

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** Feb 2, 2022

**TIME:** 3:00 pm

**PLACE:** Townhall, City Hall

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Brian Wakelin	
Meeta Lele	Excused items 2 & 3
Peeraj Thakre	
Margot Long	Excused item 1
Adrian Rahbar	
Brittany Coughlin	Excused item 1
Alyssa Koehn	Excused item 1
Jesse Gregson	
Jennifer Marshall	(Item 1 only)
Ryan Bragg	(Item 1 only)
Laura Jimenez	(Item 1 only)
Robin Williams	(Item 1 only)

### RECORDING

**SECRETARY:** K. Cermeno

### ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 1059-1075 Nelson St
2. 343 Pender St
3. 3480 E Kent Ave South

Chair Brian Wakelin called the meeting to order at 3:05pm and noted the presence of a quorum. The panel voted Ms. Natalie Telewiak as vice chair. The panel then considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 1059 – 1075 Nelson St  
Permit No. DP-2021-00589  
Description: To develop a 60-storey, Passive House residential building, with a total of 501 residential units, including 102 social housing units, 49 market rental units, and 350 market condo rental units; all over ten levels of underground parking with 321 vehicle parking spaces and 1,042 Class A bicycle parking spaces and 27 Class B bicycle spaces. The building height is 178.46m (585 ft. to to the top of the appurtenance), net floor area is 39,768 m<sup>2</sup> (428,060 sq.ft.), and the FSR is 24.7.  
Zoning: CD-1  
Application Status: Complete Development Application (Higher Building)  
Review: Third  
Architect: IBI Group  
Staff: Hamid Shayan and Sailen Black

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## **EVALUATION: SUPPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS (8-0)**

- **Introduction:**

Hamid Shayan, development planner, began by noting this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Urban Design Panel at Development Permit stage for 1075 Nelson St. At the previous meeting on Dec 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the panel's members recommended resubmission with (5/1 votes) due to major comments and concerns.

In this presentation, I am going through the design modifications from last UDP subject of addressing the previous panel's recommendations.

I would like to mention that Staff welcome all comments from the panel members and would consider them in their further review process however support or nonsupport of this proposal is based on how the new design responded to the panel's previous initiated comments.

The scope of work is to develop a 60-storey passive house residential building that will be the first of its kind in the world. The FOD is approved by Council and endorsed by UDP at RZ. Since the last meeting, staff have been working closely with the applicant to respond properly to the comments and feedbacks from the panel.

The design of the ground plane has been addressed to improve the relationship of the building with its surrounding, create a more comfortable, engaging environment for pedestrians, building occupants, and encourage neighborliness and community building.

The design modification to achieve these goals include:

- The new Glass canopy around the building to emphasize more on building expression at grade
- Series of radiating planters create seating areas to be used by residents and neighbours

- Central seating area adjacent to a sculpture that creates meeting place which is accessible from both entries

At the north side some revisions are proposed such as:

- Revising the planters at west and east sides to provide more openness and at the lane at the west side.
- At the east, these changes have resulted a large enclosed area for children
- Changing the colors and provision of more openings on the north elevation

Since last UDP, by revising landscape design, the functional and usable area of outdoor amenities at grade in increased. The children's play area is maintained at the same location but some improvements at the layout arrangements are done.

From last UDP, more design modifications been executed in rooftop outdoor amenity areas such as the stairs is designed and detailed programming for different areas been introduced.

As the building is intended to be the most advanced passive house tower in the world the design, materiality and detailing pushes the architectural language of what is normally associated with passive house design. Noted that the overall form, architectural expression and colour supported at RZ and endorsed by Urban Design Panel.

Since last UDP some refinements been proposed such as removing the green color and differentiate the balconies from rest of the façade by reducing the horizontal bands.

At the end, Mr. Sailen Black, senior green building planner, provided a summary of green building policy related to the project. He noted that the Green Buildings Policy for Rezoning requires that rezoning applications satisfy either the near zero emission buildings or low emissions green buildings conditions within the policy. In addition, the Higher Buildings Policy, which allows for consideration of building proposals in the city's downtown seeking significant additional height above current zoning, requires that applications should advance the City's green objectives for carbon neutrality for new buildings by demonstrating leadership and advances in sustainable design and energy consumption.

