

Date: Monday, October 9, 2012
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Place: Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

PRESENT:**Board**

V. Potter Director of Development Services (Chair)
K. Munro Assistant Director of Planning
D. McLellan Deputy City Manager
J. Dobrovlny Director of Transportation

Advisory Panel

G. Borowski Representative of the Design Professions (Urban Design Panel)
F. Rafii Representative of the Design Professions
S. Chandler Representative of the Development Industry
K. Maust Representative of the Vancouver Heritage Commission
K. Busby Representative of the General Public
K. Chen Representative of the General Public
J. Miletic-Prelovac Representative of the General Public
D. Wlodarczak Representative of the General Public

Regrets

J. Stovell Representative of the Development Industry

ALSO PRESENT:**City Staff:**

J. Greer Assistant Director of Processing Centre - Development
R. The Engineering Services - Projects Branch
P. Cheng Development Planner
A. Molaro Development Planner
D. Autiero Project Facilitator

2118 WEST 15TH AVNEU - DE415745 - ZONE C-2

D. Evans Cressey Development
H. Lamman Cressey Development
M. Buckner IBI/HB Architects
S. Vincent Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects

Recording Secretary: L. Harvey

1. 2118 WEST 15TH AVENUE - DE415745 - ZONE C-2
(COMPLETE APPLICATION)

Applicant: Cressey Development

Request: To develop this site with a five storey mixed-use building containing commercial units on the ground floor with 52 residential units above all over three levels of underground parking have vehicle access from the lane.

Development Planner's Opening Comments

Paul Cheng, Development Planner, introduced the application for a 3-storey commercial and residential building. Mr. Cheng gave an over view of the C-2 zoning and noted that more than 20 years ago Council directed that residential use could be added above the ground floor on C-2 zoning sites. They also allowed for a height increase from 40 feet to 45 feet and to permit a 4-storey building expression. In 2003, due to significant concerns voiced by the public about the resulting building forms and their impact on nearby properties, a setback plus guidelines for privacy screening was added to the zoning. The height limits, setbacks and landscape screening elements have been designed to reduce overlook, while also recognizing that some overlook is unavoidable.

In C-2 zoned sites, the ground floor is required to be commercial use for the front 35 feet of the building while above and behind may be residential. The commercial component serves as a neighbourhood shopping and service district. While the regulations are specific about the types of commercial activity that may be located in this commercial component, such as a furniture store, a restaurant or bowling alley, the regulations does not require specific types of occupancies. The choice of providing the type of commercial tenancy allowable under the zoning is up to the owner of the property.

Mr. Cheng described the context for the area noting the RT-7 and RS-5 residential zones across the lane (low-density duplex and single family home zones). In describing the application, Mr. Cheng indicated that grocery store is proposed for the commercial component with four storeys of residential above. There is a City owned street right-of-way at the front of the property. For typical conditional C-2 applications, Engineering Services will typically seek sidewalk improvements to the adjacent public realm. In the case of this application, it was noted that the amount of public space available is extensive. Furthermore, current Council-adopted policies under the Greenest City Action Plan look to convert excess street right-of-ways into mini-parks. As a result, the applicant and Engineering Services have agreed to the idea that the applicant can redevelop the city-owned land from a surface parking lot into a new pedestrian oriented green space.

Mr. Cheng noted that on rare occasions, when a large site is available, an extra or partial 4th storey has been permitted. With respect to this application, Mr. Cheng stressed that on the condition that neighbourliness was achieved, it would be a better fit to keep to a 4-storey form.

Mr. Cheng added that early on in the public consultation process for the application, staff had mistakenly misrepresented the reason for considering this height relaxation, attributing the improvements to the City-owned land fronting the site as an amenity. Since then, staff have clarified to the public that such an amenity should be on-site rather than on another property, and therefore does not comprise any part of the justification for permitting a 5th storey. Instead, staff are considering the height increase for the reason of increased neighbourliness.

