

FIRST SHAUGHNESSY ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: November 20, 2014

TIME: 4:00 pm

PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, Vancouver City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE FIRST SHAUGHNESSY DESIGN PANEL:

Hanako Amaya	BCSLA
Dallas Brodie	Vice-Chair, Resident, SHPOA
Donna Chomichuk	BCSLA
Linda Collins	Chair, Resident
Erika Gardner	Resident
Lori Hodgkinson	Resident
Robert Johnson	AIBC
Michael Kluckner	Vancouver Heritage
Benjamin Ling	AIBC
Alastair Munro	Resident, SHPOA
David Nelson	Resident
Frank Shorrock	Resident, SHPOA
Kerri-Lee Watson	Resident

CITY STAFF:

Colin King	Development Planner
Georgina Lyons	Development Planner

LIAISONS:

George Affleck	City Councillor
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REGRETS:

Peter Kappel	Resident, SHPOA
Lisa MacIntosh	REBGV
Mollie Massie	Vancouver Heritage

RECORDING

SECRETARY: Lidia Mcleod

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 1198 Balfour Avenue (Application first)
2. 1568 Matthews Avenue (Application first)

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Collins called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm and noted the presence of a quorum.

Business:

There was discussion about Panel minutes and minute note taking by City staff.

Heritage Action Plan

Donald Luxton of Donald Luxton & Associates and Tanis Knowles-Yarnell from the City of Vancouver presented an update of the Heritage Action Plan including progress to date and work program schedule for 2015. There was Panel commentary that an open and transparent consultation process is expected.

Project Updates:

3780 East Boulevard	DE Application received - new house
1999 Cedar Crescent	DE Application received - retention
3738 Pine Crescent	Revised DE expected

Review of minutes:

N/A

The Panel considered two Applications for presentation

- 1. Address: **1198 Balfour Avenue**
 Description: New house on Post-Date Site
 Review: Application - first
 Architect: Formwerks Architectural
 Delegation: James Bussey, Brian Scully, Claudia Koerner

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (11 in favor, 0 against)

Planning Comments:

Proposal for a new house on a post-date site located at the corner of Balfour Ave. & Selkirk St. The asymmetrical massing of the proposed dwelling is a response to the corner location. The site does not present any significant cross slopes and has lane access to the south. The proposal removes an existing sidewalk crossing to Selkirk St. Tree removal is limited to the internal side yard.

Questions to Panel:

1. Does the form of development proposed successfully engage with the FS ODP & Guidelines as it relates to both architectural and landscape designs?
2. Can the panel make specific commentary around the north (Balfour Ave) elevation as it relates to the roof profile and attic lights?

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The house is facing two dominant streets in First Shaughnessy, so in reflection the corner is marked very strongly. The front entrance is marked by a front canopy and arched window light. When seen from the position of the street the roof appears vigorous and seems to have greater height. From the street-view there is a strong expression given to the soffits and articulated roof pieces, predominantly on the corners. An appropriate grand fronting façade has been setback where the roof angles back towards the site face. The front of the house is marked as expression to the front of Shaughnessy, while the back yard is highly recognizable as street-front use by virtue of a covered porch.

Around the site there is an existing hedge which has been removed in some places to allow for backyard viewing and create a slightly un-encased backyard. This, combined with the covered porch, allows for transparent views and creates a definite backyard and front yard visibility.

The materials used contribute to tripartite expression by using a stone base and stone coining around the windows. The middle wall is punctuated with many windows and, along with the roof, contributes to tripartite expression as well. Stone, stucco and a slate roof are being proposed.

Landscape:

It is proposed to keep the existing laurel hedge along Balfour up to the covered porch in order to create a formal expression of the house on that corner. Deeper into lot the hedge is broken up and there is more filigree planting to communicate to Selkirk Street and the neighbourhood.

There are two pedestrian entries to the house off Balfour and Selkirk, with Selkirk being a secondary entrance to the backyard. There will also be a six-foot wrought iron gate with an arbor for roses to create a romantic and inviting feel. The main entrance off Balfour uses strong formalities to pick up on the two roof gables. A recessed front gate into the property adds interest and draws people in.

A circle planting bed is proposed in the front yard to add to grand feel and formality. Boxwood hedges with evergreen camellia, roses and lush plantings, are to be planted against the foundation of the house. There are no current significant trees on the lot; just cedar and holly stumps which will be removed.

The backyard has been maximized for entertaining and as a play area for children. A big sunset maple tree is proposed as a focal point, along with a small koi pond to be placed in line with the kitchen and living room of the house. The driveway entrance will be moved to come off the lane and connect to basement parking. A two-step retaining wall with evergreen planting will also be added if it is not too imposing. Around the other corner four small vegetable garden plots are to be added.

Panel Commentary:

The panel commented that this is a beautiful house with a unique style, and commends the applicant on the skillful massing and dialogue between the landscape and architecture. There were comments the overall design is charming and that this project is interesting and different.

There was much support for the use of stained and bevelled glass windows which the panel felt were unusual and charming.

Overall there is too much wall and not enough of a roof. The panel suggests lowering the ceilings in order to create space for a larger roof. A non-duroid roof should be considered.

Although skylights are currently prohibited in First Shaughnessy, the panel would consider supporting one if it were flat or in a less obtrusive design. It was noted this skylight cannot be seen from street view

The east elevation seems a bit flat, and the capping stone seems a bit thin. Wrapping the roof around on the south side and thickening the stone may fix this. As well, the north elevation is a bit too busy and could be simplified.

There are concerns that even though the back patio is visually appealing, it will prove a tough maintenance problem and be prone to being messy and dirty.

