



Advisory Design Panel Report For the Meeting of February 26, 2020

To: Advisory Design Panel **Date:** February 19, 2020

From: Leanne Taylor, Senior Planner

Subject: **Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00135 for 43, 45 and 55 Gorge Road East and 2827, 2829 and 2831 Irma Street**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Advisory Design Panel (ADP) is requested to review a Development Permit with Variances Application for 43, 45 and 55 Gorge Road East and 2827, 2829 and 2831 Irma Street and provide advice to Council.

The proposal is for a six-storey, mixed-use building consisting of approximately 153 rental dwelling units situated above ground floor commercial space. The *Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan* (2017) supports village commercial uses, such as retail, restaurants, athletic clubs, personal, medical and professional services. The variances are associated with setbacks and parking. A Rezoning Application is also required to facilitate this development.

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

- relationship with surrounding context
- height and building mass
- building transition
- design of the commercial façade
- application of building materials
- location of garbage and recycling room
- mezzanine for long-term bicycle parking
- 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: Mr. Chris Karu
PC Urban Corporation

Architect: Barry Weih, MAIBC
WA Architects

Development Permit Area: Development Permit Area 5: Large Urban Village and
Development Permit Area 7A: Corridors
Heritage Status: n/a

Description of Proposal

The proposal is for a six-storey, mixed-use building consisting of ground floor commercial uses and residential above. The proposed density is 2:43:1 floor space ratio (FSR).

The proposal includes the following major design components:

Built Form

- low-rise building form consisting of contemporary architectural features including a flat roofline, contemporary-style windows, substantial ground level commercial glazing, and steel and glass canopy system
- L-shaped building footprint with an interior courtyard
- building stepped back at the fifth storey along the south elevation
- exterior materials include brick, corrugated metal, woodgrain metal, cementitious panel, and glass guardrail system
- flexible ground floor commercial space to accommodate one larger tenant or several smaller retail tenants
- ground-oriented units with individual stepped entryways and large outdoor patios
- projecting and recessed balconies for the upper storey units
- main residential entryway fronting Irma Street
- ground level garbage and recycling room for commercial and residential uses
- driveway to underground parkade on Irma Street
- 121 underground parking spaces
- 192 long-term and 18 short-term bicycle parking spaces.

Plaza and On-site Landscaping

- plaza at the Gorge-Irma corner consisting of outdoor seating, street trees, pedestrian lighting, garbage bin, unit pavers and concrete broom-finished surface treatment
- interior courtyard amenities include a barbeque and dining tables under a pergola, a giant chess and checkers board, Patanque Court, garden planters, seating and storage benches, pedestrian lighting, hydrapress slab paving, lawn and soft landscaping
- south-facing rooftop amenity space consisting of a children’s sand play area and rubber surfacing, shade pergola with barbeque, sink and two dining tables, seating and storage benches, garden planters and hydrapress slab surface treatment
- substantial soft landscaping along the south property line
- perimeter landscaping along the east property line
- cedar privacy fence around the perimeter of the site
- retention of two Garry oak trees
- 26 new trees on-site.

The following data table compares the proposal with the URMD Zone, Urban Residential Multiple Dwelling. An asterisk is used to identify where the proposal does not meet the requirements of the existing Zone.

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	Zone Standard URMD Zone	OCP Policy
Site area (m ²) – minimum	4810	1840	
Density (Floor Space Ratio) – maximum	2.43:1 *	2:1	Large Urban Village: 2.5:1 Urban Residential: 2:1
Total floor area (m ²) – maximum	11,688.30 *	3680	
Height (m) – maximum	18	18.50	
Storeys – maximum	6	n/a	6
Site coverage (%) – maximum	52 *	40	
Open site space (%) – minimum	45 *	50	
Setbacks (m) – minimum			
Front (Irma Street)	3.16 *	4	
Rear	2.93 *	10	
Side (south)	6.10	6	
Side on a flanking street (Gorge Road East)	6.95 (building)/ 0 * (canopy)	4	
Vehicle parking – minimum			
Residential	106 *	141	
Commercial	0 *	6	
Visitor vehicle – minimum	15	15	
Bicycle parking stalls – minimum			
Long-term	192 *	193	
Short-term	18	17	

Sustainability Features

The applicant is targeting Step 3 of the BC Energy Step Code for residential areas and Step 2 for the commercial areas. Some other sustainability features that the applicant proposes to explore include:

- high performance double-glazed windows
- exterior insulation and reductions to thermal bridging (and associated heat loss)
- highly efficient mechanical heating and cooling systems, including a heat recovery system
- low flow fixtures as well as the collection of rainwater for irrigation-purposes.