He added that the interior floor space ration would be the same; 2.5 FSR. Mr. Cheng described the meaning of neighbourliness as expressed in the guidelines. Neighbourliness is a design that strives to minimize many different negative impacts. The major issues heard by staff include overlook, privacy, shadowing, noise and perceived building mass. Overlook and building mass is negligible on this project.

Mr. Cheng stated that based on the application materials, staff are not satisfied that increased neighbourliness has been achieved. As a result, staff have recommended a set of design development conditions in order to achieve a high stand of neighbourliness. However, the applicant has successfully demonstrated increased neighbourliness in many areas of the proposal including reducing the 5th storey massing so that it is less apparent; the setback of the townhouse; and setback of the amenity space. Regarding overlook, staff are asking the applicant to minimize overlook potential from a seated position anywhere in the development.

Mr. Cheng reviewed the recommendations contained in the Staff Committee Report dated September 26, 2012. The recommendation was for support of the proposal, subject to the conditions contained in the Staff Committee Report.

Questions/Discussion

In response to questions raised by the Board and Panel, the following clarifications were provided by Mr. Cheng.

- The FSR is conditional and requires the reduction of the floor space to no more than 2.5 FSR.
- When there are relaxations, staff will evaluate and look at the context for the surrounding area with respect to neighbourliness.
- Staff noted that the sign element may be permitted but the applicant will need to apply under the Sign Bylaw and can only be approved through the Board of Variance.
- About a year ago the applicant approached the City Surveyor asking if the City would sell some land to increase the overall depth of the site to 120 feet in order to make a more efficient parking garage. The sale is pending from the City.
- The maximum permitted area for an amenity space is 8,000 square feet which is a percentage of the floor space that isn't calculated as part of the floor space ratio.
- Staff have some concerns regarding the lack of private amenity space but accept the amount of common amenity space.
- The amount of parking is over the minimum with 95 parking spaces being provided. With respect to the grocery store, 83 parking spaces are proposed.
- Staff met with the applicant as they had some concerns regarding the loss of the cultural aspects on the site (the bowling alley and movie theatre). In order to accommodate these uses, it would mean the applicant would have to apply for a rezoning application to permit more than 2.5 FSR on the site. This would result in a height over 5 storeys which staff felt would not be well received by the neighbourhood.
- There was a discussion regarding the City owned lands in front of the site in order to include the theatre and bowling alley on the site. Staff's analysis noted the sewer right-of-way which would be very costly to relocate and would have to be borne by the City or developer which proved to be financially unviable.
- In other parts of the city there are a couple of examples where buildings have gone over 4-storeys. These include the Olive at West 16th Avenue and Cambie Street and a building at West 10th Avenue and Tolmie Street, a 7-storey building. In both cases the height increased was to reduce the impact of overlook.

- Light pollution was considered in the evaluation of the project. There will be some light from the indoor spaces that will be viewed by the neighbours to the west. The setbacks and adding of screening elements will help to reduce the amount of light.
- Currently a portion of the property is being used a parking space. The application proposes the main residential entry will be off the flanking street (West 15th Avenue).
- The FSR in the application is a little over 2.5 and staff are seeking to lower it back to 2.5.

Applicant's Comments

Martin Bruckner, Architect, said they have been working with the City for some time and that they had a meeting with the community earlier in the summer. He added that they have tried to address their concerns. It is a unique project and they have designed a more effective form of commercial space and feel it is appropriate to go to the 5th storey to allow for more substantial setbacks.

