

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** Oct 12, 2022

**TIME:** 3:00 pm

**PLACE:** Webex

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

Brian Wakelin  
Alan Boniface  
Jennifer Stamp  
Adrian Rahbar  
Brittany Coughlin  
Alyssa Koehn  
Jesse Gregson

**REGRETS:**

Kelly Lee  
Meeta Lele

### ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 888 W Broadway

Chair Brian Wakelin called the meeting to order at 3:05pm. The panel then considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 888 W Broadway  
Permit No. DP-2022-00635  
Description: To develop two mid-rise towers, one with 156 hotel units, the other with general office (each 10 storeys) and a commercial podium at grade over 3 levels of underground parking containing 125 parking spaces and 113 bike spaces. A maximum building height of 42.3m and an FSR of 6.89 and a floor area of 26,028 m sq.  
Zoning: CD-1  
Application Status: Complete Development Application  
Architect: Henriquez Partners Architects  
Staff: Carl Stanford

---

## **EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (7-0)**

### **Planner's Introduction:**

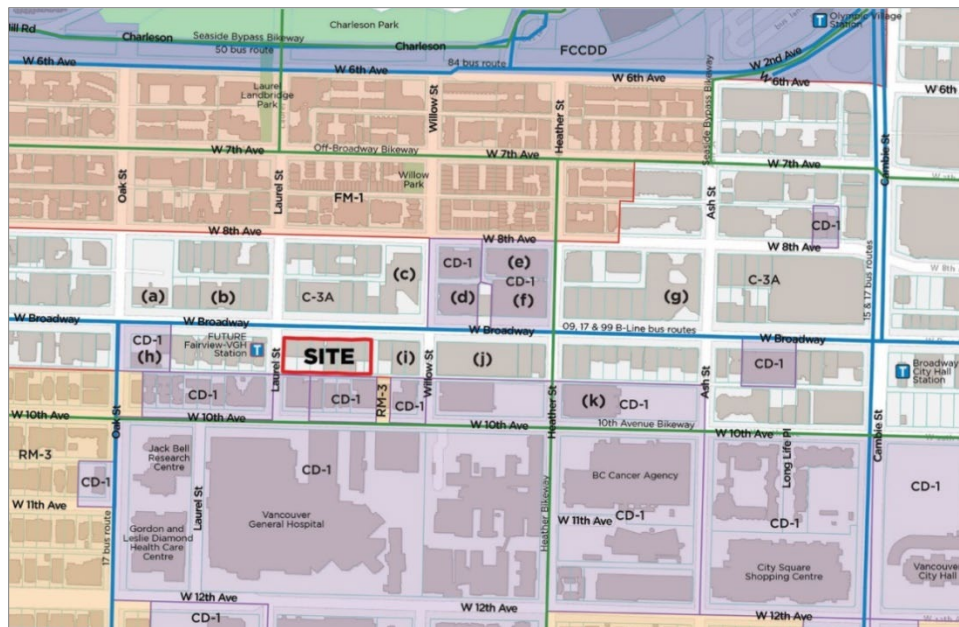
Development Planner, Carl Stanford, began the presentation by explaining this proposal seeks to develop two 10 storey mid-rise towers, one with 156 hotel units, the other with general office and a commercial podium at grade over 3 levels of underground parking containing 125 parking spaces and 113 bike spaces. A maximum building height of 42.3m and an FSR of 6.89 and a floor area of 26,028 m sq. is proposed.

The sites along Broadway are primarily zoned C-3A and CD-1 and contain a mix of office and retail in low-rise and tower forms. The sites on the north side of 10th Avenue are zoned CD-1 and RM-3A and consist mostly of three- to four-storey residential and office buildings. Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) is located directly south of the site half a block away on the south side of 10th Avenue

The proposed development is located on the southeast corner of Broadway and Laurel Street in the Fairview local area (see Figure 1). It is located on a site with three frontages (two streets and one lane). The site is comprised of seven legal parcels, with a total site size of 3,777.4 sq. m (40,660.9 sq. ft.) and frontages of 99 m (325 ft.) along Broadway and 38 m (125 ft.) along Laurel Street. It is located along the proposed Broadway Subway route (a tunnelled extension of the Millennium Line SkyTrain) and adjacent to the proposed Fairview-VGH station (to be located directly across Laurel Street). There is a sloping grade, falling approximately 2.9m (9.4') along Laurel from the Lane to Broadway while being rising 1.2m (4') over the length of the building along the Broadway frontage.

