

**MINUTES OF THE  
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MEETING  
HELD WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 27, 2019**

**1. THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 12:05 PM**

**Present:** Pamela Madoff, Jason Niles, Jessi-Anne Reeves,  
Carl-Jan Rupp, Stefan Schulson, Roger Tinney

**Absent for a  
Portion of the Meeting:** Marilyn Palmer

**Absent:** Sorin Birliga, Karen Sander

**Staff Present:** Moira Wilson – Senior Planner, Urban Design  
Michael Angrove – Planner  
Merinda Conley – Senior Heritage Planner  
Katie Lauriston – Secretary

**2. MINUTES**

**Minutes from the Meeting held January 23, 2019**

**Motion:**

It was moved by Pamela Madoff, seconded by Marilyn Palmer, that the minutes from the meeting held January 23, 2019 be adopted.

**Carried Unanimously**

**3. APPLICATIONS**

**3.1 Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00095 for 952 Johnson Street and 1400 Vancouver Street**

The City is considering a Rezoning and Development Permit with Variances Application to construct a mixed-use residential building with commercial use at grade and residential above, with an increase in density and at a height of approximately 16 storeys. The existing Chapel is proposed to be retained for future commercial use.

Applicant meeting attendees:

DOUG AUSTIN  
TOMASZ ANIELSKI  
OLIVIA LYNE  
DAN COX  
STEVEN COX

AVRP SKYPORT STUDIOS  
AVRP SKYPORT STUDIOS  
LADR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS INC.  
COX DEVELOPMENTS  
COX DEVELOPMENTS

Moira Wilson provided the Panel with a brief introduction of the application and the areas that Council is seeking advice on, including the following:

- built form massing
- façade articulation and finishes
- ground-level landscape plan for sensitive integration with the Chapel, surrounding properties and activation of the public realm.

Doug Austin provided the Panel with a detailed presentation of the site and context of the proposal, and Olivia Lyne provided details of the proposed landscape plan.

The Panel asked the following questions of clarification:

- is there a precedent in Victoria for a building with this form?
  - from Victoria's beginnings, there has been a wide and wonderful variety of architecture
  - this project faces a special set of circumstances, and there may not be another site in Victoria that has tried to do what is sought here
  - the circumstances allow for something that fits within the design guidelines and respects architectural precedent while maintaining a unique character
- will there be a live-in caretaker for the communal spaces within the rental building?
  - yes
- what is the proposed use for the Chapel building?
  - this is not yet determined
  - it will most likely be used as retail space; it is intended to provide service to the community and to residents
- how will the landscaping on each balcony be maintained?
  - tenants will maintain the plantings; this has been successful at other projects completed by the applicants
- will the Chapel be designated as it exists today, or will Council's consideration for designation include the proposed changes?
  - Moira Wilson noted that the application for heritage designation is concurrent with the rezoning and development permit applications. Further information, including a full conservation plan, will be provided to the Heritage Advisory Panel and Council prior to consideration of heritage designation. Council's consideration for heritage designation would be based on the existing building, and a Statement of Significance would be submitted for review
  - once the Chapel is designated, a Heritage Alteration Permit would be required for alterations
- sheet A405 shows the existing Chapel with the northern section removed; is this accurate?
  - yes, the portion of the existing building which sits against the north property line is part of the mortuary, not the Chapel
  - the Chapel will be left in its entirety
- was the retention of some portions of the mortuary considered?
  - this was considered, but it was thought to detract from the Chapel
- will the front façade of the Chapel, with the proposed glazing, retain its proud shape?
  - yes, it will follow the existing geometry as recommended by conservation consultants

