

**Development Permit in Chinatown (Ward 7) at 117, 121, 123, 125, and 129 - 2
Avenue SW and 116, 120, 124, 130 and 134 - 3 Avenue SW, DP2018-2769**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This application was submitted by Busby Perkins + Will Architects on 2018 June 08 on behalf of El Condor Lands Inc. The application proposes a new mixed-use tower and podium development consisting of:

- 524 residential units;
- 150 hotel rooms;
- 4,000 square metres of commercial retail uses at grade and second floor;
- 3 towers (2 towers at 92 metres, 1 tower at 46 metres);
- a total of 480 underground parking stalls.

The proposal is highlighted by mixed use development including multi-residential, hotel, and commercial uses; active frontages at grade; pedestrian permeability via walkways through the site, lined with commercial units; small tenancies and building articulation that is reflective of Chinatown; and a design which incorporates Chinese architectural elements.

The application is subject to a critical timeline. Council has given first and second reading to a pending redesignation of the subject lands, but has withheld third reading until a development permit on the subject site is conditionally approved by Calgary Planning Commission.

The proposal is consistent with applicable City policies including those of the Municipal Development Plan (MDP), proposed amendments to the Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) and with the Council-endorsed Guiding Principles (approved 2016) for development in Chinatown. More specifically, the proposal aligns with the Direct Control land use designation (pending third reading from Council) that has been designed for the site.

Overall, the proposed design is highly sensitive to its context through the distribution of its massing, the use of relevant external materials and the composition of its street-facing and internal networks.

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ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

That Calgary Planning Commission:

1. **RECEIVE AND ACCEPT** this report and attachments for information; and
2. Recommend the Development Authority, without having to return to Calgary Planning Commission, **APPROVE** Development Permit DP2018-2769 of a New: Retail and Consumer Service, Restaurant: Licensed-Medium (3), Hotel, and Dwelling units, at 117, 121, 123, 125, and 129 2 Avenue SW and 116, 120, 124, 130, 134 3 Avenue SW (Plan C; Block 8; Lots 6 to 12 and 28 to 40) with conditions (Attachment 2), subject to the approval of the bylaw amendment associated with LOC2012-0101 by Council.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

On 2016 December 05, Council gave first and second reading to Bylaws 179D2015 and 38P2015. Third reading was withheld pending approval by Calgary Planning Commission of a development permit. The exact language of the motion arising was as follows:

“ADOPT, Moved by Councillor Chabot, Seconded by Councillor Stevenson, that the Administration Recommendations contained in Report C2016-0907 be adopted, **after amendment**, as follows:

That Council:

5. Withhold 3rd reading of Bylaws 179D2015 as amended, pending the **conditional** approval of a Development Permit by Calgary Planning Commission
6. Withhold 3rd reading of Bylaw 38P2015 pending the **conditional** approval of a Development Permit by Calgary Planning Commission **or the passage of a new ARP for Chinatown.**”

Third reading will therefore need to be given to the pending bylaws by 2018 December 05 to ensure that the bylaws do not expire *sine die*.

Subject to Calgary Planning Commission granting a conditional approval to this development permit, the item would then proceed to Council via a Bylaw Tabulation Report to allow third reading to be granted.

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BACKGROUND

Relevant Planning History

The history of this development permit begins with a land use amendment application made in 2012 (LOC2012-0101, CPC2015-183).

CPC2015-183 proposed a land use amendment and a site-specific change to the Chinatown ARP. The existing Land Use District is a Direct Control (DC) District that applies to a large portion of Chinatown and whose rules are also enshrined in the Chinatown ARP. The land use application proposed a number of changes from the original DC District and ARP, most significantly to the density and building height allowed.

The DC District as originally proposed by the applicant in 2012 was modeled on land uses found in the Beltline and Downtown, and was therefore not unusual for Centre City neighbourhoods. However, the fact that this model was markedly different from the densities and heights historically found in Chinatown created significant opposition within the community. As a result, CPC2015-183 was tabled by Council twice (2015 November 09 and 2016 February 08).

Community members expressed concerns with the application, citing its significant intensification relative to the existing ARP, the potential to forever alter Chinatown, and the belief that there was not enough public consultation done. There was also a desire to evaluate a detailed building design, rather than the set of broad development rules that form a Land Use Amendment application.

