

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: September 17, 2025

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Virtual Via Teams

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Helen Besharat (Chair)
Bob Lilly Excuse item 2
Aya Abdelfatah
Alfred Waugh
Aaron Petruic Excused item 1
Aik Ablimit
Allyse Li
Parisa Seyed-Hoseini

RECORDING SECRETARY: K. Cermeno

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 1045 Haro St & 830-850 Thurlow St
2. 602-646 Kingsway and 603-617 E 16th Ave
3. EFL Area 1

1.Address: 1045 Haro Street & 830-850 Thurlow Street
Permit No.: RZ-2025-00059
Description: To rezone the subject site from DD (Downtown) District to CD-1 (Comprehensive Development) District. The proposal is to allow for the development of a 26-storey and 25-storey mixed-use rental building with an eight-storey podium and includes: 542 units including 22 below-market units; a childcare facility; commercial space on the ground floor;a floor space ratio (FSR) of 10.78; and a building height of 79.8 m (262 ft.) and 75.8 m(249ft). This application is being considered under the West End Community Plan.

Application Status: Rezoning Application
Architect: MCM Architects
Delegation: Mark Whitehead, Architect, MCM Architects
Grant Brumpton, Landscape Architect PWL
Staff: Bryan Wong & Hamid Shayan

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (5/0)

Planner's Introduction:

Bryan Wong, Rezoning Planner, introduced the project with a brief description of the existing site context, followed by an overview of the anticipated context as per the West End Community Plan. Bryan concluded the presentation with a description of the site and a summary of the rezoning proposal.

Hamid Shayan, Development Planner gave an overview of the neighborhood context in relation to the proposal, followed by the expectations of the built-form guidelines for this project. Hamid then gave a brief description of the proposed project before concluding with Staff questions for the Panel.

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

1. With due consideration given to the key principles of West End Plan, advice from the Panel is sought on the proposed Height, Density, and Overall Massing with particular attention to:
 - Shadowing on the North Robson Sidewalk
 - The podium height and massing and how it contributes to the existing and future context.
2. Please Provide commentary on the quality of building interface to the public realm along entire frontage with particular attention to the following:
 - At-grade programming and how it improves the interaction between indoor and outdoor spaces.
 - Provision of plaza and its contribution to the public life and activity.
 - Definition/articulations of the entry points for different uses.
3. Please provide comments on the quality and arrangement of amenity areas with particular attention to:
 - Proposed amenities on the 7th & 8th floors and their impacts on the livability of residential units.
 - Proposed Daycare and quality of outdoor space.
4. Given consideration to the prominent urban culture of West End, please provide any comments on

preliminary architectural expression, massing articulation, details, and materiality to assist staff review of the future DP application.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Applicant Mark Whitehead, Architect for MCM Architects noted the objectives and gave a general overview of the project followed by Grant Brumpton, Landscape Architect presenting the landscape design and sustainability strategies.

Applicant and staff took questions from Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **Alfred Waugh** and seconded by **Parisa Seyed-Hoseini** 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. Reduce the shadowing on Robson Village;
2. Improve the childcare outdoor play area and outdoor amenities of the buildings;
3. Improve the quality and expression of podium level;
4. Further Design Development of public plaza for success.

Summary of Panel Commentary:

There was general support from the panel.

The panel noted the mass, density and height are acceptable.

There was concern regarding shadowing from the building on Robson Village.

Some panelists noted the top of the building comes across chopped off, find other ways to mitigate the shadowing.

There was concern regarding the height of the podium level, it will not be a welcoming experience to walk along or pedestrians.

There was concern with the difference of materiality on the three sides of the podium.

Panel noted materiality and quality of design could be improved especially on the canopies, corners and podium level.

Consider breaking up the podium's massing articulation especially along the lane side.

Consider improving the entrance lobby.

Consider the size of the amenities for the rental building. Panelists noted they are quite small.

Consider more amenities around the middle courtyard.

Panelists noted if you take the potential plaza there is not much happening at the public space therefore this is an integral part of the project.

Revisit the outdoor play areas. Consider consolidating the childcare outdoor play area with the other outdoor areas, consider the acoustic and traffic protection.

Consider the daycare outdoor space and its proximity to the street level.

Consider improvements of landscape at amenity and outdoor play areas.

Consider improving the two retails at the corners to cozy small-scale retails. More thoughts on the loading and garbage collection of these retails should be implemented.
There was some concern with the retail space close to the Sutton Hotel.
Be aware of the acoustics and sound transferring through the floor and the adjacent walls to the units close by.