Consistency with Policies and Design Guidelines

Official Community Plan

The *Official Community Plan* (OCP, 2012) Urban Place Designation for the properties located at 43, 45 and 55 Gorge Road East is Large Urban Village, which supports low-rise and mid-rise multi-unit buildings, including mixed-use building, up to approximately six storeys and a density up to approximately 2.5:1 floor space ratio (FSR) provided that the proposal further advances strategic objectives in the OCP. The OCP Urban Place Designation of the properties at 2827, 2829 and 2831 is Urban Residential, which supports multi-unit residential buildings up to approximately six storeys and a density of up to approximately 2:1 FSR in strategic locations, such as within 200m of a Large Urban Village. The OCP encourages additional multi-family housing along Gorge Road East and a mix of residents, including households with children. This is to be achieved by increasing opportunities for innovative forms of ground-oriented multi-unit residential housing.

The OCP identifies the properties located at 43, 45 and 55 Gorge Road East within Development Permit Area 5: Large Urban Villages – Gorge at Irma. Gorge at Irma Village has been identified as a desired location for transformation from single detached homes into a mixed-use urban village serving the surrounding neighbourhood. This DPA supports low to mid-rise building forms with underground parking and building façades that define the streets and sidewalks. According to the OCP, the Gorge at Irma Village is an opportunity to define the place character of the neighbourhood.

The OCP identifies the properties at 2827, 2829 and 2831 Irma Street within Development Permit Area 7A: Corridors – Gorge Road East. The DPA encourages transit-oriented streetscaping in the design of new buildings fronting frequent transit corridors. To ensure corridors are compatible with adjacent and nearby lower density residential neighbourhoods, the DPA encourages human-scaled urban design and a sensitive transition in building form and place character.

The proposal meets the intent of the policies outlined in the OCP; however, staff have concerns with the overall built form of the proposed building.

Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan

The properties located at 43, 45 and 55 Gorge Road East are designated Large Urban Village in the *Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan* (2017), which supports mixed-use buildings up to five storeys and a density of up to 2.5:1 FSR. Village commercial uses on the ground floor of buildings built up to the street with parking generally located to the rear or underground are

strongly encouraged in the Plan. Residential uses are supported on the upper floors. The properties located at 2827, 2829 and 2831 Irma Street are designated Urban Residential in the Plan, which supports multi-unit residential buildings up to four-storeys and a density of up to 2:1 FSR where amenities are provided to offset the impacts of additional density.

The Plan encourages new development that is compatible, neighbourly and creates a good fit within the established residential neighbourhood character. Ensuring new development along Gorge Road East that is oriented positively towards the street to create a more attractive and pedestrian-friendly streetscape environment is strongly encouraged in the Plan. The Plan also encourages streetscape improvements as part of the urban village redevelopment on the south side of Gorge Road East and Irma Street. On-street parking, street trees, street furnishings, bicycle parking and space for café seating, wrapping around the Gorge-Irma corner is encouraged in the design of the prominent corner. The Plan also supports a mix of housing types, including units attractive to families with children (i.e. three-bedroom units).

The proposal meets the intent of the policies outlined in the Plan; however, staff have concerns with the proposed architecture and the overall fit of the building in the neighbourhood.