He also noted that the voluntary selection of Passive House by the applicant demonstrates leadership in sustainable design and exceeds the requirements of both policies. The standard is a rigorous 3rd party verification process that provides a dramatic reduction in energy use which helps respond to Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency. Its application at this scale of building will also help build the supply of advanced building components and local consulting capacity, exemplified by the ongoing work by the consultants who brings considerable expertise in the design of high-performance buildings. Throughout the process the applicants have demonstrated consistent commitment to incorporating Passive House into the design of the building envelope and its systems.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on:

Does the new DP proposal successfully address the concerns previously voiced by the Urban Design Panel? With respect to:

- a) contextual relationship, neighbourliness, and community building through ground plane activation;
- b) social sustainability through arrangement and programming of amenities;
- c) passive house and residential nature of the tower through architectural expression and materiality.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The applicant noted they are working with IBI group and Integral group. A key design driver from the outset was to create a passive house building that does not look like a passive house. The goal is for individuals to look at the building as a way forward.

The building color pallet includes a metallic grey.. The building is all about the sculpture nature. The undulation on the east west façades makes the building look taller and more elegant.

The applicant noted they have had extensive conversations with manufacturers of panel and glazing.

This project will be the stepping-stone of new ways of doing things.

The building is very resilient to heat and cold waves.

This will be a zero emissions building as well as passive house; this project will be the largest passive house to date.

## LANDSCAPE

There are spaces indoor and outdoor that allow for socialization.

There is horizontal and vertical planting.

There are canopies above that protect gathering spaces below.

The pedestrian traffic flow is uninterrupted on the east and west sides of the building.

At the lane, side outdoor rooms have been created with low planters. Have also created transitions zones at the building base.

By the use of louvre, walls and green planters a buffer between private and public areas have been created.

There is a fair amount of transparency to keep in line with the septid principles.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

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

Having reviewed the project it was moved by **MS. THAKRE** and **MR. RAHBAR** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **SUPPORT** the project with the following recommendations to be reviewed by City Staff:

- Reduction of impervious material at the ground plane and inclusions of natural materials;
- Design Development of the tower base and canopy element;
- Relocation of the child play area to the Nelson St side of the site;
- Design Development of the east/west slots of the building elevation.

**Related Commentary:**

There was general support from the panel.

There was a strong support for the structural form of the project.

Members noted the applicant had taken steps to address the previous UDP concerns and the project was a good addition to the skyline.

A panelist noted the tower stops; there is no hierarchy and the site contradicts any organic design.

There was concern with the materiality for the façade it comes across very corporate and not welcoming.

Another panelist noted the form of the building feels oppressive, rigid, and relentless.

There was general support for the improvements to the ground plane, it is effective and enhances the neighborhood site.

A panelist noted there are multiple fronts with too much paving on the ground plane however the ground plane development is an improvement in terms of the programmatic activation. There is a better relationship with the mid-block and outdoor space.

The connection between the interior and exterior needs to be stronger.

There was concern from the panel regarding the location of the play space and recommended the space needs to move to south side of the building.

A panelist recommended further development at the lane and the entrance to the lane.

The materiality light effects and subtle measuring of sky and ground plane is elegant and poetic.

The panel noted slightly backdrop reflective panels is better.

A panelist supported the removal of the green stripe.

There were mixed opinions, for and against, regarding the new developments of the slots east and west of the building elevation.

Regarding the landscape, a panelist noted there was too much paving to green ratio. There are trees missing on the west side of the garden. Trees make a difference in minimizing the heat island effect.

The canopies have a strange proportion, do not see it providing or protecting much from shade or shadow.

Other panelists noted the weather protection had improved.

**Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments.

2.	Address:	343 W Pender St
	Permit No.	DP-2021-00952
	Description:	To develop a seven-storey, mixed-use building with retail, restaurant and office uses at grade and office use on storeys two through six, including retention, rehabilitation and restoration of the Hartney Chambers Vancouver Heritage 'B' building. The proposed height is 83.33 ft, total FSR is 5.48 (34,200 sq.ft.), with two accessible parking stalls with vehicular access from the rear lane.
	Zoning:	DD
	Application Status:	Complete Development Application
	Review:	First
	Architect:	Mason Cattell Mackey Partnership (MCM)
	Staff:	Kevin Spaans, Hiro Kobayashi & Elijah Sabadlan

### **EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (6/0)**

- **Introduction:**

Development planner, Hiroko Kobayashi, began by noting this is the proposed DP application at 343 West Pender Street located on the north east corner of W Pender Street and Homer Street near Victory Square.

The subject site is adjacent to a 9-storey apartment building to the east along West Pender Street, and across the lane to the north is a 2-storey retail commercial building. There are two existing heritage buildings at the subject site. One of them is known as the Hartney Chambers, which is listed in the Vancouver Heritage Register in "B" evaluation category.

