

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	AVRP SKYPORT STUDIOS
TOMASZ ANIELSKI	AVRP SKYPORT STUDIOS
OLIVIA LYNE	LADR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS INC.
DAN COX	COX DEVELOPMENTS
STEVEN COX	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