Design Guidelines for Development Permit Area 5: Large Urban Village – Gorge at Irma

- *Advisory Design Guidelines for Buildings, Signs and Awnings (2006)*
- *Design Guidelines for Multi-Unit Residential, Commercial and Industrial Development (2012)*
- *Guidelines for Fences, Gates and Shutters (2010)*
- *Where not specified by additional design guidelines, buildings are encouraged to have three to five-storey facades that define the street wall with shop windows and building entrances that are oriented to face the street*

Design Guidelines for Development Permit Area 7A: Corridors – Gorge Road East

- *Design Guidelines for Multi-Unit Residential, Commercial and Industrial Development (2012)*
- *Revitalization Guidelines for Corridors, Villages and Town Centres (2017)*

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

Relationship with the Surrounding Context

As a Large Urban Village, the subject properties are considered a prominent location in the Gorge neighbourhood. The design guidelines encourage new residential mixed-use development that is compatible with the character of established areas from a built form perspective. The *Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan* contains language to ensure that new development is compatible, neighbourly and creates a good fit within the established residential neighbourhood. Staff invite the ADP's input on the proposal's relationship with the surrounding context.

Building Transition

The design guidelines state that where new development is directly abutting lands in a different OCP Urban Place Designation (the neighbouring properties to the south are designated Traditional Residential), the design of a new building should provide a transition between areas

in ways that responds to established form and character, and that anticipate any future development. The design guidelines further state that the design of a building addresses privacy, particularly the portions of the building abutting the side yards of adjacent single-family dwellings. The *Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan* also addresses transition along corridors and the importance of a sensitive transition in built form and character to adjacent lower density Traditional Residential neighbourhoods. Staff invite the ADP's input of the appropriateness of the proposed building transition along Irma Street.

Height and Building Mass

The design guidelines state that distinctive massing, building articulation and architectural treatments should be incorporated for corner sites and that perceived building mass should be mitigated through the use of architectural elements, visually interesting rooflines, stepping back of upper floors, and detailing that creates rhythm and visual interest. Staff encouraged the applicant to construct two buildings on the site in order to break up the amount of building mass, especially along the south and west elevations, and provide a better transition to the lower density residential uses to the south. Staff invite the ADP's input of the proposed height and overall built form.

Design of the Commercial Façade

The design guidelines state that building facades, especially those facing streets, should be well-designed and articulated with human-scale architectural features that create visual interest for pedestrians. According to the design guidelines, ground floor retail and other commercial uses should maximize the amount of glazing and windows to increase the interactions between pedestrians and interior spaces. Staff invite the ADP's input on the overall design of the corner of the building and how it transitions to the other commercial retail units fronting Gorge Road East and the ground-oriented dwelling units fronting Irma Street with special attention to building articulation, application of the glazing and other exterior finishes, height and depth of canopies, and the location of the proposed signage.

Application of Building Materials

According to the design guidelines, exterior building materials should be high quality, durable and capable of weathering gracefully. The applicant is proposing a mix of exterior finishes to accentuate different aspects of the building. The exterior finishes include brick, corrugated metal, woodgrain metal, cementitious panel, and glass guardrail system. Staff invite the ADP's input on the exterior finishes and feedback on the application of building materials on all sides of the building.

Location of Garbage and Recycling Room

Large, blank windowless and featureless walls that are visible from the public realm are strongly discouraged in the design guidelines. The applicant is proposing to locate the garbage and recycling room at grade, which has resulted in a blank windowless wall facing Irma Street. Staff encouraged the applicant to locate the garbage and recycling room underground to help address design challenges as well as functionality so that the commercial tenants do not have to walk down Irma Street to access the garbage and recycling room. Staff invite the ADP's input on the location of the garbage and recycling room and feedback on the blank wall fronting Irma Street.

Mezzanine for Long-term Bicycle Parking

The applicant is proposing a mezzanine bike room in the underground parkade that is accessed by an elevator or stairs. Staff invite the ADP's input on the appropriateness of the proposed location of the bike parking.

As well, this is a significant redevelopment of the area and other feedback and comments from the ADP would be welcomed.

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. 00720 for 43, 45 and 55 Gorge Road East and 2827, 2829 and 2831 Irma Street be approved as presented.

Option Two

That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00720 for 43, 45 and 55 Gorge Road East and 2827, 2829 and 2831 Irma Street 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. 00720 for 43, 45 and 55 Gorge Road East and 2827, 2829 and 2831 Irma Street 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

- Subject Map
- Aerial Map
- Plans date stamped February 10, 2020
- Applicant's letter dated November 8, 2019.

cc: Mr. Chris Karu, Applicant; Mr. Barry Weih, WA Architects.