

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** January 16, 2013

**TIME:** 4.00 pm

**PLACE:** Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Robert Barnes  
Helen Besharat  
Gregory Borowski (Chair)  
Vincent Dumoulin  
Alan Endall  
Veronica Gillies (left after second item)  
David Grigg  
Bruce Hemstock  
Geoff McDonell  
Norm Shearing  
Peter Wreglesworth

**REGRETS:**  
Arno Matis  
Daryl Condon

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

---

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1729-1735 East 33 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue
2.	5658 Victoria Drive
3.	1399 Main Street (SkyTrain Station)
4.	245 East Georgia Street

---

**BUSINESS MEETING**

The business meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. and the Chair gave an overview of the Development Permit Board meeting on January 14, 2013 where 725 Granville Street was presented to the Board. Chair Borowski then called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. The Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 1729-1735 East 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
 DE: N/A  
 Description: Cedar Cottage Cohousing Company has applied to the City of Vancouver to rezone 1729, 1733 and 1735 East 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue from RS-1 (Single Family) District to CD-1 (Comprehensive Development) District. The proposal is for a three-storey multi-family residential development that will operate as a cohousing community. The proposed floor space ratio (FSR) is 0.98 and a maximum height of 11.5 m (37.7 feet).  
 Zoning: RS-1 to CD-1  
 Application Status: Rezoning  
 Architect: McCamant & Durrett Architects  
 Owner: Cedar Cottage Co-Housing  
 Review: Second  
 Delegation: Charles Durrett, McCamant & Durrett Architects  
 Dane Jansen, DYS Architecture  
 Judith Reeve, Judith Reeve Landscape Design  
 Brenda Birch, Cedar Cottage Co-Housing  
 Staff: Farhad Mawani and Ann McLean

**EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (4-6)**

- **Introduction:** Farhad Mawani, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a site located on East 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue near Victoria Drive. He noted that it is a single family RS-1 zoned neighbourhood with Victoria Drive having mixed-use and multiple dwelling developments. The proposal includes three lots that are being consolidated.

Mr. Mawani mentioned that on October 3, 2012, City Council approved the Interim Rezoning Policy on Increasing Affordable Housing Choices across Vancouver's Neighbourhoods. The policy is aimed at encouraging innovation and enabling real examples of ground-oriented affordable housing types to be tested for potential wider application that would provide on-going housing opportunities across the city. He added that this application is the first to be considered under this policy. Mr. Mawani stated that rezoning applications considered under the Interim Rezoning Policy must meet specific criteria regarding affordability and form of development. They must also demonstrate an enhanced level of affordability, beyond that provided through the housing type alone. This includes innovative housing models such as co-housing. The housing models that meet the affordability criteria would be required to conform to the form of development criteria, based on location.

Mr. Mawani also mentioned that on arterial streets ground-oriented forms up to a maximum of 3.5 storeys can be considered on sites that are more than 500m from a neighbourhood centre. As well, all applications under the policy are subject to urban design performance including consideration of shadow analysis, view impacts, frontage length, massing, setbacks, and demonstration of a degree of community support.

As with all rezonings applications, the Green Building Policy for Rezonings applies, requiring a minimum LEED™ Gold or equivalent rating.

Mr. Mawani described the proposal noting that it will have 31 units, market value, strata titled multi-family dwellings with a sizeable common area and shared amenity space that will operate as a cohousing community. Amenities such as a communal kitchen and gathering space, laundry room, music room, guest suite, exercise studio, roof-top deck, indoor play area, woodwork shop, bicycle repair room, meeting and exercise rooms, as well as a lounge dedicated to teenagers are anticipated in the common amenity areas.

Mr. Mawani reminded the Panel that the previous iteration evaluated by the panel proposed 27 units. This proposal has an increase in residential floor area of approximately 7,000 square feet, 1,800 square feet in amenity space, and an additional 7,000 square feet of parking and storage.

Mr. Mawani noted that a rezoning is required to permit the multiple dwelling use, height and density on this site. Similar to the original proposal, support was expressed for the cohousing concept by residents greater than five blocks away. However, the immediate neighbours continue to have concerns around the scale and density of the proposal. In particular, nearby residents have issues related to shadowing, overlook, and the general compatibility of the project as proposed on this mid-block site within the existing single family area, as well as concerns around increased traffic and parking problems.

