



Advisory Design Panel Report

For the Meeting of December 16, 2020

To: Advisory Design Panel **Date:** December 2, 2020
From: Charlotte Wain, Senior Planner - Urban Design
Subject: **Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00150 and Rezoning Application No. 00730 for 903, 911 & 1045 Yates Street, 910 View Street and 1205 & 1209 Quadra Street**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Advisory Design Panel (ADP) is requested to review a Development Permit Application for 1045 Yates Street and provide advice to Council.

The Development Permit Application is for a mixed-use building containing commercial, daycare and approximately 510 residential units in a podium form with two towers at 20 and 22 storeys. The Rezoning Application for the site would allow for the massing and density of three additional tower and podium building arrangements. The proposal requires Rezoning Application to increase the density as well as an Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment for the site specific design guidelines for the property.

Although the proposal does exceed the density prescribed in the OCP, the Development Permit application is generally consistent with the OCP's strategic objectives regarding the provision of innovative and affordable housing as well as a mix of residential opportunities to accommodate a significant share of the forecasted population growth in the City. The proposed built form and character are also generally consistent with the design guidelines.

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

- comments on the Urban Design Manual with specific attention to the design objectives related to shading of the public realm, breaking up the massing and bulkiness of buildings and maximizing privacy and livability
- the overall massing and distribution of density in terms of access to light, liveability, and building separation distances
- the pedestrian experience along all three streets at the perimeter of the subject properties
- building setback and street trees.

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. Deane Strongitharm Cityspaces
Architect:	Mr. Gwyn Vose AIBC IBI Group Inc.
Development Permit Area:	Development Permit Area 3, Core Mixed-Use Residential
Heritage Status:	N/A

Description of Proposal

The proposal includes three phases, each with a tower and podium building form ranging in height from 20 to 32 storeys. The Development Permit is for the first phase on the 1000 block of Yates Street and includes commercial, daycare and market-rental housing for approximately 510 residential units with proposed towers at 20 and 22 storeys. The Rezoning Application includes the remaining two phases across the entire 900 block of Yates Street with towers at 27, 28 and 32-storeys with the podium defining a central public plaza. Approximately 1000 additional residential units would be provided for phases two and three.

The applicant has prepared the proposed *Harris Green Village Urban Design Manual* to guide the development and decisions on Development Permit Applications for all development phases. An OCP amendment is required to reference these Guidelines in the Core Mixed-Use Residential Development Permit Area which covers the site.

The Development Permit Application includes the following major design components:

- a mixed use building with a six-storey podium (including the mezzanine level) and two towers at 20 and 22 storeys
- purpose built market rental for approximately 510 residential units, including six townhouse units fronting View Street
- one major commercial retail unit with access off Yates Street, and four smaller retail units with entrances on Yates Street and Cook Street
- daycare use with private entrance off Yates Street and dedicated outdoor play area on level two
- separate residential lobbies for the two residential towers, located on Yates Street and Cook Street
- three levels of underground parking
- a setback from the podium of approximately 2.6m on Yates Street and 1.5m on Cook Street at the fifth level to define the street wall
- tower A (22 storeys) positioned approximately 5m from the podium edge on Yates Street and tower B (20 storeys) approximately 4m from the podium edge on Cook Street
- indoor amenity areas on level two including a gym, multi-purpose lounge, games room and co-working/study space
- outdoor amenity areas on the roof of the podium including table tennis, outdoor seating and BBQ areas.

Exterior building materials include:

- a combination of dark brick for the ground floor and light brick to define the upper storeys of the podium
- fritted glass panels for the private balconies on the podium
- metal panels for the top floor of the podium setback from the building façade
- aluminum window walls in gray spandrel for the tower
- aluminum guard rails with clear glass for the tower balconies
- painted concrete in dark gray for the west elevation.

Landscaping elements include:

- removal of five street trees on Yates Street and replacement with seven street trees with rain gardens, as well as a planting buffer on the west boundary between the subject property and the adjacent Regent Park residences
- removal of five street trees on View Street and replacement with six street trees and rain garden in the municipal boulevard and six trees within the private decks for the townhouse units
- retention of four mature horse chestnut trees on Cook Street
- planted buffer surrounding the outdoor daycare space on level two
- metal planters on the common and private decks within the courtyard of level two.

The Rezoning Application includes only the general massing and siting of potential future buildings around the central public plaza. However, given the deviations from the OCP, a set of design guidelines have been prepared to guide the Development Permit (DP) applications for each subsequent phase.

The following data table compares the proposed DP with the existing R-48 Zone, Harris Green District, the S-1 Zone, Limited Service District, as well as the Official Community Plan and Downtown Core Area Plan policies (both current and emerging guidelines currently underway). Where relevant, separate comparisons have been provided for the Development Permit for phase 1 (identified as “DP”) and the rezoning application for all phases combined (identified as “REZ”). An asterisk is used to identify where the proposal does not meet the standard of the existing zone.

