



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: February 28, 2023
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Meeting Date: March 29, 2023
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities
FROM: General Manager of Development Building and Licensing
SUBJECT: 23 West Cordova Street – 1220123 B.C. Ltd. (“Blood Alley Music Hall”)
Event-Drive Liquor Primary Licence Application
Liquor Establishment (Venue)

Recommendations

THAT Council, having considered the opinion of area residents and business operators as determined by neighbourhood notification, site sign, noise impacts and relevant Council policy as outlined in this report, endorse the application submitted by Rising Tide Consultants, on behalf of the applicant, 1220123 B.C. Ltd., for a new event-driven Liquor Primary licence (Liquor Establishment Venue) located at 23 West Cordova Street – below grade, subject to:

- i. A maximum interior capacity of 598 persons;
- ii. Standard Hours of operation limited to 11 am to 1 am, Sunday to Thursday, and 11 am to 2 am, Friday and Saturday, for a minimum of six months;
- iii. Liquor service is event-driven and only permitted in conjunction with pre-booked events;
- iv. Food service to be available while the establishment is operating;
- v. A Time-Limited Development Permit;
- vi. Signing a Good Neighbour Agreement with the City prior to business licence issuance; and
- vii. An acoustic report to be submitted certifying that the establishment meets Noise Control By-law requirements.

Purpose and Executive Summary

Staff recommend Council endorse the applicant’s request to operate a new 598 persons event-driven Liquor Primary licence, located below grade at 23 West Cordova Street, subject to the conditions noted in this report. The application complies with Council’s policy to support live performance venues. Liquor service in these event-driven venues is an amenity for patrons and not the primary focus of the business. The requirement for a Time-Limited Development Permit, a Good Neighbour Agreement and submission of an acoustical report will provide the necessary controls to ensure the premises operates in a manner that will mitigate impacts to the neighbourhood and surrounding area.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

[City role in Liquor Primary licence applications](#) – The Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) of the Provincial Government regulations require local government to provide a Council resolution on new liquor primary licence applications unless the local government decides to opt out of the application review process. Council policy has been to consider the impact of the new licence application on the community and to provide comment, generally in the form of a resolution.

[Cultural Services Regulatory Review for Live Performance Venues: Phase I \(February 3, 2011\)](#). Provide staff direction, with a goal of increasing the number of Live Performance Venues in the City of Vancouver.

[Liquor Policy Review – Recommended Actions \(June 7, 2017\)](#). Council approved maintaining the current Downtown Eastside (DTES) Liquor Primary moratorium to restrict new Liquor Primary licences to event-driven performance venues and disallow new seats.

[Culture|Shift: Blanketing The City in Arts and Culture – Vancouver Culture Plan 2020-2029 \(September 11, 2019\)](#). Music is a central part of Vancouver’s nightlife at the city and regional scale. The night hours represent a crucial time when social connection, economic activity and creative expression can coalesce and thrive.

City Manager’s Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

The Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch requires that local government provide a resolution with comments on public input gathered from the community within the immediate vicinity of the establishment, including the location of the establishment, its person capacity and hours of liquor service. Once received, the LCRB will review the resolution and any comments for a final decision to issue/endorse the liquor licence.

The subject site is being revitalized with the retention of the heritage façade and a new development of a 10-storey mixed-use building with 142 dwelling units, 80 social housing units and 62 market rental with commercial on the ground floor and over two (2) levels of cultural and recreational hall use areas, bicycle parking and storage. The existing 261-seat Class 3 Liquor Primary licence at this site (licence # 122843) is in dormancy status with LCRB and will be maintained on the ground floor as a separate pub style operation upon building occupancy.

The applicant, 1220123 B.C. Ltd., with Sean Gillespie listed as its Principal Director, has authorized the consulting firm of Rising Tide Consultants Ltd., to act as the representative for this application. If the application is approved, 1220123 B.C. Ltd. would become the Licensee (or holder of the liquor licence). The applicant has advised that the venue’s operations management would be shared between Live Nation Canada Inc. and Siegel Entertainment Ltd. Live Nation specializes in operating and booking live music venues across Canada, including iconic stages like the Commodore Ballroom in Vancouver and the Danforth Music Hall in Toronto. Live Nation focuses on a wide variety of talent curation across all types of events, attracting completely different genres, artists and groups of fans for each event. Siegel Entertainment is a talent booking company with extensive expertise in all aspects of entertainment production, from venue entertainment management to celebrities and headline talent.

The proposed establishment is for a 598 person event-driven Liquor Primary venue, in Gastown, which will provide important space for the arts and entertainment community. The primary focus of this establishment is an event-driven music/cultural hall. Liquor service will be ancillary to the primary focus of the establishment, which will be the provision of musical, cultural or business events.

The programming proposed in this event space will include items such as musical concerts, recitals, comedy performances and touring companies offering live performances. It will also host cultural events, corporate receptions, private parties, banquets, fashion shows and celebratory event rentals such as birthdays, anniversaries and other significant events. Siegel Entertainment and Live Nation Canada will work with the applicant to help with local, national and international programming for the establishment.