The proposal is governed by several approved policies including the *Downtown District Official Development Plan (DD ODP)* for subarea "C2", *Victory Square Guidelines*, *Heritage Policies and Guidelines for New Development Adjacent to Hotels and Rooming Houses*. Existing zoning permits up to 22.9m and 5.0 FSR, and office, Retail, Dwelling Restaurants are all permitted uses.

The proposed building seeks to demolish the existing World building and façade retention of the Hartney Chambers and develop a 7-storey building, including 2-storey addition directly above the retained heritage façades. The overall height of this proposed development is 25.4m with a total density of 5.5 FSR including 10% bonus density is sought in lieu of designating the retained heritage masonry façades along W Pender Street and Homer Street. The proposed uses include retail and restaurant at the grade and office spaces above, two accessible parking stalls and one class B loading are proposed at the lane with two levels of roof top amenities. Ms. Kobayashi then presented the proposed building expressions and massing articulations and highlighted the challenges of the proposal development, in particularly the design principal responses to *Victory Square Guidelines*.

As per guidelines for new building, additions on top of heritage building should be considered the set backs to reinforce the characteristic street wall profile of the historic buildings. This proposed development does not provide any setbacks for a 2-storey addition directly above the parapet wall of the retained heritage façades.

The other notable challenge is the horizontal angle of daylight access and sufficient ventilation at the adjacent residential building due to the orientation of the light well. Applicants illustrated both vertical and horizontal sunlight access from the most restricted dwelling units, proposed planters, and green walls to ameliorate the spaces and near views.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on:

1. The performance of the proposed materiality and proportional relationship of the addition as being visually subordinate to the heritage building when viewed from the public realm;
2. The architectural and material qualities of the additions, independent of the heritage building, and;
3. Impact to the adjacent residential building;

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Donald Luxton, heritage consultant, presented the existing heritage context, and the proposed retention of the heritage façades facing West Pender Street;

Mark Whitehead, the project Architect, then presented the design response to the challenges and constraints of the site as follows;

This is a 52-foot wide site and having to minimum setback 7.6m to respect the adjacent residential building lightwells, however with this setback from the street impact the floor areas for proposed development.

There are four windows up against the lightwell and with the setback, they are greatly improved with providing more than 70 degrees angle of daylight required

The World Building at the north end of the site will be demolished. The primary structure of the Hartney Chambers on the south end of the site will also be demolished, but its masonry façades will be retained, allowing for the vertical and horizontal additions proposed, reflecting the Edwardian era proportions of the retained historic façades.

The proposal is aiming to achieve the tripartite building expression with 11 feet floor-to-floor addition, which is a minimal addition for an office building.

Many of the viewpoints do not observe the rooftop addition, and the shadow created by the proposed 6-storey building is not deemed imposing.

The architect interprets the massing as respectful of the sawtooth profile of the streetwall, with the addition being directly above the heritage façade.

The proposed materials are subordinate and compatible with the heritage building façade materials of the red brick and black base and new additions express the simplicity and modern design. The addition does not have the red brick so that the existing building maintains the extensive building expressions.

Use is described as retail and commercial spaces at the ground floor and office spaces above, and rooftop amenities are provided.

This proposal seeks a height relaxation above of permitted 75', mainly the north side of building facing the lane. On the east elevation, facing the adjacent residential building is a light well with vines and landscaping to ameliorate the near views.

The project Landscape Architect followed to present the approach to landscape design and rooftop amenity as follows;

Existing trees along the street will be retained, and a generous outdoor rooftop amenity space with planting is proposed. As previously mentioned by the Project Architect, where the east elevation interfaces with the residential building, support trellis for vines will be installed.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

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

Having reviewed the project it was moved by **MS. LELE** and **MS. KOHEN** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **SUPPORT** the project with the following recommendations to be reviewed by City Staff:

- Review and improve the ventilation aspect in the lightwell with the adjacent units across the way;
- Further design development of the proportion of the new building over top of the existing building;
- Design development to improve the view and light access for the land lock units.

**Related Commentary:**

- Panel commented applicants demonstrated some considerations to the adjacent residential building.
- Attention to the ground level and design of the retail and commercial spaces improves the corner of this proposal.
- The panel recognized this is a challenging site and proportion of proposed buildings are supportable .
- It is a sensitive proposal to the neighborhood.

There were mixed opinions with the proportions and materials of the site, some noted the proportions are well done the three elements of the building are working well together. The additions are thoughtful.

- A lot of thought has been put into mitigating privacy and overlook issues.

There was strong support for the Homer and North elevation.

