

**LATE DISTRIBUTION
FOR COUNCIL - JANUARY 19, 2010**

RR-2(a)(i)



MEMORANDUM

January 19, 2010

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Marg Coulson, Acting City Clerk
Penny Ballem, City Manager
Robin Adair, General Manager, Inter-Governmental Relations & Strategic Partnerships
Ryan Merkley, Director of Communications
David McLellan, General Manager of Community Services Group
Brent Toderian, Director of Planning
Rob Jenkins, Assistant Director, Central Area Planning
Jill Davidson, Assistant Director, Housing Policy

FROM: Jessica Chen, Senior Planner, Planning Department

SUBJECT: Additional Correspondences Received: Historic Area Height Review (RTS 8079)

Staff met with the *Vancouver City Planning Commission* on December 2, 2009 and with the *Chinatown Society Heritage Buildings Association* on December 10, 2009 to review the proposed directions in the report on the Historic Area Height Review (RTS #8079). Each Committee has provided further input, subsequent to the staff report submission to City Clerk's office. In addition, the following three organizations have also submitted letters addressed to Mayor and Council after the staff report was submitted:

- 1) Carnegie Community Action Project;
- 2) Chinatown Property Owner; and,
- 3) Building Community Society.

These correspondences are attached to this memo for your review. Please accept these submissions as late additions to the staff report package.


Jessica Chen
Senior Planner, DTES Neighbourhoods Group

tel: 604.873.7754
fax: 604.873.7045

<JC>

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RTS8079\Memo - additional letters.doc

January 18, 2010

Jessica Chen,
Senior Planner, CAP
City of Vancouver

Dear Jessica:

RE: Historic Area Height Review (HAHR)

I am writing on behalf of the Vancouver Planning Commission to thank you for your presentations on the Historic Area Height Review (HAHR) and the opportunity to discuss perspectives and make comments.

The Commission was unable to arrive at a consensus on a response to the HAHR. There are many complex and inter-related issues involved in considering future development of this important part of the city. The HAHR has made a good beginning, and we want to acknowledge the level of public involvement that staff has sought out in the process.

Moving forward, we would encourage the broadening of the scope of the study beyond issues of built form to embrace the complexity inherent in the development of this area. We hope that the comments you received from individual Commissioners during our sessions and the concerns they voiced proved helpful.

Yours truly,



Eileen Keenan, Chair
Vancouver City Planning Commission

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Vancouver, British Columbia V5Y 1V4 Canada
tel: 604.873.7477 fax: 604.873.7045
email: vcpc@vancouver.ca



華埠僑團傳統建築協會

CHINATOWN SOCIETY HERITAGE BUILDINGS ASSOCIATION

C/O 118 KEEFER STREET EAST VANCOUVER, BC V6A 1X4 (604) 879-5550

**RESOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION IN VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA
ADDRESSING THE MATTER OF SUGGESTED BUILDING HEIGHT LIMITS AS
PROPOSED IN THE HISTORIC AREA HEIGHT REVIEW**

DULY PASSED ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 2010

WHEREAS the Chinatown Society Heritage Buildings Association was informed of the recommendations within the Policy Report regarding the Historical Area Height Review to be presented to Vancouver City Council and,

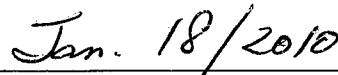
WHEREAS the Chinatown Society Heritage Buildings Association is determined to protect the unique character and ensure the long-term viability of the Historic District of Vancouver Chinatown through progress that respects and is consistent with the unique historical, architectural and cultural nature of the area.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Chinatown Society Heritage Buildings Association agrees with the recommendations in principle as presented in the Historic Area Height Review Policy Report and 1) supports the recommended maximum heights of 75 feet in Chinatown (HA-1) and 90 feet with a rezoning policy with a maximum height of 120 feet in Chinatown South (HA-1A), 2) supports the higher buildings recommendations with the implementation of stringent urban design guidelines that complements and safeguards the uniqueness of the Historic Chinatown area in addition that the maximum height of these buildings must be capped at 150 feet. With this, the Association hereby authorizes the Association President to sign the Statement as representative.



