



STAFF REPORT

TO: Committee of the Whole **MEETING DATE:** March 25, 2014

FROM: André Boel, Director of Planning **FILE NO:** 3220-20 Gower 377-385
Odete Pinho, Planning Consultant ZA-2013-01

SUBJECT: George Hotel & Residences – form and character

RECOMMENDATION(S)

THAT the staff report regarding form and character of the George Hotel & Residences be received;

AND THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

THAT Council endorse the updated form and character for the George Hotel & Residences and that the updated design be used to inform the drafting of a zoning amendment bylaw.

THAT Council request staff to draft a Development Permit for Form and Character for Council's consideration after successful completion of the proposed zoning amendment.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to outline how the applicant for the George Hotel & Residences (The George Hotel) has addressed recommendations from the Advisory Planning Commission. Secondly, the report presents the results of eye level visualisations commissioned by the Town. Thirdly, the report provides recommendations regarding mass and height of the proposal.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. George Hotel & Residences design plans (A.0.0.0 – A.11.0.1) dated December 20, 2013 issued for rezoning / DP, including mark-ups illustrating the changes resulting from Advisory Planning Commission recommendations (under separate cover)
- B. Landscape Plans L1, 2, 3 dated 13.09.24 and L4 dated 13.10.09 (under separate cover)
- C. Visualisations by Chris Foyd (in the report and under separate cover)
- D. Excerpt from January 14 staff report discussing the proposal in relation to the form and character design guidelines in the OCP's Harbour Area Plan

BACKGROUND

In February 2013 Klaus Fuerniss Enterprises Inc. submitted a rezoning application and development permit applications for the proposed "George Hotel and Residences". The Advisory Planning Commission (APC) reviewed the form and character of the proposal in November 2013. Based on recommendations provided by the APC, the applicant modified the design and submitted revised plans to the Town in January 2014.

At the January 21st and the February 4th Council meetings, Council adopted the following resolutions, providing direction for the further review of the George Hotel application:

1. THAT Council request staff to prepare a draft comprehensive development style zoning bylaw for Council's consideration.
2. THAT Council request staff to report on the provision of affordable housing and community amenities under Council Policy 3.14.
3. THAT Council request staff to arrange an independent review of the proposal's geotechnical investigation by a geotechnical engineer selected by the Town, as well as a hydrogeological review of the proposal by Waterline Resources, and that the cost of both studies be covered by the applicant.
4. THAT Council request staff to prepare a report and draft a Development Permit for form and character for Council's consideration based on the response and updated drawings from the applicant provided in response to the Advisory Planning Commission recommendations.
5. THAT staff be requested to arrange for further visual information on the project, with eye-level illustrations from various vantage points.
6. THAT staff arrange a Special Committee-of-the-Whole meeting to consider the economic impacts and viability of The George Hotel and Residences project, subsequent to receipt of the staff report regarding the revenue indications of the proposed development.

This report follows up on recommendations 4 (form and character) and 5 (eye level visualizations). Reports on other topics will be presented to Council at a later date. Staff note that a Development Permit has not been drafted yet pending the consideration of other aspects of the proposed zoning bylaw amendment.

RESPONSE TO ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION (APC) RECOMMENDATIONS

At the November 15, 2013, meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission the following recommendations to Council were formulated:

1. *THAT the Commission is supportive of the separation of the two buildings, the increased public space and addition of a view corridor.*
2. *THAT the proposed design of the hotel building would benefit from increased stepping back or terracing following the natural grade and addressing the hotel façade on Gower Point Road.*
3. *THAT the Commission has a general concern with the height of the hotel building, which may or may not be resolved with the revision of the design. (2 members opposed)*
4. *THAT the addition of the waterfront walkway is a benefit to the community, and the Commission recommends that the design better incorporate the outdoor space on the waterfront side into a more cohesive waterfront space.*

5. *THAT the future of Winegarden Park be reviewed in the near future when more details are available.*
6. *THAT the Commission recommends that agreements be put in place to insure that all proposed public spaces be fully open and accessible.*
7. *THAT the Commission recommends a public observation platform be incorporated onto the northeast side of the restaurant area.*
8. *THAT the Commission recommends that the design team incorporate more of a Gibsons historical west coast feel as per the Official Community Plan development permit design guidelines.*
9. *THAT the Commission recommends that the design team be requested to revisit several key façades and give them more attention to the detail, including the Gower Point Road hotel façade, the Winegarden Park residential facade, and the hotel's south facade.*
10. *THAT the Commission thinks it is an important decision for the Town as to what material is used on the waterfront path throughout the landing area and the Commission would like the opportunity to be involved in the selection process.*
11. *THAT the Commission supports The George Hotel concept and development subject to addressing the resolutions of this meeting and the Commission requests to be further consulted once more information becomes available.*
12. *THAT the Commission requests a computer generated 3-D model in context with the community.*