- what is the rationale for the proposed materials?
  - glass helps to maximize views, and the glass and glazed panels provide a light material colour
- what is the size and scale for material 12 and 13 as indicated on the materials board?
  - these tiles are approximately 1” tall and 4” across, and will be placed horizontally across the building’s base
- what is the rationale behind the façade and applied form along Johnson Street?
  - the retail uses are intended to be transparent and open, consistent with the use of the interior space
  - the windows above allow light into the units and views outside, with a playful and sculptural approach
- what is the rationale for the townhouse expression along Johnson Street, with streetfront entries for individual units?
  - the patios correlate to the interior spaces
  - these units have undergone a few design iterations, and the applicants are satisfied that the current proposal fits with the building overall
- were privacy issues considered in the design of the glass corners of the northeast corner units on levels 4-15, and are specific materials proposed to mitigate this potential privacy concern towards the neighbouring units to the south?
  - a mix of translucent and transparent glass will likely be used at this corner
  - planters on the exterior decks were also considered to diminish privacy concerns
- have the required clearances been incorporated between the electric distribution transformers and the proposed balconies facing Johnson Street?
  - these distances have been considered and the applicants have been in contact with BC Hydro
- what approaches have been taken to mitigate the effect of the blank wall on the west side of the building?
  - the southwestern corner of the proposal facing Johnson Street is carved out to include an outdoor space with a trellis
  - the applicants have met with the neighbours to the west, who seem pleased by the proposed corner design adjacent to the neighbours’ underground parking entrance
- how will runoff from the Corten fencing be controlled?
  - this level of detail has not yet been reached; however, the fence will be set in gravel to absorb runoff if Corten is used
  - a similar looking material may also be considered, which provides similar warmth, colour and durability
- given the concurrent development of the property to the north, have there been discussions between the developers to coordinate the projects?
  - the applicants have spoken with the neighbouring developers and have considered working together on future projects
  - the neighbouring developer seems pleased that the proposed building will be adequately set back
- is the courtyard entrance from Vancouver Street for residents only, or is it also intended for commercial use?
  - the entrance from Vancouver Street is the primary bicycle entrance, and provides entry to the lobby
  - an easier public access to the commercial space is from Johnson Street

- why is a fence proposed for the entrance on Vancouver Street, instead of further vegetation to provide privacy?
  - a fence was chosen to mitigate potential maintenance concerns given the context of the area
  - the fence contributes to the public realm while providing residents space to sit and linger
- is the rezoning application required to allow for greater density?
  - Moira Wilson confirmed that a higher density and change of use are proposed with the rezoning application
- because the Chapel is not currently designated, could it be demolished?
  - Moira Wilson confirmed that because the Chapel is not heritage-designated, it does not have formal protection from demolition.

The Panel discussed:

- the need for further justification beyond an economic rationale for the increased floor area in the upper floors
- the proposal's departure from the design guidelines, and whether the intent of the guidelines is met
- appreciation for the asymmetrical design and overall building massing
- the proposal's lack of response to context, specifically to the Di Castri Chapel, in terms of articulation and material expression
- the articulation and massing emphasizing the perceived bulkiness of the proposed building
- the balconies being visually bulky and overbearing
- the need to mitigate the appearance of bulk
- the variances are supportable; however, elements in the design do not meet the spirit of the design guidelines (e.g. the building's bulky appearance)
- the podium's playfulness in materiality distracts and overwhelms the Chapel, which is the project's supposed approach to design
- desire to see the proposal's façade and articulation better integrated with the minimal, clean lines of the Di Castri building
- desire to see the Di Castri building's materiality reflected in the proposed tower
- the tower roofline's success in integrating with the Di Castri building
- the townhouse approach being supportable but not relating to the mid-century design of the Chapel
- the need for open space around the Chapel and the supportability of the variances
- CPTED concerns with the design of the courtyard off Vancouver Street
- opportunity to integrate soft landscaping within the plaza off Vancouver Street to reduce the visual impact of the proposed gate.

**Motion:**

It was moved by Roger Tinney, seconded by Jason Niles, that the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00095 for 952 Johnson Street and 1400 Vancouver Street be approved subject to:

- further consideration of how the proposed building relates to the Chapel through the podium massing as it wraps around Johnson Street

- resolution of the façade articulation and materials of the tower to speak to the original mid-century modern ethos of the Chapel and to mitigate the appearance of bulk.

**Carried Unanimously**

*The Panel recessed at 1:35pm and reconvened at 1:40pm.*

### **3.2 Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00100 for 2566-2580 Fifth Street**

The City is considering a Rezoning and Development Permit with Variances Application to construct a five-storey rental apartment building with townhouses fronting onto Fifth Street and commercial use at the rear on the ground level.

Applicant meeting attendees:

RYAN KING  
LUKE MARI  
BIANCA BODLEY

STELLER ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTING  
ARYZE DEVELOPMENTS INC.  
BIOPHELIA DESIGN COLLECTIVE

Michael Angrove provided the Panel with a brief introduction of the application and the areas that Council is seeking advice on, including the following:

- the impact on neighbouring properties
- the street wall and pedestrian scale
- materiality.