Hani Lamman, Developer, noted that the building was designed to mitigate the building mass and the potential overlook on the backyards of the houses across the lane. He said there were several recommendations in the Staff Committee Report that they were opposed to including Condition 1.1 (b) and 1.5 (b) as they appear to be based on performance criteria. He said that they haven't been provided with that criteria and he requested that the conditions be modified to include a performance test. With respect to Condition 1.5 (b), the choice of a 3 foot view obstruction is without precedence. He noted that there are proposed planters and tree planting screens that dramatically restrict views from all floors. Notwithstanding they are prepared to accept a 24 inch view obstruction condition. He added that he felt that 3 feet was too punitive and harms the liveability of the affected units and he would prefer a reasonable performance test if their proposal of 24 inches is deemed inadequate. He noted that it is an overlook concern of over 90 feet. Mr. Lamman said he was uncomfortable with Condition 1.7(b) as well as he thought it impacts the architectural expression. Mr. Lamman added that they are in support of the Conditions in Appendix A and the comments in Appendix C.

Questions/Discussion

In response to questions raised by the Board and Panel, the following clarification was provided by the applicant team:

- The biggest challenge has been the amount of massing on the site and in order to restore the theatre and bowling alley they would need to add more space without increasing the mass. As well the applicant said they didn't understand how the space could be funded since the existing operators are unable to build those facilities.
- The food store will occupy 20,000 square feet.
- A tenant has not been secured at this time.
- The lane landscaping will consist of layers of vegetation with conifer trees and wall screening using vines.

Comments from other Speakers

The following delegations spoke in opposition to the application:

Desmond Berghofer

Geraldine Schwartz

Carrie Riches

Mark Battersby

Diana Davidson

Miriam Gregory

Sean McEwen

Mel Leham
Kyle Koch
Max Koch
John Pennant
Beatrix Korver
Edna Riches
Douglas Riches
Mary Erb
Veronica Ross
James Capadouca
Jeri Klein
Arne Lund
Daniel Heather
Airlie Ogilvie
Onni Milne
Jamie Hunt
Nadine Hofmann
Adele Ritch
Ron Ritch
Ethel Morley
Sherri Defoe
Mary Strong
Ashley Norton
Maria Wilson
Stephen Bohus
Salim Lakhani -
Helen Cunningham -
Stephen Morgan -
Martin Mellado
Sharon Fuchs -
Janice Clause
Lila Macdonald
Ken McLean
Annabell Davis
Janet Zarowmg
Debra Marsden
Lucille Minuk
Christie Reid
Adrienne Clark
Brian Clark
Gavin Trunball
Jane Burkart
Peter Gilpin
Marilyn Kelman
Alistair Black
Cathy Quinn
Amanda Tchir
Joseph Elliott

Comments in opposition included:

- Would like to see the entry off Arbutus Street and not the lane;
- Would like to see other alternatives on the site;

- The bowling alley has been used by 12,000 children/15,000 Birthday Parties/7,000 senior citizens/special needs people;
- It has been a social center for many people with no cost to the City;
- Developer didn't talk to the community;
- Grocery stores have not been viable in this location;
- Developer has already put up their marketing building in the parking lot off Arbutus Street;
- There are seven grocery stores within five blocks of this site;
- The impact of adding floor space is to dominate the area inappropriately;
- There are no social benefits in the new development;
- The bowling alley has been there for over 60 years;
- Too much parking being added to the development when that space could be used for the bowling alley instead;
- What is the development potential if the building was closer to Arbutus Street;
- Important to keep the bowling alley as it is part of some school's curriculum;
- Owner of the bowling alley is involved in the CKNW Orphan's Fund and has raised many thousands of dollars for the charity;
- Why not have the bowling alley in place of the food store;
- This building would be the largest building on Arbutus Street;
- The 5th floor is not going to be affordable housing as they will be million dollar penthouses;
- Why is the address being changed to West 15th Avenue;
- Parking entrance should be off West 15th or West 16th Avenue;
- Would like to see the parking lot stay in the front of the building to free up spaces in the underground parkade to allow for the bowling alley;
- Special Olympics athletes have been using the bowling alley for many years;
- The developer doesn't seem to care about the neighbours;
- The loss of the bowling alley will have a direct impact on bowling tournaments;
- The Ridge Theatre is the only independent theater left in Vancouver;
- Where is the provision for commercial unloading when they can't use the lane during severe weather in the winter months;
- Concerned with the potential increase of traffic in the neighbourhood;
- The City needs to reconsider the traffic study and leave the parking area as a parking lot;
- Other C-2 areas allow for unloading in the front of the building;
- The developer doesn't know there are bowling leagues.