- Other comments included, in recognition of the light well policy, further consideration should be given to those units that are directly facing to the proposed building, and especially elevator over runs and staircase are also located towards adjacent building and blocking views and creating visual barrier.
- Consider there are land lock units at the bottom of the light well that are vulnerable to overheating and do not have a lot of daylight access.



- There should be some demonstration that the ventilation improvements
- The addition on top sits too heavily, feel the proportions of the window bands are big and require some refinements on proportions. The relationship of the addition sitting directly on the wall appears odd and uncomfortable, may consider changing the materials above of the cornice
- In terms of the public realm, the Homer Street entrance and the depth of the canopy consider having a door on the side, could bring the glazing closer to the street to prevent some future security challenges.
- The impact to the adjacent residential building should be carefully considered including the access to daylight and ventilation.
- Consider attention to the ground plain and design to commercial units to improve the quality of the corner.
- There was concern with the proximity of the bike lane, consider the distance to get to the bike room.
- Consider the location of the HVAC regarding noise to the adjacent units needs some consideration.
- The new addition sits uncomfortably over the heritage building and materiality and building expression of addition is recessive quality of 1960 office building and not particularly well with compatibility.
- Do what you can do to improve enclosure and energy but overall like the direction of the sustainability.

**Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked to recognize the challenges and for their comments.

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3. Address:	3480 E. Kent Ave. South
Permit No.	DP-2021-00956
Description:	To develop a 28-storey, mixed-use building with retail use at the first storey and multiple dwelling use on storeys one through 28, containing 314 residential units; all over five levels of underground parking with 468 stalls having vehicular access from the rear lane. The proposed height is 300 ft, and the total proposed FSR is 5.62 (285,908 sq ft)
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete Development Application
Review:	First
Architect:	Boniface Oleksiuk Politano (BOP) Architects
Staff:	Kevin Spaans

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### **EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (6/0)**

#### **• Introduction:**

Kevin Spaans, Senior Development Planner, presented the proposal on behalf of the Planning Department noting the urban context of the site, and the regulatory framework governing the subject application as follows:

- The property falls under CD-1 By-law (567) – East Fraser Lands Waterfront Precinct;
- The by-law permits a height of up to 28 storeys or 87.0m, and a density of 6.29 FSR;
- Select permitted uses identified in the CD-1 include: multiple dwelling, child day care facility and social service centre, live-work uses, and retail.

The site is identified as Parcel 29, of Parcels 29 and 30, in the *East Fraser Lands Area 1 Urban Design Guidelines* which assigns the two parcels an urban design “role” within the community, in this case being as a “gateway” block to the waterfront with an enhanced expression at the NE corner intended to create a visual “magnet” when viewed from the Town Square Precinct to the north. Further, the *Guidelines* reflect important design characteristics which are expected to be reflected in future formal applications, using the included indicative design as a base reference.

Mr. Spaans then briefly presented the proposal as being a point tower flanked on the west and the south by midrise building elements generally suggesting a podium. Being that the proposal does not include substantial articulation of upper level massing, Mr. Spaans drew the Panel’s attention to the importance of the materiality in adding visual interest and quality, noting that their consideration of the proposed material and finish schedule is of particular importance with this application. Here, Mr. Spaans noted that the *Guidelines* generally anticipate material palettes which reflect the industrial heritage of the site.

Mr. Spaans then briefly presented the proposed landscape and site design, confirming that the applicant is maintaining an east-west connection anticipated in the *Guidelines*, and is proposed the addition of a mid-block north-south connection not otherwise required by City policy.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on:

1. Does the proposed development substantially meet the urban design 'role' of Parcel 29 as a visual 'magnet' from the Town Square Precinct as defined in the *East Fraser Lands Area 1 Design Guidelines*?
2. With particular consideration given to the building massing and landscape design response at the north entry to the N-S pedestrian connector, does the proposal sufficiently reinforce the green, publically accessible intent of the property?
3. Please comment on the proposed material palette as a means to add visual quality to the tower, and to reflect the industrial heritage of the site.

The Development Planner then took questions from the panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Project architect, Alan Boniface (BOP Architects), began the applicant presentation by focusing on the proposed site and landscape design, noting that the design of the landscape forms the foundation of the project as a welcoming public and semi-public place.