Luke Mari provided the Panel with a detailed presentation of the site and context of the proposal, and Bianca Bodley provided details of the proposed landscape plan.

The Panel asked the following questions of clarification:

- what criteria were used for determining the colour palettes, and were other palettes considered?
  - many options have been considered
  - the palette is meant to be playful without being offensive, and should help provide a sensitive transition to the neighbouring single-family dwellings
  - the proposed colour palette was inspired by a trip to Denmark
- where are the proposed hardie panels used?
  - four colours of hardie panel are used along the windows
- if the proposed easement on the adjacent lot is not granted, would the application still proceed?
  - Michael Angrove noted that the owners of the adjacent lot have indicated interest in granting the Statutory Right-of-Way (SRW); however, if the SRW were not granted, staff would have concerns regarding the visibility of the entrance to the street
- if the art school did not occupy the studio space, would another institutional use be allowed?
  - Michael Angrove confirmed that the zone is worded to allow for institutional use and below market housing

- does the school require parking?
  - no, it does not
- will the three existing houses be demolished or retained?
  - it is still being determined by consultants whether retention and moving will be possible; however, the buildings will likely have to be demolished
- what is the width of the interior courtyard, and do any windows look towards each other?
  - none of the windows look into each other due to the walkway configuration
- has there been feedback from the neighbours along Fifth Street?
  - the applicants have spoken with many neighbours and have received broad support
  - the initial proposal was for three storeys along Fifth Street. The fourth storey tempered support but was required due to the high water table on the site and in order to offer commercial space at below-market rates
- were other site configurations considered which do not rely on the SRW and could better speak to the presence of the art school?
  - painting signage on the hardie panel to add presence from the street was considered
  - the wayfinding can be revisited
  - there is a need to realize the site's density while accommodating the custom art school space
- was an increased public presence towards Fifth Street considered for the art school?
  - a more open, glass space was initially envisioned; however, the art school is seeking a specific layout with primarily manufactured light
  - signage for the art school is meant to be visible for pedestrians along Fifth Street
- the drive access is marked as a 15% grade, is this accurate?
  - yes; the maximum allowed slope is proposed to accommodate the tightness of the site
- the trees in the rear appear very large for the space provided; how large will the trees grow in reality?
  - the trees will grow to graze the building and will be scaled down from the plans provided.

Panel members discussed:

- the need to explore the design from a pedestrian perspective
- desire for the City to work with the applicant to secure an effective Statutory Right-of-Way (SRW)
- the SRW should supplement a primary entry to the art school
- desire to see the SRW resolved, as a critical part of the site functioning
- desire to see the Vancouver Island School of Art occupy the institutional space
- need to increase the art school's presence along Fifth Street and along the north and south elevations, possibly through materials and/or wayfinding devices
- opportunity for people to delight in finding the art school, as a less visible neighbourhood amenity
- the proposed art school currently reading as residential space through design and detailing
- appreciation for the overall building form, with two volumes pulled apart
- no issues with the overall approach or the site planning

- appreciation for the design of the north and south elevations, including the materiality and soft landscaping
- concern for the use of brick
- the Fifth Street elevation relying on subtle materiality and detailing, and needing to be very crisp and Danish
- the need to detail the hardie panel in such a way that it looks like a more high-end material
- the need to ensure that the façade depth shown in some images occurs
- not seeking design changes; rather, desiring further elaboration on the relief between the proposed materials
- cautioning against the addition of brick
- desire to see the project return to the Panel for review.

**Motion:**

It was moved by Stefan Schulson, seconded by Roger Tinney, that the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit Application No. 00100 for 2566-2580 Fifth Street be approved subject to:

- the provision of additional detail to articulate the execution of the architectural details on the façades;
- resolution of the townhouse units to improve the visual break between lower and upper levels; and
- consideration for the wayfinding and public presence of the art school / institutional space.

**Carried Unanimously**

**Motion:**

It was moved by Jason Niles, seconded by Carl-Jan Rupp, that the Advisory Design Panel supports the proposed Statutory Right-of-Way for a public frontage and recommends to Council that staff and Council liaise with the applicant and neighbours through the local area plan process.

