



Advisory Design Panel Report

For the Meeting of May 28, 2025

To:	Advisory Design Panel	Date:	May 28, 2025
From:	Chloe Tunis, Senior Planner		
Subject:	Development Permit with Variance(s) Application No.00277 for 2900 Douglas Street		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Advisory Design Panel (ADP) is requested to review a Development Permit Application for 2900 Douglas Street and provide advice to Council.

The proposal is construction a new 3-storey commercial building with partially covered parking area. The intended use of the building is a retail furniture store.

The subject property is designated General Employment in the *Official Community Plan* (OCP, 2012), which supports commercial buildings up to approximately four storeys and a density of up to 2:5:1 floor space ratio (FSR). The *Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan* (BGNP, 2017) includes the site in the Douglas Corridor which similarly supports commercial uses including retail uses on the ground floor along arterial roads.

Staff are looking for commentary from the Advisory Design Panel with regard to:

- the application of building materials, including the extensive use of glazing and the approach to signage at the Douglas Street elevation
- the relationship of the building to the street, with particular focus of the pedestrian experience and the approach to landscaping interventions at the corner of Douglas Street and Burnside Road East
- Any other aspects of the proposal on which the ADP chooses to comment.

The Options section of this report provides guidance on possible recommendations that the Panel may make, or use as a basis to modify, in providing advice on this application.

BACKGROUND

Applicant:	Kelly Dodd <i>Six Mile Furniture</i>
Architect:	Gregory Eeman, Architect AIBC <i>Continuum Architecture</i>

Development Permit Area: Development Permit Area 7A, Corridors

Heritage Status: N/A

Description of Proposal

The proposal is construction a new 3-storey commercial building with partially covered parking. The intended use of the building is a retail furniture store. There are no existing buildings currently on the site. The lot is a wedge shape, with the two primary elevations facing Douglas Street and Burnside Road East.

The proposal includes the following major design components:

- A modern flatiron shaped building with a folded concrete form and extensive glazing along the street facing façades
- metal cladding and detailing, including fluted metal panels and a corten steel feature that frames both the Douglas Street entry and three storey atrium which runs the width of the building.
- landscaping elements that include planters along the base of the building, built-in benches along Douglas Street and a feature chair 'sculpture' at the terminus of the lot, where Douglas Street and Burnside Road East meet.
- Covered parking accessed by a surface driveway spanning from Douglas to Burnside East streets.

The following data table compares the proposal with the existing C1-S Zone, Limited Commercial Service Station District. An asterisk is used to identify where the proposal is less stringent than the existing Zone.

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	Zone Standard
Site area (m ²) – minimum	1323	n/a
Density (Floor Space Ratio) – maximum	1.29	1.40
Total floor area (m ²) – maximum	1712.0	2315.6
Height (m) – maximum	14.27*	12
Storeys – maximum	3	n/a
Setbacks (m) – minimum		
Front (Burnside)	0.18*	6.0
Flanking street (Douglas) (E)	0.2*	2.4
Side (N)	6.09	0.0

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	Zone Standard
Vehicle parking – minimum	13*	47
Parking Location	Surface	N/A
Bicycle parking stalls – minimum		
Short Term	10	9
Long Term	7*	9

Consistency with Policies and Design Guidelines

Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan (OCP, 2012) identifies the subject properties within Development Permit Area 7A: Corridors, which supports the revitalization of areas of commercial use along corridors through high quality architecture, landscape and urban design in order to enhance their appearance, strengthen commercial viability and encourage pedestrian use. Enhancing Douglas Street as a frequent transit corridor with transit infrastructure is also strongly encouraged as well as a sensitive transition with nearby lower-density residential through human-scale design and building form and character.

Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan

This site is within the Douglas Corridor area in the Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan. This site is specifically identified as a key site for establishing a prominent building at the terminating vista created through the triangular block. It further encourages approaches that support pedestrian orientation, activity and interest and a fine grain rhythm of shop fronts along the entire length of Douglas Street. Building design is also encouraged to relate Frequent Transit and Rapid Transit stops along Douglas Street.