Landscape architect, Joseph Fry (HAPA Collective), then gave an overview of the approach to the site and landscape design, as follows:

- A mid-site grassy knoll is proposed to act as a placemaker; a memorable place for this neighborhood.
- The form and location of the knoll acknowledges the site's history while also providing privacy for residential units oriented toward the site.
- The knoll takes advantage of the 4-metre grade change to create a sense of playfulness and curiosity in the center of the development.
- The east-west connector is designed to be clearly identifiable as a public pedestrian realm, per the *Guidelines*. Walkways will include ample seating.
- The break in the north side of the building provides improved porosity from the north into the middle of the site from the indicative design in the *Guidelines*.
- The public realm of the high street on the east is designed to draw from and add to the building's active uses. This contrasts the quiet nature of the east-west connector and East Kent Avenue South.
- Pocket gardens are proposed to introduce vegetated breaks in the building massing.
- Materials include steel and wood that reference the industrial past of the site but are used in a contemporary way.
- Loading for the building is intentionally tucked away at the East Kent Avenue South side of the building, mitigating the need for breaks in the building façade.

Project architect, Shane Oleksiuk (BOP Architects), then presented the architectural design concept, as follows:

- A simple building form clad in high-quality materials and detailing is a key objective of the architectural concept. The neutral materiality is intended to reflect the industrial heritage of the site by employing traditional materials in a more contemporary way.
- The interface of the building with the pedestrian realm is the main focus of the design approach.
- The grade change and access issues, as well as pedestrian circulation requirements, are challenging to work around but introduce opportunities to shape the architecture of the building and the site to bring a lot of life into the project.
- The architecture is intended to reflect the concept of an eddy; a transitory place with a lot of energy.
- Key *Guidelines* elements that are reflected in the proposal include: a visible 'gateway' tower, active retail frontages along the high street, the east-west pedestrian connector (secured through SRW), and semi-private patios which front onto the interior of the site.
- The high street is activated by at-grade connections and allowing for a porous façade and spilling onto the greenway is very important to the project.
- The tower has an enhanced verticality to read as a clear visual gateway from the town centre, with balconies providing for articulation.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

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

Having reviewed the project it was moved by **MS. THAKRE** and **MR. GREGSON** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **SUPPORT** the project with the following recommendations to be reviewed by City Staff:

- Review and improve overall building accessibility of the public realm and townhouse entries;
- Design development of townhouse entries and scale for privacy;
- Consideration to improve building envelope performance.

**Related Commentary:**

The following comments were expressed by the Panel:

- The Panel generally expressed strong support for the project, noting that the architectural concept is dramatic and different.
- Panelists noted that the *Design Guidelines* are generally well responded to, and that the objectives for the site are reflected in the design.
- The Panel responded well to the landscape design overall, particularly the knoll, however there was concern expressed about universal accessibility on the knoll and through the north breezeway, and that the long-term durability and safety of the timber steps may be a challenge.

- The Panel appreciated the increase porosity into and through the site.
- A panelist expressed concerns that the north-south connector may not present as a publicly accessible space.
- The Panel generally supported the quality of the material palette, however some panelists noted that it may be perceived as cold, particularly for a large landmark-scaled building. Panelists recommended exploring adding warmth and playfulness to the proposed palette.
- A panelist recommended further consideration of the façade treatments to present a more elegant and lively texture.
- A panelist recommended increasing the size of the residential balconies, terraces, and patios where possible.
- A panelist noted potential privacy challenges to the at-grade dwelling units oriented toward East Kent Avenue South, especially as the street becomes busier over time.
- A panelist recommended that all or some of the at-grade townhouse-style dwelling units be designed with ramps rather than stairs in order to make these universally accessible units.
- A panelist recommended that an indoor amenity space be provided at Level 7 next to the proposed outdoor amenity space.
- A panelist strongly recommended design development improve the functionality of indoor amenity spaces, and improve the relationship between the west amenity space and roof deck. The panelist noted that the amenity spaces should be increased in size commensurate to the amount of units in the building, further noting that the City should consider improving regulations and guidelines pertaining to the design of building amenities.
- A panelist noted that further consideration needed to be given to the location and architectural treatment of the parking access at East Kent Avenue South.
- A panelist recommended improvements to the bike room circulation, noting that a separate bike entrance independent of the parking ramp should be explored.
- The Panel recommended reconsideration of the sustainability strategy, noting that the standard required by zoning is no longer current.
- A panelist noted that the amount of thermal bridging from the balcony slab extensions may be significant and the design of the balcony connections should be reconsidered to mitigate this.
- A panelist recommended further design development of the building envelope to improve thermal performance.
- The Panel noted support for the building having an HVAC system with cooling, as this is more sustainable and more comfortable for residents.

- A panelist recommended consideration for triple-glazed windows to improve acoustic and thermal performance.

**Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments.