



Advisory Design Panel Report For the Meeting of February 24, 2021

To: Advisory Design Panel **Date:** February 10, 2021
From: Charlotte Wain, Senior Planner – Urban Design
Subject: **Development Permit with Variances No. 00051 for 937 View Street**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Advisory Design Panel (ADP) is requested to review a Development Permit Application for 937 View Street and provide advice to Council.

The purpose of this report is to present the ADP with information, analysis and recommendations regarding a Development Permit Application for the property located at 937 View Street. The proposal is to construct an 18 storey, mixed use building containing 267 residential units. Variances are currently proposed for height, number of storeys, parapet projection, front yard setback, and long-term bicycle storage.

The following policy documents were considered in assessing this Application:

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

Staff are looking for commentary from the ADP with regard to:

- built form and massing
- building separation distances
- relationship to the street
- architectural expression
- through-block walkway.

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

Project Details

Applicant: Mr. Charles Kierulf, AIBC MRAIC
de Hoog and Kierulf Architects

Architect: Mr. Charles Kierulf, AIBC MRAIC
de Hoog and Kierulf Architects

Development Permit Area: Development Permit Area 7B, Corridors Heritage

Heritage Status: N/A

Description of Proposal

The proposal is to construct an 18 storey, mixed use building containing approximately 267 residential units. The building has a Floor Space Ratio (FSR) of 7.95:1 and a maximum height of 55.90m.

The proposal includes the following major design components:

- 267 residential units
- 2 electric vehicle parking stalls on the main floor behind the residential units (accessed from the west side) – however these are non-compliant with the Zoning Regulation Bylaw and are therefore not included in the data table
- secure long-term bike parking for 282 bikes located on the main floor behind the residential units
- publicly accessible bike parking for 27 bikes located at the side of the building (accessed from the west side)
- shared rooftop terrace and amenity room located on the north side of the 18th floor.

Exterior building materials include:

- fiber cement panels in beige and grey
- decorative concrete wall for the ground floor east elevation
- exposed architectural concrete above the secured mechanical area on the north elevation
- Juliette balconies with painted metal guardrail
- glass guardrail with anodized aluminum caprail for the private decks on the 11th floor
- aluminium windows and doorframes
- wood doors for the ground level residential units
- coloured film tint window system for the main entrance
- prefinished metal flashing.

Landscaping elements include:

- large format plank paver (natural and charcoal) at building entrance
- concrete unit pavers on private residential patios and on main entrance
- permeable concrete unit pavers on the drive aisle (min. 30% of paved area)
- planter with metal screen and trellis along the west property boundary
- painted metal fence along the east boundary and around private ground-floor residential

patios

- cast in place concrete walls and planters
- removal of one existing boulevard tree and replacement with four new boulevard trees
- five trees on private property along the View Street frontage and five trees on private property along the eastern boundary
- rain garden areas within the municipal boulevard on View Street
- planting on the decks of the 2nd and 18th floor
- green roof on a portion of the roof on the 18th floor.

The following data table compares the proposal with the existing R-48 Zone, Harris Green District. An asterisk is used to identify where the proposal is less stringent than the existing Zone.

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	Zone Standard
Site area (m ²) - minimum	1572.30	N/A
Density (Floor Space Ratio) – maximum	7.95	N/A
Total floor area (m ²) – maximum	12,504.17	N/A
Height (m) - maximum	54.50 *	27.00
Height of mechanical (m)	55.90	N/A
Parapet projection (m) - maximum	0.95 *	0.60
Storeys - maximum	14 *	9
Site coverage % - maximum	80.00	N/A
Parking - minimum	0	N/A
Visitor parking (minimum) included in the overall units	0	N/A
Setbacks (m) - minimum		
Front Lot Line (north)	3.39 *	3.50
Rear (south)	0.00	N/A
Side (east)	3.33	N/A
Side (west)	8.10	N/A
Bicycle parking stalls (minimum)		
Long Term	282 *	297
Short Term	27	27

Sustainability Features

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

Consistency with 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 OCP identifies this property in Development Permit Area 7B (HC): Corridors Heritage. The objectives of this designation are:

- to revitalize arterial and secondary arterial streets to strengthen commercial viability and improve the pedestrian experience
- to conserve the heritage value, special character, features and characteristics of the area
- to achieve a more cohesive design and enhanced appearance through high quality architecture, landscape and urban design responsive to its historic context through sensitive and innovative interventions
- to encourage pedestrian and cycling use of corridors by enhancing the experience of pedestrians and cyclists through human-scaled urban design.

Staff consider that the proposal is generally consistent with the use and height envisioned in the OCP. However, the proposal does not meet the objectives of the Development Permit Area.