Ann McLean, Development Planner, further described the proposal. She noted that at the previous review the Panel asked the applicant to reduce the height and density; reduce the overlook to the neighbours; improve the front yard expression; make for a better fit into the neighbourhood and improve the sustainability strategy through renewable energy sources. Ms. McLean indicated that the south elevation has been revised into two distinct building forms and the proposed setback is unchanged. The east elevation has been revised and the setbacks have been varied. The rear, north elevation, has been reduced in height and set closer to the lane and the west elevation has gained a storey on the north half.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

- Comments on form, height and density relative to the proposal's single-family context;
- Has the revised proposal adequately addressed the Panel's previous comments?

Mr. Mawani and Ms. McLean took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Charles Durrett, Architect, described the changes to the proposal since the last review. They reduced the mass in one area to one storey and have changed the colour to accentuate the recess. The goal of activating the laneway has been enhanced with a porch like environment. They have also made the project solar ready. Mr. Durrett noted that they have added more storage in the parking area. The common house has gone from three storeys to two and some of the uses have been moved to activate the laneway. He stated that they have also reduced the amount of living space overlooking the neighbours. The courtyard and the common house have been preserved as this is the life blood of the project.

The applicant took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Design development to reduce height and density;

- Design development to focus the mass in the first 35% of the site as well as the rear volume;
  - Consider an east/west orientation for the proposal;
  - Design development to reduce overlook to the neighbours;
  - Consider further passive features in terms of the envelope;
  - Further development the landscape aspects especially in the courtyard;
  - Consider a flat roof on the one storey component;
  - Consider moving the kid's room adjacent to an outdoor area;
  - Consider easing back the volume adjacent to the courtyard to reduce shadowing.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the proposal as they felt this was a benchmark project and to achieve a comfortable urban fit in the RS-1 neighbourhood was particularly important.

The Panel supported the co-housing aspect of the project and thought it was a good form of housing. Since the last review they felt the applicant had improved the grades and appreciated the inclusion of solar ready on the roofs. However the increase in density has made the proposal more of a challenge and that having an east/west orientation would help the project fit better into the neighbourhood.

Some Panel members thought there were some issues of privacy in the courtyard with respect to the proximity of windows of living areas to bedrooms. They also felt that there was a work needed by the landscape architect to make the spaces work for everyone. It was also suggested that there needed to be some spaces created in the landscape in the way for outdoor rooms. They also suggested that the walkway to the rear on the west property line needed to be softened with landscape screening against the neighbour's property. A couple of Panel members noted that the southern portion of the courtyard was problematic as it will be in shadow most of the time.

The Panel thought there were several areas needing improvement; the redistribution of the massing, improving the livability and privacy of the unit plans and the relocation of the kid's room. Several Panel members suggested moving the mass to the back of the site and as well to reorient the units to the north to reduce privacy to the immediate neighbours. One Panel member suggested moving the top units to the lane side of the site which could help to break up the length of the building along the side yard. As well it was suggested that the location of the kid's room be relocated next to an outdoor play area.

Several Panel members thought it would be useful if the east/west building in the courtyard had a flat roof as a way to add terraces or a play area.

Most of the Panel members thought the front yard expression was improved and fit better into the neighbourhood. However, several Panel members were concerned with the light wells on the east side and thought they wouldn't be effective.

Regarding sustainability, one Panel member thought there was some need for more passive features in terms of the envelope considering the amount of energy points is going to increase in the Building Bylaw before the project is built.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Durrett said this was an opportunity to support cohousing in Vancouver. He added that they will be able to address the Panel's concerns by the time they come back at the development permit stage. The project needs to go to Council for approval as well. Mr. Jansen thought there was a strong direction from the Panel on how they have to move forward. He added that they will take care of the density by reducing some of the massing.

---

2. Address:	5658 Victoria Drive
DE:	415029
Description:	Concurrent rezoning and development proposal to construct a new six-storey mixed-use building containing 28 dwelling units on the second to sixth floors with retail on the ground floor all over 22 parking spaces accessed from the lane. The project is under the STIR program.
Zoning:	C-2 to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning/Complete
Architect:	Matthew Cheng Architects Inc.
Owner:	Bhandal Homes Ltd.
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Matthew Cheng, Matthew Cheng Architects Inc. Patricia Campbell, PMG Landscape Architects Ltd.
Staff:	Grant Miller and Colin King

---

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (10-0)**

- **Introduction:** Grant Miller, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a revised concurrent rezoning and development permit application for a C-2 site with a mid-block frontage on Victoria Drive just north of 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue to allow the development of a six-storey mixed-use building with commercial at grade and secured market rental residential units above.