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	R-48 Zone, Harris Green District	S-1 Zone, Limited Service District	OCP Policy	Downtown Core Area Plan (DCAP) Policy
Density (Floor Space Ratio) – max. DP	6:1	9.82	1.5	5.5	5.5
Density (Floor Space Ratio) – max. REZ	6:1	9.83	1.5	5.5	5.5
Height (m) – max. DP	72 *	30	15	-	45

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	R-48 Zone, Harris Green District	S-1 Zone, Limited Service District	OCP Policy	Downtown Core Area Plan (DCAP) Policy
Height (m) – max. REZ	90.5 *	30	15	-	50
Storeys – max. DP	22*	10	n/a	20	15
Storeys – max. REZ	32*	10	n/a	20	17
Street Wall Height – minimum and maximum					
Yates Street	18m*	-	-	3 – 5 storeys	15 – 20m
Cook Street	18m*	-	-	3 – 5 storeys	15 – 20m
View Street	18m*	-	-	3 – 5 storeys	10 – 15m
Setbacks (m) – min.					
Front (Yates Street)	1.5 (building) 0.0 (balconies)	0.0	0.0	-	0 – 3
Side – east (Cook Street)	2.0 (building) 0.56 (balconies)	0.0	0.0	-	3 (up to 30m) 6 (above 30m)
Side – west	0.0 (parkade) 4.5 (building)	0.0	3.0	-	3 (up to 30m) 6 (above 30m)
Rear (View Street)	3.0 (building) 1.56 (balconies)	0.0	0.0	-	0 – 3
Vehicle parking – min.	438	0	408	-	-
Visitor vehicle parking included in the overall units – min.	104	0	92	-	-
Bicycle parking stalls – min.					
Long Term	624	585	585	-	-
	Location*	Within 1 floor level of finished grade			
Short Term	30*	67	67	-	-
	Location*	Within 15m of public building entrance			

Sustainability Features

As part of the Rezoning Booklet, the applicant has identified the following high-level sustainability strategies for the entire project:

- transportation demand measures (TDM) including EV parking, parking for electric bikes, cargo bikes and carshare memberships – exact details to be confirmed
- landscape and stormwater management including rain gardens on Yates Street and View Street
- passive envelope strategies to reduce reliance on mechanical systems
- glazing percentage targeted at 50% window-wall area for the towers to minimize glazing heat loss and heat gain
- double pane low-e glazing with thermally broken frames
- glazing selected according to building orientation
- low energy lighting systems.

Consistency with Policies and Design Guidelines

Official Community Plan (OCP)

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 twenty 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 uses envisioned in the OCP. However, the proposal is not consistent with the maximum storeys and densities outlined for this designation. Maximum number of storeys prescribed in the OCP is 20 and the proposal is for 22 storeys for the development permit and 32 storeys for later phases. Densities outlined in the OCP range from 3:1 to 5.5:1 floor space ratio (FSR) and the proposal is for a density of 6:1 (FSR). Therefore, an OCP amendment is required.

Downtown Core Area Plan

With the exception of height and density, the proposal is generally consistent with the Downtown Core Area Plan, the key guidelines for the subject property. Maximum heights range from 45m to 50m in the DCAP and the proposal is for a maximum height of 72m for the

development permit and approximately 90m for later phases. However, the proposal is generally in accordance with a number of the guidelines used to evaluate street wall massing and building placement. DCAP is currently under review and although not yet approved by Council, the draft guidelines contain relevant policies that would apply to the proposed development. Aspects of the proposal not consistent with the current and emerging guidelines are discussed in more detail in subsequent sections.

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's commentary on any other aspects of the proposal is also welcome.

Proposed Design Guidelines

In support of the current proposal and future development of the site, the applicant has prepared a new set of urban design guidelines. The proposed Urban Design Manual (UDM) has been prepared by the applicant with commentary from City staff. If Council advances this Application to a Public Hearing, the OCP would need to be amended to reference the proposed UDM in Development Permit Area 3, Core Mixed-Use Residential.

The proposed UDM is largely based on the DCAP (both current and emerging) with an updated vision, guiding principles, overall design guidelines as well as guidelines specific to the development proposal. Given that the proposal will be realised in multiple phases, the design guidelines provide the assurances that the vision will be continued in subsequent development permit applications. The guidelines are comprehensive but have a simplified and user-friendly structure with a layout focused on illustrations, photos and graphics. The guidelines include clear statements on their purpose and how they are to be used and administered as well as a brief overview of phasing intent.

