

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** June 3, 2015

**TIME:** 4.00 pm

**PLACE:** Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Russell Acton  
Stefan Aepli  
Meghan Cree-Smith  
Stuart Hood  
Roger Hughes  
Ken Larsson  
Jennifer Marshall (Chair)  
Arno Matis  
Chris Mramor  
Matthew Soules

**REGRETS:** None

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

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### ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

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| 1. | 3365 Commercial Drive and 1695-775 East 18 <sup>th</sup> Avenue |
| 2. | 6318-6340 Cambie Street   |

**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Marshall called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There was a brief business meeting and then the Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 3365 Commercial Drive and 1695-1775 East 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
 DE: N/A  
 Description: To create two new sub-areas, each with a separate and distinct development Sub-Area #1 (Heritage Site) will contain a house (relocated from another portion of the site) and converted into two market residential units, plus three new townhomes in the rear of the lot, for a total of five three-bedroom units. The house will be added to the Vancouver Heritage Register and secured with a Heritage Revitalization Agreement as protected heritage property. Sub-area #2 (Rental Site) will contain secured market rental units in a variety of unit types and sizes. The proposal includes a total of 112 secured market rental units. This application is being considered under the Interim Rezoning Policy for Increasing Affordable Housing Choices and the Heritage Policies and Guidelines.  
 Zoning: RS-2 to CD-1  
 Application Status: Rezoning Application  
 Review: First  
 Architect: Yamamoto Architecture  
 Owner: Cressey Development  
 Delegation: Taizo Yamamoto, Yamamoto Architecture  
 Piyush Sanghimia, Yamamoto Architecture  
 Jennifer Stamp, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects  
 Nathan Gurvich, Cressey Development  
 Hani Lammam, Cressey Development  
 Staff: Yardley McNeill, James Boldt and Colin King

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-2)**

- **Introduction:** Yardley McNeill, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a site located within the Kensington Cedar Cottage (KCC) Neighbourhood and situated along Commercial Drive and East 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and described the context for the area. The Croatian Cultural Centre and Trout Lake's John Hendry Park is directly across Commercial Drive. To the north is RS-2 zoning up to Clark Park at East 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue with mixed commercial areas beyond. To the west and southwest are existing older stock single family dwellings. The zoning in the area is RS-2 to the west and north, C-2, RT-10, RS-2, MC-1 and CD01 zoning to the south and east. There are several new developments along Victoria Diversion to the south in the MC-1 and CD-1 areas with 4 and 5-storey residential buildings for both market and rental housing. Ms. McNeil noted that MC-1 permits up to 5-storeys (40 feet) for residential development. The existing site area is approximately 33,700 square feet which qualifies under RS-2 zoning for consideration of a multiple dwelling. This site is comprised of five lots, heavily wooded with a variety of specimen trees, most notably a cluster of seven large Lawson Cypress trees at the corner of East 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Commercial Drive and Western Hemlock along the north property line. The ground elevation raises as head west and some sections of the site are below the level of East 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Ms. McNeill mentioned that there is evidence of a stream that flowed north on this site. The Vancouver Heritage Commission reviewed the house at 3365 Commercial Drive in 2013 and determined the house warranted retention and addition to the Vancouver Heritage Register. Ms. McNeill

noted that this rezoning application is to rezone the lands from RS-2 to a CD-1 under the rezoning provisions of the Kensington Cedar Cottage Community Vision regarding the preservation of heritage sites and the Interim Rezoning Policy for Increasing Affordable Rental Housing across Vancouver (IRP).

Ms. McNeill mentioned that the rezoning would create two separate and distinct sub-areas: Sub-area #1 is the heritage site, where the existing building at 3365 Commercial Drive will be relocated to East 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, restored and converted to two units with the addition of three townhouse units in the rear of the site. The predate dwelling will be designated as legally protected heritage property and all five units will be market strata-titled units. Parking is provided underground and accessed from East 18th Avenue via the ramp on sub-area 2.

Sub-area # 2 will contain a 4-6 storey building with 112 secured rental units under the IRP program and 64 underground parking stalls accessed off East 18th Avenue.

Ms. McNeill mentioned that the City's Interim Rezoning Affordable Housing Policy (IRP) allows for consideration of projects that create affordable housing on or near arterials. Affordable housing projects up to 6-storeys can be considered on arterials within 500 meters of a neighbourhood centre or local shopping district. Projects are evaluated based on three criteria: Affordability, Location and Form of Development. Form of Development criteria includes a review of the urban design performance (including consideration of shadow analysis, view impacts, frontage length, building massing, setbacks, etc.)