The site is currently occupied by a seven-storey hotel (Park Inn and Suites) with a bar and music venue (Fairview Pub). This building was built in 1971 and is not listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register. The sites along Broadway are zoned C-3A and CD-1 and contain a mix of office and retail in low-rise and tower forms. The sites on the north side of 10th Avenue are zoned CD-1 and RM-3A and consist mostly of three- to four-storey residential and office buildings. Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) is located directly south of the site half a block away on the south side of 10th Avenue.

Figure 1: Context plan



- |     |                      |                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (a) | 999 West Broadway    | 9-storey office building                                                                                                                                             |
| (b) | 943 West Broadway    | <i>Broadway Medical</i> , 9-storey office building with commercial-retail uses at grade                                                                              |
| (c) | 805 West Broadway    | <i>Broadway Centre</i> , 18-storey office building with commercial-retail uses at grade                                                                              |
| (d) | 777 West Broadway    | 13-storey office building                                                                                                                                            |
| (e) | 728 West 8th Avenue  | 18-storey residential building                                                                                                                                       |
| (f) | 711 West Broadway    | <i>Holiday Inn</i> , 14-storey hotel building                                                                                                                        |
| (g) | 620 West Broadway    | <i>Broadway Plaza</i> , 12-storey office building with commercial-retail uses at grade                                                                               |
| (h) | 988 West Broadway    | 11-storey office building with commercial-retail uses at grade                                                                                                       |
| (i) | 2525 Willow Street   | <i>Willow Professional Building</i> , 7-storey building comprised of commercial-retail uses at grade, three levels of above-grade parking and three levels of office |
| (j) | 750 West Broadway    | <i>Fairmont Medical Building</i> , 14-storey office building with commercial-retail uses at grade                                                                    |
| (k) | 675 West 10th Avenue | <i>BC Cancer Research Centre</i> , 15-storey office/laboratory building with commercial-retail use at grade                                                          |

The principle governing policy for the site includes:

- The Central Area Plan: Goals and Land Use Policy (1991)
- The Central Broadway C-3A Urban Design Guidelines, Fairview Slopes Sub-area (2004)
- The C-3A District Schedule (last amended 2016)
- The View Protection Guidelines (1989, last amended 2011)
- The Council approved CD-1 (2019)

Prior to the submission of a rezoning application, the sites base-zone was C-3A (Commercial) District, which permits a maximum density of 3.00 FSR. The *Central Broadway C-3A Urban Design Guidelines* generally anticipates building heights of 36.5m/ 120 ft. in the Fairview Slopes

sub-area. The Fairview Slopes area of C3-A anticipates the following urban design objectives for new developments: a) maximization of sun penetration and views to the North, b) limiting shadowing on the North sidewalk of Broadway. Council approved in Nov 26 2019 the height, density, and form of development for this project in a submitted rezoning application and was seen by the UDP as part of that process on Aug 08, 2018. The current CD-1 zoning proposes a density of 8.96 FSR and the applications use height and density is consistent with the proposal submitted. Building height, measured from base surface to top of roof slab, must not exceed 42.3m/ 139ft. The proposed overall building heights conform to a combination of view cone height limits and helicopter flight path requirements for helicopters accessing the VGH emergency heliport. These maximum heights range from elevations of 78.3 m (257 ft.) View Cone 3.1 height limit for the easterly portion of the development and 71.6 m (234.9 ft.) helicopter path permissible elevation for the westerly portion.

In terms of shadowing impact, the applicant has submitted diagrams illustrating shadowing from 10am to 4pm on the March and June Equinoxes. Staff have assessed shadow impacts on nearby public spaces and concluded subject to technical review that the proposed height of the building does not result in significant shadow impacts external to the site during key daylight hours. However it does self-shadow the newly created public plaza on the NW corner of Broadway and Laurel and the amenity space created between the towers. There is no policy infringement in this case but it affects the quality of the public realm interface. Some pertinent conditions of the approval that governed the form of development and to be considered with the previous UDP recommendations included:

- 1.3) Design development of the massing to **improve sun penetration** to Broadway, views through the site and privacy for hotel rooms, including:
  - a) Reconfigured angling of the two massing blocks on the east- and west-facing facades;
  - b) Reduced width of the west massing block facing Broadway;
  - c) **Increased separation** between mid-rise massing components; and
  - d) Enhanced privacy for east-facing hotel rooms in east block through façade angling.
- 1.4) Design development of the massing to provide for more detailed massing articulation including:
  - a) Façade angling of the east façade of the east block consistent with the sculptural expression of all the above-podium massing;
  - b) Increased stepping and articulation of the podium-level façade along Broadway to add visual and spatial interest to the streetscape and to distinguish the podium and above-podium massing elements;
  - c) Façade definition (stepping, screening and varied materials) that establishes more vertical and finer grain expression/rhythm along the Broadway and lane frontages; and
  - d) Innovative façade design with high-quality materials and detailing to achieve enhanced visual interest and “dematerialization” objectives.
- 1.5) Design development of east façade of the east block to enhance hotel room privacy through the window orientation and screening.
- 1.11) Design development to the ground level public realm interface to achieve a friendly and identifiable orientation, as follows:
  - a) Align and improve connection of public realm with entries.
  - b) Provide some planting fronting Broadway.
  - c) Provide some planting at the lane edge.

- d) Provide programming and articulation fronting Laurel St by including a variety of uses, which encourage common gathering.
- e) Provide planting that is flush with grade, rather than in raised planters, by lowering the parkade below.

1.12) Design development to the central courtyard at Level 3, as follows:

- a) Improve solar orientation by widening the courtyard space.
- b) Expand programming to include a variety of open spaces which encourage common gathering, including children's play.

The form of development is noticeably different to the appearance of the rezoning proposal but sufficiently consistent with the drafting of the CD-1 by law to not necessitate a text amendment of the rezoning application. This determination followed consultation with senior staff, management, and the rezoning group which determined the applicant was still within the bounds of the previous approval by judicious and selective alterations. On November 26, 2019 the City of Vancouver Council approved the height density and form of development for this project in a submitted rezoning application and was seen by the UDP as part of that process on Aug 08, 2018. The Panel's consensus on key aspects needing improvement included enhancement of the massing on all façades, review of sun penetration and privacy on the courtyard, liveability issues on the east façade, quality of the public open space and the potential exploration of treating the two buildings with different appearances as they are meant for different clientele. As a result, the Urban Design Panel supported the project with the following recommendations:

- Look at enhancing the massing on all facades, especially on the east façade to deal with major privacy issues;
- Review sun penetration and privacy of the gap on the courtyard;
- Review major livability issues on the east façade;
- Increase the quality of public open space, major improvements required for Laurel, Broadway and the lane;
- Explore the potential of two different buildings.

The project submission will meet the requirements for building sustainability set by the Vancouver Green Buildings Policy for Rezoning Amended in April 2017. This application is pursuing the low emissions green buildings requirements. In terms of progression from the rezoning application; the smaller (Hotel) massing is placed at the corner of Broadway & Laurel and the larger (Office) massing has been shifted mid-block on Broadway to minimize the impact on the corner and to create a gradual transition from the city block edge in alignment with potential future developments south of the property. The overall height is similar to the rezoning although the storey height and use have shifted. The FSR has been reduced from the maximum allowed and the aperture between the towers has been adjusted removing the tapering and increasing the width by approximately 1.5m/ 5'. The plaza has been reoriented and slightly increased in size with a redesign of the ground floor layout moving the entrance to the hotel from Broadway off the plaza to Laurel. The PBS station has been shifted from the lane to along the laurel street façade. The site design has been altered to facilitate future development and take account of shadowing from the rezoning application at 855-865 West 10th Avenue (a midrise office development at 12 storeys)

Coming back to the current proposal and looking at the site plan, we can see a new plaza at the corner of Broadway and Laurel with the lane/ parkade access to the rear and adjacencies surrounding the site to the south and east. Looking from the corner of Broadway and Laurel

towards the south west we see the proposed streetscape. This rendering also illustrates the plaza which faces north when it is receiving sun either late afternoon to early evening. This is the retail edge of the proposal with a number of commercial units off Broadway including the office entrance below the east tower. There are also potential art installation opportunities, available in the public plaza area, that could be explored through option "A" (On-Site Artwork) laid out in the "public art policy and procedures for rezoned developments" document issued by City of Vancouver. At level one, we have the retail units accessed off W Broadway, the main office lobby, and a service entrance to the hotel at the eastern edge.