Following the APC's recommendations, the applicant took the initiative to make revisions to the concept plan to address the suggestions that were made. Attachment A provides Council with the updated design package. Changes made since the November 12 design package have been marked on relevant drawings. Below is a summary of design revisions made by the George Hotel architect Omicron in response to the Advisory Planning Commission recommendations:

1. Modulation of roof heights on Hotel with stepped roof heights from west to east (see also drawings A209, A401 and A501)
2. Stepping down of the hotel's Gower Point Road façade by moving 4 hotel units to Waterfront walkway at level P1. This move has stepped down the façade on Gower Point Road and created less of a vertical face. The addition of hotel rooms on the Waterfront walk will create more activity above grade. (see also drawings A202, A208, A209, A402 and A501)
3. Waterfront walk character development with:
 - Waterfront Restaurant given a different more historical character than hotel with shutters, smaller paned windows, and cedar cladding; (see A210, A903)
 - Waterfront Restaurant given a modulated façade on the west elevation by recessing the kitchen by 3'; (see A210)
 - Public look-out provided on north side adjacent to waterfront walk; (see A201, A210, A903)
 - Added habitat at high-water area in front of Winegarden park to accept bioswale outfall; (see A210, A903)
 - Varied canopies at grade from the curved wood canopy on the north end of the waterfront walk, timber clock and shed roof over the seawalk café and the elimination of the wall adjacent to the seawalk café. The wall is replaced by a stepped seating wall and moveable planters to create a friendlier seating wall for the public. (see A101 and A201)

All changes in response to APC recommendations are also highlighted in the plan of Appendix A. Some key changes are summarized and illustrated in more detail below:

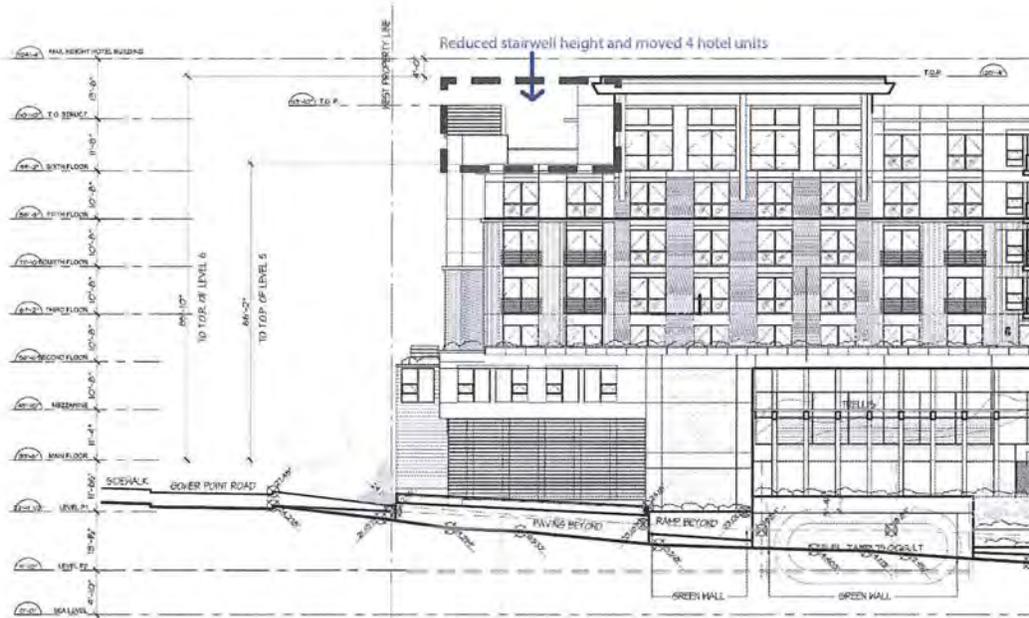


Figure 1a - Change in Gower Point Road Façade South Elevation

Figures 1a: Change in Gower Point Rd Façade / Four Units moved to waterfront level P1 (in response to APC recommendation 2: "increased stepping back or terracing following the natural grade and addressing the hotel façade on Gower Point Road")

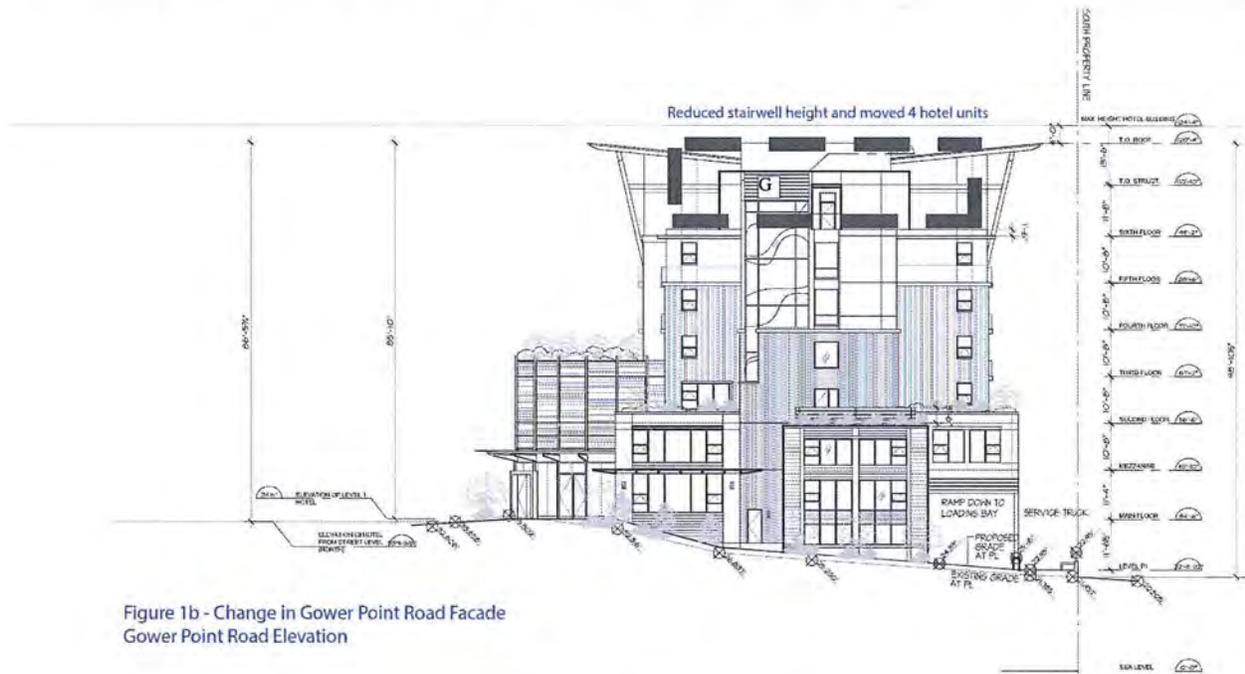


Figure 1b - Change in Gower Point Road Facade
Gower Point Road Elevation

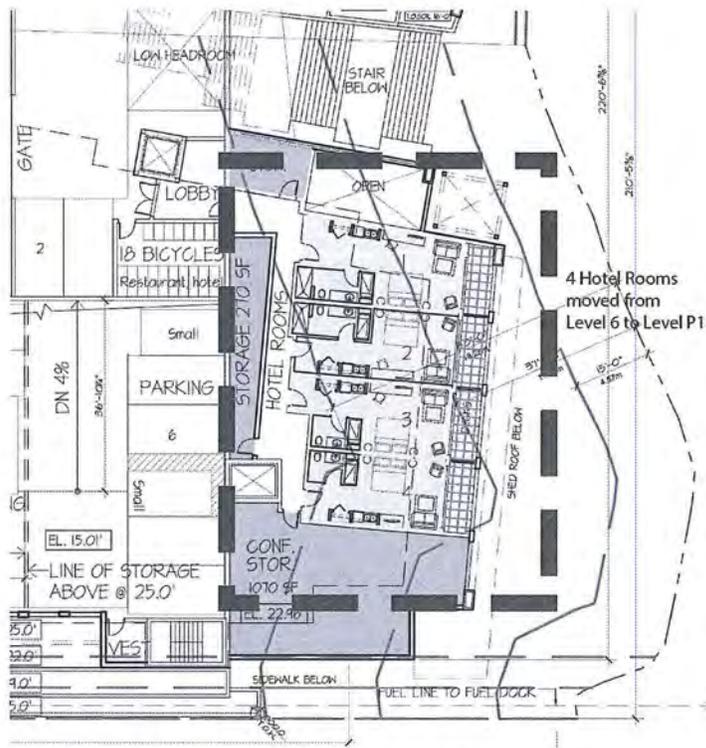


Figure 1c- Change in Gower Point Road Facade
Level P1 facing Waterfront Walk

Figures 1b and c: Change in Gower Point Rd Façade / Four Units moved to waterfront level P1 (in response to APC recommendation 2: “increased stepping back or terracing following the natural grade and addressing the hotel façade on Gower Point Road”)

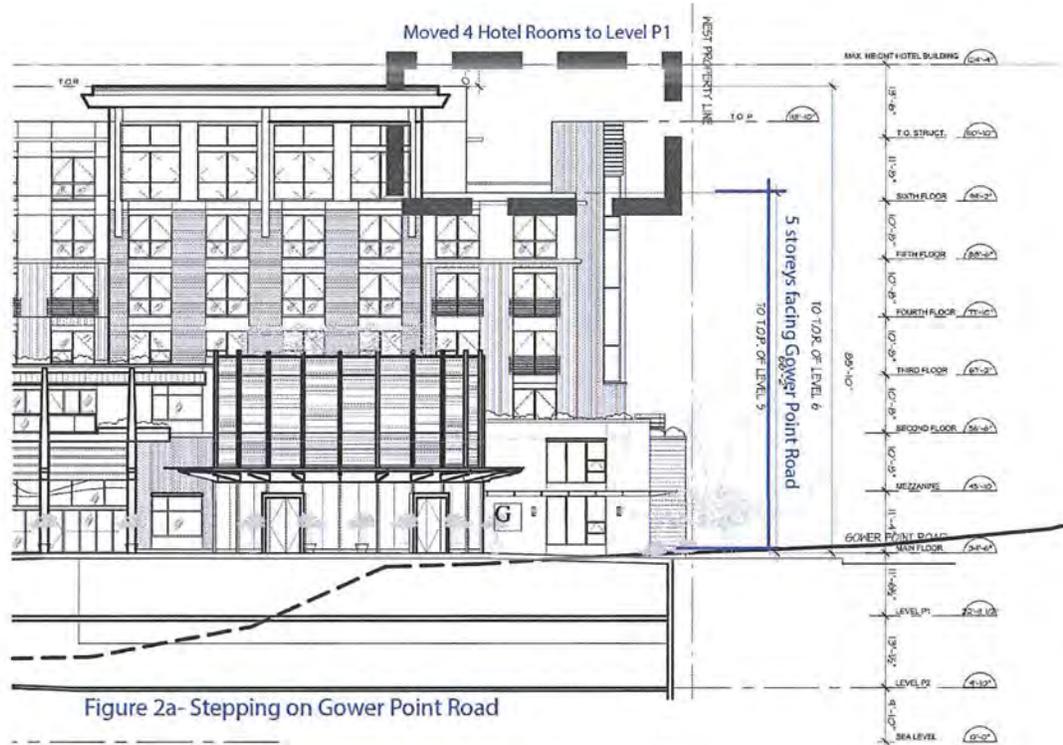


Figure 2a- Stepping on Gower Point Road

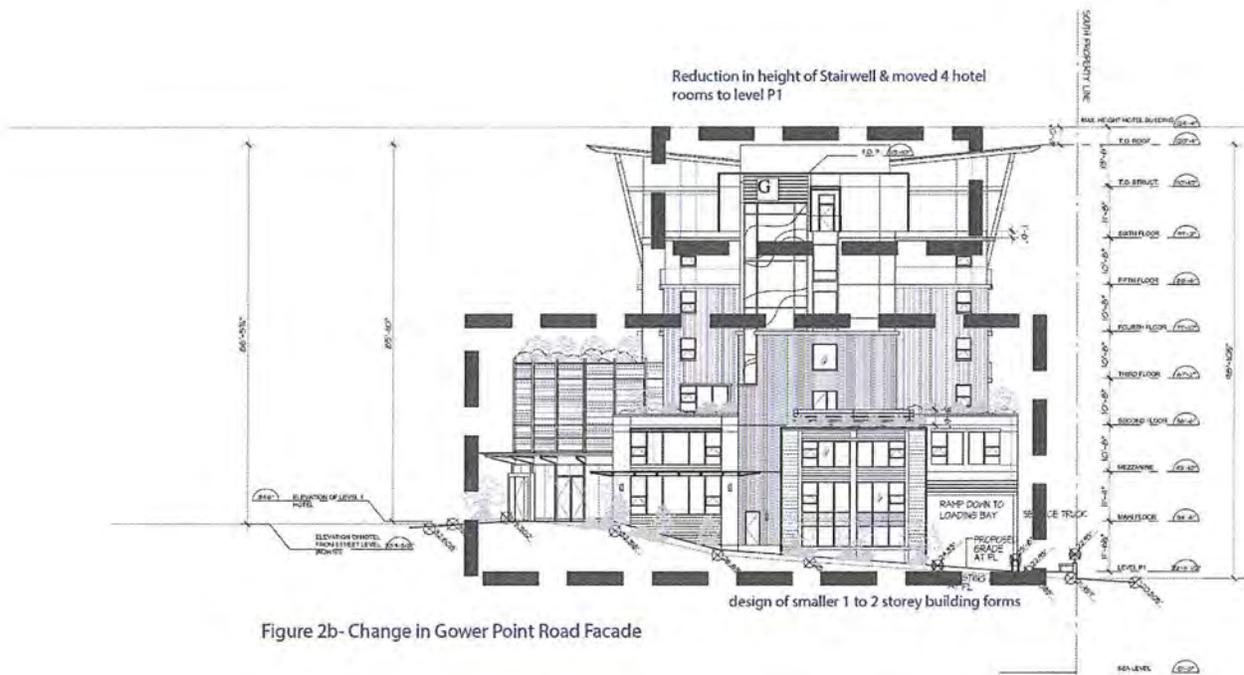


Figure 2b- Change in Gower Point Road Façade

Figures 2a and b: Change in Gower Point Rd Façade / Four Units moved to waterfront level P1 (in response to APC recommendation 2: “increased stepping back or terracing following the natural grade and addressing the hotel façade on Gower Point Road”)



- 1 - Shingles, shutters, metal cladding and smaller paned windows
- 2 - Maritime details, lookout, wood detailing
- 3 - Smaller scale waterfront expression at grade
- 4 - Varied canopies and finer grained expression

Figure 4: Waterfront Restaurant Design Details (in response to APC recommendation 8: “design team incorporate more of a Gibsons historical west coast feel”)

With regards to APC recommendation 10, staff explored the preferred choice of materials for the waterfront walkway. Staff considered the Trail and Cycle Network Plan (see also OCP policy B.5.5.4), the draft Parks Master Plan (not adopted by Council) and practical considerations. Three materials have been identified that fit the intent of the OCP as well as fit current practical considerations for future maintenance and renewal. The acceptable materials are granular rock, wood or un-dyed concrete as possible materials for the waterfront walkway surface. With regards to other APC recommendations staff provides the following information:

- APC recommendation 3: height of the hotel building. To some extent the changes to the Gower Point Road façade may address this point. Also, please see the discussion under “fit with form and character guidelines”
- APC recommendation 5: Winegarden Park. Staff suggest making further plans regarding changes to Winegarden Park if and after adoption of the Zoning Amendment Bylaw takes place. Currently, planning for changes to Winegarden Park would be premature without knowing if the George Hotel will be build or not.
- APC recommendation 6: agreements for open and accessible public spaces. This item will be addressed in a future staff report, as part of the rezoning process.
- APC recommendation 11: request for further consultation. Staff feels further consultation with the APC would only be necessary if significant changes are made. Staff will inform the APC regarding the response that was received from the applicant.
- APC recommendation 12: request for 3D model. Council considered this request in January and did not support this request. Instead, eye level visualisations have been commissioned as requested by Council.

In conclusion, staff note that the applicant has made several changes in response to APC recommendations. Council's role is to decide if the resulting form and character could be supported under the OCP Harbour Area Plan's design guidelines for form and character. This will determine if the requested zoning amendment can be based on the current design. A separate section in this report provides additional information for Council's consideration.

EYE-LEVEL VISUALIZATIONS

On January 21, 2014, Council directed staff to "arrange for further visual information on the project, with eye-level illustrations from various vantage points". The Town retained independent consultant Chris Foyd (BA/MArch/Arkitekt MAA Denmark, RAIC) to complete the visual assessment. Mr Foyd has completed many similar visual assessments over the past 23 years of practice.

Six photographs were taken on February 3 and 12, by Odete Pinho, planning consultant for the Town. The photo points and location map are shown on the following pages. Sites were selected for the most publicly accessible 'view impacts' to the Harbour Area.

The visual assessment images were produced for six view overlays of the proposed hotel and residences onto the provided photos. Omicron, the development applicant's architect, provided a proposed development computer massing model. Accuracy of mass and height was achieved by matching the viewpoint, the camera focal length and the lens target to the provided model. The resulting renderings reflect, as accurately as possible, the on-site massing.

The visual assessment images presented in this report are an accurate representation of the mass and height for the proposed development project, as it would be seen from the view points at eye-level. It should be noted that the digital model images did not include architectural materials and colours that would reflect the design 'look and feel' of the development. Instead, the visualization shows only the correct mass of the proposed development in relation to the existing surrounding area.

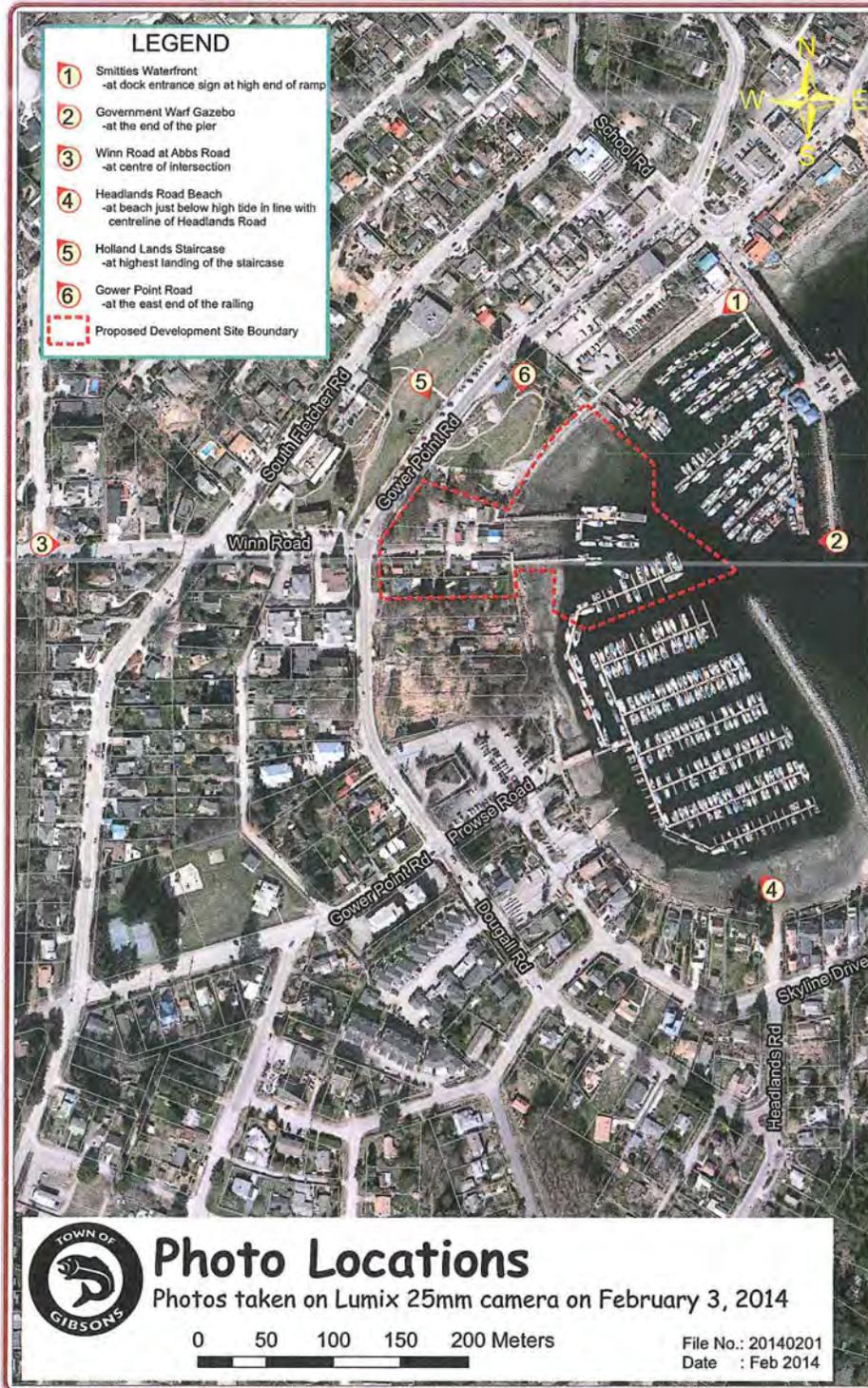
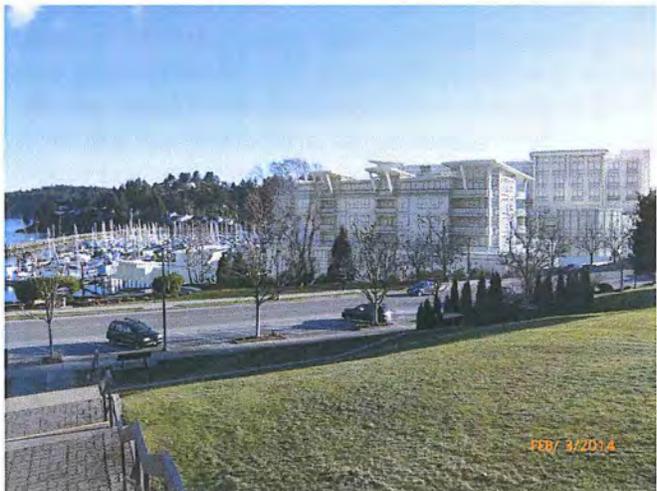
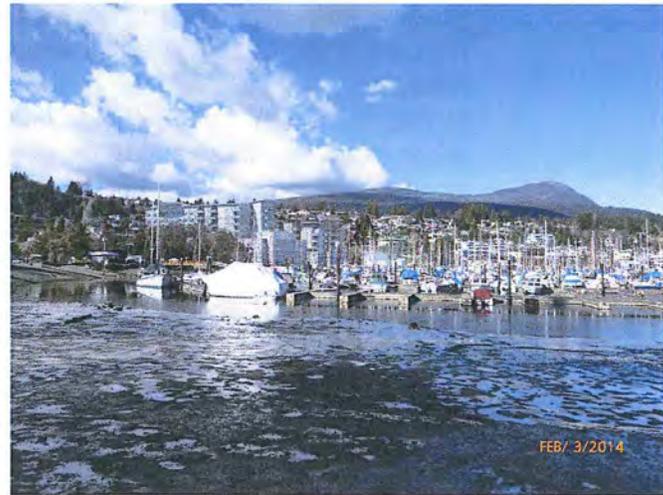


Figure 4: Six Visualization Photo Location points

Figures 5-10: Visualization Images (top to bottom; left to right) from: Smitty's Restaurant; Wharf Gazebo; Winn Rd at Abbs; Headlands Rd Beach; Holland Park Stairs; Gower Point Road. Please note: these visualisations do not show the proposed colours and materials.



FIT WITH FORM AND CHARACTER GUIDELINES OCP - HARBOUR AREA PLAN

Council's role is to review the form and character of the project under the guidelines outlined for Development Permit Area #5 Gibsons Landing (OCP Harbour Area Plan). The intent of the guidelines is "fostering design that retains, reinforces and enhances the character of the Harbour Area while providing for improvements and change." (OCP E.5.2)

As outlined on January 14th (see Attachment D), the proposed form and character of the George Hotel addresses many of the design guidelines in the OCP Harbour Area Plan. However, the proposed mass and height of the buildings is something that requires careful consideration by Council.

On the one hand, it could be argued that the described intent of section 5.2 of the Harbour Area Plan ("retaining, reinforcing and enhancing the character of the Harbour Area while providing for improvements and change") suggests that new buildings have a similar size as existing buildings in the area.

On the other hand there are policies in the OCP that speak to future changes and increased building mass and height over time:

- The Vision Statement in 2.3 sets out to "facilitate balanced development that ensures the ongoing attractiveness and the social, cultural, economic and environmental vitality of the Harbour Area, recognizing the unique and crucial role it plays in the life and economy of Gibsons."
- In Section 3.6 (Urban Design) under "built form" the following is outlined: "A significant urban design challenge is to retain the essential village scale and character while moving closer to urbanity, accepting and embracing the growth necessary for an economically viable, sustainable and vibrant community."
- In Section 4 (Goals and Objectives) a range of goals and objectives are outlined. Objectives 1.1 (compatibility with existing development) and 5.2 (accommodate additional population) reflect the need to balance new development with what's already there.
- In Section 5.1 the plan outlines that the land use framework allows for around 700 new residential units in the area. Figures 5.3 and 5.4 outline the possible implications for the size and location of buildings in the area. The map clearly suggests an increase in the amount and size of buildings overtime.

In conclusion: The mass and height of the buildings in the proposed George Hotel and Residences project would represent a significant change for the area. The OCP contains policies and guidelines that emphasize retaining the existing character of the area, and others that support an increase in building mass and height in the area over time. Council's task when dealing with development applications in such circumstances is to choose which guidelines will have priority. There is support in the OCP for approval of the form and character as presented, but the OCP could also support a rejection of the proposal and a requirement that the building mass and height be reduced to provide greater compatibility with the existing character of the area. On balance, staff consider that the form and character as presented appropriately balances the Town's objectives for the area as set out in the OCP Harbour Area Plan and merits support.

NEXT STEPS

This report discussed form and character aspects of the rezoning application. Other topics are currently being reviewed. In the near future staff will report on:

- Protection of the Gibsons Aquifer
- Economic benefits for the municipality
- Affordable housing and amenity contributions

RECOMMENDATIONS / ALTERNATIVES

Staff recommendations are listed on page 1. Alternative recommendations are listed below.

Alternatively, if Council would like to request further changes to the proposed form and character:

That the applicant for the George Hotel & Residences be requested to revise the proposed form and character in order to address the following Council concerns:.....

Alternatively, if Council deems the proposed form and character as not being compatible with the OCP's Harbour Area Plan:

That the applicant for the George Hotel & Residences be advised that the proposed form and character is considered not to be compatible with the OCP's Harbour Area Plan.

Respectfully Submitted,



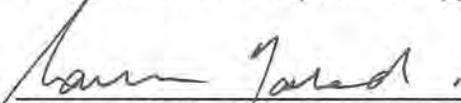
André Boel, RPP
Director of Planning



Odete Pinho, RPP
Planning Consultant for the Town

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS:

I have reviewed the report and support the recommendation(s).



Emanuel Machado
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS A, B, C

- A. George Hotel & Residences Plans (A.0.0.0 – A.11.0.1) dated December 20, 2013 issued for rezoning / DP, including mark-ups illustrating the changes resulting from Advisory Planning Commission recommendations

(under separate cover)

- B. Landscape Plans L1, 2, 3 dated 13.09.24 and L4 dated 13.10.09

(under separate cover)

- C. Visualisations by Chris Foyd

(in the report and under separate cover)

ATTACHMENT D

Excerpt from January 14 staff report discussing the proposal in relation to the design guidelines in the OCP's Harbour Area Plan

Development Permit Form and Character application

The Development Permit application for form and character needs to be considered under the guidelines of Development Permit Area No. 5 Guidelines in the OCP's Harbour Area Plan.

The following information has been provided by the applicant to aide in the consideration of the proposed form and character:

- *Project rationale (page 1 – 10 in application materials)*
- *Architectural drawings (appendix A) and landscaping plan (appendix B)*
- *A physical model of the proposed buildings has been provided (displayed at Town Hall lobby)*
- *Exterior renderings and 8 view analysis illustrations*
- *Shadow analysis for December, June and September*

The following describes the highlights of how the proposal addresses the applicable "Harbour Area Wide" design guidelines. The intent of the guidelines is described in the OCP as "fostering design that retains, reinforces and enhances the character of the Harbour Area while providing for improvements and change."

Building scale and massing

The guidelines call for designs that are pedestrian oriented and with building façade that step back from pedestrian routes. Variation in roof heights is encouraged and the design should address uphill views.

In terms of massing, the proposal outlines a six-storey hotel and a five-storey residential building on top of two levels of underground parking as seen from the Gower Point Road side. On the waterfront the hotel measures eight storeys and the residential building seven storeys. It should be noted that the buildings step back as the height increases. Between levels P1 and 1 (second and third floor on the waterfront side) the façades of both buildings step back 3 m. Further stepping back takes place between levels 1 and 2 and levels 2 and 3 for the hotel building. For the residential building stepping back is applied between level P1 and 1, level 1 and 2, level 4 and 5. (See also A4.0.1)

ATTACHMENT D (CONTINUED)

The proposed buildings are significantly larger than existing buildings in the Gibsons Landing area. The size of the buildings is not particularly "village" like and could be considered to have a more urban form. In the OCP's Harbour Area Plan it is envisioned that overtime building scale would increase. The plan describes the need to balance the village scale and character while embracing the growth necessary for an economically viable, sustainable and vibrant community. Materials and landscaping plan do reflect the wood and West Coast features that are mentioned in the general Design Guidelines (see also A9.0.1, A9.0.2, A9.0.3). The applicant has indicated that the viability of the project depends on a hotel size of at least 100 rooms.

In the proposal, the residential building has ground oriented units along the walkway through the site. On the waterfront side a sidewalk café, retail, the waterfront walkway and the restaurant on the pier provide a range of uses as possible pedestrian destinations. A central pedestrian-only walkway replaces existing Winn Road. The proposal outlines a wide pedestrian walkway through the centre of the site, which maintains and improves the current access through Winn Road. Along the waterfront new access is provided by the proposed walkway and pier (see also A1.0.1). The proposed waterfront walkway would solve a key missing link in the envisioned waterfront walkway.

Terracing

The guidelines call for following the site contours and any retaining walls should be designed as important features.

The proposal steps back from the ocean but doesn't follow the uphill contour fully. Wall facades that could have the appearance of a retaining wall are designed with green walls and terraced planters (see also A4.01, A4.02, A4.03, and A4.04).

Roofs

The guidelines describe the desire for sloping roofs, roof articulation with architectural features, design that reduces view impacts.

The proposal has a combination of flat and green roofs on the lower levels and 10 sections of sloping roof on top of the buildings with different sizes and orientations. A gravel pattern roof design and the proposed separation between the buildings are aimed at addressing uphill views (see also A2.0.9).

Roofing Materials

The guidelines call for the use of wood, composite wood. Metal roofing may be used on buildings over two storeys but not in large areas

The proposal includes green roofs, sections of metal roof and gravel covered roofs (see also L3).

ATTACHMENT D (CONTINUED)

View Protection

The guidelines call for an unobstructed view corridor to allow open views of the ocean.

The proposal replaces Winn Road with a public pedestrian walkway maintaining a view corridor over the centre of the site (see also L1).

The buildings are large enough to change existing views from some uphill areas. At the same time the two buildings are separated by a corridor and this way the site plan avoids the single block appearance of the initial proposal (see also "view analysis").

Streetscape

The policy outlines streetscape elements that reinforce character and sense of place, and includes welcoming street furniture, marine articles, beach elements (driftwood) and stone retaining walls.

The proposed landscape design includes pebbled paving, beach features of rock and plantings, seating (see also L1, L2, L3, L4).

Planting

The guidelines calls for retention of mature trees and the use of planters with seasonal flowers.

The proposal does not maintain existing trees. The plan does propose the use of seasonal flowers.

Lighting

Lighting details have not been reviewed yet.

Transitions – Fencing and Landscaping

The guidelines describe the use of landscaping elements to transition from the walkway to adjoining properties.

The proposal includes a pier with planters, a shoreline with pockets of vegetation, trellises with vines (see also L1).

Parking

The guidelines discourage surface parking and promote pedestrian oriented lighting.

The proposal has all parking underground.

ATTACHMENT D (CONTINUED)

Building Height and Setbacks

The guidelines call for protection of public and private views and adequate access to daylight and sunlight.

The requested height provision is (see also A0.0.1, A4.0.1, and A4.0.3):

- *From sea level: 30.54m (100'2.5") for the residential building, 37.90m (124'4") for the hotel*
- *From average grade: 30.67m (100.61').*
- *From Gower Point Road: 26.88m (88.19 ft.)*

With regards to setbacks, distinction is made between the podium (the two underground parking levels including 2 storey façade on the waterfront) and the upper levels (see also A0.0.1).

- *The proposed podium setbacks are 0 m to the north, east and south property lines and 0.3 m (1') from Gower Point Road.*
- *The proposed upper level setbacks are 3.51 m (11'6") from Gower Point Road, 2.95 m (9') from the sea walk, 2.74 m (9') for the south side (hotel building) and 2.13 m (7') for the north side (residential building). It should be noted that the buildings step back from the waterfront as the height increases.*

Sun and shadow impacts extend to portions of Holland Park and Winegarden Park. In June shadow impacts are very limited, only affecting a narrow strip adjacent to the site. In September (and March) shadow impacts result in up to 25% of the park shaded in the afternoon. In December shadow impacts at noon cover approximately 30 – 40% of Winegarden Park (see also "view analysis").