Mr. Miller remarked that the site falls within the Kensington-Cedar Cottage Vision Area where it borders the Victoria Fraserview Killarney Vision Area, specifically the Victoria Drive Neighbourhood Centre Area. Further, this application was made under the Short Term Incentives for Rental Program under which additional height and density can be considered to support the provision of rental housing. The Kensington-Cedar Cottage Vision also considered additional height for mixed-use developments to support public amenities. While support was uncertain, additional height is seen as an important tool in achieving other objectives, so it is to be considered in future planning. In this case, it is appropriate to consider additional height and density in order to secure additional rental housing. Mr. Miller noted that the STIR program which was adopted in June 2009 and provided incentives for private development of guaranteed rental units has been superseded by Rental 100, and this proposal aligns generally with this new program. As this application was received in August 2011, Mr. Miller noted that the City's Green Buildings policy requires registration for LEED™ Gold with a minimum of 63 points including 6 energy points, 1 water efficiency point, 1 stormwater point and proof of certification.

Colin King, Development Planner, further described the proposal. The proposal is for 30 residential units comprised of ten two bedroom and twenty one bedroom units. Retail is proposed on the ground floor on Victoria Drive with twenty-two parking spaces of which three are for the commercial component. Mr. King noted that at the last review the Panel had several concerns regarding the proposal. He added that the applicant has addressed those concerns by improving the façade, revising the unit layouts, improving the entrance lobby and revising the cornice detail. As well the applicant has added an amenity space on the roof with urban agriculture including irrigation and stair access. He also noted that the commercial parking and loading has been reconfigured and the exit door has been pulled back from the lane.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

- The design development of the architectural expression on Victoria Drive;

- The amenity measures introduced from the landscaping measures to the lane to the extent of and access arrangement of the rooftop amenity space.

Mr. Miller and Mr. King took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Matthew Cheng, Architect, further described the proposal. He noted that they have modified the entrance to the parking ramp by pushing back the exit door. They have also made the ground floor enclosed commercial parking area more efficient so that there is more commercial space. He said that they have reconfigured the unit layouts and added furniture to the drawings to show that the layout works. The weather protection has been lowered to be more effective and they will be using a bright colour on the canopy to distinguish the residential entry. As well they have widened the residential lobby. Mr. Cheng described the materials and stated that for the brick they are using stacked bond for a more contemporary look. They will also be using hardie panel with a reveal trim for contrast.

Patricia Campbell, Landscape Architect, noted that there is a piece of landscape on the lane with trailing plants. The amenity space will provide some social and gardening spaces. There are street trees planned as well.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Consider adding an elevator overrun for access to the roof top amenity space;
  - Consider further development to the residential entry;
  - Design development to improve the interface between materials;
  - Consider softening the colour palette on the building;
  - Consider reviewing the location of the security gate in the parking area;
  - Consider adding more passive design strategies.
- **Related Commentary:** The panel supported the proposal and thought the improvements were significant.

The Panel thought the improved design had more lightness, fun and a contemporary expression. They also thought that the access to the back deck is better but thought there might be some stepping issues. Several Panel members noted that the unit layouts are much better although still a bit tight.

The Panel supported the access to the roof and the added amenity space but suggested the applicant consider an elevator overrun for barrier free access. One Panel member suggested adding a simple shade structure on the roof. Another Panel member had some concern regarding the security gate being deeply inset in the parking area and possible CPTED issues, but felt it was solvable with lighting. Also, several Panel members suggested the applicant use a lighter colour rather than the orange which tends to be aggressive.

The Panel supported the improvement to the streetscape and liked the canopy for the residential entry. A couple of Panel members had some concerns regarding the interface between the brick and the hardie panel especially where there are narrow bands of hardie and suggested a change of material such as using a window wall. Some of the Panel thought the applicant still needed to improve the sustainability strategy.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Cheng said he had no further comments.

---

3. Address:	1399 Main Street (SkyTrain Station)
DE:	416346
Description:	Alterations and additions to the existing SkyTrain Station at Main and Terminal Streets; work to include alterations to the main street and east side stations to create new platforms, stair entries and landscaping.
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	VIA Architecture
Owner:	TransLink
Review:	First
Delegation:	Dale Rickard, VIA Architecture Peter Houseknecht, VIA Architecture George Martins, TransLink
Staff:	Anita Molaro

