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## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: February 1, 2012  
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Meeting Date: February 28, 2012

TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: Director of Planning  
SUBJECT: Temporary Appointment of Architects to the Urban Design Panel: Review of Proposed Higher Building at 1400 Howe Street

### **RECOMMENDATION**

THAT pursuant to the *General Policy for Higher Buildings* which requires an enhanced review of building designs in cases whereby additional building height above existing policy limits is sought, Mr. Stefan Behnisch, Mr. Peter Clewes, Mr. Walter Francl and Mr. Mark Ostry be appointed to the Urban Design Panel as special appointees for the purpose of reviewing a proposed taller building at 1400 Howe Street (1412-1460 Howe Street, 1429 Granville Street, 1410 Granville Street, and 710 Pacific Street).

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

Consistent with the Council-approved *General Policy for Higher Buildings*, this report recommends that four additional architects be appointed to the Urban Design Panel for the purpose of reviewing a rezoning application for proposed buildings located at 1460 Howe Street, 1429 Granville Street, 1410 Granville Street, and 710 Pacific Street (referred to as 1400 Howe Street throughout this report) at the "Granville Bridge gateway" into downtown Vancouver.

### **COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

Downtown Official Development Plan (1975)  
View Protection Guidelines (1989)  
Downtown Vancouver Skyline Study (1997)  
Bridgehead Guidelines (1997)

Vancouver Views Study (2011)  
General Policy for Higher Buildings (1997, and revised in 2011)  
Under the Granville Bridge Neighbourhood Commercial Centre Policies and Guidelines (2007)

### ***GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of the above recommendation.

### ***REPORT***

#### ***Background/Context***

Originally adopted on April 22, 1997, with subsequent updates on May 15, 2003 and February 1, 2011, Council's *General Policy for Higher Buildings* allows for consideration of buildings in the Downtown which significantly exceed their zoned heights, with the provision that they do not penetrate Council approved view corridors (with the exception of view corridor 3 from Queen Elizabeth Park). The policy stipulates that proposals for higher buildings be subject to an enhanced review process that includes review by a special session of the Urban Design Panel - augmented with four architects who are well known and respected for their expertise in the design of high-rise buildings. It is noted that the Urban Design Panel is not an approval authority but rather it is an advisory body that provides professional advice to staff and Council.

This enhanced review process focuses on ensuring that the application, if approved, will achieve the highest order of architectural excellence and set new benchmarks in sustainable design by significantly demonstrating and advancing the city's green objectives for carbon neutrality for new buildings. In accordance with the policy, this kind of enhanced review has been employed in the past for four buildings:

1120 W. Georgia - ("Shangri-La")  
550 Bute - ("The Melville")  
1133 W. Georgia - ("Vancouver's Turn")  
1290 Burrard Street ("Burrard Toyota")

Staff have received a rezoning application for a mixed-use, multi-tower development at 1400 Howe Street. The Higher Building is part of a larger proposal that includes both the higher building site (1412-1460 Howe Street) and the under the Granville Bridge commercial area (1429 Granville Street, 1410 Granville Street and 710 Pacific Street). The proposed development includes a tower of approximately 493 feet, which is significantly above zoned height and exceeds the height limitations on the site of the QE Park View Corridor.

In addition, this application will need to meet the requirements as outlined in the *Under the Granville Bridge Neighbourhood Commercial Centre Policies and Guidelines* that require the applicant develop a public realm concept design for the neighbourhood commercial district that ensures and achieves an enjoyable character for pedestrians and visitors.

