



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

To: Advisory Design Panel **Date:** February 12, 2020
From: Charlotte Wain, Senior Planner - Urban Design
Subject: **Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00133 for 1124 Vancouver Street, 941 and 953 View Street**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Advisory Design Panel (ADP) is requested to review a Development Permit with Variances Application for 1124 Vancouver Street, 941 and 953 View Street and provide advice to Council.

The proposal is for a six storey purpose built rental building at a density of 3.39:1 floor space ratio (FSR) and a maximum height of 19.33m. Concurrent with the application is Rezoning Application No. 00718, which is required to increase the density and add multi-unit residential uses to portions of the property.

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 Advisory Design Panel is requested to provide commentary with regard to:

- built form, massing and building separation
- façade articulation and finishes
- the raised residential entrances and activation of the public realm
- 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. Jason Gordon and Mr. Donald Butt
J. Gordon Enterprises

Architect:	Mr. Sandro Mancini, MAIBC Ciccozzi Architecture
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 six-storey purpose built rental building with a total of 154 residential units. The proposed density of the development is 3.34:1 FSR. The proposed height is 19.49m.

The proposal includes the following major design components:

- 154 multiple dwelling units
- six storeys in a perimeter block configuration
- a residential lobby entrance accessed at the corner of View Street and Vancouver Street
- a residential amenity room located adjacent to the lobby
- seven street-facing garden level units accessed via raised terraces on View Street and Vancouver Street
- a private central courtyard with interior facing ground level patios for eight units
- a bike pavilion for 124 stalls located in the central courtyard with access to a planted roof deck
- vehicle parking for 26 stalls located underground and accessed off View Street.

Exterior building materials include:

- brick (coal creek, mutual materials) on the north, east and west facades
- architectural concrete for the building base
- glass guardrails for the ground level patios
- metal panels (black) for the architectural details on the brick facades, including windowsills, balcony railings, window shadings, entry canopies and garden unit gates and railings
- metal panels (dark grey) for the exit stair walls and elevator overrun
- metal panels (medium grey) for the interior courtyard and bike pavilion
- mesh screen for the bike storage openings
- river rock detail on the roof.

Landscape elements include:

- stacked bond paving, custom benches and boulders at the building entrance
- retention of three Horse Chestnut trees and grass boulevard on Vancouver Street
- removal of four street trees on View Street and replacement with four street trees as per City requirements
- four Magnolia trees around the building entrance at the corner of View and Vancouver Street
- eleven Dogwood trees and four Chinese Witch Hazel trees within the central courtyard

- rain garden along View Street
- urban agriculture garden on the bike pavilion roof
- various shrub and groundcover plants as detailed on the landscape planting plan.

The following data table compares the proposal with the existing R3-C-P Zone, Central Area Multiple Dwelling and Parking Lot District and R3-C-T Zone, Central Area Multiple Dwelling and Technology District (both of which reference the R-48 Harris Green District Zone), the S-1 Zone, Limited Service District. An asterisk is used to identify where the does not comply with the existing Zone. The key City policy that pertains to the area has been included in this table.

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	R-48 Zone, Harris Green District	S-1 Zone, Limited Service District	OCP Policy	DCAP Policy
Site area (m ²) – minimum	2023.5	n/a	n/a		
Density (Floor Space Ratio) – maximum	3.34:1*	n/a	1.5:1	3:1 base 5.5:1 max.	3:1 base 5.5:1 max.
Total floor area (m ²) – maximum	6763.5	n/a	3035.22		
Height (m) – maximum	19.49	27.0	15.0		45
Storeys – maximum	6	9	n/a	20	Approx. 17 residential / 13 commercial
Setbacks (m) – minimum					
Front (Vancouver St)	2.93*	3.5	0		0-3
Rear (W)	2.68*	0	3		3
Side (E) (View St)	2.82*	0	0		3
Side (S)	1.26* (building face)	0	0		3
All	0* (parkade)				
Vehicle parking – minimum	22*	82	82		

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	R-48 Zone, Harris Green District	S-1 Zone, Limited Service District	OCP Policy	DCAP Policy
Visitor vehicle parking – minimum	19 (inc. 3 MODO stalls & 1 accessible stall)	15	15		
Bicycle parking stalls – minimum					
Short term	16	15	15		
Long term	162	162	162		

Sustainability Features

The applicant has identified a minimum of 10 parking stalls with electric charging outlets and the provision of a boulevard rain garden on View Street as sustainability features.