The UDM is being submitted concurrently with a Development Permit application for phase one, which provides a useful benchmark for applying the guidelines to a definitive project. However, the guidelines will set the tone for the future development of a significant portion of the Harris Green neighbourhood therefore careful attention should also be given to the implications for subsequent phases, where detailed design is still to come. The UDM would benefit from a review by the Advisory Design Panel before any consideration of the OCP amendment by Council. To assist the panel with the review of such a comprehensive and detailed document, staff are requesting the panel focus their attention towards three high level topic areas, and

provide commentary on whether the guidelines are successful in achieving the overall design objective. This is outlined briefly below.

Design objective: minimising shading on public spaces and achieving a human scaled built form

The UDM contains numerous guidelines that seek to preserve access to sunlight on public streets and plazas. This can be achieved in a number of ways, including built form, massing and tower placement. Similar to the emerging DCAP update, the guidelines encourage a perimeter block built form, with human-scaled podiums and well-spaced slender towers above. Although the proposal does exceed the height limits of the current DCAP, the proposed form does help to mitigate the negative impacts on the public realm. A series of relatively complex guidelines have been established to help assess the potential shading impact on the public realm, with minimum requirements for sunlight between certain hours. Staff have concerns regarding the standards being applied to the plaza in later phases, but overall the guidelines do provide the necessary tools for evaluating future applications on their relative success for achieving the design intent. ADP is invited to comment on the practicality of guidelines as they relate to reducing the shading on the public realm.

Design objective: breaking up the massing and bulkiness of buildings

In the same vein as achieving a human scaled built form noted above, buildings need to be well articulated to avoid a monotonous, overbearing and bulky appearance. The UDM does include a number of guidelines that will help to address this, and a great deal of effort has gone into providing an appropriate building height to street width ratio with cross sections related to specific street conditions. Although this will ensure an appropriate podium height is achieved, it doesn't address the length of potentially long facades. In the case of the DP, a significant break has been incorporated on the Yates Street façade to emphasize the entrance and avoid long uninterrupted building plane. However, there is no guarantee similar building articulation will be included in later phases. The applicant cites the need for architectural creativity as a reason for not providing a quantitative measurement to address long facades (e.g. facades greater than 40m in length). Staff would prefer to see further effort to ensure this design intent is achieved and suggest the following wording (taken from the draft DCAP update) is incorporated into the overall objectives of section 3.6.1. Architectural Expression:

"To support street vitality and safety through the creation of active streets through buildings that provide visual interest and diversity and respond to the façade patterning and proportions of the surrounding context."

Commentary from ADP is requested on whether the UDM provides adequate guidelines to address long uninterrupted facades and whether the suggested wording above is appropriate.

Design objective: maximizing privacy, livability and access to sunlight in buildings

Best practice design principles seek to preserve privacy to ensure that existing and future buildings are livable for residents. The current DCAP falls short in this regard with only minimal spacing required between taller buildings. The updated DCAP intends to rectify this by increasing the minimum building separation distances. The UDM has taken a similar approach and a number of guidelines aim to maintain the privacy and livability units through measures such as tower placement, orienting units in a north-south direction and landscaping screening. ADP is invited to comment on whether the design guidelines are successful in achieving privacy and livability for existing and future residents.

Massing and Distribution of Density

The overall density of the proposal is 6.1 Floor Space Ratio (FSR), which is greater than the 5.5 FSR envisioned in the OCP and DCAP for the area. However, the OCP notes that use, density and scale of buildings for an individual site will be based on site-specific evaluations of proposed developments in relation to all the relevant City policies. This includes the existing underlying zoning. As noted in the data table above, the existing zone for a portion of the lands permits densities up to 9.82:1 FSR, which brings the total blended density for phase one to 6.26:1 FSR.

The proposal includes densities and heights that exceed those recommended in the guidelines, therefore the ADP is asked to advise on the overall distribution of density in terms of access to light, liveability, street character and building separation distances. Although the proposal does exceed the heights prescribed in the DCAP and OCP, it should be noted that the DCAP review is considering increased heights to accommodate the envisaged slender built form.

The proposal is inconsistent with the guidelines as it relates to the 1:5 setback ratio for upper portions of the tower. However, in the development permit for phase one, the towers are setback from the podium edge: approximately 5m from Yates Street for Tower, approximately 4m for Tower B on Cook Street and approximately 5.8m for Tower B on View Street. In addition, the proposed floorplates do not exceed the maximum residential floorplate size of 650m². The Urban Design Manual accompanying the proposal includes policies stating that no further setbacks are required for portions of the building above 60m. Although a deviation from the current guidelines, staff are of the opinion that this is acceptable given the other policies related to site planning, tower placement, building massing and height contained in the document.