There are also concerns that the proposed vegetable garden is ill-placed, as it will not receive enough sunlight in its current location. Having a more formal front yard and placing the garden in the back would allow for better vegetable growth. As well, enclosing the south-west corner would create a safer backyard space for children.

Chair Summary:

We are enthusiastic about reviewing a project that presents us with a unique design and overall there is a lot of support for the project.

The massing on the lot was applauded. The house is designed in sections with the side pieces set back from the centre section and the street, rather the front elevation appearing as one dominating block. This creates visual appeal from the street and opens up the landscaping to interesting spaces, it also makes the building appear less overpowering along the streetscape.

There is support for the front elevation window layout at the corner of Balfour and Selkirk as it has a strong circular shape which defines the street corner. Stained and bevelled glass windows on the house are a welcome and positive design feature. There is an issue with the skylight; the panel suggests either flattening it or trying a different design that would fit better in the FS neighbourhood.

It was felt the front entrance could use some height in the form of stairs in order to make it appear more grand. One solution is to raise the main floor height in order to add stairs to the front entrance. If more roof height were allowed in FS and if the proper criteria were met this could help create a grand entrance. The roof should be of good quality and presented more prominently. The chimneys could be more substantial.

In terms of landscaping more evergreen trees for winter visuals are suggested, as well as moving the vegetable garden to the backyard.

To facilitate quality control it is the Panel's preference is that the architect be retained through to the final completion of this project and that detailed construction drawings of all exterior features be required for any builder who might work on this project without the supervision of the architect.

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| 1. | Address: | 1568 Matthews Avenue |
| | Description: | New House on site of significantly altered pre-date house |
| | Review: | Application - first |
| | Architect: | Loy Leyland Architect Inc. |
| | Delegation: | Loy Leyland, Ron Rule |
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8 in favor, 3 against)

Planning Comments:

This is a new house on Pre-Date site. Existing dwelling was not on either VHR or FS-Inventory and was assessed through merit evaluation process as being significantly altered to the extent of having no heritage value; as such, the HAPL does not apply and a new house is being considered on this mid-block no-lane access site. The proposed development removes seven existing trees and retains the existing dual sidewalk crossing to Matthews Ave.

Questions to Panel:

1. Does the form of development proposed successfully engage with the FS ODP & Guidelines as it relates to both architectural and landscape designs?
2. Can the panel make specific commentary around the Matthews Ave elevation as it relates to the roof profiles and retention of the dual sidewalk crossing with regard to tree removal?

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Stylistically the house is fairly straight forward and has a clean roofline with strong gables. The detailing of the structure is heavy but appropriate. The massing is consistent and works with the windows around the house. The main challenges are with cleaning up the site.

Landscape:

There is a circular driveway with a port-cochère, and some existing oddities on the site. The goal is to keep the site traditional and not remove any existing specimen trees. The site is currently heavily blocked by neighbour trees which create a 50% reduction in light. A meeting was arranged with the neighbours on the west side with the intent of removing some hazardous trees. The neighbours to the south were also met with to discuss the possible trimming and shaping of two oak trees which exist on both properties. The end hope is to work with the neighbours to gain some light back onto the property and create a healthier environment for everyone.

The front is treated traditionally with a fountain and some trees which focus on the port-cochère. There is a shaded walkway on the west side which would make a nice entrance to the back.

In the backyard there is a proposed swimming pool, spa, and vegetable garden. In the upper area a change in grade adds some visual interest. There are also three walls, two across from each other and a low fountain wall in the pool itself.

Panel Commentary:

There was discussion about the same overall design being used repeatedly in the neighbourhood, the term “cookie cutter” was used.

There were comments the materials proposed are not substantial enough. The timber elements and gable fascia could be more robust. Stronger stone columns would create a better feel. The roof material would fit better with the craftsman style of the house and with the FS neighbourhood and the Design Guidelines if it were cedar shingles rather than asphalt.

The fire place between the porches seems generally out of place, and a brick chimney would add a more First Shaughnessy feel and break up the long expanse of the house.

The massing is too large for the lot, a contributing factor is the huge mechanical room in the basement. There was discussion a mechanical room does not need to be that large.

More delicacy is needed in the design of the front. Currently it does not feel pedestrian-oriented, and the front elevation could be higher or more proportionate. The railings on the front elevation could be wrought iron to add contrast. The semi-circle window on the front should be taken out to simplify the front façade.

There were comments the west side balcony should be removed as the house is already heavy with balconies and this would give it more balance. A covered veranda should be re-thought as it might make the interior of the house very dark.

It is positively received that the applicant is communicating with the neighbour about several large trees that create shade on the property. More coordination is needed between the landscaper and the architect as the vegetation doesn't speak to the design of the house.

There were comments about the driveway being too overpowering. Though the driveway may appear elegant or charming and was supported by some people, it was discussed that double-driveways are not allowed on lots of less than 100 feet as they do not fit correctly within the space.

Chair Summary:

More creativity in housing design is needed. The design for this house is repetitive and lacks uniqueness for the neighbourhood. The same overall design is being used repeatedly, the Panel used the term “cookie cutter”. Further to this the design is passive, the timber elements and gable fascia could be more robust. A higher quality roof is needed, cedar shakes would be preferred.

The massing is too large for the lot, making the house feel overly large and crowded as much of the FSR is above ground. The double-height ceilings are not supported partly because they give the appearance of a false room, which looks very odd from the street.

Opinion is split on the circular driveway, but overall it seems positive. There are two porches on the front elevation which add interest to the elevation with shadow and texture. More landscape design work is required with more trees and garden interest added to the property.

Adjournment:

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:37 pm.