Questions/Discussion

In response to questions raised by the Board and Panel, the following clarification was provided by the applicant team and staff:

- There are other bowling alleys in Vancouver; one on Marine Drive, one downtown and one on Commercial Drive;
- Municipalities are taking on commercial amenities but have not gotten into these kinds of activities;
- The current bowling alley takes up about 14,000 square feet but would be 20,000 square feet for a new alley;
- Allowable floor space ratio in the zoning allows for .75 outright and 2.5 conditional. By having a condition for the maximum allowable floor space staff are able to do a larger design review of the application.
- Within the district schedule, 10% of the floor space is allowed for amenity space without being counted as part of the floor space ratio. For the 20,000 square feet on the ground floor, that would mean 8,000 square feet could be used for a social amenity. However, that square footage would need to be put somewhere else in the building;

- The Development Permit Board does not have the power to require a single occupancy in the building. Normally this would require a rezoning and then the City could demand a certain kind of occupancy that would be operated for a specific period of time;
- In order to have the bowling alley included in the project, the applicant would have to voluntarily agree or it could be a requirement under a Council adopted rezoning.
- Another method for retaining the bowling alley could happen if the City compensated the developer in some way such as gifting some of the City owned land in front of the property;
- Staff found that there were high costs associated with moving the existing sewer line within the parking lot;
- There are buildings that are in C-2 zoning areas along Arbutus Street that are smaller than what is available for the zoning. Mostly they are older building with the potential for redevelopment at some future date.

Panel Opinion

Mr. Borowski thanked the members of the public for their presentations. He said it was a difficult project to evaluate but that it was supportable. The site has a major encumbrance on it in the way of the bowling alley which makes for an even more difficult evaluation. He noted that the Urban Design Panel did not give support at their first review of the application. They requested more work on various aspects of the project including improving the way finding; enclosing the loading bay; wrapping the units; design development to simplify the lane; improving overlook issues and the park area. On the second review the applicant had increased the setbacks on the west facing façade and as a result had managed the height. He added that there are still some programming issues at the lane. As well the Panel had some concerns regarding the popup roofs and potential light intrusion into the neighbouring homes. The Panel thought the general density was supportable. Mr. Borowski added that there were a number of issues regarding dealing with the community facility that exists and is not addressed through the C-2 zoning. Mr. Borowski recommended deferral for the application to give more opportunity to have a more comprehensive review for the relocation of the community facility.

Mr. Chandler thought the issue of the bowling alley had become something more than just the building. He said he tried to assess the project without that being a factor and that staff had done an exceptional job in working with the applicant to respond to the main criteria considering neighbourliness. He said he thought the applicant had done a good job in carving back the building on the west façade and using landscaping and other devices to reduce overlook. He said he wasn't sure that there was much of a difference in the non-transparent treatment of the lowest three feet as opposed to 24 inches on the enclosed balconies and interior spaces. Mr. Chandler thought there were a number of sticking points including the 50 foot setback and in terms of height and the conditional uses. Mr. Chandler recommended support for the application but urged staff and the applicant to find a solution for the bowling alley.

Mr. Rafii said he would limit his comments to the design of the project. He noted that having worked as with the City for over 30 years, he felt that staff do a great job of going through all the zoning guidelines, bylaws and policy to make for the best possible project. He thought it was a well-designed project but would like to see something done to save the bowling alley. Regarding Condition 1.5(b), Mr. Rafii thought that if going to three feet for non-transparent glass had a negative impact on the residents he would recommend a height of 24 inches.