President

Fred Mah

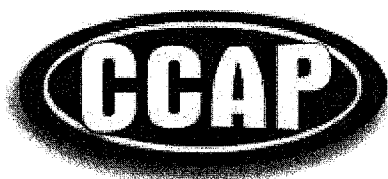


Date

Chen, Jessica

From: Wendy Pedersen [wendyccap@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2010 11:26 AM
To: Cadman, David; Jang, Kerry; Chow, George; Deal, Heather; Meggs, Geoff; Reimer, Andrea; Louie, Raymond; Woodsworth, Ellen; Anton, Suzanne; Stevenson, Tim; Robertson, Gregor
Subject: DTES Height Review - Please read this from CCAP
Attachments: image001.jpg

Our Position is down at the bottom.....



Carnegie Community Action Project

401 Main St, Vancouver V6A 2T7
 604-839-0379; 604-729-2380

January 13, 2010

Hello City Council members,

It would be great if you could read this before dealing with the Historic Area Height Review on Jan. 19th. CCAP really appreciates some of the things this council has done to get affordable housing and shelters:

- The motion at the UBCM to get a national housing strategy;
- Removing the 10% daily/weekly option from the SRA bylaw;
- Better enforcement of maintenance standards;
- Kerry's interviews on the radio this week about the need for even more shelters;
- Gregor having the goal of ending homelessness by 2015;

And we understand that the province and feds have to build more housing and that the city doesn't have the tax base to take on this entire responsibility.

However, we are afraid that there is a big hole in what you are trying to do to end homelessness. That hole is the impact of Woodwards and gentrification on the low- income community in the DTES.

We are hoping you will consider these facts before making a decision to increase density in the Historic Area (western part of the Downtown Eastside):

The SROs are the last housing before homelessness.

Displacement Fact #1: *Rents are increasing.*

Hotel rents are escalating beyond what people on welfare, disability and seniors can afford. According to CCAP's hotel survey, the number of hotel rooms renting for over \$425, \$50 above what people on welfare and disability have for rent, increased by 44% between 2008 and 2009. In other words, about half of the privately owned SROs are renting for more than low income people can afford. Probably as a result of these rent increases, CCAP also found that the number of hotels where two people are staying

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in one tiny room quadrupled between 2008 and 2009.

Displacement Fact #2: *Hotels near Woodward's have the highest rents.*

According to data from CCAP's 2009 hotel survey, 10 hotels with about 450 rooms, East of Main, are renting rooms at over \$425 a month. But 15 hotels with about 1130 rooms, West of Main, are renting rooms at over \$425. This statistic shows that, in general, the hotels closer to Woodward's have the highest rents.

Displacement Fact #3: *More empty rooms.*

According to a survey by the Jodyne Keller of the VPD in December 2009, some hotels have large numbers of vacant rooms, which are not for rent. In CCAP's experience this usually means they are getting ready to sell or to upgrade and rent at increased rents (maybe to students of the new SFU Arts School). These hotels include the Colonial Hotel (90 vacant units), and Argyle Hotel (40 vacant units). The Golden Crown Hotel (28 units) is empty and renovating as is the Burns Block (28 units). Other hotels may be doing this also. With increased rents these hotels will not be available to current low-income DTES residents. These hotels are all located near Woodward's.

Displacement Fact #4: *The City counting method doesn't give a clear picture.*

City staff continually inform council that its 1 for 1 replacement policy (for every 1 SRO that is lost, a new social housing unit should be built) is being met. However, the city does not take into account rent increases that make the SROs unaffordable to very low-income people. Nor is it examining the impact on low-income DTES residents of owners holding rooms vacant. And the city includes provincially owned hotels as new social housing when they are newly social but not new accommodation.

For these reasons CCAP believes it is crucial that the city take a step back from its "revitalization" policies to gauge whether or not the "without displacement" part is actually happening too. If low income people are being displaced, as CCAP believes they are, then homelessness will keep increasing.