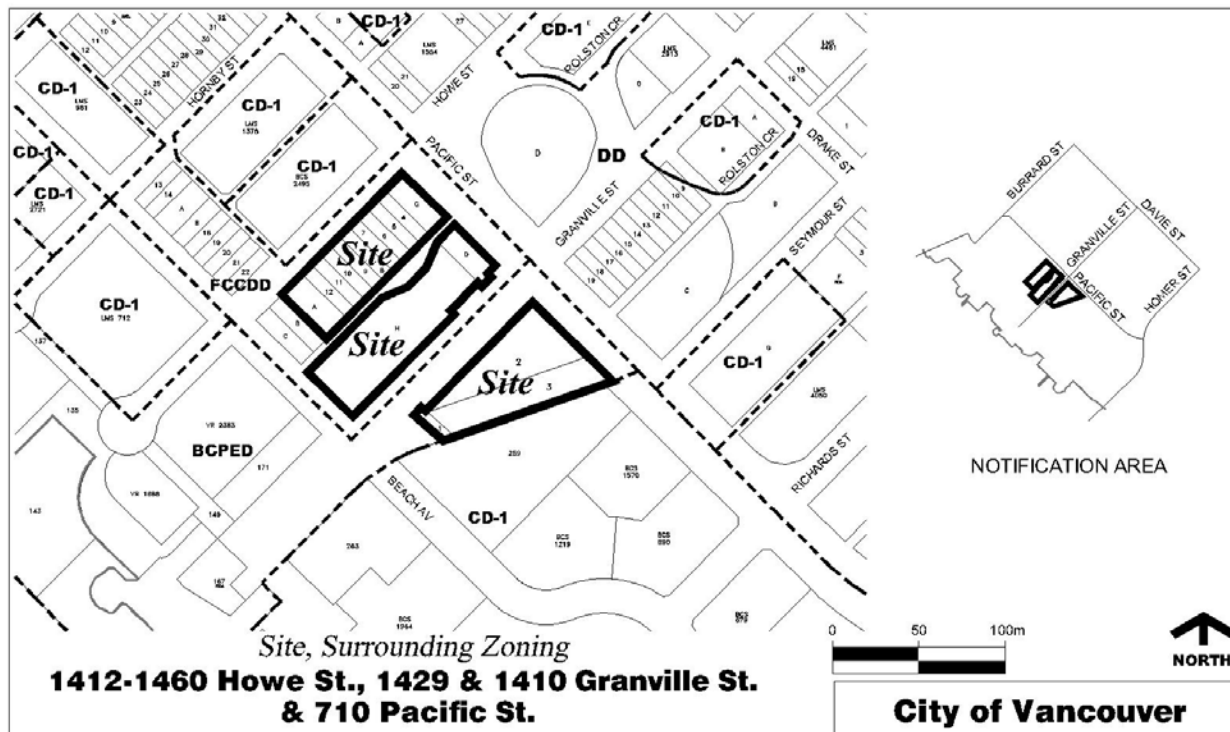


Figure 1: Site Area with Surrounding Zoning

### Strategic Analysis

#### Temporary Appointments to the Urban Design Panel

In consultation with the Architectural Institute of British Columbia, staff have confirmed the availability of and are recommending the following four architects for temporary appointment to the Urban Design Panel: Stefan Behnisch, Peter Clewes, Walter Francl and Mark Ostry.

- Mr. Stefan Behnisch is Principal of Behnisch Architekten in Stuttgart, Germany, and Behnisch Architects in Los Angeles, Boston and Munich. Stefan's firm has designed some of the world's most distinctive, ecologically sensitive buildings including: the Institute of Forestry and Nature Research, Netherlands; Norddeutsche Landesbank, Germany; and the Genzyme Center, Massachusetts. He is a recipient of a Good Design Award in the category of "People", presented by the Chicago Athenaeum and the European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies, in 2007 a Global Award for Sustainable Architecture, in 2004 an Environmental Champion Award, presented by Interiors & Sources Magazine, USA and in 2002 an Award "Trophée Sommet de la Terre et Bâtiment" for Sustainable Architecture, France. He is a BDA, RIBA and AIA member, an NCARB certified architect, and an AIA Honorary Fellow.
- Mr. Peter Clewes has a reputation as one of Canada's most adventurous architects, behind some of the most innovative residential buildings in North America. Peter's notable projects include the award-winning Terrence Donnelly Centre for Cellular and Biomolecular Research at U of T; the Kaiser Computer Science and Engineering Building

at UBC; mixed use development projects in Canada, the US and Europe; and the first 'green' student housing in Canada: the Pond Road Residence at York University. He has received awards from the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA), Canadian Architect, the City of Toronto, the Royal Institute of British Architects, Architectural Record and Business Week Magazines, and the OAA. In 2005 Peter was appointed to the Waterfront Design Review Panel for the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation.

- Mr. Walter Francl is a graduate of both the University of British Columbia and Harvard University with Bachelor and Master Degrees in architecture. His early work experience was with Waisman Dewar Grout Carter and with James Cheng Architect, providing a broad exposure to institutional, commercial and residential building typologies. Walter has been in private practice since 1988, and as the sole principal of Walter Francl Architecture Inc., he is the lead designer for all projects in the office including the award winning Creekside Community Centre and SEFC Energy Utility Centre. Walter has also been active within the profession, serving on numerous professional committees including the Vancouver Urban Design Panel and Development Permit Board, and is a past president of the AIBC. Walter is the Juror for 2011 Canadian Architect Awards, and is currently serving as a member of the City of Surrey's Advisory Design Panel.
- Mr. Mark Ostry has been practicing architecture for over 20 years. He is a graduate of the Technical University of Nova Scotia and received a Bachelor of Environmental Design Studies in 1984 and a Bachelor of Architecture in 1985. Established in 1992, the work of Acton Ostry Architects demonstrates a continuing commitment to the making of architecture that responds thoughtfully to local culture, topography, climate and to lessons learned from buildings inherited from the past. The work spans educational, community and cultural, religious, residential and mixed-use buildings. The firm has received over 50 civic, provincial and national design awards including: 8 Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia Awards; 4 Canadian Architect Awards of Excellence; a Best in Canada Award; and, a national Outside the Box Award for exceptional, innovative design. His practice is a leader in sustainable design with several public projects having received LEED Gold certification. In 2010, his firm was the first ever to receive multiple awards in the same year from the national Sustainable Architecture and Building awards program for the redevelopment of the Sauder School of Business at UBC and the mixed-use Alhambra + Garage + Cordage + Grand + Terminus buildings located in historic Gastown. In addition, his practice has received 8 City of Vancouver Heritage Awards and 6 Canadian and American Wood Council Awards, including the prestigious Ron Thom Award. In 2007, the Canadian Wood Council presented Acton Ostry Architects with a special Firm Leadership Award in recognition of their innovative use of wood. In addition to the profession, Mark has a strong commitment to community. He has served on the City of Vancouver Urban Design Panel and the City of Vancouver Artist Live / Work Studio Implementation Committee. In 2011, he was appointed to the Squamish Nation Advisory Design Panel. He is a member of the Canada Green Building Council and has served as an advisor to the Canada Council and the City of Vancouver Cultural Planning Department. Mark has served on the Boards of several Vancouver cultural institutions, including The Stanley Theatre Society, Vancouver TheaterSports, and is presently Chair of the Pacific Cinematheque. In 2008, Mark was elected to the College of Fellows of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.

As in previous Higher Building Review processes, these appointments to the Urban Design Panel will only be applicable to the review of the specific application for 1400 Howe Street. Once Council has approved these additional appointees, staff will convene the special session of the Urban Design Panel, which is expected to occur in April 2012.

### **Opportunities for Public Input on the Rezoning Application at 1400 Howe Street**

The special session of the Urban Design Panel (to which the public is invited to observe) is required as part of the technical review of the rezoning application at 1400 Howe Street. The session is one component of a much more comprehensive review process for the application that will include numerous opportunities for public input and engagement.

Future key steps in the review and consultation process include (all dates to be confirmed and are subject to change):

- February 2012 - application to be posted on the City's website with opportunities for the public to provide online comment;
- March, 2012 - City-hosted Public Open House to review the proposal and to receive public feedback;
- April 10, 2012 (to be confirmed) - free Public Lecture by the appointed Urban Design Panel members on architectural excellence and green building design;
- April 11, 2012 - Urban Design Panel meeting to review the rezoning application at 1400 Howe Street (public invited as observers);
- Spring/summer 2012 - City staff technical review and analysis of the application;
- Summer/fall 2012 - City staff will report back to the community on the outcome of the application review process and provide further opportunities for public comment;
- Public Hearing - A Council decision on the application will only be made after a Public Hearing at which anyone with an interest in the application may speak.

### **Public Lecture on Architectural Excellence in High-rise Building Design**

In the past when Council has made temporary appointments to the Urban Design Panel for the purposes of a higher building review, the City has hosted a free public lecture event at which the appointees provide a presentation. This event is an opportunity for the public to hear from internationally renowned architects who will share their professional experiences.

Should Council appoint the recommended architects, a lecture event will be organized. Staff anticipate that the public lecture event will be interesting and engaging for a broad range of members of the general public. The presentations at the event, given by the visiting out of town architects, will not be specific to the rezoning application at 1400 Howe Street, but rather they will seek to further develop local understanding of architectural excellence, green building design and sustainability.

*Implications/Related Issues/Risk (if applicable)*

*Financial*

Additional expenses of up to \$38,000 related to the enhanced review process and the appointment of additional Urban Design Panel members are paid for by the applicant and is consistent with the Higher Building Application fees in the Zoning and Development Fee By-Law 5585 - 2012 Schedule of Fees for Permits. The fees cover travel, honorariums and accommodation for the visiting out-of-town architects, as well as the administrative costs of the special session of the Urban Design Panel and the public lecture event.

*Environmental*

It is Council policy that proposals for taller buildings take leadership in advancing sustainability principles in design and that these buildings must perform at the highest possible levels. By involving four world renowned architects in the review of the rezoning application for 1400 Howe Street, Vancouver can continue to improve local expertise in this area and ensure that the proposed development serves to "raise the bar" for green building design in the city.

**COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

Staff will work with the City's Corporate Communications staff to ensure that the free public lecture event and special session of the Urban Design Panel are appropriately publicized.

**CONCLUSION**

With City Council's appointment of the special members to the Urban Design Panel, the Higher Building Review process and associated public events associated with the rezoning application for 1400 Howe Street can proceed. The results of the review will be brought back to City Council for deliberation as part of the rezoning process, including a public hearing.

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# GENERAL POLICY FOR HIGHER BUILDINGS

*Adopted by City Council May 6, 1997  
Amended February 1, 2011*

## Application and Intent

These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with all applicable Official Development Plans for buildings seeking approval for significant additional height above current zoning and policy, or for those entering into the Queen Elizabeth View Corridor. The intent of these guidelines is to mark the prominence of the Central Business District in our downtown skyline, while also providing opportunities for strategically placed height at two prominent bridge “gateways” to mark the entry into downtown from the Burrard and Granville Bridges.

## General Policy for Higher Buildings

The following should be considered when reviewing proposals for Higher Buildings (i.e. those which significantly exceed current height limits and/or enter into the Queen Elizabeth View Corridor):

- Higher Buildings will only be permitted within the areas identified below in Figure 1;
- The tallest buildings ( i.e. ~ 550-700’) should be located within the Central Business District with the tallest buildings (i.e. ~ 700’) located on one of Vancouver’s three primary streets: Georgia, Burrard and Granville;
- Secondary heights may be considered for buildings at the Granville and Burrard Bridgeheads with a single prominent tower (~ 500’) in axial alignment with the Burrard Bridge, and two towers framing the Granville Bridge Gateway (~ 425’);
- All other application for additional height at these two bridgehead locations should be analyzed to ensure that the experiential intent of these gateways is maintained;
- All Higher Buildings must establish a significant and recognizable new benchmark for architectural creativity and excellence, while making a significant contribution to the beauty and visual power of the city’s skyline;
- Higher buildings should demonstrate leadership and advances in sustainable design and energy consumption and as a result must be subjected, not only to current review requirements, but also to review by a Council appointed panel including respected community leaders, notable local and international design experts, and leaders in sustainable design;
- All Higher Buildings must significantly demonstrate and advance the city’s objective for carbon neutrality for new buildings with a stated objective to achieve a 40-50% reduction in energy consumption from 2010 levels;
- As a component of this enhanced review, a special public engagement, such as a public forum or guest lecture, should be held featuring the guest panel members and experts to expand public discussion and education around architectural excellence and green design in Vancouver.

In addition, all Higher Buildings should be considered with careful effort to provide a lasting and meaningful public legacy to Vancouver and should include careful consideration of the following:

- The buildings should achieve community benefits (i.e. as a recipient site for density transfers; retention of important heritage components; provision of significant cultural or social facilities; or provision of low cost housing);
- The development should not involve the demolition of a Class ‘A’ heritage building;
- The building should include activities and uses of community significance such as public observation decks or other public amenity;

- The development should provide on-site open space that represents a significant contribution to the downtown network of green and plaza space;
- The building should not contribute to adverse microclimate effects;
- Careful consideration should be given to minimize adverse shadowing and view impacts on public realm including key streets, parks and plazas, as well as neighbouring buildings;
- Signage on the buildings should not be located at a height which exceeds the building's current height limit.