---

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-3)**

- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for an upgrade to the Main Street SkyTrain Station. The work includes an extension of the platform over Main Street along with provision of a new point of access at the south end of Thornton Park. The east station house includes two points of entry; one on the north side and one on the south side. The north side access will serve the bus/park and pedestrian access. Also proposed as part of the east end of the platform are two new retail spaces that may also include a bicycle storage space. At the west end of the station the interstitial mezzanine area is to be removed. While the south side entry will remain open, the north side entry will be closed off. The existing retail space within the station is being removed along with the Starbucks in order to accommodate a new entry facing onto Main Street.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

The urban design objectives for this station that staff would like the Panel to provide advice on include how the proposal responds to:

1. Achieving a strong sense of publicness: conveyed through the high quality architecture and materiality that also highlights access and openness.
2. Achieving good connectivity/accessibility for transit users, pedestrians and cyclists.
3. Achieving a safe environment both within and around the station.
4. Resolving/respecting the interface with existing adjacent development and uses (Citygate, VanCity and Thornton Park).
4. Achieving high quality public realm interface with high amenity sidewalk areas with active edges providing pedestrian interest and weather protection
5. Accommodating commercial/retail opportunities within or near station

Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Dale Rickard, Architect, further described the proposal. He noted that the station was the first one built in the early 80's and was built as a demonstration project for Expo 86. He added that it was built to standards that TransLink wouldn't consider today. Its massive concrete structure guideway cannot change but everything else can be changed so it becomes a brand new building using the bones of the old structure. Mr. Rickard noticed that TransLink asked them to consider safety and security when designing the station. TransLink is investing in a fair gate program throughout the whole system which will transform how the station is organized and

operated. There has been a huge increase in ridership and this station was never planned to handle the number of people it now has to accommodate. The station also needs to accommodate bus traffic. Mr. Rickard mentioned that there needs to be better weather protection on the station and as well the addition of weather protection canopies on the sidewalks. Poor accessibility is another issue at the station with only one elevator on the west side and none on the east side, and also there currently isn't any place for HandyDART to park. In the new design there will be full accessibility to the station with new elevators, stairs, escalators and a parking area for HandyDART on Station Street. The platform is very narrow so there isn't any room to expand sideways, so the only way to expand the station is lengthwise. The new design will allow for two entrances; one on the west and one on the east with a new concourse on the east side. Mr. Rickard said that they have met with VanCity and the CityGate Tower to address the CPTED issues in the lane between their buildings and the station.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Design development to the east station house to achieve a more dynamic expression;
  - Design development to unify the two stations; consider better integration of the east stationbox and the wind screen;
  - Consider adding weather protection at the buses on the east side of Main Street;
  - Design development to improve the path from the HandyDART area to the station;
  - Consider the history of the neighbourhood when planning the public art piece;
  - Design development to bring a better identity to the entrances at grade;
  - Consider a more contemporary landscape plan;
  - Design development to improve the pedestrian access especially on the west plaza to improve circulation especially with respect to people gathering or waiting for other people.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal.

The Panel thought the proposal was a huge improvement for this SkyTrain Station given the number of complex issues it needs to address. However, the Panel thought it was important that the station should have a simple dynamic expression that will unify the two stations. Although in many respects the design is achieving that, the Panel thought there was some design development needed on the wind wall expression. They noted that the wall seems to fall apart at the east end. They also thought the HandyDART pick up and drop off was weak considering the circuitous route they will need to take to get to the elevators.

The Panel was disappointed by the presentation materials. They found the drawings to be highly technical and had trouble identifying how it would come together. A number of Panel members thought there should be more colour in the renderings as well as a model to convey the pedestrian experience.

One Panel member recommended that the money for the art program be spent locally, perhaps working with at risk youth, and that it should be on the station and not the park area. As well it was suggested that there was a need for good public art on the side between Quebec and Main Streets as this will help to reduce the perception of crime. Another Panel member thought the neighbourhood and history of the location should be taken into consideration.

Some of the Panel couldn't comment on the commercial aspects of the station since there wasn't a model to define the space.

There was some concern with the interface with the public at the ground floor particularly the lack of ability to access the bus stops without getting rained on particularly on the east



side of Main Street. As well, the Panel thought the canopies and weather protection could take further design development. Some Panel members thought the plaza patterns felt like an attempt to get a grid which seems to be an old solution and very much like the pattern on other streets in the city. They wanted to see a more modern approach.

A couple of Panel members thought the interface to City Gate needed gating at either end of the pathway. They also thought the paving pattern along Main Street could have a circular pattern and the circle could go around the station house.

Several Panel members thought the west station plaza bands were a bit relentless and that there were a lot of barriers for pedestrians: bikes, garbage cans and street furniture. They suggested that there should be some opportunity for allowing people to gather since they are often meeting people at the station, and there could be buskers in the area.