This is why CCAP wants a social-economic study of the impact of Woodward's and condos in the DTES BEFORE more density is allowed. The study should look at what has been the impact of Woodward's and condos on the assets and tenure of the low income community and on homelessness.

Another consideration about the Height Review: Planning staff have told CCAP that they want extra height so they can get amenities from developers. The "amenity" that low income DTES residents want the most, according to our research, is housing. But we have seen pro formas from the Building Communities Society that show very few social housing units will be built by condo developers as amenities. For every 7-10 condos we might get one social housing unit in good economic times. This means that to get the 6000 units of social housing that the DTES needs, we'd have to have 42,000 condos, which would totally wipe out all the assets of the low income community that we uncovered in our mapping with over 200 residents. Our other fears are that the community would be split arguing over whether heritage, housing, childcare, etc were the most appropriate amenities, or if the amenities were designed for the benefit of the new richer residents and not for more vulnerable low income residents.

What CCAP wants: the city should not consider "outright" or even "conditional" height increases, or any additional supportive regulatory framework to facilitate increased development within the DTES Heritage Areas under review. These proposed policies will lead to demolition of heritage buildings and further displacement of low-income residents. Instead, we recommend the following:

1. A social-economic study of the impact of Woodward's on the tenure and assets of the Aboriginal and low-income communities.
2. A vision for the whole neighbourhood.

3. A short term local area planning process in which Aboriginal and low-income residents have a say proportionate to their numbers and with a goal of designing a plan to ensure Vancouver's low-income and heritage districts are secured.

Something else to consider:

CCAP could consider the staff's proposal for a "moderate" height increase in the historic district "if" we could get a National Housing Program and 50% raise in welfare rates "first." Council could consider "holding back" approval for 6-12 months conditional upon a serious effort made by reps from Chinatown, business and developers to lobby for housing and better incomes to allow the low-income community to compete with the developers for tenure. This national subsidy could help the DTES community build housing for Chinese families, Aboriginal families, working families, seniors, low-income singles as well as supportive housing and preserve the historic district. New zoning is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Council could use the energy that is pushing for zoning change to help the Mayor achieve his goal of building affordable housing and ending homelessness in Vancouver.

MANDATE NATIONAL MORTGAGE CORPORATION

Suite 505 - 1195 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V6H 3X5
Telephone: (604) 731-2899 Fax (604) 734-5546 Email: mandatenational@telus.net

January 14, 2010

CITY OF VANCOUVER
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.
V5Y 1V4

Attn.: His Worship, Mayor Gregor Robertson and Vancouver City Councillors

Dear Sirs or Madams:

Re: Historic Area Height Review-Chinatown and Downtown Eastside

We are the owner of the property located at 663 Gore Avenue in historic Chinatown. Our property is affected by the Historic Area Height Review and we wish to register our support of the proposed recommendation being presented to Council on January 19th as a basis for further discussion for the following benefits:

1. Restore the vibrancy of Chinatown with new local residents who will live and work in the area.
2. Update and renew buildings for increased street appeal.
3. Increase area population base for the survival of existing businesses and opportunity for new businesses.

Vancouver Chinatown has been in steady decline for over the last two decades as the traditional consumers have moved to competing neighbourhoods that have been able to provide similar goods and services in a more contemporary setting and in larger facilities.

The proposed zoning changes in the report are vital in the community's efforts to revitalize the neighbourhood. Chinatown continues to battle on a daily basis the problems resulting from mental health issues, the open drug and social disorder.

The existing development strategy is not working. Chinatown needs a development strategy that will encourage the development of a consumer oriented residential neighbourhood in Chinatown that will allow the ground level businesses to survive.

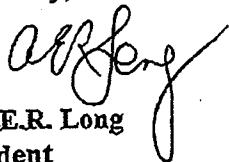
Chinatown needs a greater density of population consisting of local residents who will use and benefit from facilities in the area - groceries shopping, restaurants, cafes, and professional services such as medical, dental, legal and accounting,

The Historic Area Height Review is only one key component of the City's initiatives in Chinatown under the Vancouver Agreement, which was a joint effort between all three levels of government and the local community to revitalize the Downtown Eastside.

