

## Hildebrandt, Tina

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**From:** Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office  
**Sent:** Monday, July 09, 2012 10:11 AM  
**To:** s.22(1) Personal and Confidential  
**Subject:** FW: Public comments re: rezoning application for 4837 - 4861 Cambie St  
**Attachments:** choptuik.pdf

Thank you for your comments.

All public comments submitted for the public hearing that are received not more than 15 minutes after the close of the speakers list for that public hearing will be distributed to members of Council for their consideration. The public comments must include the name of the writer.

In addition, these public comments will also be posted on the City's website ([http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/councilmeetings/meeting\\_schedule.cfm](http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/councilmeetings/meeting_schedule.cfm)).

Please note that your contact information will be removed from the comments, with the exception of the writer's name. Comments received after the start of the public hearing should not exceed 1500 words.

Public comments submitted for the public hearing that are received more than 15 minutes after the close of the speakers list, will not be distributed until after Council has made a decision regarding the public hearing application and the related bylaw is enacted, if applicable.

For more information regarding Public Hearings, please visit [vancouver.ca/publichearings](http://vancouver.ca/publichearings).

Thank you.

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**From:** Monique Choptuik s.22(1) Personal and Confidential  
**Sent:** Friday, July 06, 2012 2:31 PM  
**To:** Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office  
**Subject:** Public comments re: rezoning application for 4837 - 4861 Cambie St

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To whom this may concern,

Please find attached my comments re: Rezoning Application for 4837 - 4861 Cambie St. I will be the 1st speaker at the public hearing on this matter on Tuesday, July 10, 2012, at 7:30.

Monique Choptuik

Objections to the Rezoning Application for

4837- 4861 Cambie Street

Under

The Cambie Street Corridor Plan

by

Monique Choptuik

s.22(1) Personal and  
Confidential

## Revised Rezoning Application for 4837- 4861 Cambie Street

**NOTE: This document is structured so that the sections parallel those of the Council Report (dated May 24, 2012) concerning the rezoning of 4837-4861 Cambie St. Extracts from that report, and from the Cambie Corridor Plan, are quoted below and will generally be presented in italicized font.**

In reading the Summary and Recommendation document for the rezoning of 4837-4861 Cambie Street and its recommended approval by the director of planning **I strongly feel that this proposal is being rubber stamped. My primary concern is that the current proposal is inappropriate for this site and fails, in several key respects, to adequately reflect the spirit of the overall goals of the Cambie Corridor plan, especially given the proposed development's unique geographical relationship to Queen Elizabeth Park, the anticipated Canada Line Station at 33<sup>rd</sup> and Cambie, the Bowie Row Houses (which themselves represent an innovative approach to densification of single family lots, and the creation of freehold properties) and several large institutional sites to the west.**

### 1. Site/Context

The report states:

*“The site is located on a major arterial with excellent access to transit. Transit service to the site is provided by the King Edward Canada Line Station (seven blocks north) and bus routes on both Cambie Street and King Edward Avenue.”*

Comment

I argue that the proposed development **does not adequately fit into the context of the area in which it would be sited.** In the report the description of the site fails to convey **how unique and important the location of this site is to the neighbourhood.** It is located **within** the 1<sup>st</sup> block north of the intersection of W33rd Ave and Cambie Street. This intersection is important because:

- It is across the street from Queen Elizabeth Park which receives on average, 6 million visitors a year. The neighbourhood has up to now, never benefited economically from this.
- It is one of only two pedestrian East /West connections to and from the park and the large institutional sites to the west (Women's and Children's Hospital, St Vincent Campus of Care, The RCMP Barrack site and Eric Hamber Secondary School).

- Most importantly **it is the location for the proposed 33<sup>rd</sup> Ave Transit Station** which the report entirely fails to address or even to mention.

Although the station is proposed, **for planning purposes the station should be viewed as existing and therefore developments in its vicinity should follow the CCP principles and plan regarding transit stations.** In regard to transit stations, and specifically for this site the CCP states that developers should

- *“Consider opportunities to integrate small scale locally serving commercial space focused around a potential new station at 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, considering the relationship to the park and surrounding neighbourhood”.*
- *“Ensure new developments contribute to enhancing each station area as a unique place by respecting the context of the neighbourhood and encouraging buildings and spaces to be memorable and locally authentic.”*

The CCP also speaks to the subject of better urbanism and the fact that *“complete communities that combine a concentrated, well-designed mix of housing types, job space, shopping, local gathering places, and community facilities make neighbourhoods more walkable, liveable and sustainable. Such communities enable people of different life stages , income levels and abilities to grow and age in place.”*

The QE neighbourhood is situated mid point between the commercial areas of Oakridge to the south and the Cambie Village commercial area to the north. *“Offering goods and services that meet human need, at key locations along a complete corridor, can help reduce our overall ecological footprint”.* **There are currently no small scale commercial spaces in this neighbourhood.** These spaces are crucial in building a dynamic walkable, liveable and sustainable neighbourhood.

## **2. Policy Context**

The report states:

*“ The Neighbourhoods” section of the plan provides direction for development including neighbourhood character, public realm and urban design principles. Subsection 4.3.2. specifically reports residential buildings up to six-storeys in height. A density ratio 1.5 to 2.0 floor space ratio is suggested, but is not a maximum. Supportable density is to be determined by analysis based on site specific urban design and public realm performance.*

## Comment

What “the neighbourhoods” section actually says is:

*“New mid-rise residential buildings will be introduced along Cambie Street with special design consideration for buildings directly across from Queen Elizabeth Park (north of 33<sup>rd</sup> Ave ) to reflect the unique siting conditions and public view opportunities. “ Pg 36 CCP*

*“The suggested , floor space ratio (FSR) range is an estimate (not a limit) based on intended urban design performance with respect to site size, form/topography, height and scale appropriate for respective locations and transition to adjacent neighbourhoods. The development potential for each site may fall within, below or above the FSR range given and will be determined by careful analysis of individual proposals based on urban design and public realm performance and quality.” pg 36 CCP*

## Comment

I find the report a little misleading as I understand this to mean that there is **no predetermined** height for a development on this specific site. As the CCP states, an appropriate height should be determined by careful analysis, taking into account all relevant design factors, and this does not appear to have been done.