Subsequently in 2016 April, Council referred the application back to Administration to undertake a community-wide City-led engagement process with an intent to not only gather input on the proposed application, but also to scope a potential new Chinatown ARP. The engagement took place between May and October of 2016, and involved more than 4,700 participants in on-street events, interviews, open houses, workshops, online participation and included a walking tour event. Based on this engagement exercise, Administration developed a set of Guiding Principles (Attachment 7) whose purpose was to inform the direction of a future ARP and to help assess applications that occur before a new ARP can be drafted (work on the new ARP is scheduled to begin in 2019). The Guiding Principles provoked a list of recommended changes to the pending land use and policy amendments, which in turn was then incorporated into the original 2012 land use proposal.

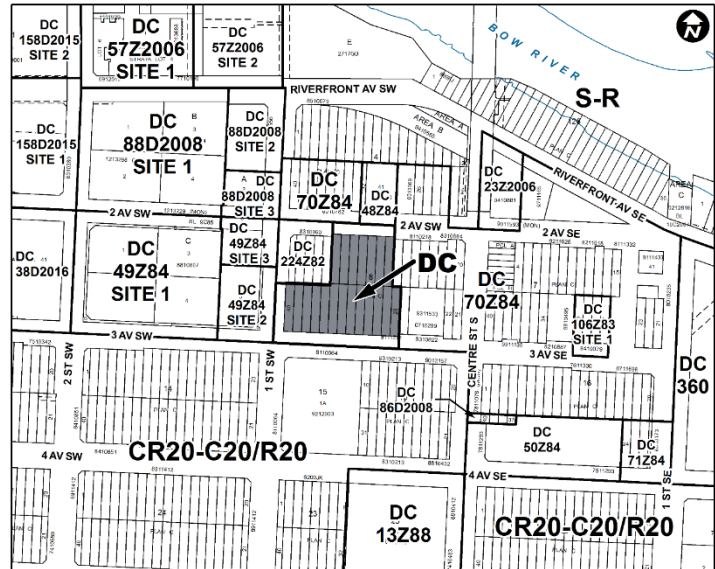
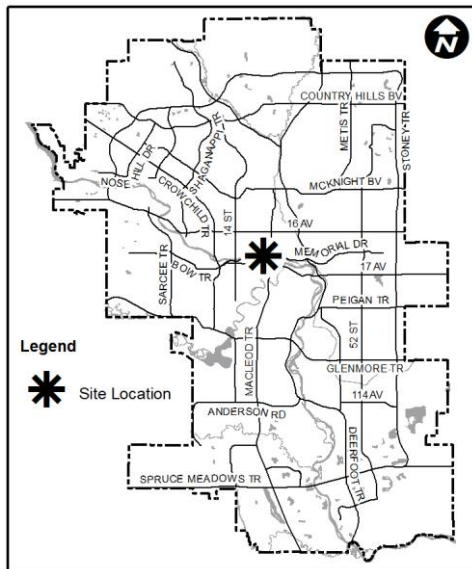
The revised proposal was heard by Council on 2016 December 05. First and second readings were granted to both the new DC District (Attachment 5) and the amendments to the ARP (Attachment 6). Third reading of the bylaws was withheld pending conditional approval of a development permit by Calgary Planning Commission.

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Location Maps



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Site Context

The site is composed of 10 separate parcels that currently contain a surface parking lot. Taken together, the parcels compose about half of the block delineated by 2 Avenue SW, 3 Avenue SW, Centre Street S and 1 Street SW.

Adjacent parcels are mostly designated DC Direct Control Bylaw 70Z84, a district which applies to most of Chinatown. However, south of 3 Avenue SW, the adjacent lands are designated CR20-C20/R20 – Commercial/Residential District.

The surrounding development to the south is therefore composed of office towers (Sunlife Plaza) very typical of the downtown area. To the west is the Chinese Cultural Centre and to the east and north is a mix of multi-residential, mixed-use and institutional facilities. The result is that the streetscape on 2 Avenue is more of a neighbourhood scale and typical of Chinatown than the office tower environment on 3 Avenue.

As identified in Figure 1, the population in Chinatown is at an all-time high in 2018, due largely to the influx of residents from the Waterfront development to the west.

Figure 1: Community Peak Population

Chinatown	
Peak Population Year	2018
Peak Population	2,176
2018 Current Population	2,176
Difference in Population (Number)	0
Difference in Population (Percentage)	0 %

Source: The City of Calgary 2017 Civic Census

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

The development application proposal represents a balance between developer aspirations and the needs and desires of Chinatown residents and users as expressed through the extensive public engagement that occurred through the summer of 2016.