The Chinatown Vision was adopted by Council in July 2002 as part of the action plan of the Chinatown Revitalization Program and focused on an expansion of residential development, including non-market housing, ongoing community development, revitalization of retail and business district, and youth and senior involvement.

To honour and enhance the agreement between the City and Chinatown, i.e. economic revitalization, the Historic Area Height Review should be a key component of revitalization of the Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside.

Yours truly,



Alan E.R. Long
President

cc: City Clerk's Office
Third Floor, City Hall

Ms. Jessica Chen, Senior Planner
Downtown Eastside Neighbourhoods Group
Vancouver Planning Department - Central Area



January 18, 2010

To Mayor and Council

Dear Mayor and Council:

Historic Area Height Review: Conclusion and Recommendations

In May 2009, in anticipation that Council would be considering its position relative to the ongoing studies regarding the Historic Area Height Review, the Building Community Society (BCS) submitted for your attention the Society's opinion and recommendations concerning the potential impacts of this report on this highly complex and sensitive area of town. Our previous submission is included in Appendix C, of the staff report now before you. Our purpose with this submission is to refine our earlier comments in light of the staff report.

We are most appreciative of the sensitive and participatory work that your staff has been doing on this project and, in particular, the attempt to define the difficult balance between the ongoing pressures and need for change in the area and the commitment which has been made by Council in its current policies to *"revitalization without displacement"*.

The staff recommendations, responding to Council policies and a consensus of public opinion, reject the notions of major increases in density and height and the creation of high-rise towers, in favour of "moderate pattern height increases". This direction opens the prospect of the more managed growth that is necessary so as not to overwhelm and transform those qualities of the area that are important to retain and nourish

Staff has properly focused its attention on the issue of building height, as directed by Council. However, the report also identifies, in the public responses received and the staff commentary under "Social Implications" on page 17, the considerable community concern that future redevelopment to higher and denser forms without a clearer understanding and provision for the associated social and economic needs of the DTES would upset the policy for revitalization without displacement. In fact the staff states, "Many of these issues cannot be addressed through the Height Review process, and require a broader and comprehensive community strategy for the DTES"

While staff do not support the highest increases in density and height that were considered in the height study, their more moderate proposal still involves the doubling

c/o Maggie Geiser | 4097 Arbutus Street | Vancouver BC | V6J 4T2
mgeiser@telus.net 604 619 5050

of the population in the area and the development of over 4 million square feet of built space

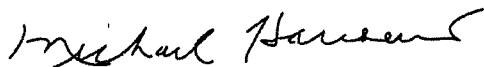
We therefore reinforce the staff concern to address the associated social and economic issues as soon as possible and believe that a plan is needed for the DTES area as a whole that builds on the existing community assets and the up-to-date existing area planning policies including Gastown, Chinatown and Victory Square. Such a plan would be developed with the full participation of everyone affected.

There are many ways to move towards the production of such a plan. We believe it would be advisable to proceed to identify a preferred way bearing in mind the wide range of interests involved and especially the need to ensure that any plan is properly representatives of the needs and values of the predominantly low-income community. While the City has a long history of successful area planning programs this one will require special sensitivity to the area's special challenges. Careful preliminary work in setting up the participatory planning process will help to ensure a sound plan with strong community support.

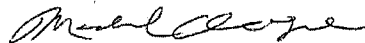
BCS believes this work is important and should proceed as soon as possible. We therefore request that Council asks staff to report back on an approach to area planning that addresses the social, economic and environmental issues and involves working with the various community interests, builds on community assets being identified by the community and offers an opportunity for community dialogue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mike Harcourt
Chair



Michael Clague
Director

Attachments: Building Community Society description
List of Participants

About the Building Community Society of Greater Vancouver

THE SOCIETY

The Building Community Society has been formed by a group of volunteers who share a personal desire to contribute positively to the future of the Downtown Eastside.

ITS FOCUS

Building Community Society focuses on supporting the communities that make up the Downtown Eastside in their efforts to build on their many strengths and to address the current issues of poverty, homelessness, addictive and mental illnesses, and crime.

SEEKING PARTNERSHIPS

Building Community Society believes that effective solutions will only occur when those most affected are fully involved in developing those solutions. Therefore we will always seek community partnerships and listen carefully to the advice we receive.

BUILDING BRIDGES

Building Community Society assists those activities that build bridges and collaboration among groups and organizations within the community, and between the Downtown Eastside and the city as a whole.

TAKING ACTION

Building Community Society with local and other organizations in planning, designing and implementing actions that build local capacity and strengthen the community through arts and culture, education, training, employment, health and social supports, and local enterprise development. An important component of that product is to develop multi- purpose building projects with an emphasis on affordable and supportive housing.

DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING

Building Community Society undertakes research and programs that help to develop understanding of the issues and the policies, programs and actions needed to resolve them.

COMMUNICATING WITH GOVERNMENT

Building Community Society communicates with all levels of government to assist their understanding and support for policies and programs that lead to improvements in the Downtown Eastside.

FUNDING

Building Community Society helps to secure funding for projects and for its own administrative costs and expenses but does not make direct financial contributions.



Board Members

Milton Wong, Honorary Chair

Mike Harcourt, Chair

Jacquie Forbes-Roberts

Tim Pringle

Joe Wai

Building Community Society Participants

Milton Wong C.M.

Milton Wong is a leader in business, volunteer service, health research, culture and sports. He has a gift for gathering together those who are passionate and talented. People with this potent combination work hard and long to bring about meaningful change. Milton is committed to the revitalization of the Downtown Eastside. His family left the Downtown Eastside only when the City denied them permission to renovate their home. Hence his conviction that change has to be community based and has to reflect the needs and aspirations of that community rather than those of others. Milton received an honorary doctorate from Simon Fraser University. In 1997, he was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada and in 2003 received the Order of British Columbia.

Larry Beasley C.M.

Larry Beasley is recognized as an authority on urban development and urban issues. As the Co-director of Planning with the city of Vancouver, he played a leading role in transforming the downtown core into a vibrant, liveable urban community. He is recognized as having a participative and socially responsible approach to zoning, planning and design, which has become known internationally as the "Vancouver Model". Larry is an adjunct professor at the University of British Columbia in the School of Community and Regional Planning and lectures widely elsewhere. In 2004, Larry was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada.

Ian Chang

Ian Chang is a second generation Vancouver native. He has over thirty years experience in city planning work with Canada Mortgage and Housing, the City of Richmond and in private consulting. He is strongly committed to the goal of seeing the Downtown Eastside become a vibrant neighbourhood again and that the low income working and non-working residents benefit from the pending growth of the area.

Michael Clague C.M.

Michael Clague has worked for all three levels of government and has been Executive Director of Britannia Community Services Centre, the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria, the Social Planning and Research Council of BC and the Carnegie Community Centre. Michael has said his experience at Carnegie was the most challenging and rewarding of his career for all he learned about community and the miracles that people with very little means can accomplish for themselves individually and collectively. In 2007, Michael was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada.

David Eaves

David Eaves is an expert in negotiation and public policy. As a negotiation consultant David develops and implements collaborative strategies that enable organizations to maximize the value they generate with community members. He has worked with leading companies in North America, Europe and Africa and in a range of industries such as financial services, health-care, information technology, energy, and telecommunications. David also works and volunteers with community groups, non-profits and government agencies.

Jacquie Forbes-Roberts

Jacquie Forbes-Roberts is recently retired from her position as General Manager of Community Services for the City of Vancouver. She was responsible for wide range of planning, development, social and cultural services. She is a former Co-Director of Planning for the City and has served as Vancouver's Heritage Planner. Jacquie has many years of experience working with the public and private sectors, non-profit agencies, and community groups in the delivery of policy, projects and services. She brings expertise in organizational change, policy development, strategic planning and conflict resolution.

