

NORTH PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC) Meeting June 7, 2017

Present:

Board members: Pam Hartling, Christopher Fleming, Penny Bond,

Members: Michael Rowe, Lori Nielson, Anne Moon, Stacey Ness, Anthony Colyn, Julie Poskitt, Gillian Hurwood (Girl Guide House), Jim Harlick (represented by proxy Steve Blumberg)

Guests: Curtis Knichel, Tommy Ngo, Jim Aalders (HDR CEI Architecture); Carly Abrahams, Biki Kang (Kang & Gill Construction); Rajinder Sahota (Method Built Homes); Kevin DeCoste, Lucy Poskitt, Michele Blumberg, Steve Blumberg, Helene Beaudvin, Holly Rockery, Nona Dyck

Call to Order: Christopher Fleming, NPNA CALUC Co-chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Process:

This meeting will present two land use proposals, with one hour allotted to each. The developer will present the proposal, then the floor will be open for questions and discussion. The NPNA secretary will record the minutes of the meeting. After the conclusion of the meeting, NPNA's Land Use Committee will write a separate letter to the City for each proposal reporting on decisions and recommendations from the meeting; the minutes will accompany this letter. The NPNA letters and minutes will be sent to all NPNA members and to those who were guests at the meeting.

Based on the conclusions from the meeting, the developer would send modified plans to the City.

Individuals who have particular opinions about the development proposal may send their own letters to the City.

A. Proposal:

**926 - 932 Pandora Ave. — Kang & Gill Construction;
HDR CEI Architecture Associates**

1. Presentation

- The Pandora Ave. side of the proposal is for the maximum height permitted by the Official Community Plan (OCP):
 - 30 m. on Pandora Ave. (10 storeys); 20 m. on Mason St. (six storeys)
- Current zoning is CA-1 (up to 15.5 m. or 5 storeys); OCP supports up to 10 storeys. This development, as planned, would create a site specific zone.
- There are 147 units: studio; several versions of 1-bedroom; 2-bedroom; and 3-bedroom to level 8.
- Level 9 has a common rooftop garden.

- Levels 9 and 10 have the larger suites.
- Floor to space ratio (FSR) is 4.78
- There will be maintenance of good light and view for everybody.
- Plan includes better street right of way on Mason St.
- Five townhouses on Mason St. respond to same landscape as existing houses on the north side of the street. Townhouses are two storeys with patio and second floor balcony.
- Building mass is broken up into three components of differing configuration.
- There is a strict set of rules. The developer is working with City Planning.
- Building is L-shaped with a courtyard on Mason St., heights stepping back from six to 10 storeys from Mason towards Pandora.
 - Main entrance on Mason St. has landscaping, courtyard.
 - Secondary access to entry lobby by exterior walkway from Pandora Ave.
 - Common amenity room for all tenants adjacent to entry lobby.
- Bylaw dictates that traffic access and egress must be on the less busy street, which is Mason St.
- Underground parking is on two levels with 81 residential stalls; seven commercial.
- First floor is commercial space.
- Coloured glass on outer aspect of west side stairwell echoes stained glass in the many churches in the area.
- There will be a direct access point to the Pandora bike lane.

2. Q&A

Q: Is the building all strata?

A: Yes.

Q: Does it include low cost accommodation?

A: Not at this point.

Q: Shadowing of Mason St. is a concern. How much shadow will fall on the north side of the street?

A: A shadow study was done and will be made available.

Q: The building is “monstrously tall”. It will negatively affect quality of life of the houses on Mason St. Shadow, noise, night-time deliveries are great concerns.

A: Commercial loading zone, including garbage collection, is in place on Pandora. The plan is to maintain a quiet, pleasant atmosphere.

Q: Traffic flow is a major concern in the vicinity of St. John’s Church. There is a fear of being clogged with cars. Additionally, access off Mason St. removes the “eyes on

the street” on the Pandora side, which is a sociological concern. People who live in the building should have a connection to Pandora Ave.

A: Commercial activity all day, and the height of the units will provide eyes on the street. People who live or do business in the building are more likely to travel southward towards Pandora and downtown, rather than away from Pandora.

Q: Drug activity nearby is a concern.

A: The building is solidly commercial on ground level, which should prevent activity from sprawling across Pandora. Our Place is good about engaging and working with the developers.

Q: What impact will the building have on the neighbourhood during construction, in terms of noise, dust, etc? This already is a problem with current construction in the next block.

A: The developers are doing their best to control this aspect of construction. They will try to keep the bulk of the work towards Pandora, not Mason. Due to many factors, it is hard to know when construction will start. The proposal requires full re-zoning, requiring public hearing, so it may take some time for approval of the project.

Q: Does it have to be built to the maximum height?

A: Zoning is in place but looking at the OCP, development is supported for up to 10 storeys. Looking at the long-term vision, there likely will be further development with maximum allowable height all along this block of Pandora. The developer is trying to be sensitive to Mason St. by stepping the height. They will do shadow studies of both the current and proposed heights.

Comment: Victoria Conservatory of Music (VCM) is appreciative of developers looking to improve the neighbourhood. VCM is supportive of these plans.

Q: What materials will be used?

A: Glass, brick on lower floors, south-facing metal screens, wood soffit (overhang). There is an effort to complement the VCM stone.

Q: What will be the impact on the street itself on the Mason St. side?

A: No changes at the stop signs. The street will be widened. There is no talk of changing the parking limits.

B. Proposal

953 Balmoral Rd. — Method Built Homes

This proposal originally was presented to NPNA on July 28, 2016.

1. Original Proposal:

- The property at 953 Balmoral currently is a 7,200 sq.ft empty lot.
- Zoning is R2 (duplex). The developer is seeking zoning change to R3 (multiple dwelling).
- The proposal is for a purpose-built rental building with six storeys.
 - The building itself takes up one-third of the site.
 - There are 17 units — six one-bedroom, 10 two-bedroom, one three-bedroom.
 - There are five vehicle parking stalls.
 - Each residential unit has storage for two bicycles.
 - There is one parking stall for a Modo car share vehicle, located at the front of the building. Each residential unit would have, in perpetuity, a Modo membership acquired by the developer.
- Affordability is directly relational to amenities.
 - This building offers Modo car share, bike stalls, proximity to downtown, green roof.

2. Possible Revision:

Since originally proposal last year, which was not supported due to height and limited number of parking stalls, the market has changed and it is more feasible now to revise to a four storey plan.

3. Q & A:

Q: What is the building's relationship to Pacifica Housing?

A: The developer is on the board of Pacifica Housing. Pacifica interest in another Method Built project on North Park St. fell through.

Q: What is the size of the one-bedroom suites?

A: 500 - 600 sq.ft.

Q: Is this the same as last year's proposal?

A: Yes, but market rents change all the time and a subsequent change has made reducing height to four storeys more feasible.

Q: If the height is reduced to four storeys will the building cover more land?

A: No, the number of units would be reduced with no change in the footprint.

Q: There is a lack of space between the back of the building, where the parking is situated, and the neighbouring house on Mason St. This causes a privacy issue. Could there be a green wall to visually separate the two properties?

A: As information, the similar North Park St. building has been rented since January 2017 and not many tenants need or use the parking. However, the city insists on a certain number of stalls.

The OCP guidelines mean that there will be density. The plan has tried to maintain as much set-back as possible. The units are stepped back from the decks and would not permit vision into neighbours' homes. The decks themselves are small and more for air circulation than occupation.

Q: Can LEED standards be looked at as a possibility?

A: What LEED offered as progressive in 2012 has been incorporated into the building code. About two-thirds of LEED standards now are in the building code. Further such progress is happening.

Comment: A neighbour who opposed the original proposal would be happy with the four storey option.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Recorder: Penny Bond, NPNA Secretary

Record of the North Park Land Use Committee Public Meeting
August 15, 2017

Raj Sahota, on August 15th, 2017, presented Method Built Homes' four-storey revision of their proposal for 953 Balmoral Rd. A similar six-storey proposal by Method Built Homes was presented to the North Park community in June 2017, but since the application submitted to the City of Victoria was a four-storey building, a second community meeting was held.

There was not a lot of concern with the building specifically, other than a comment that exterior of the building should be of good quality; the discussion largely focussed on the grounds surrounding the building. It was proposed that any hard surface that surrounds the building should be permeable, which Mr. Sahota was supportive of. There were questions as to whether five parking stalls would be sufficient for the building, to which Raj stated that the target demographic for the units would be carless, either utilizing the Modo ride sharing stall or the ample bike stalls in the building.

There were several questions about the landscape design of the proposal, to which Raj stated that the landscape designs had not be finalized yet, but there would be a landscape company maintaining the property. There was support for a green wall along the permeable hard surfaces to shield the adjacent properties from the parking area as well as a wish to retain a line of trees along the back property line. There was also concern about the root system of a chestnut tree that may or may not be a part of the back of the 953 Balmoral property. In addition, due to a lot of trespassing taking place in the neighbourhood, there was a request that any fence, as a part of the green wall, not be climbable.

Raj anticipated that the build time would be roughly 18 months, and that the property during construction would be monitored by video but would not be patrolled. It was estimated that the rents for the one-bedroom would be \$1,200 a month and the two-bedroom was estimated to \$1,525, although the rents would depend on the market at the time of rental.



Chris Fleming
Co-Chair
North Park Land Use Committee