
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: August 3, 2022

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Webex

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Natalie Telewiak (Chair)
Geoff Lister
Jane Vordrodt
Scott Romses
Amina Yasin
Brittany Coughlin (excused from item 1)

REGRETS:
Margot Long

RECORDING SECRETARY: M.Sem

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 2009-2037 Stainsbury Ave (Vienna House)
 2. 314-328 W Hastings
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BUSINESS MEETING Chair, MS.TELEWIAK, called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum.

- Address:** 2009-2037 Stainsbury Ave (Vienna House)
Permit No.: DP-2022-00439
Description: To develop a 7-storey passive house building with 123 social housing units. 35 car parking spaces and 235 bike parking spaces are proposed. An FSR of 3.47 and a building height of 75.62 ft. (23.05 m). This project is being developed as a passive house under the SHORT program.

Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete Development Application
Review: First
Architect: WMW Public Architecture + Communication Inc.
Delegation: John Wall
Erika Mashig

Staff: Paul Cheng, Senior Development Planner and
Grace Jiang, Development Planner

EVALUATION: 2009-2037 Stainsbury Ave (Vienna House) - Support with recommendations (5/0)

Planner's Introduction:

Paul Cheng, Senior Development Planner began by introducing the project 2009-2037 Stainsbury Ave (Vienna House).

This is a social housing project and not a market led project, the objective is to land as many units as possible. The proposal is trying to reach passive house certification therefore a simple building form is preferable. Applicant is using and introducing pre-fabricated elements which means there will be a lot of replication with repetition on the façade. Mr. Cheng requested Panel to advise on the architectural expression in particular how the architecture is treated to mitigate against the possibility of too much repetition and simplicity.

Grace Jiang, Development Planner then provided a brief overview of the site context and conditions, the proposal, rezoning conditions for the development application of 2009 – 2037 Stainsbury Ave.

This is a 7-storey social housing application following a rezoning application approved by the Council unanimously in this July. The site is in Kensington-Cedar Cottage neighbourhood, close to Trout Lake Park, public transit and local shopping area. Currently it is used for a community garden by the Cedar Cottage Community Garden Society. The site has an irregular shape with

large frontages on Stainsbury Ave, Victoria Dr. and the Sky Train guideway. The site drops from the south to the north by approx. 5 meters. The Victoria Dr. bends to the west here creating a street end view looking towards the building. The surrounding context has been gradually transformed from single family and light industrial into a multi-family mixed use neighbourhood with four to six storey buildings. However, the low-density residential area across Stainsbury Ave remains intact.

The project contains 123 dwelling units with a mix of shelter, Hils, and market rental units. The building has a courtyard form. The south portion of the building presents a 6-storey massing on Stainsbury Ave, while the northern portion having 7 storeys facing the guideway. The proposed height and form are consistent with the rezoning application which has been approved in principle by the Council.

The proposed interior courtyard is accessed from the building entrance off Stainsbury Ave and shared by all dwelling units as a primary gathering space. This courtyard building also includes other design features with regard to the enhancement of livability and sociability, such as blocking the traffic and transit noise, cross-ventilations through courtyard; co-locating multipurpose room with the courtyard and south-facing outdoor amenity space; and enhancing the use of corridor, stairway and elevator lobby to foster varied social interactions.

In terms of public realm interface, on Stainsbury Ave, the street edge is animated by the building entrance, outdoor amenity space, shared garden, and private patios with direct street accesses; on Victoria Dr., a planted bio-swale in city boulevard is proposed and the parkade wall is screened by layers of plants; on the north side, the walkway has been raised to enhance CPTED and privacy.

At rezoning stage, no UDP review was required as the overall scale and massing is generally comparable to recent Council-approved rezonings in the surrounding area. Staff brought forward rezoning conditions to guide further design development at DP stage. Improvements to the architecture expression, public realm and livability were recommended in the rezoning conditions. However, at DP stage, staff believe it is a good opportunity to seek advice from the Panel on the architectural expression and building design for this particular project for two reasons. First, the building has long frontages on three sides and demonstrates significant visual impact to the surrounding public realm. Second, the building is designed to respond to Passive House target, climate resilience, and pre-fabrication construction, so the resultant building form is simple and flat with limited 3-dimensional variations, which to some extent causes design challenges, such as creating visual interest and responding to local context.

Within this application package, the applicant made changes on each side of the building including the balcony expression, material, texture and colour variations. This slide illustrates the revisions of architecture expression from rezoning to DP on three main façades.

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

1. Does the revised architectural expression successfully contribute the public visual interest and respond to the context?
2. Provide commentary on the performance of the courtyard, overall livability and sociability, and quality of landscape design;
3. As the Vienna House vision states, this is a demonstration project in sharing knowledge and advance innovation in low-carbon affordable housing. Please provide comment on the proposed sustainable design and resilient building strategies.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Applicant gave a general overview and objectives of the project and followed by presentation on the landscape strategy.