Colin King, Development Planner, further described the proposal and mentioned that the proposal qualified for consideration under two separate rezoning policies: IRP for the rental site and the KCC Vision regarding heritage retention for the heritage site. He noted that the IRP does not have zoning matrix, so urban design performance criteria to assess the 6-storey proposal includes contextual fit as it relates to shadow analysis, view impacts, frontage length, building massing and setbacks. The IRP also expects ground orientation where the development does not directly front the arterial. The proposal is an assembly of five lots including one City-owned lot. Mr. King mentioned that the existing condition includes the pre-date dwelling (identified as worthy of addition to the register by the Vancouver Heritage Commission). The site includes significant mature trees, including but not limited to the prominent stand at the corner of the site and two to the rear providing screening to adjacent 2-storey development. He also noted that the Topography is complex with a significant localized depression in the area of the dried creek-bed. He added that the creek-bed does not have any standing like Brewery Creek that would require for day lighting. He also noted that the existing adjacent development pattern is complex with a variety of heights up to 5-storeys south along Victoria Diversion falling to 2-storey walk-up apartment immediately adjacent to north. The arterial frontage is across from the SkyTrain elevated rail and the Croatian Cultural Centre.

Mr. King described the heritage proposal noting that the project went to the Vancouver Heritage Commission for review and was rejected but included conditions for support. Staff are currently evaluating the proposal in light of the Vancouver Heritage Commission's comments. The proposal includes relocation of the dwelling from its current location to a south-east quadrant of the site in line with existing and similarly scaled development along East 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The new infill containing three units is proposed for the rear of the site.

Mr. King mentioned that the secured market rental component is comprised of a 6-storey block with frontage to Commercial Drive and a 4-storey block fronting East 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue. They are linked by a 4-storey element containing an indoor amenity space at grade with apartments above. It is also over a parkade shared between both parcels and accessed from

the low point of the site on East 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He noted that there is a shared outdoor amenity space attached to the indoor amenity space. The two trees in the courtyard area could be retained with minimal interruption of the current landscape proposal and deletion of five parking spaces since the current proposed application exceeds required parking. As well these trees have high visibility from the north along Commercial Drive.

Mr. King mentioned that both blocks include an entry to the ground floor apartments to help activate the ground plane. The 4-storey East 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue frontage is articulated to reflect a 3-storey townhouse massing with the fourth floor set back five feet from the building face. He noted that the 6-storey block steps back at street level along Commercial Drive to provide private entries. From the second to fifth floor, the setback is less than two feet and then steps back an additional four feet at the 6<sup>th</sup> floor level. Setbacks to the north edge of the block are increased at the 4<sup>th</sup> floor level to the rear, but along the streetscape it is essentially a 6-storey to 2-storey transition to the north.

The massing at the corner is a direct expression of the 6-storey height and has been pulled back to retain a stand of five mature trees. Mr. King mentioned that staff are exploring retention of two additional trees in the stand which would reduce density.

Mr. King noted that LEED™ Gold is required and a checklist was provided in the presentation materials.

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

1. Comments on the proposed relocation of the pre-date dwelling as it relates to streetscape compatibility along East 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and generation of transitional heights across the development lot.
2. Comments on the relationship between the infill development and;
  - Existing adjacent development to the west along East 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, specifically as it relates to neighbourliness and direct overlook to the rear yard given the nine foot setback proposed along the shared side yard;
  - The relocated dwelling, specifically as it relates to subordination of the infill component in heights and footprint on the lot.
3. With regard to the 6-storey block, comments on the appropriateness of the 6-storey height to Commercial Drive in terms of contextual fit, with particular regard to the following:
  - Setback profile at the upper levels along the north edge as it relates to compatibility with the adjacent development to the north;
  - Apparent height and massing along the Commercial Drive frontage as it relates to building setbacks at all levels;
  - Proposed building expression, noting that this is at rezoning stage only and a fully resolved expression is not expected, as it relates to the expectation of ground orientation in Interim Rezoning Policy (IRP) proposals.
4. Comments on the bridging element as it relates to streetscape compatibility and frontage length to the predominantly lower scale East 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and also in terms of visual permeability through the site to the landscaped area to the rear.
5. Regarding sustainability measures, comments on the desirability or otherwise green roof to the rental component, noting the visibility of the 4-storey roof from the 6-storey block and also provide commentary on solar heat gain to the southern exposure.

