



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: March 1, 2011
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Meeting Date: March 15, 2011

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Director of Planning
SUBJECT: Temporary Appointment of Architects to the Urban Design Panel:
1290 Burrard Street ("Burrard Toyota" site)

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. Jack Diamond, Mr. Rick Cook, Mr. Bing Thom and Mr. Richard Henriquez be appointed to the Urban Design Panel as special appointees for the purpose of reviewing a proposed taller building at 1290 Burrard Street.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

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

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends APPROVAL of the above recommendation.

COUNCIL POLICY

Downtown Official Development Plan (1975)
View Protection Guidelines (1989)
Downtown Vancouver Skyline Study (1997)
General Policy for Higher Buildings (1997 and revised in 2003 and 2011).

PURPOSE

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 a proposed building located at 1290 Burrard Street at the Burrard Bridge gateway into downtown Vancouver.

BACKGROUND

General Policy for Higher Buildings

In 1997, the Downtown Vancouver Skyline Study concluded that Vancouver's skyline would benefit from the addition of a handful of buildings exceeding current height limits to add visual interest to the city's skyline. This led to the *General Policy for Higher Buildings* which outlined potential opportunities for these high points and established the process for enhanced review of taller building proposals.

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 expanded 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. Attention in the enhanced review is focused on ensuring that the application, if approved, will achieve the highest order of architectural excellence and set new benchmarks in sustainable design (see Appendix "A" for more detail). 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.

In accordance with the policy, this kind of enhanced review has been employed in the past for three buildings:

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

Following a recent review of existing view corridors in the Vancouver Views Study, Council resolved to maintain existing policies relating to public protected views and, further, to not pursue taller buildings in the Downtown that would impact protected view corridors other than View 3.0 from Queen Elizabeth Park. Following additional staff analysis, on February 1, 2011 Council added four new protected public views to the City's View Protection Guidelines. As a result of these policy revisions, seven sites in the Downtown area were noted as having the potential for higher buildings. The subject site at 1290 Burrard Street, located in the Burrard Bridge Gateway precinct, was one of the identified sites.

Staff have received a rezoning application for a mixed-use, multi-tower development at 1290 Burrard Street with a height of approximately 500 feet, which is significantly above zoned height and exceeds the height limitations on the site of the QE Park View Corridor. In accordance with the *General Policy for Higher Buildings*, this rezoning application will not

only be subject to the full public process that is required for any comprehensive rezoning but it will also necessitate a review at a special session of the Urban Design Panel as an additional component to the City's rezoning process.

DISCUSSION

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: Jack Diamond, Rick Cook, Bing Thom, and Richard Henriquez.

- Mr. Jack Diamond is the founding Principal of Diamond and Schmitt Architects, which has received numerous national and international awards for design and sustainability. He is a Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Gold Medalist and an Honorary Fellow of the American Institute of Architects. He is a member of the Order of Ontario and an Officer of the Order of Canada.
- Mr. Rick Cook is a partner at Cook + Fox Architects. This New York based firm is well known for combining innovative and beautiful designs with the highest standard of environmental responsibility. Its work includes three LEED® Platinum projects in New York City, including the new Bank of America Tower at One Bryant Park, the second tallest tower in Manhattan.
- Mr. Bing Thom has earned an international reputation for innovative responses to integrating a range of commercial, residential and cultural uses to create a vibrant and sustainable whole. His distinguished career has been recognized with membership in the Order of Canada for his contributions to architecture.
- Mr. Richard Henriquez is a highly regarded local architect who is responsible for a number of prominent high rise buildings in Downtown Vancouver. Mr. Henriquez has been awarded the Gold Medal 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 1290 Burrard 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 2011.

Opportunities for Public Input on the Rezoning Application at 1290 Burrard Street

As noted, 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 1290 Burrard 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. In addition, two public open houses have already been hosted by the applicant, with the most recent occurring on March 1, 2011.

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

- Late March 2011 - application to be posted on the City's website with opportunities for the public to provide online comment;
- Week of April 11, 2011 - City-hosted Public Open House to review the proposal and to receive public feedback;
- April 19, 2011 (to be confirmed) - free Public Lecture by the appointed Urban Design Panel members on architectural excellence and green building design;
- April 20, 2011 - Urban Design Panel meeting to review the rezoning application at 1290 Burrard Street (public invited as observers);
- Spring/summer 2011 - City staff technical review and analysis of the application;
- Summer/fall 2011 - 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 1290 Burrard Street, but rather they will seek to further develop local understanding of architectural excellence, green building design and sustainability.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Additional expenses of up to \$37,300 related to the enhanced review process and the appointment of additional Urban Design Panel members are paid by the applicant consistent with the Higher Building Application fees in the Zoning and Development By-Law 5585 - 2011 Fee schedule. 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 IMPLICATIONS

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 1290 Burrard 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 1290 Burrard Street can proceed.

