



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

To: Advisory Design Panel **Date:** November 10, 2020
From: Charlotte Wain, Senior Planner - Urban Design
Subject: **Development Permit with Variance Application No. 000543 for 975 and 983 Pandora Avenue (1468 Vancouver Street)**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Advisory Design Panel (ADP) is requested to review a Development Permit with Variance Application for 975 and 983 Pandora Avenue and provide advice to Council.

The proposal is to construct a 16-storey, mixed-use building with ground-floor retail and residential above, including approximately 121 dwelling units. The overall proposed density is 5.46:1 floor space ratio (FSR). A variance related to height is proposed as part of the application.

Staff consider that the proposal is generally consistent with the use, density and height envisioned in the *Official Community Plan* and *Downtown Core Area Plan*.

The proposal is generally consistent with the applicable Design Guidelines outlined in Development Permit Area 3 (HC), Core Mixed Use Residential, although some deviations from the guidelines are being proposed. Staff are looking for commentary from the ADP with regard to:

- built form and massing
- building separation distances
- relationship to the street
- amenity areas
- architectural expression
- 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. Dave English
Townline

Architect: Mr. Foad Rafii AIBC
Raffi Architects Inc.

Development Permit Area: Development Permit Area 3 (HC), Core Mixed Use Residential
Heritage Status: N/A

Description of Proposal

The proposal is to construct a high-rise mixed-use building at approximately 16 storeys with one commercial unit on the ground floor and approximately 121 residential units above. The proposed density of the development is 5.46:1 FSR. The proposed height is approximately 47.68m.

The proposal includes the following major design components:

- 121 multiple dwelling units, including one-bedroom and two-bedroom units as well as three, four and five-bedroom co-living suites
- one commercial unit fronting Pandora Avenue
- one music room facing Pandora Avenue
- gated breezeway accessed off Pandora Avenue, leading to a residential amenity area courtyard
- three levels of underground parking accessed off Pandora Avenue
- the main residential building lobby entrance on Vancouver Street
- double height gym on level two
- indoor and outdoor amenity area on level four
- publicly accessible short-term bike parking located near the residential entrance on Vancouver Street, the commercial entrance on Pandora Avenue and the breezeway
- secure long-term bike parking located on parking level 1
- vehicle parking and servicing located within the building
- public realm streetscape improvements on Pandora Avenue and Vancouver Street.

The following data table compares the proposal with the existing CA-43 Zone, Pandora Harris Green District. An asterisk is used to identify where the proposal is less stringent than the existing zone. Additionally, the key City policy that pertains to the area has been included in this table. Variances related to parking have been identified in the data table but these are anticipated to be corrected as the application progresses.

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	Zone Standard CA-43	OCP Policy	DCAP
Site area (m ²) – minimum	2043.80	N/A	-	-
Density (Floor Space Ratio) – maximum	5.46:1	2:1	-	5.5:1
Total floor area (m ²) – maximum	11,155.88	4087.60	-	-
Height (m) – maximum	47.68*	15.50	-	45
Storeys – maximum	16*	N/A	20	15 (residential) 11 (commercial)

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	Zone Standard CA-43	OCP Policy	DCAP
Site coverage (%) – maximum	65	N/A	-	-
Open site space (%) – minimum	35	N/A	-	-
Setbacks (m) – minimum				
Front (Pandora Ave)	1.5 (building) 0.0 (canopy)	3.0	-	0 to 3
Rear (S)	3.5	0.0		See Building Separation Guidelines
Side (W)	0.0	0.0		See Building Separation Guidelines
Flanking Street (Vancouver Street)	1.5 (building) 0.0 (canopy)	3.0		0 to 3
Vehicle parking residential – minimum	102	101*	-	-
Vehicle parking residential visitor - minimum	12	12	-	-
Vehicle parking commercial – minimum	4	5*	-	-
Bicycle parking stalls – minimum				
Short Term	16	14	-	-
Long Term	240	147	-	-

Sustainability Features

As noted in the applicant's letter dated October 6, 2020, all common areas will be lit with LED lighting and controlled with occupancy sensors.

Consistency with Policies and Design Guidelines

Official Community Plan

The subject site is designated Core Residential in the *Official Community Plan (OCP, 2012)*,

which envisions multi-unit residential, commercial and mixed-use buildings from three storeys up to approximately 20 storeys. In terms of place character features, the OCP envisions three to five-storey building façades that define the street wall, with upper storeys set back above.

The main objectives of the Development Permit Area 3 (HC): Core Mixed-Use Residential that are relevant to this proposal are:

- to transform the function, form and character of the Core Residential area through mid-to-high rise residential mixed-use and commercial buildings, with greatest heights along Yates and Blanshard Street
- to conserve heritage value, special character and the significant historic buildings, features and characteristics of this area
- to enhance the area through a high quality of architecture, landscape and urban design that reflects the function of a major residential centre on the edge of a central business district in scale, massing and character while responding to its context of a skyline with prominent heritage landmark buildings.

Staff consider that the proposal is generally consistent with the use, density and height envisioned in the OCP.

Downtown Core Area Plan

The subject site is designated Residential Mixed-Use District in the *Downtown Core Area Plan* (DCAP, 2011), which envisions multi-residential development up to a height of 45m. The base density for a mixed-use development is a floor space ratio of 3:1 and a maximum of 5.5:1.

