

Grandview-Woodland Area Council
c/o Britannia Community Centre
1661 Napier Street
Vancouver BC
V5L 4X4

Mike Chu
Project Coordinator
City Hall
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver
BC V5Y 1V4

Tuesday 17 March 2009

Dear Mr. Chu:

Grandview-Woodland Area Council (GWAC), the main community association of Grandview Woodland, is writing to express its concern about Development Permit No. DE412468 for 1643 and 1649 Kitchener Street. The proposed development is to be known as 1667 Kitchener.

GWAC's concern, more specifically, is with six of the relaxations that are being sought for the site's current RM-4 zoning:

- A relaxation of the allowable building envelope height from 23.95 feet to 36.04 feet.
- A relaxation of the maximum building height from 35.10 feet to 36.04 feet.
- A relaxation of the rear yard setback from 25.10 feet to zero.
- A relaxation of the west side setback from 6.89 feet to 6 feet.
- A relaxation of the east side setback from 6.89 feet to 0.75 feet.
- Containment angle from 135 degrees to non-compliant.

GWAC presents reasons below why the six relaxations should not be granted but, before presenting those reasons, GWAC lists some general more concerns about the proposed development.

1. General concerns about Development Permit No. DE412468

1.1. Five buildings/ten units. Though apparently allowed under RM-4 zoning, putting five buildings (ten units) on the site is completely **out of character** with the residential developments to the west and south of the site.

1.2. Sixteen parking spots. Putting in parking on the site commensurate with five buildings (ten units) would produce **unacceptable levels of traffic** along the lane to the north, and especially the lane to the east. This would exacerbate the problem of the unusually high level of vehicular traffic along the lane from the east due to people visiting the businesses that have off-street parking on that lane, notably the launderette and dry cleaner at 1315 Commercial Drive (William's Coin Laundry & Dry Cleaning) and the café at 1321 Commercial Drive (Caffe Abruzzo). There is also appreciable pedestrian traffic in the lane because both the preceding businesses can be accessed by foot from the lane, and people cut through from Grandview Park to Kitchener.

1.3. *Fir tree on Kitchener.* The proposed development would call for the removal of the large, attractive fir tree on Kitchener Street. One characteristic of the streets off this part of Commercial Drive is their trees, therefore it would be **out of character** to remove this tree.

2. Reasons for not relaxing the building envelope height

2.1. *Box-like buildings.* Allowing this relaxation (and non-compliant containment angle) would create buildings that would be **much more box-like** than any nearby purely residential dwellings, and would be completely **out of character** with them.

2.2. *Four-storey “wall” to north.* The proposed relaxation of building envelope height, maximum building height, and rear yard setback would create an unfriendly streetscape with a **visually unacceptable, out-of-character**, four-storey “wall” along the lane to the north.

2.3. *Considerable shadow.* The combination of the proposed relaxations of building envelope height, maximum building height, west side setback, and non-compliant containment angle will cast a **considerable shadow** on the yards of 1642 Charles and 1646 Charles to the north, 1639 Kitchener (rear) and 1637 Kitchener (front) to the west.

2.4. *Potential “canyon” to north.* The same combination of relaxations would create a **precedent** along the lane to the north, so that if someone wanted to develop another property along the same lane, s/he could argue for the same relaxations. If developments were allowed were allowed along both sides of the lane, the effect would be a **narrow, tall canyon**.

3. Reasons for not relaxing the maximum building height

3.1. *Taller buildings.* Granting this relaxation would create buildings taller than any nearby RM-4 residential dwellings, and **out of character** with them. The developer has given no rationale or community benefit for this proposed relaxation.

3.2. *Four-storey “wall” to north.* See 2.2.

3.3. *Considerable shadow.* See 2.3.

3.4. *Potential “canyon” to north.* See 2.4.

4. Reasons for not relaxing the rear yard setback

4.1. *Four-storey “wall” to north.* See 2.2.

4.2. *Considerable shadow.* See 2.3.

4.3. *Potential “canyon” to north.* See 2.4.

4.4. *Blind corner.* Relaxing the rear yard setback and east side setback would create a **blind corner** at the intersection of the lane to the north and lane to the east.

4.5. *Vehicle/pedestrian hazard.* The unacceptable levels of traffic, combined with the blind corner, would create a **hazard for vehicles and pedestrians** using the lanes, especially the lane to the east of the site.

5. Reasons for not relaxing the west side setback

5.1. *Inadequate protection.* The proposed west side setback, in combination with the proposed non-compliant containment angle, will **not provide adequate protection** for the neighbouring properties, especially the property at 1639 Kitchener (the rear townhouse to the immediate west).

5.2. *Considerable shadow.* See 2.3.

6. Reasons for not relaxing the east side setback

6.1. *Four-storey “wall” to east.* The proposed relaxation of building envelope height, maximum building height, and east side setback would create an unfriendly streetscape with a **visually unacceptable, out-of-character**, four-storey “wall” along the lane to the east.

6.2. *Blind corner.* See 4.4.

6.3. *Vehicle/pedestrian hazard.* See 4.5.

7. Reasons for not allowing the non-compliant containment angle

7.1. *Box-like buildings.* See 2.1.

7.2. *Four-storey “wall” to north.* See 2.2.

7.3. *Considerable shadow.* See 2.3.

7.4. *Potential “canyon” to north.* See 2.4.

7.5. *Inadequate protection.* See 5.1.

Sincerely,

The Directors of Grandview-Woodland Area Council

(Max Addington, Selena Couture, Annwen Davies, Tom Durrie, Dan Fass, Bing Jensen, Brenda Koch (Poesy Dirtyfoot), Susinn McFarlen, Craig Ollenberger, Brian Peaslee, Richard Penneway, Petronella Vander Valk)

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