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 50m. The base density for residential 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 but exceeds the density and height envisioned in the DCAP. It should be noted that although the density is greater than those envisaged in the policy, the current R-48 zone does not prescribe a maximum density.

The property is situated within Development Permit Area 7B (HC): Corridors Heritage 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* (1981)
- *Guidelines for Fences, Gates and Shutters* (2010)
- *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*
- *City of Victoria Heritage Program Sign & Awning Guidelines* (1981).

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

The following sections identify and provide a brief analysis of the areas where the Panel is requested to provide commentary.

The issues associated with this project are:

- built form and massing
- building separation distances
- relationship to the street
- architectural expression
- through-block walkway.

ANALYSIS

Built Form and Massing

The DCAP contains policies for street wall heights and setbacks that pertain to the context of each street, with narrower streets requiring a shorter street wall. The intent of these guidelines is to:

- minimize the effects of shading and wind
- maintain views to the open sky
- avoid the visual presence of bulky upper building mass.

View Street is considered a narrow street and the guidelines require a primary street wall between 10m and 15m high and a one to five building setback ratio established at 15m above grade. The proposal does not have a well-defined podium which blends into the tower above, in part because of its uniform appearance. The lower portion of the building is over 18m high, which is over 3m above the maximum end of the scale in the guidelines. Although the applicant has aligned the height of the podium to the adjacent proposed development to the east (a proposed six storey residential building, currently under review by the City), staff are of the opinion that the podium as presented is too harsh. A shorter podium is warranted to provide a more appropriate response and human scale to the narrow condition of View Street.

The ADP is invited to comment on whether design revisions are warranted.

Building Separation Distances and Upper Storey Setbacks

To address privacy issues and open up views between buildings, the street wall guidelines in the DCAP require a 3m setback for portions of the building up to 30m and a 6m side yard setback for portions of the building above 30m (level 10 – 14). Where feasible, additional clearances for windows are encouraged to enhance livability for residential uses, and this is of particular importance on the east and south elevations with existing and proposed residential uses. The proposal has undergone numerous design iterations and although the current version is more consistent with the guidelines, it still does not meet the minimum 6m setbacks on the side and rear. An increase of approximately 1.5m on the east, 1m on the west and 2m on the rear for portions of the building above 30m is required. Notwithstanding these adjustments, the current attempt to respond to the guidelines is resulting in a form that lacks

refinement. Staff have suggested that removing the four corner units from levels 1 – 10 would provide a simpler form with more breathing room within the site.

The ADP is invited to comment on the impacts on adjacent properties and whether design revisions are warranted.

Relationship to Public Street and Sidewalk

The design and materials of the entrance vestibule may not relate well to the public street and sidewalk as required in the guidelines. The double height entrance is narrow (approximately 2.8m) and consists predominantly of dark grey fiber cement panels, which may not be the most durable finish for such a high traffic area. Additionally, the proposal does not provide continuous shelter from the rain with elements such as awnings, canopies and projections.

The ADP is invited to comment on the relationship to the street and any opportunity areas for improvement.

Building Articulation

DCAP addresses the importance of the design of “base, body and top” in relation to taller buildings. The proposal has not attempted to address this in the current design, instead opting for a uniform appearance throughout the entire front façade, with no distinction between the building base and upper portions of the tower. The applicant cites the proposed modular construction method as being the primary reason for the homogeneous aesthetic. However, the lack of variety in fenestration pattern, materials, colour, texture and overall architectural expression has resulted in a stark appearance that does not enhance the appearance of the neighborhood through high quality architecture, landscape and urban design as required by the guidelines. ADP is invited to comment on the overall architectural expression and building articulation.

Through-Block Walkway

The subject site is located within the Priority Through-Block Walkway Area identified in the Downtown Core Area Plan (DCAP). In these areas, the guidelines encourage the consideration to redesign and replace key pedestrian connections with new through-block walkways, which should be a minimum of 5m in width. The proposal includes improvements to the parking access (7m wide) on the west side of the property, although there is no separately defined walkway. An approval was granted in 2020 for the adjacent property to the south at 930 Fort Street which also does not provide a connection through to Fort Street. However, there is no guarantee that the adjacent development will be realized, therefore the ADP is invited to comment on the potential for a through block walkway and whether design revisions are warranted.

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. 00051 for 937 View Street be approved as presented.

Option Two

That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00051 for 937 View Street be approved as presented.be approved with the following changes:

- as listed by the ADP.

Option Three

That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to staff that Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00051 for 937 View Street be approved as presented 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 date stamped August 12, 2020
- Plans date stamped August 17, 2020

cc: Mr. Charles Kierulf, AIBC MRAIC, de Hoog and Kierulf Architects