Consistency with Policies and Design Guidelines

Official Community Plan

The *Official Community Plan* (OCP, 2012) designation for the site is Core Residential. This designation includes mixed-use buildings up to approximately 20 storeys with total floor space ratios ranging from a base of 3:1 to a maximum of 5.5:1 FSR. The OCP refers to the local area plan to provide finer grain policy and regulatory guidance in response to local context and development opportunity.

The subject property is located in Development Permit Area 3 (HC): Core Mixed-Use Residential. The objectives for this DPA are to transform the function, form and character of the Core Residential area through mid-to-high-rise residential mixed-use and commercial buildings, to conserve and enhance the heritage value and special character of this area, and to enhance the area through high quality 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. The proposal is consistent with the objectives of this designation.

Downtown Core Area Plan

The subject property is located within the Harris Green neighbourhood in the Residential Mixed-Use District (RMD) in the *Downtown Core Area Plan* (DCAP, 2011). District objectives include encouraging multi-unit residential development appropriate to the context and function of each neighbourhood, along with other land uses, public amenities and services that help to develop complete communities, and ensuring that new residential development includes active street-level businesses, where appropriate, to increase pedestrian activity within the public realm.

Overall, the proposal is generally consistent with the DCAP, the key guidelines for the subject property. Specifically, the proposal is in accord with a number of the guidelines used to evaluate density, massing, height and scale. However, the proposal is inconsistent with the building separation distances prescribed in the DCAP and these are discussed in more detail below.

Other design guidelines relevant for Development Permit Area 3 (HC): Core Mixed-Use Residential include:

- *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* (2005)
- *Advisory Design Guidelines for Buildings, Signs and Awnings* (2006)
- *Guidelines for Fences, Gates and Shutters* (2010).

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

The following section(s) 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.

Massing and Building Separation

The proposed density is 3.39:1 FSR, which is consistent with the OCP and DCAP. The proposed building height of 19.41m is modest when compared to the heights supported in the guidelines (45m). The result of a perimeter block form on these parcels has resulted in a building situated close to all property lines with reduced setbacks on all sides. The proposed setbacks to the interior property lines are:

- west: 2.68m
- south: 1.26m.

The guidelines require a minimum clearance of 3m from all side and rear property lines, with additional clearances (where feasible) to enhance livability for residential uses. The separation distances stated in the guidelines are minimal when compared to best practices elsewhere and are currently under review with the aim of increasing the minimum requirements. Staff have concerns with the south and west elevations, which have the potential to impact the livability of the units within the subject site and adjacent sites coming forward for redevelopment. An active application exists for the adjacent property to the west (937 View Street), which is also currently presented with minimal setbacks from the property line at 3.5m and full height windows for the living rooms. The package presented before ADP includes an image showing the interface between the subject site and 937 View Street to the west. Given the circumstance of these two sites redeveloping at a similar time, their development interface should coordinate with one another to mitigate impacts on livability. The applicant has responded to staff comments by orienting the north-west corner unit north and the south-west elevation south, with clerestory windows in living rooms. No setbacks have been increased and all other habitable rooms (living rooms and bedrooms) on these elevations have full height windows. ADP is invited to comment on the reduced building separation distances and impacts on the livability of residential units.

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 Vancouver 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 4.5m. The intent of this criteria is to create an animated and interesting pedestrian area by breaking up the mass of the building. Given the overall lower scale of the building, staff are of the opinion that this deviation from the guideline is acceptable, and that a setback on the sixth floor would undermine the intent of the design.