Applicant and staff took questions from Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **MR. ROMSES** and seconded by **MR. LISTER** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel Recommend Support with recommendations to the project with the following recommendations to be reviewed by City Staff:

1. Consider addition of private outdoor space for access from the northern units including opportunity to define zones of public and private within the Northern Corridor, or addition of balconies to the north.

Summary of Panel Commentary:

Panel in general commended the typology of housing proposed, the innovative approach to social and environmental resiliency and the proposed sustainable measures.

Panel in general agreed the expression of the façade is appropriate for the site and contextual response to the different variety of buildings within the neighbourhood.

A Panelist suggested there could be more variety to the expression of the continuous balconies.

There was strong support from Panel on the positive attributes of the courtyard.

Panel encouraged the opportunity to further explore access to private outdoor space in particular the northern units.

Panel commended the sustainable measures relative to anticipating and planning for future climate.

Panel Commentary:

Some Panelists noted appreciation for the simple exterior elevations.

Panel in general noted appreciation for the simplicity, rigour and skillful handling of this project.

Panel strongly supports the courtyard and the possibilities of community and social engagement.

One Panelist noted the courtyard size feels reasonable, but could benefit from being slightly wider.

Regarding the walkways that are outside of the units, a Panelist noted there could be some control over the level of expectation people have when navigating through the spaces with visual impairment. Panelist suggested having benches to note the occupied side and the other side is for circulation; also occupying the outside section for people navigating through touch to find the door.

Panelist suggested for applicant to keep in mind for next project: if through the implementation of CLT that the building could have the ability to go seven storeys or eight storeys on the south, sky train side and then drop out on the Stainsbury side to improve the lighting of the courtyard.

A Panelist noted the Stainsbury setback should match the Victoria Dr. setback of 3.5 metres and getting an extra metre in the courtyard.

Panelists noted there is opportunity to further refine additional private outdoor space for some of the northern units.

A Panelist suggested having personal and private outdoor amenity space for the one bedroom units.

Panelists commended applicant on setting a high bar for carbon and energy strategies.

A Panelist suggested considering areas of reprieve for situations where extreme heat events may occur. For example, incorporating additional cooling in amenity rooms.

A Panelist encouraged the city to consider this building as a new standard, even in a residential neighbourhood. Panelist commended how it contributes to the neighbourhood and the courtyard reflects other buildings in the neighbourhood.

A Panelist noted the continuous balconies on the family units are a bit regimented. Panelist suggested those continuous balconies could be a bit more dynamic and playful in how the supports and solar shading plays out on those balconies.

A Panelist noted the building does not respond to how Victoria Dr. curves into the site of the project and suggest having something more interesting and dynamics that addresses that frontage.

A Panelist noted the need to share some of the lessons from this project (i.e. costing and schedule targets) if those end up being part of the information that's accessible to the public.

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

2. Address:	314-328 W Hastings
Permit No.:	RZ-2022-00030
Description:	Rezone from DD to CD-1 to allow for a 12-storey mixed-use building containing 128 secured market rental units. A building height of 105 ft. and a density of 8.16 is proposed under the Downtown Eastside Plan and the Rezoning Policy for the Downtown Eastside. The proposal also includes the preservation of the existing heritage building facade of 314 and 328-330 West Hastings Street.
Zoning:	DD to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	Atelier Pacific Architecture Inc.
Delegation:	Brian Shigetomi Peter Kreuk
Staff:	Lex Dominiak, Rezoning Planner, Hamid Shayan, Development Planner James Boldt, Heritage Planner

EVALUATION: 314-328 W Hastings (RZ) - Support with recommendations (6/0)

Planner's Introduction:

Lex Dominiak, Rezoning Planner began by noting the application is for the consideration of a rezoning to the lands at 314-328 W Hastings St which consists of 3 lots on the south side of Hastings Street between Hamilton and Homer Streets. While none of the site's existing buildings are on the heritage register, the outer two structures have been identified as having heritage potential. The existing zoning is DD and is surrounded by other DD lots as well as a number of CD-1 sites.

Applicable policies include the Rezoning Policy for the Downtown Eastside, the Victory Square Policy Plan, and the Downtown Eastside Plan. With the latter policy allowing for increased density, and heights up to 105 ft. for public benefits including social housing, secured market rental housing, and heritage rehabilitation.

Development planner, Hamid Shayan, noted this application proposed an addition to the existing heritage buildings at Victory Square area. In general, *Downtown Eastside Plan* entitled key place-making and built form strategies for this area including:

- Recognize and strengthen the contextual role of specific blocks that transition from higher densities and built form to Victory Square and the DTES
- Recognize and strengthen historic form and scale, with an emphasis on appropriate frontage and modulating heights, in contemporary design reflective of older buildings.

The site is located in the Plan's Victory Square sub-area, which encourages the development of new residential and mixed-use buildings that support rehabilitation of heritage assets and provides a wide range of housing types, including market rental housing. A vibrant and active public realm is also encouraged to be developed along West Hastings Street.