The design is heavily informed by the Guiding Principles that were the direct result of that City-led public engagement.

The development consists of a commercial podium topped by three towers. The lowest tower, a 150-room hotel, is 12 storeys in height and is located on the lower-profile environment of 2 Avenue SW. The other two towers, 29 storeys in height each, are located on the south edge of the site at 3 Avenue SW and consist of multi-residential development.

Additionally, a small three-storey mixed-use building is located to the north of the southwest tower and fronts onto 1 Street SW.

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Site and Building Design

Massing-wise, the lower hotel building on the north side of the site maintains the more neighbourhood-like environment of 2 Avenue SW. Its proposed height is very much in keeping with the height rules of the existing Chinatown ARP and Direct Control District, and therefore matches the height and massing of many of the existing buildings on 2 Avenue SW. The taller buildings are likewise located on the 3 Avenue SW frontage in order to take advantage of the more intense urban context there.

The podium consists of commercial retail units (CRU) at grade throughout, as well as several restaurant spaces at both grade and the second podium level. In the residential buildings, commercial space is mostly limited to the main floor, though the massing of the building itself is projected outward up to the sixth storey level to create the effect of a taller podium on the 3 Avenue SW frontage.

In response to the Guiding Principles for Chinatown and to the guidelines of the pending Direct Control District, the podium has been split into two with a throughway that not only provides for some sunlight penetration to the interior of the site, but also accommodates pedestrian traffic. The open-air throughway is lined with CRUs along its length. The area will maintain pedestrian connectivity between 2 Avenue SW and 3 Avenue SW, as well as generate foot traffic of its own.

A second, narrower pedestrian-only connection is provided to the west from the main throughway. This connection is also lined with CRUs.

In combination with the small size and narrow frontages of the ground-floor CRUs, these internal spaces reflect the environments found in many North American Chinatowns.

As directed by the pending Direct Control District, the building facades incorporate Asian-inspired architectural elements. These are interpreted in contemporary form and materials and are more subtle and less literal than may be found in earlier developments in Chinatown. The hotel building is composed of a glass curtain wall fronted by a perforated grey masonry screen that allows light passage from and into the building. The visual form of the screen element and the material itself are also found on the upper storeys of the residential towers, though on a much larger scale. These screens recall those found in traditional Asian design details, functioning similarly to create texture, opacity, and variation on the facades, but in a completely contemporary way.

As a result of the height difference between the three towers, the impact of shadowing is minimized upon the 2 Avenue SW streetscape and is equivalent to what would have been cast by 2 Avenue buildings compliant with the existing ARP maximum height.

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Public Realm and Outdoor Amenities Spaces

The public realm of the project is defined by high-quality at-grade pedestrian spaces. The pedestrian corridors and public streets are all lined with fine-grained, small tenancies that encourage activity and pedestrian traffic. A small plaza is provided along the southern frontage. Landscaped outdoor amenity space for the residents can also be found on the seventh floor.

Site Access and Parking

Vehicular access to the site is from both 2 Avenue SW and 3 Avenue SW. The north access is for public parking access to the hotel, residential and commercial uses. The south access is to accommodate loading and service functions.

Pedestrian access through the site is provided by the main north-south pedestrian spine, as well as the narrower connection from this spine to the west and 1 Street SW.

Class 2 bicycle parking compliant with the Land Use Bylaw is provided at various locations throughout the main level of the development, including within the pedestrian and shared spaces.

Secured Class 1 bicycle parking is provided at two locations on the main floor of the development as well as on the first floor of the parkade.

The proposal contains an overall net relaxation of 46 parking stalls. Based on the findings of a Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA) and the site's proximity to a future Green Line station, the relaxation was deemed acceptable.

Transportation

As mentioned earlier, a TIA was submitted with the application and reviewed by Administration. The main finding was that signalization of the intersection of 2 Avenue SW and 1 Street SW is required to accommodate additional traffic from the development. A Prior-to-Release condition obligating the developer to fund this infrastructure has been included.

Utilities and Servicing

All deep services are available from adjacent public streets. Furthermore, conditions have been attached to the application that will ensure that the applicant's obligations for Off-site and Centre City Utility Levies will be fulfilled.

Design Narrative

Citywide Urban Design

Administration's Citywide Urban Design team reviewed the initial proposal and worked with the applicant to create a more strongly defined podium at a height in keeping with the pedestrian scale and street edge definition desired along 2 Avenue SW. The net result was that the podium

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on this façade was extended in height to a full two storeys. Guidance was also provided encouraging opportunities be provided for flexibility and customization of entries, signage, canopies and branding elements to lend the visual diversity expected in Chinatown.

Urban Design Review Panel (UDRP)

The proposal appeared at the Urban Design Review Panel (UDRP) twice: once at the pre-application stage, and the next prior to the issuance of the first Detailed Team Review.

UDRP comments were generally supportive on both occasions. UDRP comments and the applicant's response to the comments can be found in Attachment 4.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

From a CPTED perspective, the main area of potential concern is the internal pedestrian network. To counteract some of the narrow spaces found within, the proposal contains extensive, attractive overhead lighting. Combined with the activity from the commercial tenancies, these elements should minimize safety concerns.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

In keeping with Administration's standards practices, this application was circulated to relevant stakeholders and notice posted on-site. The application was also included in the Planning & Development Map (PDMaP), which is an online tool that includes relevant information on planning applications.

The decision made by the Development Authority will be advertised in accordance with the Municipal Government Act. As this development permit is for a discretionary use, an appeal may be filed based on the decision on the entire permit, the decision to grant a relaxation, or any of the conditions of approval.

The applicant undertook their own engagement program that consisted of two open houses (2018 July 21 and July 25) which Administration attended to provide clarification on the planning process. An online survey and several pop-up events were also undertaken. The applicant has created a What We Heard Report that gathers up the input and responds to the most common concerns. Many of the comments and sought-after requests were either technically unachievable or would result in a development that was less responsive to the Guiding Principles. As a result, the developer was not able to respond to the comments with significant changes to the application.

Citizen and Community Association Comments

Through the circulation and notice posting processes, Administration received five letters of opposition from concerned citizens and three letters of qualified support. Most of the concerns centred on the proposed height, the loss of Chinese character from Chinatown, and the potential impact on the senior population.

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The Chinatown Community Association submitted a letter in opposition, which is included as Attachment 3. While the letter outlines a number of concerns, the overall conclusion was that the development did not align with the Guiding Principles for Development in Chinatown. Administration believes this is not the case. The development commendably responds to all of the Guiding Principles, and the expressed concerns have been effectively addressed through the design of the development.

Strategic Alignment

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (Statutory – 2014)

The site is located within the “City, Town” area as identified on Schedule C: *South Saskatchewan Regional Plan* map in the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP). While the SSRP makes no specific reference to this site, the proposal is consistent with policies on Land Use Patterns.

Municipal Development Plan (Statutory – 2009)

The site is part of the Centre City Activity Centre in the Municipal Development Plan. No major departures from the general MDP policies were identified.

Centre City Plan (Non-Statutory – 2007)

Chinatown is a specific neighbourhood within the Centre City Plan. The plan identifies 1 Street SW and Centre St S as major pedestrian corridors, and the Chinese Cultural Centre as the focus of the neighbourhood centre. By providing amenity-rich pedestrian access through the site, an influx of residents and commercial development, the proposal contributes greatly to this area’s existence as a neighbourhood centre.

Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) (Statutory - 1984)

The site is within the Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan, which has embedded the ARP’s development standards and parameters into a Direct Control District (70Z84) that applies to most of Chinatown. The proposal exceeds the height and density allowed by the ARP. Therefore, a site-specific amendment to the ARP proceeded with the pending Direct Control District to Council in 2016. Like the proposed land use change, the ARP amendment received first and second reading from City Council, with third reading pending conditional approval of the development permit

Guiding Principles for Development in Chinatown (2016)

A set of Guiding Principles for development in Chinatown was adopted in December of 2016 as an addition to the Chinatown ARP. These principles were integrated into the pending land use. The proposal aligns with each of the principles as follows:

1. *All new developments reinforce the distinct cultural and historical character of Chinatown.*

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The building design and materials incorporate Asian character through the use of screening elements and geometric patterns that are reflective of Asian construction, without being a reflexive replication of what already exists in the neighbourhood.

Further, the height of the building on 2 Avenue SW has been kept to the height expected by the existing ARP, as well as to the heights of existing buildings along this street. The neighbourhood feeling of this street is therefore maintained.

