



## Committee of the Whole Report

### For the Meeting of July 9, 2020

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**To:** Committee of the Whole **Date:** June 25, 2020

**From:** Karen Hoese, Director, Sustainable Planning and Community Development

**Subject:** **Development Permit with Variance Application No. 00065 for 736 Princess Avenue**

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### RECOMMENDATION

That Council, after giving notice and allowing an opportunity for public comment at a meeting of Council, and after the Public Hearing for Rezoning Application No. 00602, if it is approved, consider the following motion:

“That Council authorize the issuance of Development Permit with Variance Application No. 00065 for 736 Princess Avenue, in accordance with:

1. Plans date stamped June 18, 2020.
2. Development meeting all *Zoning Regulation Bylaw* requirements, except for the following variances:
  - i. reduce the required number of residential parking spaces from 14 to 0;
  - ii. reduce the required number of commercial parking spaces from 17 to 8;
  - iii. reduce the required number of visitor parking spaces from 3 to 0;
  - iv. reduce the required number of long-term residential bicycle parking spaces from 28 to 7;
  - v. reduce the required number of short-term residential bicycle parking spaces from six to 0;
3. The applicant identifies the location of the PMT station on the site plan, to the satisfaction of the Director of Sustainable Planning and Community Development.
4. The Development Permit lapsing two years from the date of this resolution.”

### LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

In accordance with Section 489 of the *Local Government Act*, Council may issue a Development Permit in accordance with the applicable guidelines specified in the *Community Plan*. A Development Permit may vary or supplement the *Zoning Regulation Bylaw* but may not vary the use or density of the land from that specified in the Bylaw.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to present Council with information, analysis and recommendations for a Development Permit with Variance Application for the property located at 736 Princess Avenue. The proposal is to construct a six-storey, mixed-use building. The variances are related to vehicle and bicycle parking.

The following points were considered in assessing this application:

- The subject property is within Development Permit Area 7A (DPA 7A): Corridors – Douglas Street and Blanshard Street. DPA 7A envisions the revitalization of commercial areas along corridors with high quality architecture, landscape and urban design that enhances their appearance, strengthens commercial viability and encourages pedestrian use.
- The applicant is proposing a building with contemporary architectural features, such as a flat roofline, contemporary-style windows and materials that are sympathetic to the service commercial neighbourhood context, which is consistent with the objectives of DPA 7A.
- The proposed ground floor coffee shop with outdoor seating would create an attractive and pedestrian-friendly streetscape.
- The applicant is proposing to reduce the required number of residential parking spaces from 14 to 0; commercial parking spaces from 17 to 8; and visitor parking spaces from 3 to 0. The applicant provided a parking analysis for the requested parking variances (attached) and demonstrated the anticipated parking demand on-site can be met with the proposed number of parking spaces.
- The applicant is proposing to reduce the required number of long-term residential bicycle parking spaces from 28 to 7 and short-term residential bicycle parking spaces from six to nil. In a letter from the applicant (attached), it states that for various reasons there is little bicycle ownership among the residents and the proposed bicycle parking being provided would either satisfy or exceed the demand.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Description of Proposal**

The proposal is for a six-storey mixed-used building. Specific details include:

- mid-rise building form consisting of contemporary-style design features, including a flat roofline, industrial-like materials and floor to ceiling glazing at the ground level
- exterior materials include horizontal corrugated metal with aluminium flashing, corten steel accents, cement board, and architectural and board formed concrete
- separate commercial and residential entryways facing Princess Avenue
- a ground floor coffee shop with outdoor seating
- rooftop amenity space on the third and sixth-storeys
- an indoor common area for residents-only on the fifth storey
- seven under-building parking spaces screened from public view
- a total of 14 long-term (residential and commercial) and six short-term (commercial only) bicycle parking spaces.

The proposed variances are related to vehicle and bicycle parking.

## **Affordable Housing**

Affordable housing impacts are discussed in the concurrent Rezoning Application report.

## **Sustainability**

The applicant has not identified any sustainability features associated with this proposal.

## **Active Transportation**

The applicant has not identified any specific features, beyond bike parking, that support active transportation. However, the site is well served by transit and is centrally located within the City.

## **Public Realm**

No public realm improvements beyond City standard requirements are proposed in association with this Development Permit Application.

## **Accessibility**

The British Columbia Building Code regulates accessibility as it pertains to buildings. The applicant is proposing five accessible dwelling units, which would be designed in accordance with CSA B651-12 Accessible Design for the Built Environment, which exceeds the accessibility requirements of the British Columbia Building Code. The remaining units may be designed to adaptable standards for future modifications as available. All common areas in and around the building would be universally accessible, including the program areas and the social enterprise space on the ground floor.

## **Existing Site Development and Development Potential**

The site is presently a parking lot. Under the current M-1 Zone, the property could be developed as a five-storey commercial building consisting of a mix of commercial and service commercial uses.

## **Data Table**

The following data table compares the proposal with the existing M-1 Zone, Limited Light Industrial District. An asterisk is used to identify where the proposal differs from the existing Zone. Additionally, the key City policy that pertains to the area has been included in this table.

<b>Zoning Criteria</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Existing Zone M-1 Zone</b>	<b>OCP Policy (Core Employment)</b>
Site area (m <sup>2</sup> ) - minimum	556	n/a	
Density (Floor Space Ratio) - maximum	<b>4.01*</b>	3:1	5:1

<b>Zoning Criteria</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Existing Zone M-1 Zone</b>	<b>OCP Policy (Core Employment)</b>
Total floor area (m <sup>2</sup> ) - maximum	<b>2280.67*</b>	1668	
Height (m) - maximum	20.10 (top of roof) / <b>20.88 * (top of parapet)</b>	15	
Storeys - maximum	6	n/a	15
Site coverage % - maximum	96	n/a	
<b>Setbacks (m) – minimum:</b>			
Front	0	3 or 0	
Rear	0	3 or 0	
Side (east)	0	3 or 0	
Side (west)	0	3 or 0	
<b>Parking – minimum</b>			
Residential	<b>0*</b>	14	
Commercial	<b>8*</b>	17	
Visitor	<b>0*</b>	3	
<b>Bicycle parking stalls – minimum</b>			
Long-term			
Residential	7	28	
Commercial	7	5	
Short-term			
Residential	0	6	
Commercial	6	5	

## Community Consultation

Consistent with the *Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC) Procedures for Processing Rezoning and Variance Applications*, on March 23, 2020 the application was

referred for a 30-day comment period to the Burnside Gorge CALUC. A letter dated April 9, 2020 is attached to this report.

This application proposes variances, therefore, in accordance with the City's *Land Use Procedures Bylaw*, it requires notice, sign posting and a meeting of Council to consider the variances.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Development Permit Area and Design Guidelines**

The OCP identifies the subject property within Development Permit Area 7A (DPA 7A): Corridors – Douglas Street and Blanshard Street. DPA 7A envisions the revitalization of commercial areas along corridors with high quality architecture, landscape and urban design that enhances their appearance, strengthens commercial viability and encourages pedestrian use.

The design guidelines applicable to DPA 7A – Douglas Street and Blanshard Street encourage a well-designed and articulated building base, especially along those facades that are adjacent to a street. The ground floor coffee shop is accentuated with extensive storefront glazing, a prominent entryway and an outdoor patio. The entrance to underbuilding parking is slightly recessed from the commercial storefront and the residential entryway in order to soften its appearance from the street and minimize interruption of the commercial frontage and the pedestrian realm. The applicant is also proposing a decorative metal screen for the garage door to further integrate it into the overall design of the building.

The design guidelines encourage the use of rich and varied architectural materials to enhance and articulate street frontages. The applicant is proposing high quality and durable exterior finishes such as horizontal corrugated metal with aluminium flashing, corten steel accents, cement board, and architectural formed concrete to emphasize different aspects of the building. Corten steel is used as distinctive detailing around the windows as well as a decorative treatment to accentuate the commercial and residential entryways at street level.

In the previous proposal that was considered by Council in April 2018 (attached), staff expressed some concerns primarily related to the siting of a six-storey building on a 556m<sup>2</sup> lot. In response to staff's original concerns and accommodating the programming needs of the John Howard Society, the applicant has made some positive refinements to the overall design of the building. These refinements include:

- creating a distinctive and articulated street façade
- adding east facing rooftop patios on the second and sixth floors, which has resulted in improvements to the building articulation and reductions in the overall building mass
- improving the pattern of windows as well as the relationship between solids and voids
- modifying the application of exterior finishes and reducing the amount of corrugated metal, which has softened the overall appearance of the building.

### **Downtown Core Area Plan**

The subject property is within the Rock Bay District (RBD) of the *Downtown Core Area Plan* (DCAP, 2011). Within the RBD, the Plan encourages mixed-use development primarily between Douglas Street and Blanshard Street and emphasizes the importance of locating, designing and siting residential development in such a way that mitigates any potentially

negative effects on the general operation and function of adjacent employment activities. The applicant is proposing to locate the residential uses on the fourth to sixth floors in order to avoid conflicts between uses in the proposed building and also at grade, and mitigate privacy and noise impacts that may be generated from the adjacent properties that are currently occupied by two-storey warehouse buildings, which include caretaker suites as well.

The mid-rise building form complies with the design guidelines embedded in the DCAP, which is discussed above.

## **Tree Preservation Bylaw and Urban Forest Master Plan**

No existing public or private trees will be impacted by this proposal. Even though the applicant's proposal to plant two new street trees along the frontage of the building is supportable, there are some space limitations as well as an existing underground utility, which may restrict planting along this frontage. Parks will work with the applicant prior to the proposal advancing to a Public Hearing to determine if street trees can be achieved as part of this project. There will be ongoing operational impacts with additional street trees.

## **Regulatory Considerations**

### Vehicle Parking Variance

The applicant is proposing to reduce the required number of residential parking spaces from 14 to 0; commercial parking spaces from 17 to 8; and visitor parking spaces from 3 to 0. The John Howard Society has provided a parking analysis (attached) summarizing the anticipated parking demand on-site relative to their other buildings in the city.

For various reasons outlined in the parking analysis, vehicle ownership is generally very low among the residents and clients supported by the John Howard Society. The Society has three other residential buildings in the City with a total of 30 residents, of which only four residents have access to or own vehicles. The predominant mode of transportation is public transit, and the Society provides free bus tickets for residents. According to the Society, the majority of their residents work in commercial construction in the downtown core.

Currently up to eight employees of the John Howard Society drive to work. Due to staggered work schedules to ensure the building has on-site support services 24 hours a day and seven days a week, there would be no more than three or four employees driving to work at a time and occupying the parking spaces. The Society's other employees walk or take public transit to work.

Given the low vehicle ownership among residents, the provision of free bus tickets, the staggered employee work schedules, and the subject property's close proximity to a frequent transit network as well as within walking distance to the downtown core, staff support the requested parking variances.

### Bicycle Parking Variances

The applicant is proposing to reduce the required number of long-term residential bicycle parking spaces from 28 to 7; and short-term residential bicycle parking spaces from six to nil. In a letter provided by the John Howard Society (attached), it states that for various reasons there is little bicycle ownership among the tenants. On average, they have less than two client bikes on-site and generally one communal bike for residents to share. At the Society's other locations, the communal bikes have not been used so far in the 2020

calendar year. The applicant is proposing to provide long-term and short-term bicycle parking spaces for the commercial uses in order to encourage employees to bike to work and ensure bicycle parking is available to commercial patrons when visiting the coffee shop.

### **Other Considerations**

The Advisory Design Panel (ADP) reviewed the Development Permit with Variance Application at their meeting on May 27, 2020 and provided the following recommendation for Council's consideration:

*“That the Development Permit with Variance Application No. 00602 for 736 Princess Avenue be approved as presented with consideration for the following comments:*

- *Consideration of revisions to the accessible North West corner suite*
- *Concern of introduction of residential units into an M1 Zone in terms of use and site planning.”*

In response to ADP's comments above, the applicant adjusted the layout of the accessible dwelling units in order to enhance the liveability of these units and as a result of these changes, the applicant was able to increase the number of accessible dwelling units from three to five.

The introduction of residential units in this neighbourhood designated Core Employment in the OCP is consistent with the land use policies, as the residential use is being provided in conjunction with substantial employment space and designed to mitigate any potential conflicts between uses in the building or impacts on the adjacent properties.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The proposed six-story, mixed-use building is consistent with several urban design objectives and guidelines outlined in DPA 7A. The applicant is introducing a building with residential uses in a neighbourhood that is predominantly service commercial; however, through a variety of design interventions the proposed building would fit in with the existing neighbourhood context. The proposal requires 34 parking spaces and the applicant is only providing eight parking spaces. The applicant has demonstrated in their parking analysis that there would likely be sufficient parking on-site based on the anticipated demand from the proposed uses. The applicant has also demonstrated that the proposed bike parking would meet or potentially exceed the bicycle parking demand generated by the employees and residents. Staff recommend that this application proceed concurrently with the Rezoning Application for Council's further consideration.

### **ALTERNATE MOTION**

That Council decline Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00065 for the property located at 736 Princess Avenue.

Respectfully submitted,



Leanne Taylor  
Senior Planner  
Development Services Division



Karen Hoese, Director  
Sustainable Planning and Community  
Development Department

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:



Date: June 25, 2020

#### List of Attachments

- Attachment A: Subject Map
- Attachment B: Aerial Map
- Attachment C: Revised Plans date stamped June 18, 2020
- Attachment D: Letter from applicant to Mayor and Council dated March 10, 2020
- Attachment E: Letter from applicant to Mayor and Council regarding social enterprise dated March 12, 2020
- Attachment F: Letter from applicant to Mayor and Council dated March 12, 2020
- Attachment G: Letter from applicant dated June 23, 2020
- Attachment H: Parking Analysis dated June 11, 2020 and letter from the Community Social Planning Council
- Attachment I: Advisory Design Panel report, dated May 20, 2020
- Attachment J: Advisory Design Panel minutes, dated May 27, 2020
- Attachment K: Original Plans dated November 23, 2017.