A significant part of the design was driven by the two existing heritage buildings which anchor the opposite ends of the Hastings Street frontage. The intention is to maintain the historic character of the area while also creating an urban architectural expression which both fits in the contemporary context and complements the existing heritage buildings.

Hamid Shayan, Development Planner then noted this application proposed an addition to the existing heritage buildings at Victory Square area. In general, *Downtown Eastside Plan* entitled key place-making and built form strategies for this area including:

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Hamid Shayan, Development Planner then presented on the form of development for this proposal as follows:

- Heritage Preservation
- Neighbourhood and Streetscape Character (contributing to the existing saw-tooth profile)
- Height and Massing (street wall height)
- Yards and Setbacks
- Overall façade Composition
- Public Realm

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

With due consideration given to the key principles of Downtown Eastside Plan & Victory Square Guidelines, advice from the Panel is sought on the proposed Height, Density and Overall Massing of the proposal with particular attention to the following:

- Architectural compatibility and sensitivity to the existing heritage buildings;
- Respect of the character of the existing urban fabric and contribution to the streetscape;
- Ground plain integration with the public realm interface at W. Hastings Street, particularly at the retail frontage and entry points;
- Proposed preliminary materiality and architectural expression.

Applicant’s Introductory Comments:

Applicant gave a general overview and objectives of the project and followed by presentation on the landscape strategy.

Applicant and staff took questions from Panel.

Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **MR. LISTER** and seconded by **MS. YASIN** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel Recommend Support with recommendations to the project with the following recommendations to be reviewed by City Staff:

1. Enhance articulation of the sawtooth pattern with design development of the facade expression.
2. Design development to improve expression of the central volume including connecting to the textures, and rhythms of Hastings Street.
3. Consider more contextual material within the palette, including brick masonry.
4. Design development to enhance quality of the public realm along Hastings.
5. Consider addition of an indoor amenity space.

Summary of Panel Commentary:

General support from Panel on the height, density and overall massing.

General support from Panel on the decision to retain the two heritage buildings.

Panel in general noted the quality and expression of the central volume is not effective and the desire to connect that further to the quality of Hastings St, the rhythms, materiality, and human scale.

Some Panelists noted design development of the material palette is needed and the potential to connect back to contextual materials such as brick masonry.

Panelists noted how the building meets the ground and the opportunity to allow the heritage aspects to come all the way down to improve the material and quality of the public realm along Hastings St.

Panel Commentary:

A Panelist noted appreciation for the effort to replicate the sawtooth pattern along the Hastings St. façade but suggested this could be pushed further. The façade, glass in-between the two historic sides to the building is very well balanced, primarily the height of the parapets on either side of the glass reveal. The punched residential form at 328 Hastings St could go up full height to accentuate that sawtooth. It feels too balanced to represent the *delight* of Hastings St.

A Panelist noted the sawtooth appearance along the block has not been achieved. Panelist suggested creating continuity along the block making it feel part of the heritage piece.

A Panelist noted concerns with the middle portion of the glazed curtain wall because it introduces a scale that emphasizes the verticality in an area where the human scale is removed; the human scale needs to be reintroduced to represent the *delight* of Hastings St., and currently it does not do this.

A Panelist noted the CRU three, continuous curtain wall from the street to the top between the two historic buildings is uncoordinated with the idiosyncratic character of Hastings St. and the exuberance of the Tip Top Building; it currently reads completely neutral and suggest that it provides a bit more light.

A Panelist suggested enlivening the glass façade to express the entry to the CRU as a two-storey frame or to bridge the two historic buildings in a more contemporary way.

Panelists noted the glass curtain walls are not congruent with the heritage side of the project.

Panelists noted the awkwardness of the glass portion of the building in between the two heritage facades without the columns on the side of the Tip Top Tailors building.

Panelists encouraged further design development to the middle building at the ground level.

A Panelist noted the materiality of the building is too predictable of what is found on projects all over Vancouver and given this is on Hastings St. at Victory Square, Panelist suggested the building to be more brick on the wings on the building outside as opposed to concrete.

A Panelist suggested design development of the repetitive private balconies on the back/southside of the building.

Panel encouraged an indoor amenity space adjacent to the outdoor amenity space with a kitchen and washroom.

Panel encouraged green roofs for this project.

A Panelist noted appreciation for the simple geometry of the massing, including the lightwell and cooling.

A Panelist suggested incorporating overhangs or shading to the top windows on the south side of the building.

A Panelist suggested incorporating thermally broken balconies.

Some Panelists noted re-establishing signage, heritage and design integration that would add value to this project with regards to some of the old signage that distinguished the site.

Panelists noted the signage and lighting is integral to tell the history of this building.

A Panelist noted the curved Tip Top shape is very bare without the signage. Panelist suggest further exploration of the curve to be represented in a more porous materiality allowing opportunity for light to come through.

A Panelist noted not seeing any improvements to the public realm, i.e. continuous canopies at the commercial level.

Panelists noted concerns with the reduction in the number of family oriented units and not having any accessible units.

A Panelist encouraged more family units for this project.

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