



Advisory Design Panel Report For the Meeting of September 28, 2022

To: Advisory Design Panel **Date:** September 14, 2022
From: Manasvini Thiagarajan, Planner
Subject: **Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00212 for 1039 & 1043 Meares Street**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Advisory Design Panel (ADP) is requested to review a Development Permit with Variances Application for 1039 & 1043 Meares Street and provide advice to Council.

The proposal is to construct a six-storey residential building with a total of approximately 50 strata units including a live-work unit on the ground floor. A concurrent Rezoning Application proposes to increase the maximum allowable density from 1.2 to 2.5:1 floor space ratio (FSR) and allow for a live-work unit as a permitted use. The proposed variances are related to reducing the vehicle parking, reducing the front, rear and side setbacks and increasing the building height.

The subject site is designated as Core Residential in the *Official Community Plan (OCP)*, which envisions multi-unit residential, commercial and mixed-used buildings. The site is also designated as Core Residential in the *Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan*. The site is identified within Development Permit Area 16: General Form and Character and the following documents were considered in assessing this Application:

- *Official Community Plan (OCP, 2012)*
- *Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan (2019)*
- *Downtown Core Area Plan (DCAP, 2022)*
- *Design Guidelines for Multi-Unit Residential, Commercial and Industrial Development (2012)*
- *Advisory Design Guidelines for Buildings, Signs and Awnings (2006)*
- *Guidelines for Fences, Gates and Shutters (2010).*

The proposal is generally consistent with the land use policies relevant to the property. However, further design revisions are warranted for greater consistency with guidelines. In particular, staff are looking for commentary from the Advisory Design Panel with regard to:

- street relationship
- building massing and transition to neighbouring properties
- any other aspects of the proposal on which the ADP chooses to comment.

The Options section of this report provides guidance on possible recommendations that the Panel may make, or use as a basis to modify, in providing advice on this application.

BACKGROUND

Applicant:	Mr. Greg Damant (on behalf of Jawl Residential) Cascadia Architects & Bradbury Developments
Architect:	Mr. Greg Damant, Architect AIBC Cascadia Architects
Development Permit Area:	Development Permit Area 16
Heritage Status:	N/A

Description of Proposal

The proposal is to construct a six-storey residential building with approximately 50 strata units (49 dwelling units and 1 live-work unit). The subject site is currently used for surface parking. A concurrent Rezoning Application proposes to increase the density from 1.2 to 2.5:1 FSR and allow for a live-work unit as a permitted use. The proposed variances are related to reducing the vehicle parking, reducing the front, rear and side setbacks and increasing the building height.

The proposal includes the following major design components:

- six-storey building, in a north-south orientation, comprising a mix of studio, 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom and 2-bedroom plus den units
- a patio on level 2 and roof top community garden for residents
- one ground-oriented live-work unit
- 74 long-term bike racks and 8 short-term bike racks on the ground floor
- 22 motor vehicle parking stalls located at-grade at the rear of the building.

Exterior building materials include:

- louvre screen for the roof top mechanical units
- a combination of panelized warm grey durable cladding with custom patterned balcony glass that relates to the cladding of the Mosaic building (1050 Meares Street) across Meares Street
- cementitious panel in warm white-grey on the west and east elevations
- cementitious finishes in warm white-grey, for balcony walls
- metal cladding, clear glass, and full height glazing on the ground floor facing the street
- white aluminum finish for solid portions of the balcony
- architectural concrete for the building base
- aluminum vertical louvre sunshade on the west elevation
- landscape concrete wall (1.1m high) with custom pattern on the north side facing Meares Street.

Landscape materials include:

- three new boulevard trees on the municipal boulevard along Meares Street

- one new tree at the southwest corner of the property
- one new tree at the southeast corner of the property
- five new trees along Meares Street
- four new trees at the rear end of the property
- two new trees the second-floor patio on the west side three new trees and edible garden shrubs in planters on the roof deck.

The following data table compares the proposal with the existing R3-1 Zone, Multiple Dwelling District. An asterisk is used to identify where the proposal is less stringent than the existing zone. Additionally, the key City policy that pertains to the area has been included in this table.