The office lobby is entered underneath a sculptural zig zag A-column intended to demarcate the entrance. The language used is similar in expression for the hotel entrance off Laurel. Multiple entries are proposed along the sidewalk on the northern podium facade to increase porosity and pedestrian interaction with the building. The facade treatment shown above is articulated concrete panels. The applicants stated intention with this treatment is to create a fine grained design scale. At level 02, we have the hotel primarily accessed off Laurel Street with a drop off service and parkade access to the rear. Looking towards Broadway from Laurel, we see the steep slope and PBS station off a planting wall. The sole activated façade element along Laurel Street is the hotel entrance at the corner of the lane & laurel which is accentuated by a sculptural structural A-column. At level 03 we rise above the podium and transition to our predominant uses of hotel on the east tower and office use on the west tower. The hotel use has a mix of long and short term stay units. The gym and pool are accessible to both user groups and face onto moderate landscape planting. The hotel floorplate is similar to below with a mix of short stay units on the eastern façade and long stay on the west. The office at level 04 opens up onto a terraced area to the west. An amenity area is located at the uppermost level of the east wing hotel building while the west office building has a terrace at its northwest corner offering some relief to the similar articulation in both wings. Mechanical enclosures are located on the office buildings roof and adjacent to the hotels amenity space.

With regard to materials used, the building is designed to reflect simple materials, such as concrete, glass and wood. Insulated precast concrete panels, with a variation in finish & textures are suggested in the tower elements. The reoccurring modular panels, sculptural concrete columns and wood interior, highlight the building's vocabulary. Wood is utilized at base of the building to create a warmer interior space.

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

1. Please comment on the architectural expression, & articulation of the massing of the building with consideration of the below:
  - a. Has the articulation of scale established an appropriately grained expression and rhythm suitable to the character of the area?
  - b. Is the expression of the massing sufficient to produce a high quality addition to the streetscape (considering the color, shape, proportions, fenestration, material treatment, screening and material treatment with regard to the above)?
2. Please comment on if the proposal achieved a well-executed public realm with sufficient consideration of how the building interfaces with it street edges (in particular at the corner & along Laurel St)?

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The applicant began by noting this site is at the Corner of Laurel and Broadway within the uptown office district and part of the Broadway plan area that will provide additional jobs and services. The development will activate W Broadway and support the goals of the Broadway plan and community. The proposal includes a mix of hotel, rental office and retail.

This application precedes the Broadway plan. The intent is to strengthen the uptown office district by intensifying the areas primarily retail/service and office character.

The buildings height is below view cone 3.1 and limited by the CD-1 zoning. The building heights are also limited by the helicopter flight path requirement from VGH.

The form of development has been designed to comply with the requirements of the CD-1 and rezoning conditions to meet or better the previous design.

The applicant noted they are working at aligning the gaps between the surrounding building context to improve view and daylight penetration and transitioning the massing between the buildings with appropriate articulation. This alignment also improves the success of the office and the hotel public realm interface.

The public realm has been opened up at the corner to facilitate the plaza with a better transition to the future transit station.

Building materials include precast concrete panels and selective use of wood at the soffits to add warmth to the expression. The solid massing of the precast is contrasted by the lightness of the curtain wall to reveal individual massing elements.

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

Having reviewed the project it was moved by **MS. STAMP** and seconded by **MR. BONIFACE** 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:

- Design development to differentiate the Identities of the hotel and office;
- Consider more carefully the identity and signage strategy of the hotel's west Broadway presence;
- Improve the office's entrance and public realm interface.

**Related Commentary:**

There was general support from the panel.

The panel noted it was a great improvement from the rezoning application.

There was support for the massing and how it sits on the site and neighborhood context.

A panelist noted the expression picks up on the history of W Broadway successfully and the articulation and expression of scale was generally successful.

There were strong opinions regarding differentiation between the two different programmatic areas including:

- The buildings tower massing and façade expression appear too similar.
- The office component is expressed essentially identical to the hotel.
- The facades are not successfully addressing different exposures.
- The office building entry should be set back more and be more visible at the street.
- The project will rely heavily on signage and there should be a strategy in place.
- The panel noted the need to consider the importance of signage and the hotels identity moving forward.

The majority of the panel noted that the material strategy should be improved further.

The majority of the panel noted the applicant should consider further exploration of expression with different patterns for the precast materials, different material treatment and/or use of color.

The panel noted the public realm and its integration to the building has improved from rezoning stage with areas such as the bike share, plaza, and public art in the right location.

The panel noted that outdoor office amenities are ample and accessible.

The panel noted the public realm around the office area should be improved.

A panelist noted the frontage facing the lane and the back of house could be improved and should be paid more attention to.

Some panel members noted that the need to consider more landscape elements than what is currently shown at grade.

Some panel members noted the need to consider more vegetation at the level 3 north planter to mitigate use into this space.

The panel noted the need to consider the consistency of the columns expression and how it contributes to the public realm.

The panel noted that the sustainability features are generally successful.

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