

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: July 3, 2013

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Ryan Bragg
Walter Franci
Joseph Fry
Veronica Gillies (Chair)
David Grigg
Bruce Hemstock (Excused Item #2)
Joseph Hruda
Phil Mondor (Excused Item #2)
Peter Wreglesworth

REGRETS:

Daryl Condon
Vincent Dumoulin
Goran Ostojevic
Norm Shearing

RECORDING

SECRETARY: Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. Briefing on the Mayor's Task Force on Housing Affordability
2. 475 Howe Street (The Exchange)
3. 6399 Cambie Street
4. 2220 Kingsway
5. 231 East Pender Street

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Gillies called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. Walter Franci represented the Urban Design Panel at the Development Permit Board on Tuesday, July 2, 2013. He gave a brief overview of 1365 Burnaby Street that was previously reviewed by the Panel. The Panel then considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address:	Briefing on the Mayor's Task Force on Housing Affordability
DE:	N/A
Description:	2013 interim rezoning policy on affordable housing choices across Vancouver neighbourhoods.
Zoning:	N/A
Application Status:	N/A
Review:	First
Architect:	N/A
Owner:	N/A
Delegation:	N/A
Staff:	Doug Robinson and Abigail Bond

EVALUATION: Non-Voting Workshop

- **Introduction:** Abigail Bond, Assistant Director of Housing Policy, introduced the workshop with a power point presentation. She noted that Vancouver has significant challenges with housing affordability, and Vancouver City Council has made the task of clearly identifying and addressing these challenges a high priority.

Vancouver has some of the highest housing costs in Canada, which is why the City is working to increase the choices for affordable housing in Vancouver. This includes creating new affordable housing options for students, young families, and seniors through a new Interim Rezoning Policy, as recommended by the Mayor's Task Force on Affordable Housing.

Ms. Bond gave an overview of how the Task Force and the Interim Rezoning Policy came about. She stated that through the Housing and Homelessness Strategy, City Council has set aggressive targets for the delivery of affordable housing. These targets reflect Council's commitments to end street homelessness and to increase the supply of affordable housing for all Vancouverites. The Interim Rezoning Policy to Increase Affordable Housing Choices was adopted by Council to help implement the recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Housing Affordability. It is designed to enable housing diversity and enhance affordability for moderate income households across Vancouver's neighbourhoods.

Ms. Bond and Mr. Robinson took questions from the Panel.

- **Related Commentary:**
 - There needs to be flexibility of building form and height as long as the project is meeting good urban design criteria;
 - Perhaps the plan could look at density limits depending on the location of the site (east/west or north/south orientations);
 - There should be lots of room for public interaction with the community to discuss plans for redevelopment or rezoning;
 - Perhaps it would be worthwhile to assemble a catalogue showing examples of could be built on a 33 foot lot, for instance;
 - Could have some innovative approaches such as using City owned sites with long term leases that makes for more affordable housing;
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- Some Panel members thought the housing targets could be more ambitious;
- The Panel thought this should have a regional focus rather than it just being about the City;
- Site assembly can be a challenge which could be hindering the amount of enquiries for rezoning.

2. Address:	475 Howe Street (The Exchange)
DE:	416842
Description:	To construct a 31-storey office building above the existing old stock exchange building.
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Complete
Review:	Second (First as Development Application)
Architect:	Iredale Group Architecture and Harry Gugger Studio
Owner:	
Delegation:	Harry Gugger, Harry Gugger Studio Peter Hildebrand, Iredale Group Architecture Margot Long, PWL Partnership Landscape Architects Frank Gehringe, Swissreal
Staff:	Anita Molaro

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-1)

- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a site located in the Central Business District in downtown. The site is located at the corner of Howe and Pender Streets and includes the existing Stock Exchange Building. This building is listed as an "A" building on the City's Heritage Register but is not designated. Ms. Molaro described the context for the area noting the mixed-use tower, The Jameson, immediately to the north of the site.

The proposal is to retain the existing stock exchange building and insert an office building beside and above the existing building. The program for the building is to retain the existing retail/commercial space in the stock exchange building and to add retail/commercial space in the first two levels of the new development. The third level of the building is to be reserved as amenity space. The new and old building's floor plates will be contiguous.

Ms. Molaro noted that there are two view cones affecting the site and the proposal will protrude through them which is not a supportable response and as such there are condition for the applicant to adjust the height of the building to comply within the view shadows.

The proposal is proposing to be LEED Platinum.

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

Has the response to the rezoning conditions noted below been appropriately address?

- Proximity with the Jameson House in response to the rezoning condition noted below:
Design development to the northwest corner to improve the proximity between the proposed office tower and the existing residential units in Jameson House across the lane.

Note to applicant: *This can be achieved by modifying the northwest corner of the office building for the portion of the tower that overlaps with Jameson House, with the remaining tower floor-plate providing a 1'-6" setback along the lane. Floor area can be reallocated to other areas of the building provided that it does not further compromise Jameson House or increase the amount of building bulk over the former Stock Exchange Building.*

- Privacy with the Jameson House in response to the rezoning condition noted below:

Design development to address privacy impacts by eliminating direct sight lines from distances of 60 ft. or closer between the proposed office building and the existing residential units in the Jameson House.

Note to applicant: These privacy measures between the two occupancies must be implemented as a permanent component externally integrated with the glazing treatment.

- Architectural response to skyline noting the reduction in the height to align with the height of the Jameson.
- Detailed response to the building's external treatments and expression, including the passive design elements, vertical and horizontal shading devices passive design attributes of the LEED™ Platinum.
- Integration of the lower massing with the overall tower composition.
- Massing response to lessen its visual impact over the former Stock Exchange Building.
- Landscape treatments: Green roofs, sky gardens, vertical green.

Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Peter Hildebrand, Architect, further described the proposal noting this is one of the best locations in the downtown for office space. They will be registering the heritage building and they want to have the most sustainable building in Vancouver. It will be the first heritage building with LEED™ Platinum. He added that after the last Panel's review and meetings with staff, they decided to have a fresh look at the design.

Harry Gugger, Architect, described the proposal using a power point presentation. He said they were looking for a coherent design response as well as addressing privacy and proximity, passive solar protection and a connection to the heritage building. As well they wanted to maximize views and light and to accentuate the verticality of the building. He described the architecture noting that they chamfered the edges in order to recess the building from the stock exchange building. They plan to use mullions to resolve heat gain and privacy issues.

Margot Long, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping which is imbedded in the public realm and in some roof decks. There were originally glass blocks in the sidewalk that will be reintroduced that will be lit from underneath. At the main entry there is local stone and the street trees will be redone. The fourth level has an amenity roof deck with an interior amenity space with an extensive green roof. On the heritage building the eleventh will have extensive green roof that is not accessible. On the twelfth floor there will be an extensive green roof with an outdoor amenity area.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

The Panel had no substantial aspects needing improvement.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a response that often isn't seen in Vancouver. They especially liked how the heritage building was being retained.

The Panel thought the applicant had done as much as possible for privacy against the neighbouring building, the Jameson building. One Panel member noted that the setback had been reinforced by layering materials and fins to block the view. Another couple of Panel members wondered if cranking the fins would help to improve the view to the Jameson building.

The Panel noted that the building had a finer grain than what was seen at rezoning. They saw the building as a background building to the heritage.

The Panel thought the architectural response to the skyline with allowing the mullions and glazing to disappear into the sky was an appropriate response.

The Panel supported the landscape plans although one Panel member thought there should be more heritage referenced to the base of the new building.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Gugger thanked the Panel for their comments. He noted that they had tested the mullions for privacy and views and felt they had found the best solution.

3. Address:	6399 Cambie Street
DE:	416773
Description:	To construct a new 8-storey multiple dwelling building with three unit townhouse building at the lane over two levels of common underground parking.
Zoning:	CD-1 pending
Application Status:	Complete
Review:	Fourth (First as Development Application)
Architect:	GBL Architects
Owner:	Wanson Development Ltd.
Delegation:	Stu Lyon, GBL Architects
	Ken McKillop, Durante Kruek Landscape Architects
Staff:	Sailen Black

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-4)

- **Introduction:** Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for an 8-storey building with 61 residential units. It will have eight storeys on Cambie Street and three townhouse units on the lane. Mr. Black described the context for the area noting the 6-storey project immediately to the north. The proposal comes under the Cambie Corridor Plan which allows for mixed-use, mid-rise buildings. Mr. Black explained that the design of the building is intended to respond to the approved form to the north through proposed setbacks and windows.

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

1. Does this design address the comments of the Urban Design Panel from October, 2012?
2. Looking around the public realm interfaces at each of the three open sides, does the combined effect of the landscape design at grade and the ground floor architecture create a high quality and walkable urban environment?

Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Stu Lyon, Architect, further described the proposal noting that there is a relationship between their building and the one to the north. The residential entry faces a walkway that goes through the site to the lane. Mr. Lyon described the architecture and the material and colour palette noting the use of window wall construction for the retail. He mentioned that one of the changes since the rezoning review was to add a trellis over the parking entrance. As well, privacy and liveability of the units between the townhouses and the main building has been improved. Mr. Lyon said they plan to make the canopies along the retail more consistent.

Ken McKillop, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans. Along Cambie Street, they are proposing a double row of street trees. The walkway through the site will have benches and a water feature. Green roofs comprise about 45% of the roof with the rest being a reflective material.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

- Design development to improve the relationship with the building to the north;
- Design development to improve the south and west façades;

- Design development to improve the colour palette;
 - Design development to improve the public realm on Cambie Street.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought there was a marked improvement since the last review.

The Panel thought the relationship to the building to the north was weak and didn't come across very well. One Panel member noted that where the two come together there is an odd juxtaposition between them. They thought the townhouses were successful and the space between them and the building was well handled.

Some Panel members thought the south façade was not successful as it doesn't recognize the southern exposure. As well they thought the 4-storey element on the façade facing the courtyard was the wrong expression. The wrap doesn't seem to be working as there is little differentiation between it and the glass.

The Panel thought the public right-of-way was a good move as it breaks up the block for pedestrians. They also thought the courtyard opening onto the mews worked well. One Panel member noted that there are grade changes on the site and needed to be improved to make the mews successful.

The Panel did not support the colour palette and thought the colour was rather oppressive. One Panel member said the relationship between solid to void was a bit confused.

The Panel thought the double row of street trees and the greening in the sidewalk did not work as it would take away from the pedestrian realm and doesn't transition well to West 49th Avenue. One Panel member noted that it didn't match the rest of Cambie Street while another Panel member wanted to see a simpler approach to the landscaping.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Lyon said they were enthusiastic about the project as they have made great strides since the rezoning. He noted that the Cambie Corridor Guidelines are challenging but had worked with the development planner to improve the project.

4. Address:	2220 Kingsway
DE:	416814
Description:	To develop the site with a mixed use development including 410 residential units. The development will consist of three 14-storey towers with four and five storey low-rise portions over a commercial podium and one-storey townhomes.
Zoning:	CD-1 pending
Application Status:	Complete
Review:	Second (First as Development Application)
Architect:	Henriquez Partners Architects
Owner:	Westbank
Delegation:	Gregory Henriquez, Henriquez Partners Architects Rui Nunes, Henriquez Partners Architects Brock Cheadle, Henriquez Partners Architects Kelty McKinnon, PFS Partnership Landscape Architects Dari Roberts, Kane Chris Cheng, Bunt
Staff:	Paul Cheng

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Paul Cheng, Development Planner, introduced the proposal and mentioned that this was the second rezoning proposal for the Norquay Neighbourhood Centre. He added that according to the plan, the site was deemed special due to its size and the large palette of public realm improvements. Mr. Cheng said the site sits on a block that is nearly three times the length of a typical block, so a pedestrian mid-block pathway was required as well as a new service lane. Furthermore wider sidewalks were a requirement and a new traffic signal will be designed. A public plaza is located in the northwest corner of the site acting as entrance plaza to some of the commercial spaces on the ground floor. A southwest facing public park is also included on the site.

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

1. The proposal introduces several enhancements to the public realm including wider sidewalks off the Kingsway frontage, a public plaza, a public green space and a new mid-block pedestrian link and service lane aligned with a new signalized Kingsway traffic crossing. Staff are seeking comments for further improvements to the various spaces and their interface with the building that may improve their use as places for public activities.
2. A particular design challenge for this project was the differentiation of the three tower elements that were visually distinct while maintaining the same maximum height of 14-storeys. Staff were seeking comments and advice on the architectural expression of the three tower elements.

Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Gregory Henriquez, Architect, further described the proposal and mentioned that the previous scheme for the public park had a water element and an enclosed space. After discussions with staff and the community, they have now created more of a play feature for children. As well there is a restaurant proposed with a patio area that interfaces the park. Mr. Henriquez described the architecture noting that they wanted to tie the buildings together with a modernistic expression. As well he described the material palette which will be painted architectural concrete. One of the buildings has alternating balconies to give some shading to the façade. The scale of the

retail spaces has been increased as a result of the type of tenants that will occupy the space.

Kelty McKinnon, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans and explained that it includes areas for people to sit and eatable landscaping in the corner of the park as well as a bike station. A games area for chess is also included.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to simplify the architectural expression;
 - Design development to improve the pedestrian mews;
 - Design development to improve the park area;
 - Consider softening the public art expression;
 - Consider improving the sustainability strategy.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal noting that it would be providing a lot of amenity to the community in terms of the public realm treatment.

The Panel would like to have seen the development permit model rather than a context model as they thought it would have been more helpful in their evaluation of the proposal. Some Panel members preferred the rezoning proposal as the three towers were differentiated in their form and didn't appear to be similar buildings. One Panel member noted that they seemed to have moved from delicacy and lightness to some heaviness. Although the Panel supported the curved stairs ascending to the rooftop, a couple of Panel members thought they needed to have a clean expression as they seemed a bit out of place on the façade.