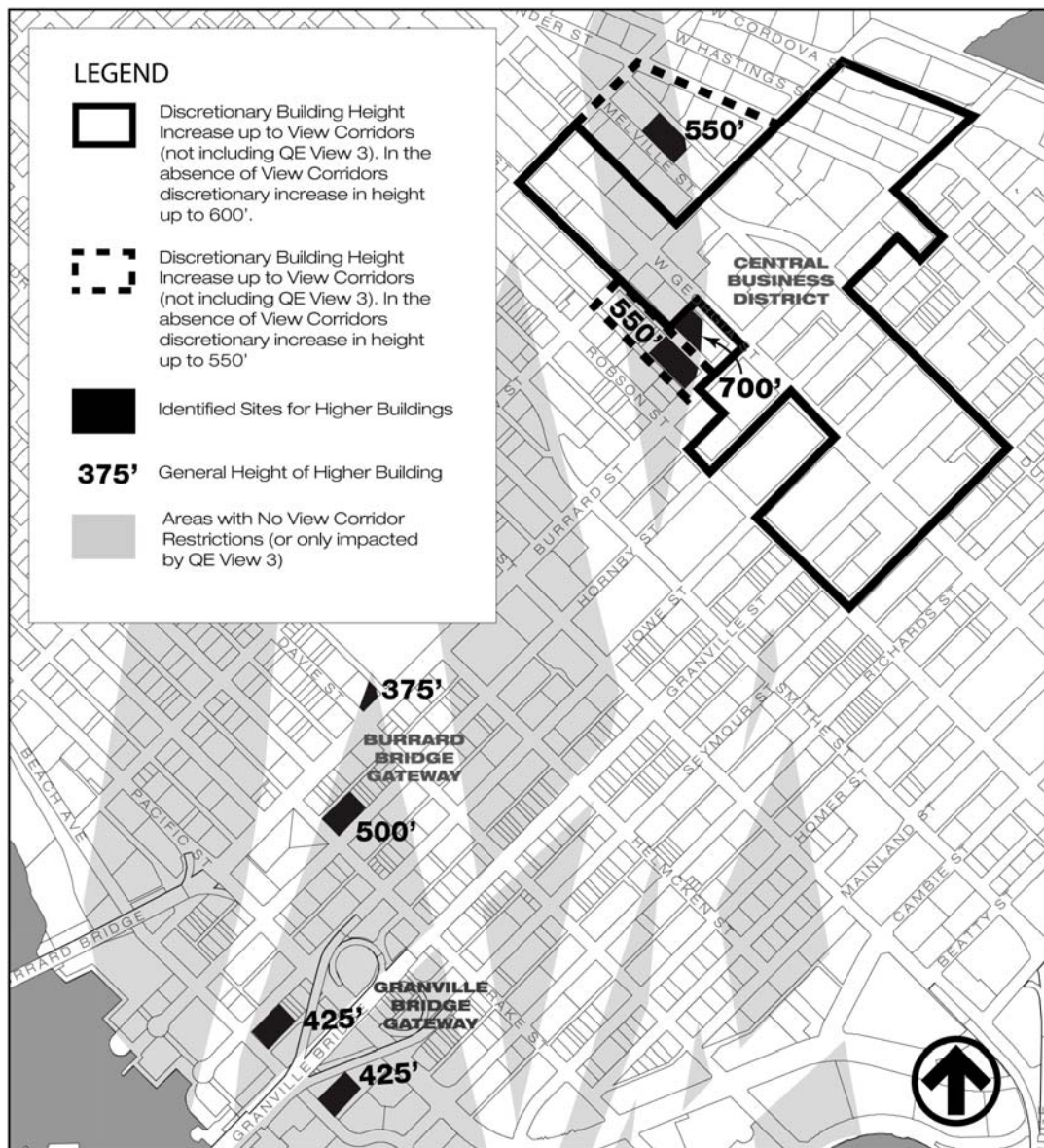


Figure 1: General Policy for Higher Buildings Map