Other design Guidelines that apply to Development Permit Area Area 7A: Corridors

- Design Guidelines for: Multi-Unit Residential, Commercial and Industrial (2012), revised 2019
- Revitalization Guidelines for Corridors, Villages and Town Centres (2017)
- Guidelines for Fences, Gates and Shutters (2010)

Although generally consistent with the above guidelines, staff have concerns with the proposal's extensive use of curtain wall glazing on the upper storeys and are seeking input on the street level pedestrian experience, particularly at the corner terminus at Douglas Street and Burnside Road East.

Regulatory Considerations

The height variance is considered supportable as the massing is appropriate for the site and effectively responds to the wider street context along Douglas Street by creating a proportional street wall.

The side setback variances along the two street frontages are considered supportable due to the site constraints of the irregular lot the provision of a 3.95m road dedication along Burnside Road East. Additionally, they do not create inconsistencies with the applicable design guidelines.

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

The following sections identify and provide a brief analysis of the areas where the Panel is requested to provide commentary. The Panel's commentary on any other aspects of the proposal is also welcome.

Materiality

The proposal includes extensive use of clear curtain wall glazing on the second and third storey elevations. The design intent of the glazed facade is noted, which does respond to the guidelines that encourage prominent buildings on triangular blocks within the Douglas Corridor. However, the guidelines also encourage energy efficient buildings and glass clad buildings generally perform poorly in this regard (particularly given the large West facing façade). In addition, large, unbroken surfaces, such as glazing, can lead to a disconnect between the building and the street, inconsistent with the Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood design guidelines that encourage design approaches that emphasize pedestrian orientation, activity and interest and a fine grain rhythm of shop fronts along the entire length of Douglas. This has been mitigated somewhat by the addition of metal panel siding to break up the transparent glazing. The applicable guidelines speak to interventions such as louvres or fins to break up 'blank' walls.

An additional consideration is that, though not technically applicable on this site, the relatively recent General Urban Design Guidelines for Multi-Unit Residential, Commercial and Industrial Development (2022), which applies elsewhere in the City and is consistent with ongoing policy work as well as a wider body of best practices, encourages bird-safe glazing or treatment to minimize bird collisions. These design guidelines suggest a window to wall ratio of less than 40%. Further, they suggest avoiding areas of large glazing, particularly where birds can see through them to the sky or habitat on the other side, which is the case with the current proposal. Fritted or textured glass, louvres and shutters are all examples of interventions to support bird-friendly design, that have not currently been incorporated into the proposal.

The Panel is invited to comment on the approach and extent of the curtain wall glazing and metal panel materials.

Street Level Response

According to the Design Guidelines for: Multi-Unit Residential, Commercial and Industrial, building bases should be well-designed and articulated, especially along façades that are adjacent to a street. In contrast to the recommendations related to the upper storeys, the guidelines do suggest a

high proportion of glazing at the street level to encourage permeability and street interest. Additional access points on the proposed building could further support this and provide future flexibility for the use of the space.

The neighbourhood plan identifies the objective of establishing prominent buildings at terminating vistas afforded by sites such as the subject property. The proposal currently includes a sunken landscaped area featuring an oversized chair ‘sculpture’ at the terminus of the site. The design guidelines encourage the use of gathering places for pedestrians and the Burnside-Gorge Neighbourhood Plan further encourages street-level approaches that foster pedestrian friendly spaces supportive of the rapid transit corridor along Douglas Street. A more pedestrian-friendly intervention such as a mini-plaza approach for this portion of the site could support the more multi-modal future of this corridor.

The Panel is invited to comment on the design of the ground floor and the landscaping and resulting public/private interface at the building terminus.

OPTIONS

The following are three potential options that the Panel may consider using or modifying in formulating a recommendation to Council:

Option One

That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit with Variances Application No.00277 be approved as presented.

Option Two

That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit with Variances Application No.00277 be approved with the following changes:

- as listed by the ADP.

Option Three

That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit with Variances Application No.00277 does not sufficiently meet the applicable design guidelines and polices and should be declined (and that the key areas that should be revised include:)

- as listed by the ADP, if there is further advice on how the application could be improved.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A Subject Map
Attachment B Aerial Map
Attachment C Plans date stamped December 16th, 2024
Attachment D Applicant’s letter dated December 16th, 2024.

cc: Kelly Dodd; Continuum Architecture