panel to reject the proposal.

Speaker Russell Chiong noted opposition to the project. Russell noted the following: 105 Keefer not only threatens to worsen the crises of gentrification, affordability, and accessibility facing Chinatown, but would also do serious damage to vital public spaces in the neighborhood and erode Chinatown's sense of place. The Chinatown Memorial Square and the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Park, two of the only truly public spaces in Chinatown are especially threatened by this development. 105 Keefer would tower over the Chinatown Memorial Square and Chinatown Memorial Monument, doing irreversible damage to the sense of place and community vibrancy in Chinatown.

Speaker Pearl Wong a new resident in Vancouver moved from USA two years ago. Pearl noted growing up she was connected to various Chinatowns. Vancouver Chinatown has been no exception as it has been an anchor and comfort place. Pearl noted concern with the impact the building will have on the present and future. The development does not confirm with setback requirements. The massing of this development hinges on the memorial square. The renderings on the design is misleading and downplays the massive height and departure of the building. Beedie should have conversations with the people of Chinatown not people that sit on the boards. Engage with different income levels; work with the people to make it a welcoming place, and do not just build a cookie cutter condominium.

Speaker Alyssa Sy De Jesus is a member of the Asian Canadian Communities. Alyssa noted she spoke in opposition back in 2017 and is still in opposition. This model is a colonial position to revitalize Chinatown. It imposes its wrong ideas of progress while hurting those that are vulnerable in Chinatown. It is not the job of the developers to revitalize a historical significant land. We cannot rely on developers to do our jobs however; the board can make a decision that affects the community positively and the City of Vancouver.

Speaker Larry Chin noted opposition to the project. Larry noted the project does not comply with

HA-1A design policy. He noted the project would overshadow the public square where the Chinatown Memorial Square and Monument are located.

Speaker Dr. Su-Anne Yeo noted opposition to the project, noting non-compliance with HA-1A design policy.

Speaker Susanna Ng noted she has been living in Chinatown for more than 50 years. Susanna noted the following: I am not as fortunate as other people are, I was unable to go to school, and however I have seen the difficulties of Chinatown. What Chinatown needs is new commercial and office buildings for professional like doctors and accounts that speak the language of the seniors and are accessible to all. Many seniors are lacking accessibility to resources and it is difficult for them to go out of Chinatown. Due to rising costs and gentrification, many our professionals had to leave Chinatown. It would be nice to have a senior center that cater to physical and mental wellbeing of the seniors, but also to the needs of others such as a daycare. Susanna opposed the proposal.

Speaker Diane Wong noted opposition to the project, noting it will take away the community space for intergenerational engagement, community engagement and lack of living spaces.

Speaker Dan Seto opposed the proposal and noted opposition back in 2017. Dan noted the following: Consider what will happen in Chinatown in 25 and 50 years. The building that is being proposed is too big and too tall; it sticks out and hovers over the heart of Chinatown. The City of Vancouver should initiate a plan that includes the people of Chinatown and get to know the community better. Beedie did not reach out to the community. Consider how this building will affect the people.

Speaker Karin Lee noted her opposition for the proposal and her opposition back in 2017. Karin noted the following: I know what it means to have a heart in Chinatown. There was a lot of institutionalized racism and we continued to fight for our legacy to go on. The suggestions of the 2017 decision were good however; the present proposal is the same and reflects no changes. By approving, we are saying forget what not only the public but from the staff of 2017 said as well. Please consider a different area that fits with the proposed building more. We should work towards a vibrant place, one that welcomes the people by preserving its culture.

Speaker Douglas Ferguson noted support for the project. Douglas noted the site is currently being neglected as an empty lot. Douglas noted by revitalizing Chinatown, it would create a sense of stewardship in this community.

Speaker Kristina Mei-Yung Tutlewski noted her support for the proposal however noted it was a difficult one to make as many of her friends and family are in opposition. Kristina noted the following: It is sad to see how Chinatown has become divided. I ask the board to make the best decision based on your due diligence. I ask is it true that Beedie was not allowed to make changes? If this is true, I ask that you allow Beedie to make changes that support amenities for the community and affordable housing. An empty lot celebrates nothing but a void in the community. I am aware of all the potential negative impacts however believe this a positive step forward.

Speaker Nathan Edelson noted opposition to the project. Nathan noted the building is bulky and should come with significant community benefits; Nathan noted concerns with increasing land values and gentrification. Nathan noted the historical significance of the Chinese Memorial Square needed further consideration. Nathan noted this Square should be a showcase to the Chinese and Indigenous community.

Speaker Eugene McCann a professor of Geography at SFU noted his opposition for the proposal. Eugene noted the following: In 2011, the city approved a building in Chinatown, this decision made a huge damage in the affordability and gentrification. Council ignored comments that were made. This mistake shows the ill-informed decisions made on behalf of Chinatown. Urbanism is a concept that connects the buildings life with its social environment. It requires a thorough understanding of the surrounding environment and should not negatively affect its resources. The memorial plaza is the existing resource that will be negatively impacted; this alone should be reason to reject. This project will also encourage gentrification and displacement. The decision makers of the boards should note they could be the reason for neighborhoods to thrive or people leaving them. Do not make the same mistake as 2011.

Speaker Kingo Liang noted significant historical and cultural reasons for opposing this project.

Speaker Lydia T is part of an organization for youth collaborations and justice for Chinatown. Lydia opposed the proposal. Lydia noted the following: Chinatown memorial square is where many events are hosted for inter-generational bonding. The site that is being discussed is not just an empty parking lot. This is the heart of Chinatown, this building will chase out the most vulnerable from this community. Beedie's proposal shows no regards for the cultural historical context of this area. The HA-1 district calls for new buildings to be compatible with the Chinatown area. The guidelines aim to discourage large developments. The proposal was rejected once I asked that it be reject again. It will exasperate the inequities and injustices of the Chinatown and the downtown eastside. Please consider the most vulnerable people who live here.

Speaker Karim Nanji noted the development should not be rejected it is meets the current zoning bylaws.

Speaker Shirley Lam runs a business in the heart of Chinatown and noted her support for the proposal. Shirley noted the following: We see what Chinatown is dealing with and we hear everyone call out for revitalization but revitalization means progress not the status quo. Change and new injection of life is needed. This development is vital to Chinatown. I agree it is important to consider all the cultural and historical aspects however; this is not relevant to this lot. Culture only lives where there is life and people feel safe. Older generations have paved the way for change by bringing commerce to the neighborhood; let us bring back the entrepreneurial spirit back.

Speaker Perry Lam noted opposition to the project. Perry noted safety issues in Chinatown.

Speaker Judy Hanazawa a Japanese Canadian senior with personal ties to the east side and Strathcona area. Judy opposed the proposal. Judy noted the following: I am standing with those in the Chinese

community and their supporters. The new development is not responsible or respond to the recommendations made in the 2017 meeting. Where is the living human factor? When it was rejected in 2017, the concern was surrounding the building design in relation to its environment and the people. According to the 2017 board, it failed the design test. The elders in the neighborhood who not too long ago were facing eviction due to the rising costs of living do not have the means to stay in their own communities. The City said they would hold up the principles of Human Rights and Equality following the atrocities against the Chinese and Japanese communities however, displacement still happens today and this is a result of developments such as Beedie.

Speaker Jonathan Kan noted support for this project. Jonathan noted the project would have an economic impact and much needed urban growth and densification to the neighborhood. Jonathan noted the densification would address the housing shortage.

Speaker Rosemary Hu is a first generation Chinese immigrant and a law student in the University of Victoria. Rosemary opposed the proposal. Rosemary noted the following: The experience of 2017 was a testament of how the community comes together to fight for what is important. The Red boxes on top trying to align with Chinatown and noted as a cultural contribution is a shame and disgrace. Hope the decision makes will hear the voices of the community and prioritize and value what is community is asking for.

Speaker Beverly Nann noted the project does not recognize the major historical and cultural significance of the Memorial Square for Chinatown and the wider Chinese community. Beverly also noted the proposed development does not address the need for more social housing in Chinatown. Beverly noted full endorsement of the recommendation and proposal by MP Jenny Kwan that Beedie Construction be offered City of Vancouver property in an alternate location in exchange for the property at 105 Keefer Street. The City could then ensure the property was developed in a culturally relevant way to include social housing for vulnerable seniors.

Speaker Vive Wong opposed the proposal. Vive noted the following: Chinatown is important both personally and for the community because it offers many services to immigrants and seniors. Cherish this vibrant community and reject the proposal. The proposed project is at the heart and gateway of Chinatown and faces the memorial square, which honors the forgotten and our ancestors. The project was rejected back in 2017 and should be rejected again. The amount of mass and response to the saw tooth pattern needs a lot of work. The frontage to the memorial square does not have any pedestrian interest. This is a place to connect with the community without judgement and should be preserved. Consider that seniors in Chinatown have one of the lowest incomes. We must approve change with care and dignity.

Speaker Peggy Chen opposed the proposal. Chinatown is a place where many can take part in programs and volunteer because they feel a sense of home. There is a lack of clarity on the interpretation of urbanism. The same proposal has been brought forward, therefore no efforts have been made to listen to the residents and better respond to the surrounding environment. Community building means working towards social equity. Peggy urged the board to reject the proposal. We neglect the ha-1 design

philosophy when we neglect those that call this community home.

Speaker Cynthia Kent noted opposition to the project. Cynthia noted the design changes are necessary to ensure the development aligns with the cultural context, reduce the building’s mass and building’s architecture lacks the fine grain style typical of Chinatown. Cynthia also noted there was lack of community consultation.

Speaker Linzhi Zou a first generation immigrant oppose the proposal. Vancouver is experiencing crises with the lack of social housing. Linzhi noted the following: These kinds of developments further reduce available housing. Who can afford to buy and rent these condominiums, the condominiums that have been approved all they did was push the community out and bring higher rents. This has also caused many legacy stores to close and open new unaffordable retail. The places where many could feed themselves and socialize are now closed. Young professional workers who are our future are struggling now imagine our seniors with language barriers. Despite the barriers, many seniors have travelled to today’s meeting to speak because of how much they believe in the fight. However, it is heartbreaking to see so many who did not come today because they no longer believe in the system due to decisions that have been made in the past by the City.

Speaker Candie Tanaka noted the design guidelines do not comply with HA-1A policy. Candie also noted there is a need to keep the public open spaces and honor the history and ancestors of this community. There is also a need to address the affordable housing issues.

Speaker Kathy Chan is a second-generation queer neuro diverse living with a disability. Kathy noted her father had a business in Chinatown. While my parents worked, my next-door neighbor was my primary caregiver. Communities are needed for the care and progress of the people. People contribute to the living social fabric of the community. This development should not come at the cost of affordable housing. 100ft building at the heart of Chinatown is not for revitalization and progress. Kathy opposed the proposal.

Speaker Eva Cohen Eva noted the need to get the provincial government involved. Eva noted there is a need for social and affordable housing.

Speaker Judy Stoffman grew up in Vancouver. Judy noted the following: I have personal affection and ties to Chinatown where I spend time as a teenager; it was a place of color and vibrancy that my neighborhood lacked. If you approve this proposal, it is the end of Chinatown.

Speaker Loretta John is a member of the Chinatown community. Loretta noted the following: The combination of the Chinatown community with the Salish people is strong. To have this part of east Vancouver be negatively impacted affects all those who have had the opportunity to engage with Chinatown. Consider those who are not only trying to get back on their feet and still give back to the community. Loretta noted she was able to improve her life because someone opened the door and gave her an opportunity. When the heart of the community is allowed to grow, it provides opportunities to improve. Loretta asked the board to consider how this development will affect the people that are

present and honor those from the past.

Speaker Minnie Ng noted opposition to the project. Noting the downtown eastside is the poorest postal code, it is going through an indigenous genocide, Beedie is contributing to this genocide, and Beedie should be engaging with the community. Minnie also noted this project is in direct conflict of the city's affordability issues.

Speaker Emily Lam is a second-generation Chinese immigrant and medical student at UBC. Emily noted the following: I am advocating rejecting the project. Market condominiums is not what Chinatown needs, it needs affordable and safe housing in Chinatown. My own stories of homelessness and poverty can attest the great need for this. Seniors should be able to thrive in their communities and when aging is done right, the community thrives. Approving a building at the gateway of Chinatown is asking to erase the community, these are places that matter and deserve respect. Emily asked the DPB to refuse the project once again, protect the sense of community, and invest in community consultation. Can you be okay with letting your community and elders down?

Speaker Keith Li noted opposition to the project. Keith noted the loss of historical and cultural importance to Chinatown and the Chinese people.

Speaker Jin He noted his opposition for the proposal. Jin noted the following: I am against architects that build housing for profit and not the community. Housing is a human right. Chinatown has a unique context and its policies should be applied to the sensitivity of the community. Human Rights should be afforded to all and not hindered because of dollar values. Developers should provide at least 50 percent of affordable housing.

Speaker Samantha Zimmerman noted opposition to the project. Samantha noted historical importance of the Chinatown Memorial Plaza. She also noted businesses are being pushed out and this project does not meet the HA-1A design guidelines and suggested this project needs a community engagement process.

Speaker Denise Fong noted her stance to appeal to the essence of Chinatown and opposed the proposal. Thoughtful consideration needs to make on how we design public open spaces. The 2022 Vancouver Heritage program documents the importance of preserving heritage, Model safeguarding and regenerating cultural activities is just as important as the physical significance of its buildings. Its resident and legacy business shape Chinatown's rich heritage. Heritage should be revitalized and renewed for future generations. The site is not just a parking lot. This application should be rejected and the DPB should stand with the community.

Speaker Melody Wise noted opposition to this project. She noted gentrification of the neighborhood and the unaffordability it will create for low-income residents.

Speaker Theresa Vanderten has lived in Chinatown for 27 years and has been one of the "lucky ones" to be approved for coop-housing, however that says a lot as this should be a human right for all those

in need. Theresa touched on the Freeway fight that was by the community and many benefitted from it. The community is so vibrant it does not need revitalization but vitalization that comes from the community. There are other options for such developments explore them.

Speaker Stefanie Smith noted opposition to the project. Stefanie noted it does not meet the design guidelines nor is the design sensitive to the site where it is a public gathering space for the community and Chinese seniors.

Speaker Andrew Yao noted opposition to the project. Andrew noted this project fails to honor the cultural importance of the Chinese community and heritage importance of the Chinese monument.

Speaker Wah Gee noted support for this project.

Speaker Sean Cassidy noted opposition to the project. Sean noted the lack of community engagement on this project.

Speaker Brian Tang noted support for this project.

Speaker Melody Ma was born and raised in Vancouver. Melody noted the following: I learned dancing from the seniors I help today. I was always took part in the lunar parade. Having never visited China until my late teens all I know of my culture as a Chinese Canadian is from Chinatown. I am still actively involved in Chinatown, it is a place where I can live and practice my Chinese identity. I represent the generation that will continue our fight. Beedie is not culturally sensitive to the memorial square that honors our ancestors who fought for our democratic right. Beedie development does not comply with the zoning. This proposal is culturally insensitive and architecturally racist.

Meeting concluded at 10:06 pm.