Ms. McNeill and Mr. King took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Taizo Yamamoto, Architect, further described the proposal and mentioned that they are trying to continue the street scale that has been established by the buildings along the street. That is why they have the 6-storey element

focused on Commercial Street and they are pushing it as far as they can to the eastern boundary to keep the western part of the site as low as possible. Another important factor is that the site slopes to the west and the height of the ridge is not much lower than the height of the 6-storey building. By relocating the predate dwelling it allowed them to create a very sympathetic stepping onto the 4-storey building. Also with respect to the infill, it is only 2-storeys relative to the rear yard because again of the slope. The main living spaces for those units are on the ground floor. Mr. Yamamoto said they are trying to pick up the smaller scale in the projecting bays of the 4-storey element which gives it a smaller rhythm that relates to the houses on the street. As well they are trying to create a break with the courtyard between the two wings. He noted that the single family homes across the street fronts the relocated predate dwelling. The ramp entrances has been shifted as far as they can towards the west before the site starts going uphill which would require a longer ramp and larger travel into the building. For the 4-storey element they tried to shift it to the front to pick up the streetwall and to allow for a large rear courtyard.

Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect, further described the landscaping plans and mentioned that the existing trees currently land in the children's play area which she feels can be easily incorporated as a play element. The existing stand on the corner will have a pathway for the public and some seating on the corner. The ground oriented units along Commercial Drive will have patios along the street edge. The main entry to the building will have a water feature to pay homage to a stream that was on the site pre 1910. Due to weight issues they are not planning green roofs in the proposal.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Design development to improve the grade conditions around the predate dwelling and existing adjacent development;
  - Design development to better integrate the infill building with the predate dwelling and give more space to predate dwelling;
  - Design development to improve the massing and expression of the 6-storey block;
  - Design development of Commercial Streetscape to be more pedestrian friendly and to buffer vehicular traffic;
  - Design development to improve the bridging element by radically reducing its mass;
  - Consider an accessible roof on the 4-storey block;
  - Re-examine site circulation to minimize paving;
  - Consider revising 4-storey ground floor units to 2-storey townhouses on bottom.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal noting that it was a complication project.

The Panel supported the location of the predate dwelling but thought it created a challenging grade change between the existing property to the west. They suggested the applicant consider raising the height of the heritage house or look at moving the retaining wall. They wanted to see more space around the building. They noted that the setbacks on East 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue should align with the current condition.

Although the Panel supported the addition of the infill townhouses, they suggested the applicant might consider the Laneway House Guidelines in terms of scale and character as well as the sloping roof line. They thought they it was too large and too close to the predate dwelling.

Regarding the 6-storey block massing, the Panel noted that in the absence of a policy context, the applicant might consider drawing on the Cambie Corridor Plan where there is some precedent. As well they thought a shoulder setback at the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floor would give some relief to the façade.

In terms of expression, the Panel thought more work could be done on the decks and suggested either breaking up the expression or treating the decks differently.

Regarding the street edge along Commercial Drive, the Panel thought the street trees should be adjacent to the street with the typical boulevard condition. As well they thought the 6-storey block's relationship to the street could be improved with a 10 or 12 foot setback since it feels a little tight to the street.

The Panel thought the landscape treatment of the townhouses needed improvement. As well they thought the walkway didn't feel connected and in fact felt rather narrow.

The Panel thought the bridging element needed some work. They suggested that it should be more transparent. One Panel member suggested removing the bridge at the ground floor allowing for more unit space and activation of the courtyard.

Regarding sustainability, some Panel members thought an accessible roof on the 4-storey block was worth exploring which would create a visual amenity for the residents in the 6-storey block. As well they thought there should be solar shading on the south façade although they noted that the existing trees would help somewhat in mitigating the solar gain.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Yamamoto thanked the Panel for their comments. He explained that there are still lots of things to work out noting that the entry and the infill will be the focus.

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2. Address:	6318-6340 Cambie Street
DE:	N/A
Description:	To construct a 7-storey mixed-use building and seven townhouses. The proposal is for a total of 50 dwelling units and commercial at grade.
Zoning:	RT-2 to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	Integra Architecture
Owner:	L & A Real Estate Investment
Delegation:	Duane Siegrist, Integra Architecture Amber Paul, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects
Staff:	Graham Winterbottom and Allan Moorey

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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (10-0)

- **Introduction:** Graham Winterbottom, Planner, introduced the site for this rezoning application which consists of a two lot assembly on the east side of Cambie Street between 46<sup>th</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The proposal is being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan within the Oakridge Town Centre neighbourhood which extends from 41<sup>st</sup> to 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In this area the Plan contemplates building from six-storeys transitioning up to eight-storeys from 45<sup>th</sup> to 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue, then up to ten at 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue. A net floor space range of 2.25 to 3.25 is suggested subject to urban design performance.

To the north of the site is the Oakridge Shopping Centre site which was approved by Council to rezone as mixed use with heights up to 45-storeys. To the south is the 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue Canada-Line Skytrain Station.

Across Cambie Street are two approved rezonings, including one at 6311 Cambie comprised of six-storeys with 56 units at 2.9 FSR, 70ft in height, and with townhouses at the lane. The other is an eight-storey mixed use building at 6361 Cambie comprised of 63 units, 3.29 FSR, 95 ft., and with townhouses at the lane.