A summary of the key policies used to evaluate the overall distribution of density and massing include:

- ensuring buildings relate well to adjacent streets by maintaining a consistent street wall height and scale, providing generous sidewalk widths, stepping back building massing and by considering design elements such as recessed entries, small plazas, sidewalk dining areas and inset or chamfered building corners to provide visual articulation along street walls
- encouraging varied heights and massing to avoid uniformity in building design, to create a more diverse skyline, and to improve sunlight access into development blocks
- encouraging the use of terraced or stepped building forms to distinguish building podiums from upper storeys, minimize the effects of shading and wind, maintain views to the open sky, and avoid the visual presence of a bulky upper building mass
- providing a minimum of 12m of separation between buildings above 30m in height
- encouraging the location of buildings closer to the outside perimeter of the block to increase open space within the centre of the block for sunlight penetration and enhanced privacy.

Pedestrian Experience

The guidelines provide a number of policies relating to the pedestrian realm. Generally, these focus on the provision of a comfortable, safe and animated pedestrian area with wide sidewalks and a positive, engaging relationship with proposed adjacent buildings. Specifically, the guidelines categorize Yates Street and Cook Street as a “wide street” and View Street as a

“narrow street”. Each street type has specific policies to encourage positive building-to-street relationships. Since View Street is defined as a narrow street, the guidelines limit the primary building street wall height to 15m, and the proposal exceeds this by 3m. In addition, the emerging guidelines from the DCAP are shifting towards a proportional street width to façade height ratio, which would result in a maximum height of 10m for View Street. The intent of this criteria is to create an animated and interesting pedestrian area by breaking up the mass of the building and providing a human scale at the street level. Although the applicant has responded to staff comments and lowered the overall podium height by one storey on Yates and Cook Street, no further reduction has been included on View Street. Given the narrower street condition staff maintain the podium should be reduced by an additional storey, for a maximum height of 15m to comply with current guidelines. ADP is invited to comment on the overall scale and composition of the building base, with specific attention to the View Street frontage.

Sidewalk widths are also outlined in the guidelines for different street classifications, in addition to the promotion of multiple entrances and glazing to help activate the street wall. Sidewalk widths ranging between four and six metres are recommended for Yates Street, which is classified as a Primary Commercial Street. View Street is classified as a Local Street with recommended sidewalk widths between two and four metres. The proposal includes a 5.8m wide sidewalk along Yates Street and a 2m wide sidewalk along View Street. Cook Street is not classified under the DCAP but the proposal does seek to maintain the existing mature horse chestnut trees.

The guidelines encourage well designed and articulated building bases, especially on those facades that are adjacent to a street. Although recent revisions have led to a significant improvement in building articulation, the proposed elevation drawings for the development permit identify a number of exit doors and blank walls on Yates Street and Cook Street that appear unresolved and could benefit from further refinement. In addition, despite staff requests to consider reducing the width of the vehicle access on View Street, the current proposal has widened this by approximately 2m for a total width of 17m. This is considered a detriment to the overall pedestrian experience.

Additionally, the ADP is asked to advise on the overall pedestrian realm with respect to these Design Guideline policies and their intent around providing comfortable, safe and animated pedestrian areas.

Building Setback and Street Trees

Cook Street is identified as a commercial street in the DCAP. The general design criteria for these streets encourages a single row of trees on both sides of the right-of-way (ROW) to enhance the pedestrian realm. The canopy from the continuous row of mature horse chestnut trees along Cook Street is seen as a valuable asset to the overall pedestrian experience. The applicant has included a jog in the building plane along Cook Street in an effort to ensure successful retention of the street trees. However, a balcony has been added in the south east corner unit, contrary to previous advice and staff also have concerns that insufficient building and balcony setbacks have been provided along the northern portions of the Cook Street frontage with decks and balconies for levels 2-5 approximately 0.5m from the property line. Although these setbacks are technically within the DCAP guidelines, the proposal may impact the future growth of the trees and create potential maintenance issues. The close proximity of the balconies to the street trees may also pose a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) challenge and create security issues for these units. Commentary from ADP is requested on the appropriateness of the proposed building setbacks along Cook Street.

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. 00150 and Rezoning Application No. 00730 for 903, 911 & 1045 Yates Street, 910 View Street and 1205 & 1209 Quadra Street be approved as presented.

Option Two

That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00150 and Rezoning Application No. 00730 for 903, 911 & 1045 Yates Street, 910 View Street and 1205 & 1209 Quadra 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 Application No. 00150 and Rezoning Application No. 00730 for 903, 911 & 1045 Yates Street, 910 View Street and 1205 & 1209 Quadra 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
- Applicant's letter dated November 10, 2020
- ADP Booklet dated December 16, 2020

cc: Deane Strongitharm, Cityspaces, Applicant; Gwyn Vose AIBC, IBI Group Inc, Architect