The applicant is applying for the Family Food Service endorsement to their Liquor Primary licence which will allow minors, accompanied by a parent or guardian, to enter in all licensed areas until 10 pm when food service is available for families. The amount of food service will depend on the nature of the event being held. The food service will range from light snacks to full course meals, with all food being catered into the establishment.

Discussion

Public Input – Results of Neighbourhood Notification

A neighbourhood notification advising of the event-driven Liquor Primary application was conducted by distributing approximately 1,428 postcard notifications to property owners within a 750 foot radius of the subject site (See Appendix B). A site sign was installed advising the community of the application and where to send comments or concerns. Staff allowed three weeks for the community to respond with concerns or support.

A total of three (18) pieces of feedback, fifteen (15) email responses and three (3) voicemails, were received from the public in response to the liquor application. Of the responses received four (4) were in support and fourteen (14) were in opposition. All of the responses received were from within the notification area.

Respondents in support of the application indicated investments in the community helps bring renewed vibrancy to an area deeply affected by the pandemic. Others commented that this application is the first step to the revival of the business district and is of critical importance to the neighbourhood and its viability. Those in support also indicated that proper operational

conditions will help alleviate concerns related to noise, public nuisances and related disturbances.

Respondents expressed concerns regarding hours of operation, venue size, potential for increased noise, public nuisances and disturbances, reduced building access for residents, parking and safety. Residents voiced concerns about the potential for increased impact of noise within the immediate vicinity during not only operation, but also pre and post events. The release of 598 patrons into Blood and Trounce Alley’s at closing time has the potential of creating noises levels that disrupt the quiet enjoyment of residents who live within the area.

Other concerns related to previously approved Council motions; the one-time exceptions for occupant increases as a result of an update to the Fire By-law and dual licensing in the moratoria. Residents are concerned that these motions will cause an increase in the number of liquor primary seats and could lead to an increase in complexity of public nuisances and disturbances within the area, similar to what the Granville Entertainment District is experiencing.

The applicant has advised that the Property Management team for the establishment is committed to ensuring the seamless integration of the venue into the surrounding community. As a result of the concerns expressed in the feedback, they are committed to the following:

- Additional security personnel will assist with crowd management before and after events to minimize potential impacts to the surrounding community.
- Security patrols will be conducting three (3) to four (4) times nightly along the retail frontage along Cordova and the park area in the rear.
- Security is on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week to address any concerns and will work to move people along to mitigate potential noise, public nuisance and disturbances.
- BC Housing will have staff onsite and will assist with security call-outs if needed.
- The walkway passage leading from Cordova Street to Blood Alley will be gated and fully secured in the evening hours to reduce patrons from gathering in the alley/back laneway.
- Exterior daytime cleaning will be conducted as needed and power washing of the entire exterior premises on a quarterly basis or as needed.

With the proposed measures, the applicant is committed to creating a positive environment and relationship with area residents and the community, to help mitigate any perceived concerns and minimize potential negative impacts.

Location of Establishment

The subject site is located in the Gastown Historic Area District (HA-2) and for the purposes of liquor policy, it is considered to be located in the Downtown – Primarily Mixed-Use area. The establishment will be located below ground level in a mixed-used building within Gastown (see Appendix B).

Proximity to other Liquor Primary Establishments

Within a 750 foot (229 metre) radius of the subject site there is one event-driven Liquor Primary licensed establishment, 149 West Hastings Street, Simon Fraser University School for the Contemporary Arts, with a capacity of 1,412 persons. The nearest liquor primary establishment

is located across the street at 50 West Cordova Street (GRETA Bar). Within the 750 foot radius there are currently eleven (11) Liquor Primary establishments and twenty-nine (29) Food Primary establishment with active business licences in the area. It should be noted that a food primary establishment’s primary purpose is the service of food with liquor as an additional service.

Person Capacity and Hours of Operation

The proposed capacity for this Liquor Primary licence at this event-driven venue is 598 persons (See Appendix A). Final occupancy calculations will be provided in accordance with Building and Fire by-laws once building permits have been finalized. Final occupant load calculation will not increase beyond what Council approves.

The hours of operation for the Liquor Primary licence are 11 am to 1 am, Sunday to Thursday, and 11 am to 2 am, Friday and Saturday, which are within the parameters of the Standard Hours permitted in this Downtown – Primarily Mixed-Use area.

Noise

Staff have considered the impact for noise on the community and have no concerns at this time. With the venue locate below grade and the absence of exterior windows and doors, the noise level of the venue when in operation should have minimal impact on the community. An acoustical report certifying that the establishment meets Noise Control By-law requirements will be required and should mitigate potential negative community impacts due to noise. It is also a condition of the licence and will support compliance and enforcement efforts if necessary.