## Strategic Analysis

### 1. Land Use and Housing

The report states:

*“The Queen Elizabeth neighbourhood's existing residential character is to be strengthened and enhanced with new mid-rise residential buildings along Cambie Street.”*

## Comment

Despite the reference to a strengthening and enhancement of the “*residential character of the QE neighbourhood*”, the report focuses only on the fact that the proposed development will include market rental units, and units suitable for families. However, *all* new developments will contain these elements, because it is mandated, so it is not clear to what extent, if any, the special character of the QE neighbourhood is being factored into the proposal.

With regards to the actual architecture of the building, “ Most of the Panel (Urban Design Panel) were disappointed with the architecture and thought it could have gone further. They thought it was a conservative approach and looked like so many other apartment buildings in the city.” A mixed use development with row/ townhomes/ lane way homes and a commercial element would be a better fit to reflect the context and character of not only this specific site and smoother transition from the Cowie Row Homes, but also the area as a whole by recognizing the 33<sup>rd</sup> Ave Transit Station and the economic importance of the park. An example of such a development is Mackenzie Green at 33<sup>rd</sup> and Mackenzie. A development that mixes townhomes and commercial spaces.



I do however, recognize that a lower density development may not be economically feasible due to the high cost of the land (tripling in value), as well as the Community Amenity Contributions and City-wide Development Cost Levies that the developer must pay. My wish is not to create undo hardship for Mosaic Homes. They are a reputable developer and have made **their reputation on constructing quality row homes and townhouses**. I am however, suggesting that they could **build on their strengths to be more creative and innovative**; not to put the focus on immediate profits, but rather on creating a continuing market. The City Hall Task Force on Housing has also recognized that the city needs more row homes, townhomes and laneway homes to increase density on single family lots and I foresee many more of these developments in the future that Mosaic can build and from which they can profit.

At the same time, I am asking the city to be flexible and work with Mosaic to facilitate such a development. If the city truly believes in the principles and the vision of the Cambie Corridor Plan they should do everything in their power to achieve it.

### ***Form of Developments***

*The report states:*

*“While the open space offered adjacent to the three-storey row houses to the south is relatively modest, the proposal is also downhill from the rowhouses, would not shadow these neighbours and is one storey less than planned for this area. Recognizing the value of the recently built row houses and that they are unlikely to be redeveloped, staff recommends that the design of the proposed building be refined, at the development permit stage, to explore improvements to the visual transition to its neighbours and mitigate any direct overlook.”*

Comment

**I argue that the siting of the proposed building is not acceptable** on several grounds:

- It does not recognize the value of the Cowie Row Home development, which, represent an innovative approach to the densification of single family lots, and the creation of freehold properies.
- A development of this kind, located 9' away from a property line to single family dwelling is not normal (Sailen Black, Development Planner ....noted” ***the unusual adjacency to the south of a recently developed row house project***” , when commenting on the proposal).

- According to Benn Duffell of Mosaic Homes, the only reason why the building is sited 9' from the Cowie Row Home property line is that it was the only way to ensure parking for an anticipated 31 unit development on the orphaned lot that would be created on the north side of the proposed project. In actuality, 2 orphan lots would be created on either side of the development.

City staff do not like orphaned lots that can not be reasonably developed “with consideration for building massing, underground parking and project economics”. In my view the orphan lot development is not a successful plan. Although the Cowie Row Homes are long term neighbours under the rezoning application **all** orphan lots should have a development plan. I don't believe one was ever done for the Row House lot and I find it very hard to believe that it it would feasible to develop that lot to a five or six storey height.

- The “Neighbourhoods” section clearly states: “*The built form response to this **unique location** should acknowledge the “openness” that results from the current rhythm of existing houses. **Larger openings between new buildings, for example and shorter building frontages will help to highlight the special features of this area.**” Even spacing results in a rhythm. A 9' space on one side and a 23' space on another does not. Again, the nature of the proposed development, including its positioning on the lot, seems to be in contradiction to this principle.*

## Conclusion

The report states:

***“The proposed rezoning for 4837-4861 Cambie Street, to allow development of a five-story residential building, generally meets the intent of the Cambie Corridor Plan.”***

In his book “Design on the Land The Development of Landscape Architecture”, Norman T Newton discusses how the the US government set up a Land Planning Division within the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) in the 1930's. The Division was established, in part, to eliminate fraudulent housing schemes as well as to give advice to developers on how to improve their plans. An excerpt from that book

***“As so often happens with attempts to legislate public standards, what FHA set as minimum requirements become all too soon maximum provisions by the developer: just good enough to get by no better.”***

remains as relevant today as it was in the 30's

This unique site and neighbourhood demands and deserves more. **Generally meets the**

**intent is not good enough.** As stated in the CCP, the proposal site is worthy of special consideration, and it is my assertion that the current proposal does not live up to what the CCP envisioned. **The Urban Panel reviewed the application in March and voted not to support the proposal.** Although the developer has revised the proposal, **it is still inappropriate for this site** and, as argued above, **fails in several key respects to adequately reflect the spirit of the overall goals of the Cambie Corridor Plan.**