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 Vancouver Street, which is classified as an Avenue. View Street is classified as a Local Street with recommended sidewalk widths between two and four metres. The proposal includes a 3m wide sidewalk along Vancouver Street and a 2.8m wide sidewalk along View Street. Although this is substandard along Vancouver Street, the proposal does intend to retain the existing Horse Chestnut trees along this frontage, which will be of benefit to creating a positive pedestrian environment.

The guidelines encourage well design and articulated building bases, especially on those facades that are adjacent to a street. The proposal includes one level of underground parking that projects above grade on all elevations at the property line. Staff have raised concerns that this does not meet the intent of the guidelines and requested for the parkade to be lowered. The applicant has cited geotechnical challenges associated with the site as a reason for this not being a desirable option. Instead, the applicant has modified the garden level units by lowering the brick and concrete upstand and providing more glass guardrail, which helps provide a visual link between the sidewalk and the private patio. Planting has been included to soften the interface between the building and the street edge.

Another aspect of the design that impacts the pedestrian experience is the staging area for waste collection. City standards require these to be located on private property and this is usually adjacent to the parking ramp. The proposed design has located this in front of the window of the indoor amenity room, which has resulted in the loss of a landscaped area (including one tree) from previous designs. Although only temporary, this is not a desirable solution and would do little to add to the pedestrian experience along View Street.

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

Façade Articulation and Finishes

The *Advisory Design Guidelines for Buildings, Signs and Awnings* provide guidance on the importance of exterior cladding including texture and colour, fenestration and the arrangement of solids and voids and detailing of decorative finish to help establish the design's character, longevity and compatibility with its surroundings. In addition, DCAP highlights the importance of supporting context-sensitive developments that complement the existing Downtown Core Area through siting, orientation, massing, height, setbacks, materials and landscaping.

The predominant material cladding for the proposed building is brick (by mutual materials in coal creek colour). The precedent images supporting the material board indicate a contemporary brick with variations in texture and colour. The repetitive façade includes details such as vertical brick shoulder course, punched windows and black metal details including a metal cornice, sills, sunshades and pickets for the Juliette balconies. This detail has been continued around both wings on the south elevation. Light metal panels have been incorporated on the exit stair walls and elevator overrun, as well as the interior courtyard and bike pavilion. The architectural concrete base provides a contemporary contrast to the brick used on upper floors. The neighbourhood context is varied, with a mixture of red brick, stucco and glazed curtain wall buildings. The ADP is asked to provide commentary on the articulation and materials of the building façades, and the appropriateness to the context.

Landscape Plan/Open Space

The proposal includes a number of public realm improvements as detailed on the landscape plan, including new street trees and a rain garden along View Street and new paving and planting around the main entrance.

The proposal includes 154 residential units in a compact building form. Given the large footprint of the building, there are limited opportunities for private amenity space. The proposal does however include small patios for ground level units, communal benches and an urban agriculture garden on the roof of the bike pavilion. Two small urban agriculture plots have also been included in the courtyard. The bike pavilion does account for much of the courtyard space and if this were relocated underground it could potentially allow for a much more usable and programmable amenity space.

The respective policies used to evaluate open space are presented below:

- encourage on-site private and public development to increase the provision of green spaces, natural surfaces, plants and streetscaping
- consider the provision of on-site open space such as courtyards, forecourts, plazas, patios, gardens, roof top patios/gardens for high density residential and commercial buildings
- ensure that on-site open spaces are well-designed, safe, active, visible and illuminated to encourage their use
- encourage projects to incorporate opportunities for urban agriculture
- encourage residential dwelling units to have direct access or views of the on-site open space.

The ADP is asked to advise on the proposed green space and open space with respect to these Design Guideline policies.

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 Application No.00133 for 1124 Vancouver Street, 941 and 953 View Street be approved as presented.

Option Two

That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit Application No.00133 for 1124 Vancouver Street, 941 and 953 View 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.00133 for 1124 Vancouver Street, 941 and 953 View 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 14, 2020
- Applicant's letter dated November 7, 2019.

cc: Sandro Mancini; Ciccozzi Architecture Inc.