The generous balconies are a positive however consider the cost especially when you get up higher in the tower.

Consider adding a bike elevator will assist in making the experience of biking pleasant.

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

2.Address: 602-646 Kingsway & 603-617 E 16th Ave
Permit No.: RZ-2025-00018
Description: To rezone the subject site from C-2C (Commercial) District to CD-1 (Comprehensive Development) District. The proposal is to allow for the development of two buildings as follows: a 14-storey mixed-use rental building with a one-storey podium (North Tower) and a 25-storey mixed-use rental building with a one-storey podium (South Tower). Additional details include: 120 rental units (North Tower) and 207 rental units (South Tower) with 20% of the total residential floor area for below-market units; commercial space on the ground floor; a private 20-space childcare facility; a floor space ratio (FSR) of 8.5; and a building height of 51.0 m (167 ft.) for the North Tower, and 84.1 m and (276 ft.) for the South Tower. This application is being considered under the Broadway Plan.

Application Status: Rezoning Application
Architect: Perkins & Will
Delegation: Ryan Bragg, Architect, Perkins & Will
Aik Ablimit, Architect, Perkins & Will
Christophen Cheng, Bunt & Associates
Staff: Oskar Eriksson & David Cha

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (4/1)

Planner's Introduction:

Oskar Eriksson, Rezoning Planner, introduced the project with a brief description of the existing site context, followed by an overview of the anticipated context as per the Broadway Plan. Oskar concluded the presentation with a description of the site and a summary of the rezoning proposal.

David Cha, Development Planner gave an overview of the neighbourhood context in relation to the proposal, followed by the expectations of the built-form guidelines for this project. David then gave a brief description of the proposed project before concluding with Staff questions for the Panel.

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

1. Please comment on the proposed form, scale and massing with particular consideration given to the following:
 - Compatibility and Interface with the adjacent surrounding urban context.
 - Contribution to the Kingsway corridor.
2. Please comment on the quality of the public realm interface including setbacks along the street frontages.
3. Please comment on the façade articulation and preliminary material treatment to assist staff review of the future DP application.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Applicant Aik Ablimit & Ryan Bragg, Architect for Perkins & Will, noted the objectives and gave a general overview of the project and touched on the sustainability strategies and landscape design.

Applicant and staff took questions from Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **Bob Lilly** and seconded by **Alred Waugh** 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. Provide a pedestrian access between the proposed project and park across;
2. Regarding daycare residents and access explore other options may be beneficial to the project;
3. Regarding design development revisit finesse to all the facades, materiality and details.

Summary of Panel Commentary:

The panel generally supported the project however there were mixed opinions.
The density, scale and massing was generally supported.
The public realm along with the daycare is generally successful.

Some found the design and form of the buildings successful along with the openness of the podium.

Others noted concern with the tower forms and resulting livability along with site access and circulation.

There were mixed opinions regarding how the project related to the existing urban context some found it did not represent the Kingsway area well. Others found it to be a good gateway into the community. A panelist noted to consider some art play similar to the Mount Pleasant area.

There was concern regarding the low level podium. Some found the podium weak and did not add to the pedestrian experience.

Consider increasing the number family units and have them at the childcare level.
The amenities overall were supported.

There was some concern regarding the similarity in tower design and mirrored floor plates, consider something different.
Two different floor plate sized would be beneficial at addressing tower separation and shadowing.

One member found the curved corners and geometries unsuccessful while others noted it responds well to a challenging site.

Regarding balconies some found it be successful others a missed opportunity to not have them at the corner.
A panelist noted where the balconies meet the curve wall is successful.

There was concern regarding the lane condition and loading access. Individuals will be expected to go back and forth across the lane to access different services in building.
Consider the pick up and drop off area especially for the daycare.

There were mixed opinions regarding materiality and the success of the façade and renderings. There is a lot of steel and metal. Consider more of a balance between the grid verticality and more solid materials.

Consider dropping down the windows.

Consider wood soffits to add some warmth to the building.

There could be more finesse in the articulation of the façade to be less relentless and more playful.

Consider a simplified and efficient tower expression.

There was some concern regarding the success of the commercial units on 16th ave.

Some panelists found the green space on the 2nd floor generally successful.

The panel agreed that landscape could use further design development. A panelist noted to consider a native planting palette.

Bike access could use further improvement its current location on one side of the parkade is unsuccessful. This will create a lot of operation challenges with people coming in and out.

Consider a manual access such as a ramp. Instead of a bike elevator consider decentralizing the bike storage on site.

A panelist noted the sustainability is well balanced and the same footprint adds to the sustainability initiatives.