Across the lane to the east is currently zoned RS-1 for single family. This area has been identified in the Cambie Corridor Phase 3 study area. The planning process for Phase 3 has begun, with introductory open house meetings currently taking place.

This CD-1 rezoning proposes to rezone the site from RT-2 to CD-1 to allow development of a seven-storey building with 50 units, including seven townhouses on the lane over two levels of parking with an FSR of 3.245.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team started their presentation by acknowledging the issues surrounding the street wall and set-backs at the upper levels. The project is an infill with the form based on the guidelines, and having a similar built form to approved rezonings across the street which have a mid-block pedestrian pathway connecting through to Tisdall Park via a pathway adjacent to an existing townhouse development. The current proposal is to do the same thing with this site at the mid-block connection.

The community walkway was originally an attempt to relax the corner of the site and create a more open plaza and stronger community connection. Turning the townhouses onto that walkway is important as an attempt to take ownership of it. The access into the courtyard also provides more light and security.

When working with the planning department a lot of consideration was given with regards to what it meant to have a transition of space onto Cambie Street. The proposed dimensions were created while keeping in mind both this important transition and another currently proposed development to the north. With the changing environment on Cambie it would be a good idea to announce this transition space with landscape materials and public art.

The programming for the space includes residential and commercial, with amenity spaces connecting into the courtyard. Having a sloped parking ramp in this space offers the opportunity for a more level transition and eliminates any stepping into the courtyard. Townhouses and the built form along the walkway are two-storeys up until the shoulders of the building where it wraps into the façade. The intent of the upper roof was to create less blocky building and looser top, which could provide both rooftop patio space and screen mechanical equipment.

Several passive design principles have been added to encourage sustainability. Solar angles and a vertical fin have been added to the west façade. Larger walls and a recessed livable room have also been added, along with a silver shade, to add some flavour to the façade.

Materials and colours are meant to be relaxed and playful in their rhythm. The intent is to contrast with the standard glassy structures existing along Cambie.

The applicant team then took questions from the board and panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Design development to relieve the harsh relationship between the two-storey and eight-storey mass
  - Design development to relieve the 'canyon' feel of the project
  - A strategy is needed for the mews in the interim until the adjacent project is developed
  - Design development on townhouse number four and five to make them more livable (access to light)
  - Townhouses on the lane seem too squat and should not necessarily match the adjacent building
  - The tower entry and CRU need some refinement
  - Increasing the size of the amenity and providing better integration with the mews
  - Design development of the townhouses to create more activation of the lane
- **Related Commentary:** The panel thanked the applicant for putting together such a comprehensive package, and thought that the height, massing and density conform well with the Cambie Corridor.

While the concept of the mews is important, the concern is that it reflects what Cambie will eventually look like and doesn't take into account the interim condition. It is true that one of the projects in the area needs to go first, but the proposal should be more sensitive to what the area will look like before the other buildings are approved.

It would be better to go back to a conventional courtyard approach, with the lane units oriented towards the lane and the six-storey units oriented towards the courtyard. Concern should be paid to making sure that the townhouses do not constrict the entrance to the courtyard from the mid-block connection. Eliminating one of the townhouses near the laneway would open up the entrance between the mid-block connection and the interior courtyard. It would also be beneficial for the commercial element to engage the mid-block connection more and create more of a public element.

The outdoor amenity space seems small and could engage more with the mews. Adding garden space and landscaping or lighting to the area would make it more usable for residents.

The larger building adds an intense verticality and canyon-like quality to the area, and the transition between the six-storey and two-storey forms seems too harsh. While the six-storey form is well articulated and could be set-back in order to off-set this effect, consideration in the future should be given to allowing three-storeys or creating more verticality in the townhouses in order to facilitate the transition.

The rooftop cover is not supportable as it looks like an additional storey. While it is important that it be usable by residents of the building, it cannot look like another floor to the development.

Townhouse number four and five don't seem to be livable in that they are overhung by the building above, and the ground and second level floors seem to be oddly disconnected from the logic of the building. If the amenity space was moved to this corner and the townhouses wrapped down and around the courtyard it would free up the massing logic and create a strong entrance to the courtyard. There also seems to be an odd living arrangement in the lane townhouses where the most private spaces seem to be on the lower level. This destroys porosity and community within the area and people do not connect through their bedroom windows.

The attention to sustainability seems very well done. Colours were also appreciated, although they could be better used to indicate entryways and to emphasize the public connection.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel and noted that they will work with staff to create some controlled guidelines so that a successful mews can be created. They also agreed that some of the townhouses need to be loosened up, and mentioned that there has already been some discussion about the roof top.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.