Mr. Wlodarczak thanked the members of the public who came out to speak to the Board. He said he thought it was difficult when you have the potential for the loss of a community amenity. He noted that the project was a fairly average design and met the existing guidelines and zoning. He said he was in support of the extra height as the setbacks improve the

neighbourliness. He said he recommended approval. Mr. Wlodarczak added that he thought it was worth looking into the parking as there seems to be a lot for the amount of units in the building and asked the applicant to take into consideration what the community had said.

Ms. Maust said she was moved by the presentation from the members of the public and wished that community centers were as much loved as the bowling alley. She said she had issues with Condition 1.5(b) and Condition 1.7(b) and didn't think either condition was necessary. Regarding the heritage aspects of the project, Ms. Maust thought the importance of the Ridge sign had been diminished by the speakers and didn't see any importance in keeping it.

Ms. Busby was in support of the height but was not convinced that the issue of neighbourliness had been resolved. Mr. Busby recommended deferral of the application although she was in support of the prior-to conditions in the Staff Committee Report.

Ms. Miletic-Prelovac was taken by the passion of the speakers. She said she also recommended that staff and the applicant continue to seek a solution for the relocation of the bowling alley in the neighbourhood. She said she liked the design of the building and supported the parking lot being turned into a park. She agreed that there should be a buffer along Arbutus Street to make it more enjoyable for people in the sitting area. Ms. Miletic-Prelovac was in support for the application.

Mr. Chen said he was impressed by the sense of community the bowling alley has gotten over the generations. Mr. Chen said he hoped an acceptable compromise could be reached and recommended deferral of the application.

Board Discussion

Mr. McLellan noted that commercial recreation is always changing noting that video stores have all but disappeared. He said he was a bowler in his youth and thought it was a great place to meet new people. As well it is great exercise especially for seniors and offers lots of opportunity for interaction with all ages. He wondered if this was something that could be managed by Parks and have it on City land. He noted that sports such as soccer are played on City fields. As someone who is responsible for driving affordable housing he noted that most of the units in this project were going to be very expensive. It would be a win for the developer to have the extra height but he didn't think they had earned it. He added that we were losing a great social amenity and without the height relaxation the design falls apart.

Mr. Dobrovlny thought there were a lot of mixed feelings noting that it takes people to feel threatened before they get out and try to make a difference. He said he did know about the transportation issues but felt they were solvable. A number of have already been addressed and other issues can still be addressed if the project goes ahead. He said he didn't have any concerns regarding the density and height but would have if the building went any higher to keep the bowling alley. Mr. Dobrovlny noted that the applicant had tried to keep the bowling alley in the project but they found it wasn't economically viable to do so. He thought there was a tremendous amount that is being added conditionally and in his opinion staff and the developer have failed in finding a solution for the site. He added that they have to get it right.

Mr. Munro said he was challenged with the project and wanted to know what development has happened along Arbutus Street from the site to West Broadway. The projects seem to be smaller and lower in height than this project and he questioned whether or not the applicant had earned the additional height. He said he was not entirely comfortable with the height on the ridge. There seems to be a lot of pushing and pulling of the setbacks but the speakers didn't think that would make any difference to the acceptance of the project. He thought that height

was a concern but density wasn't the problem. Mr. Munro said he wanted to know what the height and density is of newer developments on Arbutus and made a motion to defer the application to get that information. He added that although a number of options have already been explored, there are still more than could be explored.

Mr. McLellan seconded the motion to defer the application and seek additional information from staff about the heights and densities of other developments along Arbutus Street in the vicinity.

Mr. Dobrovolny said he supported the deferral as he was also not prepared to support the application.

Motion

It was moved by Mr. Munro and seconded by Mr. McLellan and was the decision of the Board:

THAT the decision on the Development Application No. DE415745 be deferred to the Development Permit Board Meeting of October 22, 2012. Staff were instructed to provide the Development Permit Board further information regarding the heights and density of the other developments along Arbutus Street to allow the Board to further assess whether the application has earned the height and density for the site.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:49 PM

L. Harvey
Assistant to the Board

V. Potter
Chair