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	R3-1 Zone, Multiple Dwelling District	OCP Policy	Fairfield Neighbourhood Policy
Site area (m ²) – minimum	1352	920	-	-
Density (Floor Space Ratio) – maximum	2.5:1*	1.2	1.5:1 to 3:1	1.5:1 to 3:1
Total floor area (m ²) – maximum	3378.22	-	-	-
Height (m) – maximum	22.70*	18.50 or 22.0	-	20
Storeys – maximum	7.00	-	6	6
Site coverage (%) – maximum	73.50*	20.00	-	-
Open site space (%) – minimum	14.50*	30.00	-	-
Setbacks (m) – minimum				
Front (Meares St.)	1.96*	13.50		
Rear (S)	3.22*	11.35 (1/2 bldg ht)	-	-
Side (E)	1.805*	11.35 (1/2 bldg ht)		
Side (W)	0.505* (TBC)	11.35 (1/2 bldg ht)		
Vehicle parking – minimum	22*	48	-	-
Visitor vehicle parking included in the overall units – minimum	1*	5	-	-

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	R3-1 Zone, Multiple Dwelling District	OCP Policy	Fairfield Neighbourhood Policy
Bicycle parking stalls – minimum				
Short term	8	6	-	-
Long term	74 (TBC)	60		

Sustainability Features

The applicant’s letter to Mayor and Council dated July 14, 2022, lists numerous sustainability features, including:

- meeting step 3 of the BC Energy Step Code
- electrical outlets for electric bicycle charging locations within bicycle storage
- a bicycle wash station and repair stand in a convenient location on Meares Street
- all 22 parking stalls to have EV car chargers installed at building completion
- high efficiency common domestic hot water boiler system.

Consistency with Policies and Design Guidelines

Official Community Plan

The *Official Community Plan* (OCP) designation for the site is Core Residential. This designation envisions multi-unit residential, commercial and mixed-used buildings up to approximately 6 storeys with total floor space ratios ranging from a base of 1.5:1 to a maximum of 3:1 FSR. The OCP refers to the local area plan to provide finer grain policy and regulatory guidance in response to local context and development opportunity.

The OCP also identifies the site within Development Permit Area (DPA) 16: General Form and Character, which supports multi-unit residential development that is complementary to the place and character of the neighbourhood. Enhancing the character of the streetscape through high quality, human-scaled architecture, landscape and urban design is also a key objective of this DPA.

Downtown Core Area Plan

The subject property falls within DPA16 and therefore the *Downtown Core Area Plan* (DCAP) guidelines are not applicable to the form and character considerations as part of the Development Permit Application. However, the site is located within the Residential Mixed-Use District (RMD) within DCAP and therefore these overarching policies are applicable. The objectives for the RMD include encouraging multi-unit residential development appropriate to the context and function of each neighbourhood, along with other land uses, public amenities and services that help to develop complete communities and ensuring that new residential development includes active street-level businesses, where appropriate, to increase pedestrian activity within the public realm.

Overall, the proposal is generally consistent with the DCAP. The key area where the proposal differs from the Plan is the lack of upper storey step-backs to minimize shadowing of adjacent streets and open spaces.

Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan

The *Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan* (2019) identifies the site as Core Residential, consistent with the OCP. The plan envisions new development up to six-storeys and densities ranging from 1.5:1 to 3:1 FSR in this location. Specific form and character objectives for new multi-unit residential development include:

- supporting the provision of publicly oriented active uses on the ground floor as a means to encourage pedestrian activity and vitality along the street
- encouraging ground floor facades to have smaller storefront modules with frequent entries and generous transparent glazing
- ensuring buildings are sited and oriented to provide sufficient building separation to maintain livability for residences in both existing and planned future buildings
- providing a sensitive transition in scale to adjacent, smaller development through consideration for massing and other design features by setting upper storeys back, varying roof lines, increasing setbacks and siting and scaling buildings to reduce shading, etc.
- incorporating building elements and building designs that complement the surrounding area
- encouraging the organization and placement of building massing and design to demarcate and define the building base, body and top
- encouraging upper storey and roof top building designs that help to complement the existing skyline
- ensuring that new development integrates attractive landscaping and building features that create attractive walking environments along the adjacent streets
- ensuring that building entrances are clearly identifiable with direct connections from the street
- ensuring that building driveways and parking access are designed and located to minimize interruption of frontage and the pedestrian environment along public sidewalks.

