

Date: June 26, 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 & Sustainability

Advisory Panel

C. Taylor	Representative of the Urban Design Panel
G. Song	Representative of the General Public
K. Krangle	Representative of the General Public
M. Moore	Representative of the General Public

Regrets:

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

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

Panel Opinion

Craig Taylor acknowledged the heartfelt speakers and their resilience for the protection of Chinatown.

Craig noted Urban Design goes beyond the physical forms; it represents the people and what the space is being used for. It is important to review the proposal is not going against the policies and district schedule in place.

Craig noted his support for the Urban Design comments made in 2017. Reconsider the design of the glazed massing on the roof level to add more vibrancy and appropriate colors. Refine the glazing and balcony guards and other minor details.

Craig noted his support with planning's suggestion to reduce the architectural texture. Reinforce with greater emphasis on the step rooflines.

Craig noted he believes the application does achieve a contemporary vocabulary that respects its neighbors. However further work is needed at the detailed level of the application and recommend the applicant to continue working with staff, heritage experts and leaders of the community.

Craig noted his support for the development as a backdrop to the plaza.

Craig noted there is a desperate need for social housing and hopes the applicant will provide some social amenities and housing for those in need. In addition hope the City and Province will come together to provide some public land for social housing.

Gloria Song noted her concern for the architectural design and acknowledged this is a challenging design for the applicant team

Gloria noted concern with the proportion of the plaza and monument. The proposed building is too large for the backdrop of this area.

Gloria recommended increasing the setback at Keefer St to create a distance from the monument and encourage more setback at the upper floors.

Consider the significance of the site it is imperative that the monument is the central site within the plaza. The Backdrop should enhance the prominence of the monument.

Gloria noted her appreciation for the applicant's attempt to incorporate elements of the neighborhood on the building however, it is important to understand the Chinatown culture and the long-standing architectural history with meaning behind its color and physical forms. The building proposed spears out of historical context.

Gloria noted to consider the involvement of a professional artist and Architect that has a deep understanding of the Chinatown history and historical periods. This will be imperative in creating a

successful façade.

Gloria noted the building should follow the current policy and Chinatown guidelines.

Monica Moore noted Chinatown is struggling with the closure of business. New developments will create vibrancy for Chinatown; this will do a lot more for the community than an empty parking lot.

Monica noted she does not believe members of the community and then downtown eastside will be displaced.

Monica encouraged an architecture that would incorporate a scale that is not too large in comparison to other buildings.

Karenn Krangle noted the supreme courts are to reconsider the proposal not necessarily approve and can be sent back to the drawing board if given sufficient reason.

Karenn noted those who support the project state that it conforms to the zoning. Should the history and nature not be considered? It is a challenging situation, if the Board rejects the proposal it loses its profession by not approving however should the board just give the rubber stamp of approval as long as the zoning is in place.

Karenn recalled the board's decision about ten years ago where the board allowed only five storeys, as the proposal was un-neighborly.

Karenn noted her disagreement with Beedie's Lawyer's statement that the board did not act with due regard and faith.

The proposed building does not fit in the Chinatown context however, Karenn noted with greater effort the building can be made to fit into the architectural vocabulary of Chinatown. The building language can be simplified, as it is presently very busy.

Karenn noted her support with Gloria Song's comments regarding the design.

Karenn noted there is too much glass. The color pallet and saw tooth effect can be improved. Do not agree with the red boxes at the top.

Karenn noted more design development is needed to reflect the culture and history of the area. Karenn recommended more conditions. There should be a reexamination and stepping back.

Karenn noted heritage committee and CHAPC should review the application.

Board Discussion

Theresa O'Donnell thanked all the speakers that came forward and acknowledged the amount of interest for this application.

Theresa noted the outpouring for the love of Chinatown regardless of which side of the application you stand is heartwarming and appreciates hearing from the seniors and their knowledge regarding this culturally rich neighborhood.

Theresa noted there is a strong desire to see Chinatown revitalize.

Theresa noted the Board has to reconsider the application from 2017.

Theresa noted the Board has no legal authority to deny or require senior or social housing, to sell, or to swap the land. However, the board has the discretionary power to recommend conditions that the exterior has a proper contextual fit to the plaza and surrounding buildings.

Theresa noted the concerns are not reason to decline the proposal and can be remedied.

Theresa asked staff to help craft the amended conditions.

Lon LaClaire thanked all the speakers that come forward to speak on the application.

Lon noted his satisfaction with the comments from engineering.

Lon noted modifications to the plaza could be made.

Lon noted his support for any changes that Theresa may recommend to staff in the conditions.

Andrea Law thanked the staff and advisory members and all the members of the public that came forward to speak.

Andrea noted the decisions from 2017 continues to divide the community in 2023. Andrea noted this is a challenging application.

Andrea noted the application could not be rejected because it was refused in 2017. There is room for improvement.

Andrea noted that in regards to the many comments requests for social housing the board can only comment against the zoning and land use and cannot demand certain uses.

Andrea agreed the applicant should address the cultural fit.

The board paused for a 5-minute recess.

The meeting reconvened at 4:08pm.

Senior Planner Kevin Spaans read out the recommended amendments.

All board members voted in favor of the recommended amendments and noted their support for the project.

The decision of the Board: THAT the Board APPROVE Development Application **DP-2017-00681** subject to the conditions in accordance with the Staff Committee Report dated October 18, 2017 with the following amendments:

- 1.3 design development to improve the building elevations, as follows:
- g) better reflecting the 25ft typical lot width in the treatment of all facades, including introducing pronounced material changes between façade elements to reinforce a strong, contextually sensitive composition.
 - h) refine the cladding palette of all facades to better reflect the materiality of the community, including working closely with the Chinatown art, design and cultural community to identify appropriate materials and architectural elements.
- 1.8 Design development to reduce the visual impacts of the rooftop elevator overruns and mechanical penthouses by introducing additional screening, improved materiality and specifying elevator equipment with lower-profile machine rooms and overruns.
- 1.9 Design development to improve the performance of the building massing as a backdrop to an important place in the city by way of the following:
- a) Significantly reshaping the expression and massing of the corner of the building.
- Note to Applicant:** The corner of the building should read as a welcoming marker for the community. Consideration of a rounded corner, a visually impressive and contextually considered architectural feature, or other similar design element.
- b) Redesigning the corner retail unit to perform as the primary commercial space, including providing multiple points of entry, outdoor seating areas, large glazing, and an interior layout that generates a sense of welcoming and activity.
 - c) Redesigning at grade elements, including glazing units, entries, lighting features and canopies through the lens of contextual fit.
- Note to Applicant:** Rolling doors should be replaced with building elements in better keeping with the context, including large glazed walls, outdoor market stands and outdoor dining areas.
- d) Provision of additional detail drawings, including sections, details and reflected ceiling plans of the mid-block passages to demonstrate the contribution of these spaces to the character of the Chinatown neighborhood.
- 1.10 Design development to improve the relationship of the proposed building to the culturally significant places in its context, including the Chinatown Memorial Square and Sun Yat-Sen Park, as follows:

- a) provision of a surface right of way of at least 160 sq. m adjacent to the Square to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and the General Manager of Engineering Services;
- b) reduction in upper level massing facing Keefer Street to be no more than seven storeys as seen from the Square;
- c) refining the design of the upper glass levels to reduce their potential visual impacts and prominence at all hours, including at night. A combination of material treatments, changes in massing and green roof elements should be explored.

Note to Applicant: Intent is to better comply with section 4.17 External Design of the district schedule, to provide more space for pedestrians and events around the Square, to improve views from and toward culturally significant places, and to respond to concerns expressed by the community. This condition will reduce the achievable floor area.

Meeting concluded at 4:30pm.