Maggie Geiser

Maggie Geiser is an advocate and community volunteer. Maggie has served as a Neighbourhood House board member, initiated and undertaken fundraising campaigns and is an activist with Citywide Housing Coalition. Maggie has many years of experience running an office in both non-profit and health care environments, including Harbour Light Detox. She now runs her own consulting business.

Mike Harcourt

Mike Harcourt has travelled from storefront lawyer in Strathcona, to city councillor, to mayor of Vancouver, to Premier of British Columbia. Mike's commitment to the environment and sustainability helped BC earn its reputation as one of the most liveable places in the world and has also contributed to the transformation of cities and communities around the world. Mike continues to be approachable, enthusiastic and supportive of the community in which he started in politics. Mike has received many awards, including the University of British Columbia has awarded him the Alumni Achievement Award of Distinction for contributions to British Columbia, Canada and the world.

Terry Howard

Terry Howard works with BC Persons With Aids (Prison Outreach) and has done so for over 8 years. Terry's direct experience with this group of individuals who are often discharged from prison with no home to go to and no support services in place, has evolved into his current community based research. The aim is to identify health care services which impact directly the needs of the most disenfranchised of our community. Terry has recently graduated from Simon Fraser University's new Masters of Health Sciences program.

Ken McFarlane

Ken McFarlane is a lawyer who has a wide range of professional experiences in the public, private, non-profit and university sectors. He has served in three federal government departments including being chief of staff to a cabinet minister and as a consultant to several Canadian royal commissions. Ken was the founder and principal of The Katalysis Group Inc., a company specializing in economic and business development projects in various parts of the world. As a volunteer he has served on the boards of numerous arts, cultural and social service agencies. Currently Ken volunteers at the First United Church shelter in the Downtown Eastside.

Michael Mortensen

Michael designed the "Tools for Talking" Excel spread sheet and currently works in the development industry and was previously a planner with the City of Vancouver and Canada Mortgage and Housing. He writes and teaches in community planning.

Tim Pringle

Tim Pringle is primarily concerned with preserving the heritage of the past and at the same time protecting the future, through conservation of the environment and support for changing communities. Tim believes in the importance of reflecting on how wealth is created and there is a responsibility to return wealth to the land. In addition to funding projects through the Real Estate Foundation, Tim takes a personal interest in each project and is generous with his time and expertise.

Ray Spaxman

Ray Spaxman, architect and planner, has over 40 years of international experience in planning and urban design. Currently president of the Spaxman Consulting Group, Ray advises private and public sector clients on planning, urban design and development issues. As Director of Planning for the City for Vancouver between 1973 and 1989 he led the work in establishing public participation and community engagement in planning and initiated the City's unique development approvals processes.

Paul Sullivan

Paul Sullivan was the western editor of The Globe and Mail, and managing editor of The Vancouver Sun; he also worked in television and radio before launching Sullivan Media in 1998 to provide communications products and services. Sullivan Media works with a wide array of corporate and institutional clients across North America to create effective communications. Clients include non-profits, including a number from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Joe Wai

Joe Wai has helped shape the way Strathcona, Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside appear today. Joe has designed 22 social housing projects, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Gardens; the Chinese Cultural Centre Museum; the Chinatown Parkade, and the Millennium Gate. The restoration of the Chinese Freemasons Building received a Special Jury Award from the Architects Institute of British Columbia in April 2008. Joe is a passionate advocate for the Downtown Eastside and believes he has a greater insight into his own surroundings through living in Europe and visiting and experiencing different communities and cultures.

Gerry Zipursky

Gerry Zipursky has over 35 years of committed strong leadership and expertise in organizational development and community work in the field of social, community and social enterprise services. Gerry's experience in fund development has enabled him to secure millions of dollars for capital, operational and endowment funds through major fundraising and event planning. Gerry has overseen a wide variety of large projects including, major construction, international events, as well as video and film productions. Gerry is a committed community member with extensive board and committee involvement with a variety of municipal, national and international organizations.