Some Panel members thought the east plaza was awkwardly meeting the geometry of the park and that the applicant should find a way to make the access safer from the train station to the SkyTrain station.

Several Panel members were concerned that the public toilet was in the middle of the pedestrian path.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Houseknecht thanked the Panel for their comments. Mr. Martins said they would take the Panel's comments into consideration. He added that the project is pretty far advanced and they are at the tender stage.

---

4. Address:	245 East Georgia Street
DE:	416284
Description:	To construct a 9-storey mixed use building with ground floor retail and 40 units of rental housing under the Rental 100 program.
Zoning:	HA-1A
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Gair Williamson Architects
Owner:	245 East Georgia Holdings Inc.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Gair Williamson, Gair Williamson Architects Tami Masunba, Gair Williamson Architects
Staff:	Paul Cheng

---

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-1)**

- **Introduction:** Paul Cheng, Development Planner, introduced this proposal on a small 25 foot lot in Chinatown. He noted that about two years ago the City revised the zoning of HA-1A and increased the overall allowable building heights as a means to stimulate change and growth in the area. Along with that there were some further changes to the parking bylaw, which permitted relaxations to the parking requirement to allow the development of these slender, 25 foot wide lots. The maximum permissible building height is 90 feet and the proposal reaches that maximum height. It is a Rental 100 application meaning that the owner will undergo an agreement to keep all the dwelling units under market rental provisions for at least 60 years. The 400 square foot minimum size is also relaxable to 320 square feet and all the dwelling units are either 320 or 380 square feet. Mr. Cheng explained that it will be a 9-storey building with retail at grade and each residential floor will have five rental units.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

- The HA-1A design guidelines speak to the need for architectural compatibility with the Historic Chinatown context with respect to vertical expression, sawtooth silhouettes, storefront design, pronounced cornice lines and parapets, etc. Taking into consideration the immediate context, does the proposal provide a sensitive response to the Historical Chinatown Context?
- As a means of insuring livability, the required rear yard setback for residential uses is typically 23 feet. In the interest of maximizing the number of rental units in this project, this proposal requests a relaxation of the setback to 2 feet or 6.5 feet. Does the Panel have any concerns over the resulting liveability of these dwelling units?
- The project proposes several dwelling units with a singular outlook to an internal courtyard. Taking into consideration the relationship with the immediate east neighbouring building, does the Panel have any concerns about the livability of these dwelling units?
- Are there any design improvements that can be made to the proposal to minimize the impacts to the livability of the suites located in the east neighbouring building?
- Does the proposal provide an adequate amount of indoor/outdoor amenity space for the residents?

Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Gair Williamson, Architect, further described the proposal. The idea of the project is to have units that are affordable with a diversity of use and a diversity of people living there. Mr. Williamson noted that the ground floor will have a Chinatown context and they have addressed that with a deep canopy, truck sliding doors

to open the frontage and light boxes. In terms of cornice lines they have sunscreens on the south facade which picks up the cornice lines and vertically they are adding diffused glass. In terms of the light well condition, there will be irrigated planters and some units will have a balcony to improve livability. They are proposing one car share space at the back of the building. He added that parking hasn't been completely resolved with Engineering Services at this point. They require three car share spaces but unfortunately they can't fit them into the building and there are issues with having them on the street.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Design development to improve light access into the light wells;
  - Consider adding greenery and weather protection in the amenity space on the roof.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a good response to the historical neighbourhood.

The Panel agreed that it was a well thought out expression and commended the applicant team for their work on the project. They felt that the rear yard setback wasn't a huge issue as it is a very urban project. Most of the Panel members thought the light wells were a minor issue on balance while others thought it made some of the units in the adjacent building less livable. One Panel member noted that some attention should be given to the wall finish opposite the light wells; something that is light and reflective. Another Panel member thought the planters could be eliminated and suggested carving the corner and making the building higher to achieve more liveability for the units in the building opposite. Another suggestion was to eliminate the kitchen in units between the light wells and provide a common kitchen for those units.

The Panel also felt that the internal courtyard worked well for this building but unfortunately would have a negative impact on the building units to the east. Most of the Panel felt there wasn't enough outdoor amenity space and thought the roof could be developed more with the addition of some greenery and weather protection. One Panel member felt there might be some CPTED issues at the back and suggested adding an automatic door.

The Panel asked that the City be more flexible when it comes to parking as residents will likely not have a car or will use transit.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Williamson though the Panel offered some great suggestions that they will consider.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.