Impact on the Community

A Time-Limited Development Permit will be required which will provide ongoing reviews to ensure the land-use and business remains compatible with the surrounding community. The permit review process will involve an assessment of neighbourhood impacts, including compatibility with surrounding uses, hours of operation, social and policing impacts and noise control. In addition, the Good Neighbour Agreement will set out City expectations that the business needs to be responsive in dealing with any issues and responsible for creating a positive relationship with the community.

The Vancouver Police Department have reviewed the application and have no concerns.

The applicant has completed the Neighbourhood Fit Tool (Appendix 3) as requested by Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability’s Community Planning Division. As indicated within the neighbourhood fit tool, the new development will include a large number of social housing units, 80 single room occupancy units and 62 units of market rental, and community led events taking place in ‘Blood Alley’. ‘Blood Alley’ square which is a fully accessible and open to the public will improve access and connection for residents residing in the surrounding area. The venue is aspiring to include local residents to create a welcoming environment within the neighbourhood.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report’s recommendations.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report’s recommendations.

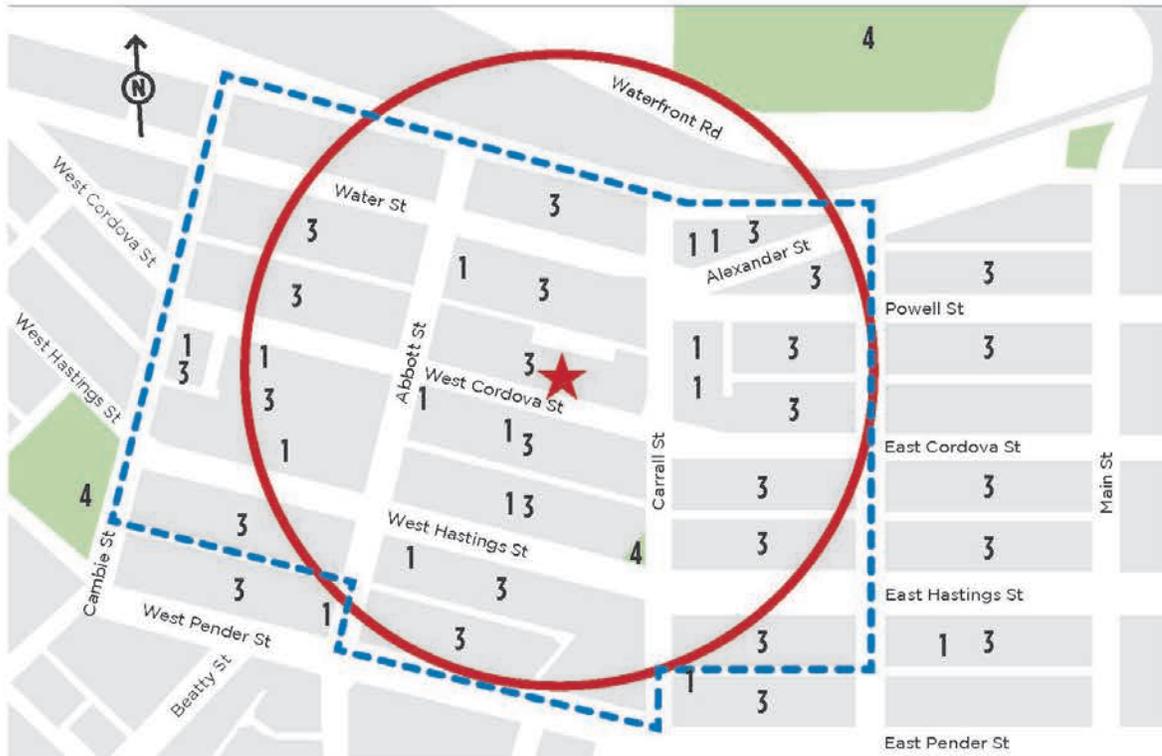
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APPENDIX B
Notification Area and Surroundings

LIQUOR PRIMARY

(Liquor Establishment – Venue)

1220123 B.C. Ltd – 23 West Cordova Street



LEGEND

-  Subject Site
-  228.6 metres
(750 feet) radius
from Subject Site
-  Notification Area

1 Liquor Primary Establishments:

- Back and Forth Bar – Class 3
- Cambie Hotel – Class 3
- Funky Winkerbean – Class 3
- Grand Union Hotel – Class 3
- GRETA Bar – Class 4
- Guilt and Company – Class 2
- New Brandiz Pub – Class 3
- Simon Fraser University School for the Contemporary Arts – Event Driven
- Smith’s Gastropub – Class 2
- The Blarney Stone – Class 3 (Dual Licence)
- The Lamplighter Pub – Class 3
- The Met Pub – Class 3
- The Pint Public House – Class 4
- The Portside Pub – Class 3
- West Hotel Pub – Class 2

2 Liquor Stores:

- none applicable

3 Residential

4 Parks:

- Victory Square
- Crab Park
- Pigeon Park

5 Schools:

- none applicable