A couple of Panel members thought the space at the northwest corner needed some work to make it more successful as it seemed to be a dull area with not much natural light. The Panel thought the pedestrian mews was an unfortunate combination of both pedestrian and vehicles. One Panel member suggested moving the loading bay inside the building and a couple of Panel members thought there should be a stronger separation between the pedestrian and vehicular areas.

The Panel thought the landscape was well resolved and integrated with the architecture, however a couple of Panel members thought the expression in the public realm could be edited, especially the public park at the southwest corner of the site. The Panel noted that the grade change was a challenge and thought there was an opportunity to activate the park edge with an outdoor patio that connects to the restaurant at grade. Several Panel members mentioned that the restaurant patio didn't relate to the park and should be a restaurant that will spill out into the street. One Panel member suggested replacing that deck with massing of greenery to deaden the noise.

Although the Panel supported the public art a couple of Panel members thought the art over-powered the entrance to the plaza. One Panel member thought the space could be better animated.

The Panel supported the sustainability strategy, however one Panel member thought the glazing percentage was high and that the buildings could have some shading devices.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Henriquez thanked the Panel for their comments.

5. Address:	231 East Pender Street
DE:	416681
Description:	To construct an 8-storey mixed-use building consisting of one storey of retail and seven storeys (2 nd - 8 th) of dwelling units. A total of 60 dwelling units with two levels of underground parking having vehicular access from the north lane.
Zoning:	HA-1
Application Status:	Complete
Review:	Second
Architect:	Bingham Hill Architects
Owner:	Porte Developments
Delegation:	John Bingham, Bingham Hill Architects David Karpenic, Bingham Hill Architects D. Porte, Porte Developments
Staff:	Paul Cheng

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-2)

- **Introduction:** Paul Cheng, Development Planner, introduced the proposal and reminded the Panel that they had previously reviewed the project which received non-support. He noted that the applicant has come back as a result of advice given by staff and the Panel with respect to the contextual fit of the design with the historical context of Chinatown. He described the Panel's previous concerns.

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

1. Does the proposed front façade treatment successfully emulate the "sawtooth" profile which historically resulted from incremental development of small 25 foot wide lots?
2. Does the proposed treatment of the top cornice of the streetwall component successfully achieve the visual richness that is emulated by the historical buildings in the neighbourhood?
3. Does the typical storefront design successfully reflect the Lower Street Façade elements cited in the HA-1 Design Guidelines and the Chinatown Character documents?
4. The west-facing elevation will likely be apparent from Main Street for an extended period of time. Does this elevation successfully respond to the historical character of HA-1 zoning?
5. Does the main body of the front façade successfully respond to the historical character of the neighbourhood with respect to fenestration, window detailing, brick detailing and treatment of balcony balustrades?

Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** John Bingham, Architect, further described the proposal noting that the main Pender Street elevation has been adjusted and lowered to help facilitate the sawtooth approach with the upper storeys further set back. The awnings are retractable and will have a different expression for each CRU which is part of the Chinatown character. The entrance has been pulled back under the building. On the west lane they have lowered the metal panels to give the top of the building greater visual strength. The colours of the garage are true to what was there originally. The mural space has been identified on the west elevation. The north elevation has a more contemporary expression but on the concrete there is a line of the original profile of the historical building and the metal panels are also replicates of the existing windows.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to return the cornice line and make it stand out more;
 - Design development to better mirror the back to the front façade;
 - Consider using another colour than white on the building;
 - Consider using pigment in the concrete rather than painted concrete.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought the design had improved since the last review.

The Panel thought the proposed front façade treatment emulated the sawtooth profile successfully. They also thought the minimal cornice line was acceptable but thought it should complete the line at the top of the brick. As well a couple of Panel member thought it could be differentiated more. One Panel member thought the glazed balconies were not the right expression for this neighbourhood.

The Panel agreed that the storefront design was in keeping with the Chinatown character while several Panel members felt the back did not mirror the front. Most of the Panel felt the front façade successfully responded to the history of the neighbourhood however they felt the garage doors could have been used as its original intended use.

The Panel supported the material and colour palette but felt that white on the upper storeys was not the correct colour for Chinatown. A couple of Panel members suggested continuing the orange along the top on the south elevation. Also, they were concerned that painted concrete might be a problem and suggested adding the pigment in the concrete instead. A couple of Panel members suggested using a Chinese artist for the mural on the side of the building.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bingham thanked the Panel for an interesting discussion and their comments that they can draw on to further improve the design.

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.