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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.

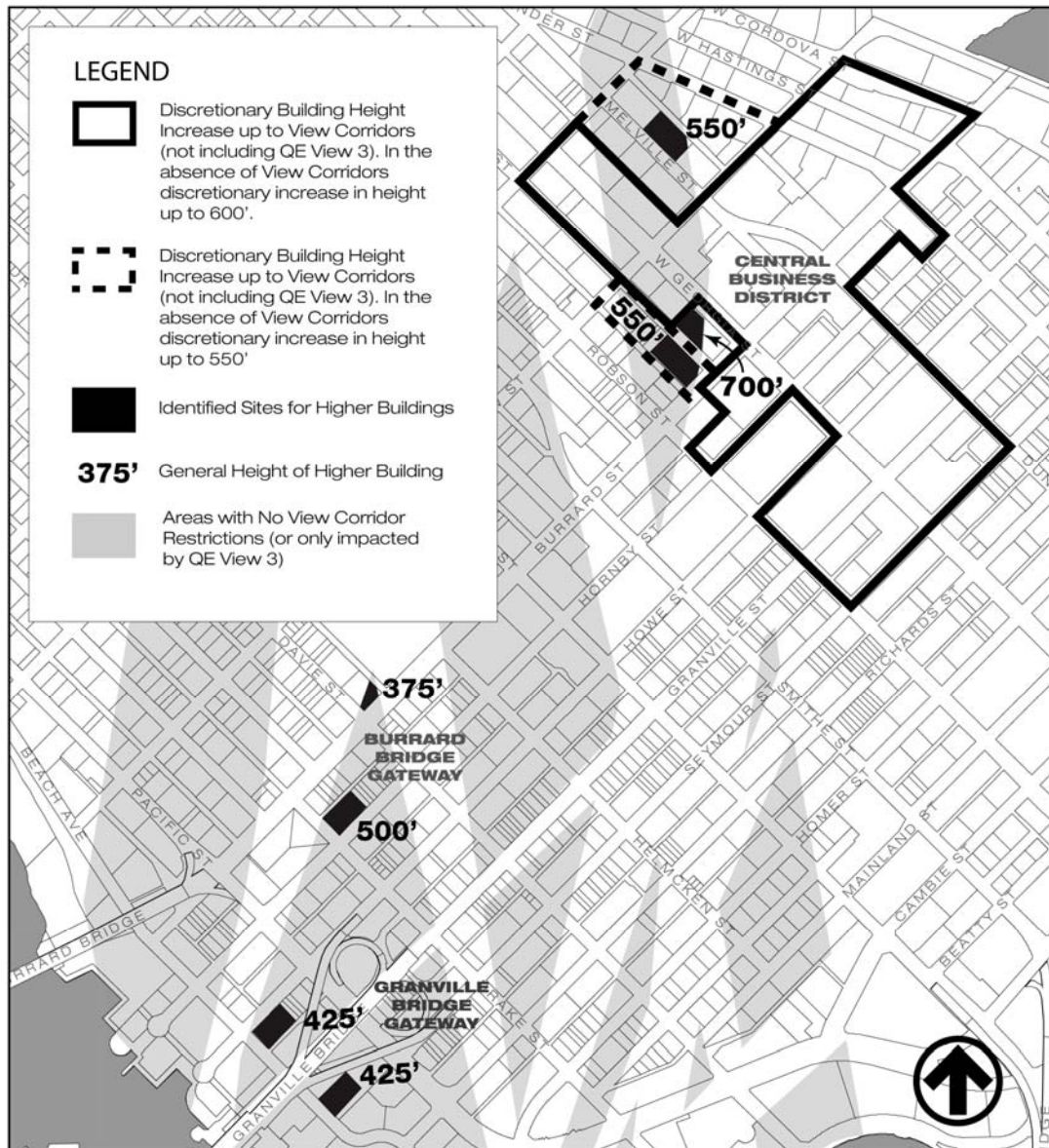


Figure 1: General Policy for Higher Buildings Map