The proposed building is considered generally consistent with these policies with consideration of the issues noted below.

Design Guidelines for Development Permit Area 16: General Form and Character

Design guidelines that apply to DPA 16 are the *Design Guidelines for Multi-Unit Residential, Commercial and Industrial Development* (2012), *Advisory Design Guidelines for Buildings, Signs and Awnings* (2006) and *Guidelines for Fences, Gates and Shutters* (2010). The proposal is consistent with these Guidelines as follows:

- the parkade entrance gate is setback from the building face which ensures this element is not the dominant feature of the building facade whilst maintaining transparency which allows the passing public to view into the space
- articulation and variation in materials, texture and colour help to break-up the building massing
- balconies incorporate façade rhythm to add interest to the streetscape and break down monotonous massing

- entrance for pedestrians are legible and the vehicular entrance acts as a subordinate feature
- materials used on the principal façade are continued around building corners visible from the public realm
- blank side elevations feature patterns to provide visual interest
- inclusion of private open space in the form of balconies and rooftop garden
- an accessible building entrance is appropriately designed and clearly visible from the main entrance
- surface parking is located at the rear of the building and the parking entrance at the building frontage is recessed breaking up massing proportions.

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

The following sections identify and provide a brief analysis of the areas where the Panel is requested to provide commentary. The Panel's commentary on any other aspects of the proposal is also welcome.

Massing and Transition

The applicable design guidelines encourage high-rise buildings to have upper levels stepped back to enable sunlight penetration to the street and public open space, mitigate the perception of building mass and minimize the impact of winds. The six-storey proposal maintains a consistent setback for all storeys with no stepping back of the upper storeys. There is no setback in the building form on the north side where the building faces Meares Street. Instead, the design relies on variation in materials, and balconies to help break up the perceived massing of the building. The Panel is asked to comment on the success of this approach in achieving the objective of the aforementioned design guidelines.

Further, the guidelines, indicate that multi-unit residential development that directly abuts any residential building that is lower and smaller in scale must be designed to provide a sensitive transition in scale to adjacent, smaller development through consideration for massing, varying rooflines, or other design features. This design aspect could potentially be satisfied by reconfiguring the roof over the driveway on the west side of the proposed building to have a better relationship with, and transition to, the neighbouring building. The Panel is invited to comment on the appropriateness of sensitive transition in response to the immediate context.

Relationship to the Street

The design guidelines recommend that new development contribute to cohesion, visual identity and the quality of streetscapes. The design shows a solid accent wall that runs along the front of the building and has a double gate that serves as an entry to the live-work unit located on the ground floor. The concrete accent wall incorporates the same artistic pattern used on the fritted glass balcony guard rail to provide visual interest. The Panel is asked to comment on the success of the design approach in terms of contribution to a cohesive and pedestrian-friendly streetscape.

OPTIONS

The following are three potential options that the Panel may consider using or modifying in formulating a recommendation to Council:

Option One

That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00212 for 1039 & 1043 Meares Street be approved as presented.

Option Two

That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00212 for 1039 & 1043 Meares Street be approved with the following changes:

- as listed by the ADP.

Option Three

That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00212 for 1039 & 1043 Meares Street does not sufficiently meet the applicable design guidelines and polices and should be declined (and that the key areas that should be revised include:)

- as listed by the ADP, if there is further advice on how the application could be improved.

ATTACHMENTS

- Subject Map
- Aerial Map
- Plans date stamped July 14, 2022
- Applicant's letter dated July 14, 2022

cc: Mr. Greg Demant, Applicant; Cascadia Architects