**Carried**

**For:** Jason Niles, Marilyn Palmer, Jessi-Anne Reeves, Carl-Jan Rupp, Stefan Schulson, Roger Tinney

**Opposed:** Pamela Madoff

**3.3 Heritage Alteration Permit with Variances Application No. 00005 for 603-607 Pandora Avenue**

The City is considering a Heritage Alteration Permit with Variances Application to undertake an adaptive reuse of the heritage-designated Plaza Hotel into a residential development with approximately 100 units and ground-level commercial use, as well as a new retail/residential building beside and on top of the Plaza Hotel building.

This application was previously reviewed by the ADP at its February 28, 2018 meeting.

Applicant meeting attendees:

ERIC BARKER

ERIC BARKER ARCHITECT INC.

Miko Betanzo provided the Panel with a brief summary of the application and the areas that Council is seeking advice on, including whether the following issues have been addressed:

- Brick needs to be the primary material in context with the building across from the site, Chinatown and the McPherson Theatre. Replace the masonry with brick, or at least a masonry pattern.
- Increase the degree to which the contemporary additions along Pandora Street and the key corner element are compatible, distinguishable, and subordinate to the heritage-designated Plaza Hotel and integrate with the rest of the new building.
- Consider a simplification of the built form, materials, scale, rhythm and window openings within the historic district and the Chinatown National Historic District to add coherence of the proposal.

Eric Barker provided the Panel with a detailed presentation which highlighted the revisions to the proposal since the December 13, 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting.

*Marilyn Palmer left the meeting at 3:27pm.*

The Panel asked the following questions of clarification:

- what is the design rationale for the corner element?
  - desire for a strong, contemporary expression for the new building
  - the corner element is framed with the concrete panels and punched windows which relate to the Plaza hotel
  - the same treatment is repeated on the buildings to the east
- what is the rationale for the use of green glass?
  - the green glass provides more solidness expressed through the building
  - the coloured glass is used to cover wall ends, and is carried through to the balconies
- will the plaza have additional street furniture and animation?
  - the plans accurately note what is proposed
  - the building's light palette is intended to not overwhelm the plaza, and to work with the restoration of the Plaza Hotel
- will the Plaza Hotel building be refinished in all one colour?
  - the Plaza Hotel will be restored according to the Heritage Consultant Report
- is the central courtyard open to the air?
  - yes
- were any changes made to the proposal since the ADP's review in 2018, specifically to address issues such as the lack of daylight to units or the challenges to future development of the site to the east?
  - no; these were not addressed.

Panel members discussed:

- the importance of architectural excellence at such a prominent corner and in adjacency to a national historic site
- appreciation for the restoration of the Plaza Hotel

- desire for the rooftop addition to the Plaza Hotel to be further set back, so as to not be visible from the public realm and to better comply with the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*
- appreciation for the narrow glass windows, which help transition between the Plaza Hotel and the new building
- opportunity for the proposed building to better integrate with the existing Plaza Hotel and to respond to the Old Town context
- the new building's lack of composition and lack of built form, scale, and rhythm as set out in the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*
- lack of precedent downtown for this type of corner treatment
- need to resolve the corner feature
- need to redesign the elaborate railing details and reconsider the use of green glass
- need to reconsider the proportion of masonry to glass to provide more structure to the retail spaces at the ground level
- the proposal's failure to meaningfully address the Panel's recommendations from 2018 relating to the liveability of units, resolution of the architectural and material composition, reconsideration of the plaza design and sensitivity to context.

**Motion:**

It was moved by Jason Niles, seconded by Carl-Jan Rupp, that the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that the Heritage Alteration Permit with Variances Application No. 00005 for 603-607 Pandora Avenue be declined, and that:

1. the proposal does not sufficiently meet the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, nor does it address points (a), (b) and (c) as outlined in Council's December 13, 2018 motion to refer;
2. additional setbacks on the rooftop addition to the heritage building should be considered to better integrate this aspect of the proposal; and
3. some points from the Panel's motion February 28, 2018 were not adequately addressed; specifically:
  - a. the liveability of the units; and
  - b. reconsideration of the plaza planting and design to encourage activity and animation including planting, surface treatment, seating and active program elements.

**Carried Unanimously**

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

The Advisory Design Panel meeting of February 27, 2019 was adjourned at 4:10 pm.

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Stefan Schulson, Chair