Staff consider that the proposal is generally consistent with the use, density and height envisioned in the DCAP.

Development Permit Area Design Guidelines

The property is situated in Development Permit Area 3 (HC): Core Mixed-Use Residential and the following documents were considered in assessing this application:

- *Official Community Plan* (OCP, 2012)
- *Downtown Core Area Plan* (2011)
- *Advisory Design Guidelines for Buildings, Signs and Awnings* (2006)
- *Guidelines for Fences, Gates and Shutters* (2010).

The Design Guidelines in the DCAP encourage multi-unit residential development appropriate to the context of the neighbourhood and reflects the differences in allowable building heights and densities. Staff consider that the proposal is generally consistent with the 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 is being asked to comment on the impacts and potential design solutions regarding built form massing, separation distances, relationship to the street, functionality of amenity areas and material selection.

Built Form Massing

DCAP includes a number of design guidelines related to built form which includes reducing the building bulk of upper storeys to minimize the effects of shading, wind vortices, to maintain views to the open sky and to avoid the presence of bulky upper building mass. Residential floorplates are approximately 76m² above the recommended maximum 650m² for levels 11 to 13. In addition, levels 12 and 13 encroach into the 1:5 building setback ratio on Vancouver Street. ADP is invited to comment on the overall built form and massing, and the inconsistencies with the guidelines.

Building Separation Distances

To address privacy issues and open-up views between buildings, the street wall guidelines in the DCAP require a 3m side and rear yard setback to the exterior wall for portions of the building up to 30m in height (excluding the podium) and a 6m side yard setback for portions of the building above 30m (levels 11 – 15). For balconies, the setback should be 3.5m up to 30m and 5.5m above 30m. Although the proposal is technically within these requirements (balconies are 5.75m and the building face is 6.13m from the south property line), the proximity to the development currently under construction to the south creates a tight interface with facing balconies only 11.5m from each other. The guidelines state that additional clearances for windows are encouraged to enhance livability for residential uses where feasible. In addition, DCAP is currently being updated with a view to increasing the minimum distances between towers. Staff are of the opinion that enhanced separation to the south would provide greater breathing room between the two developments. ADP is requested on the separation distances and whether further setbacks are warranted.

Relationship to the Street

As outlined in the Design Guidelines, new buildings should be designed to relate well to public streets and sidewalks. Buildings should also have quality architectural materials and detailing in building bases and street walls. A significant portion of the Pandora Avenue frontage contains gates or fences, which restricts the amount of active edge along the street. There is limited detail being provided for the enclosure around the pad mounted transformer and the overhead vehicle garage gates and staff have advised the applicant that a custom design for these features is warranted to ensure the extensive use of security fencing does not create a fortress like appearance. The remainder of the frontage contains a music room, a breezeway into the rear courtyard and commercial retail space. Staff have expressed concern that the breezeway may pose a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) challenge and the applicant has responded by the inclusion of a custom metal picket gate and removing vehicle access to this space. There are also doubts as to how well used the music room would be in contributing to an animated and pleasant streetscape for pedestrians.

The guidelines call for weather protection for pedestrians and the proposal includes a double height canopy which the applicant states has been positioned to allow the expansion of the commercial opportunities to the streetscape. Although the finished appearance does create a cleaner aesthetic, the canopy may not function as well as intended.

ADP is invited to comment on the overall design of the ground floor along Pandora Avenue as it relates to the creation of a positive pedestrian experience, recognizing that further detail may be warranted.

Amenity Areas

The guidelines encourage the provision of on-site open space such as courtyards, forecourts, plazas, patios, gardens, roof top patios/gardens for high density residential buildings, and that these are well-designed, safe, active, visible and illuminated to encourage their use. The proposal includes a diverse range of amenity areas located throughout the building including a music room, bike lounge and exterior courtyard on level 1, a double height gym on level 2 and an indoor and outdoor amenity area on level four. Although these are always encouraged for residential developments, staff question the functionality of the 12m² bike room and whether the music room will provide the animation of the street frontage intended by the proponent. ADP is invited to comment on these elements of the proposal.

Architectural Expression

The design guidelines encourage high quality architecture and diversity in the design of buildings to ensure excellence in building types and design. As part of this, high quality finishing materials with detailed architectural quality is encouraged. Overall, staff are supportive of the proposed architectural expression and are of the opinion that overall the building composition has been well articulated. However, there are some inconsistencies between the 3D renders and the architectural elevations, which creates a misleading representation of the proposed finishes. White cementitious panels are intended to be used for a large portion of the south elevation and upper portions of the building (this is represented as a smooth finish with no reveals on the rendered images). Given the generous use of this material, staff question whether this meets the intent of the Design Guidelines for creating design excellence in the downtown and ADP is requested to provide their comment on this aspect of the proposal.

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. 000543 for 975 and 983 Pandora Avenue be approved as presented.

Option Two

That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit Application No. 000543 for 975 and 983 Pandora Avenue be approved with the following changes:

- as listed by the ADP.

Option Three

That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit Application No. 000543 for 975 and 983 Pandora Avenue 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 October 7, 2020
- Applicant's letter dated October 7, 2020.

cc: Dave English, Townline, Applicant; Foad Rafii, Rafii Architects Inc, Architect.