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

3.Address: EFL Area 1
 Parcels 33/34 and 35/36 – 3522 E Kent Ave S – CD-1(567)
 Parcel 30 – 8711 River District Crossing – CD-1 (567)
 Parcel 19.1 – 3575 Sawmill Crescent – CD-1 (566)

Permit No.: RZ-2025-00063

Description: Amend CD-1 (566) and CD-1 (567) to permit above-grade parking (AGP) in the East Fraser Lands ODP. This results in additional height and changes to the form of development for a number of buildings on Parcels 19.1, 30, 33/34, and 35/36 in Area 1. Additional changes include the transfer of housing tenure types between Parcels 30 and 33 (social vs. strata), along with a housekeeping amendment to correct the live-work use description in CD-1 (566).

Application Status: Rezoning Application

Architect: BOP Architects & Wesgroup

Delegation: Graham Brewster, Senior Director, Westgroup Properties
 Shane Oleksiuk, Lead Architect, BOP Architects

Staff: Tess Munro & Mahdi Tavanpour

EVALUATION: WORKSHOP NON-VOTING

Planner's Introduction:

Tess Munro, Rezoning Planner, introduced the project with a brief description of the existing site context, followed by an overview of the anticipated context as per the East Fraser Lands ODP. Tess concluded the presentation with a description of the site and a summary of the rezoning proposal.

Mahdi Tavanpour, Development Planner gave an overview of the neighbourhood context in relation to the proposal, followed by the expectations of the built-form guidelines for this project. Mahdi then gave a brief description of the proposed project before concluding with Staff questions for the Panel.

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

1. Comment on the proposed building siting, height and massing with the following considerations:
 - Impacts to the neighborhood buildings;
 - Transitions to the surrounding areas;
 - Impacts on the character of streetscape, and solar access top open spaces.
2. Comment on the proposed above grade parking, considering the impacts to the character of streetscape, and the pedestrian network of open spaces.
3. Comment on the quality/quantity of the public realm design. Please consider:
 - Contribution to a vibrant neighborhood shopping area;
 - Provision of diverse open spaces to foster neighborhood social connection;
 - Building interface and setbacks;
 - Experience of nature.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Applicant Graham Brewster, Senior Director for Wesgroup, along with Shane Oleksiuk, architect for BOP, noted the objectives and gave a general overview of the project followed by landscape details.

Applicant and staff took questions from Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

1. Establish age identification and promotion of interaction;
2. Consider the impact of main floor and rooftops overall throughout the project;
3. Consider the rooftops to be parks and provide a connection to the street;
4. Provide stairs as landscape to connect the ground level to the rooftop areas;
5. Consider a balance of private and semi- private areas that could be connected in some areas;
6. Provide fun, informal and sculpted spaces;
7. Provide a balance of small scale and larger retail spaces;
8. Highlight the loft and perimeter walls;
9. Provide diversity of spaces, foster community interaction and provide access to water.
10. Consider breaking up the proposed building masses through architectural articulation to create a more dynamic and interesting composition.

Summary of Panel Commentary:

The panel generally supports the initiatives and the starting point of the project that could bring many benefits to the neighborhood and surroundings areas.

The panel noted to City staff to consider providing flexibility to the applicant and development team to allow for more creative opportunities.

Consider researching case studies from Richmond and around the world to draw out potential creative solutions.

The panel noted the density and massing generally are in keeping with the proposed policies.

Panelists noted having successful private and public spaces can be a positive.

Comments included considering moving the tower to the center and playing with the forms.

Break up the massing to make it more interesting considering the uses of the sites.

Some panelists noted the -8,000 sq.ft. floorplate is quite large; however, others noted if carefully crafted it can be successful.

Consider the future faces of the undeveloped parcels. The connection between the proposed and current context is very important.

A panelist noted Parcels 35 and 36 are the most problematic.

Consider further development of the courtyard, does not appear it will serve well the many people that will cross this site.

There could be more granularity and breaking down.

A panelist noted if more volume is needed the marine way interface isn't as valuable therefore can push up against it.

Consider changing conditions when developing community plans.

The quantity of the public seems generally okay, keep the focus of active spaces, and consider how to foster connections between neighbors.

Consider the main floor activation and whether this will be enough to support the street level, Also consider the main floor retail.

Consider the relationship of the site with a network of public transportation.

A panelist noted wrapping the parkade with active uses is successful.

Other comments included consider future use of the parking space. Consider further design development of the parking.

Consider bike parking, with an elevator or a ramp.

The landscape architect will be critical in ensuring spaces are lively, animating and inviting.

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