Lastly, the proposal mirrors the narrow buildings and smaller tenancies of existing Chinatown development. The façade at grade level has been articulated every 7.5 metres.

2. *Chinatown is a residential, mixed-use community.*

The proposal provides 524 additional dwelling units, a significant contribution to the residential base of the community. The pending Direct Control district mandates a minimum of 60% of the floor area ratio (FAR) be residential. Without counting the hotel use as residential, the proposal provides 75% of its total FAR as residential.

3. *All developments enhance the pedestrian experience.*

The development has responded to this principle in four ways: 1. A reduced overall building height at 2 Avenue as described previously. 2. Façade articulation as described above. 3. The podium has been split to allow sunlight penetration and pedestrian connectivity between 2nd and 3rd Avenues. 4. An effective podium height of between two and six storeys, offsetting the height of the towers for pedestrians at street level.

4. *Chinatown is a community for all, and provides housing for residents of all ages and incomes.*

Chinatown is currently home to a high proportion of seniors. They are a hallmark of the community and are well-served by the existing businesses and services in Chinatown. New residential development would add to the population base and allow shops and services to remain viable for the senior population. Furthermore, the presence of more residential units will allow for some diversification of the resident population.

5. *There are a variety of options for getting to Chinatown.*

While there is no direct contribution of the development to transportation options, the development is in close proximity to a station on the future Green Line. By providing residences and commercial uses, the development will support the viability of the Green Line.

The loss of the existing surface parking stalls was identified as a concern during public engagement on this file. However Administration felt that the downtown location and the proximity to a future LRT station did not warrant the provision of replacement parking.

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6. *Chinatown has a variety of public and private gathering spaces.*

The split of the podium not only provides for pedestrian connectivity, but can also act as potential gathering space on the site. Furthermore, a small plaza has been provided on the south side of the building.

7. *Chinatown is safe, clean and vibrant, day or night.*

The development provides additional population base to ensure activity at all times of the day, thereby providing passive surveillance of the area. The pedestrian spaces are properly lit and lined by commercial retail units, again providing surveillance, activity and a safe environment.

8. *Commercial activity in Chinatown supports the residential and cultural community.*

This principle is supported by many of the recommendations previously mentioned. Furthermore, by ensuring that the proposal contains small-scale, street-friendly commercial uses, the resulting commercial activity will be much in line with what exists in Chinatown today.

Land Use Bylaw 1P2007

All the listed uses are discretionary under the pending Direct Control District. Only four relaxations are being sought (outlined below). None of the requested relaxations will have a notable impact on adjacent developments.

Bylaw Relaxations		
Regulation	Standard	Provided
12 Building Setbacks	The front setback area must have a minimum depth of 1.5 metres and a maximum depth of 3.0 metres.	Plans indicate a 0m (-1.50m) minimum and 5.52m (+2.52m) maximum west setback. <i>Rationale: 5.5m setback is only for a door inset. Bulk of building on west side is at 3.45m in an arcade form, fulfilling the intent of the rule.</i>
14 Required Motor Vehicle Parking Stalls	393 residential stalls required.	340 Provided = 53 stall relaxation. <i>Rationale: supported by the TIA.</i>
	53 visitor stalls required.	42 provided = 11 stall relaxation. <i>Rationale: supported by the TIA</i>
15 Sunlight Protection		Sien Lok Park is shadowed (see shadow studies). <i>Rationale: Amount of additional shadowing is very minor (69 m²) and no more than development on adjacent sites would cause.</i>

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Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

The proposed development provides a population base which will allow the continued maintenance of services and shops for seniors in the neighbourhood.
No environmental issues have been identified at this time.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

There are no known impacts to the current and future operating budgets at this time.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

The proposed development does not trigger capital infrastructure investment and therefore there are no growth management concerns at this time.

Risk Assessment

There are no significant risks associated with this proposal.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

The proposed development brings a significant contribution to the community of Chinatown. The noted relaxations have no material impact on the use or enjoyment of the adjacent properties. The proposal aligns substantially with all policy plans.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Development Permit Plans
2. Conditions of Approval
3. Chinatown Community Association Letter
4. Urban Design Review Panel comments and applicant's response
5. Proposed Direct Control District 179D2015
6. Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan Amendment 38P2015
7. Guiding Principles for Development in Chinatown