

DATE: February 16, 2022
TIME: 3:00 pm
PLACE: Webex

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Clinton Cuddington
Geoff Lister
Jennifer Stamp (excused from item # 3)
Kelly Lee
Margot Long
Natalie Telewiak (Chair)
Reza Mousakhani

RECORDING SECRETARY: M.Sem

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 5562-5688 Manson St.
2. 396 SW Marine Drive
3. 1025 Dunsmuir St.

3. **Address:** 1025 Dunsmuir St
Permit No.: DP-2021-00824
Description: To develop a 16-storey Office Building, with a one-storey retail pavilion and a public plaza; all over 2 levels of below grade parking, providing 173 vehicle parking spaces and 273 bike parking spaces, including a connection to the existing retail concourse and the Burrard Skytrain station. The building height is 260'-0", and the total floor area is 461,619 sq. ft.
Zoning: DD
Application Status: Complete Development Application
Review: First
Architect: KPF
Delegation: Marianne Kwok
Vincent Defaud
Kevin Welsh, Integral Group
Joseph Fry,
Ryan Martin
Levi Stoelting
Staff: Daniel Fung
Hamid Shayan

EVALUATION: Recommend Re-submission (6/0)

Planner's Introduction:

Development planner, Hamid Shayan, began by noting this is a proposed DP application to replace an existing 7-storey parking structure at north-west corner of Bentall centre with a 16-storey mass timber office building, featuring sub-grade parking, connection to the retail concourse and the Skytrain, retail at grade, a lobby, and rooftop. The building is fronted by a large public plaza, which is activated by a 1 storey retail pavilion.

The site is zoned DD and is located in area “A” under Downtown Official Development Plan and mostly surrounded by office buildings. It is considered as established high-density prestige employment node.

The project sits within the current Bentall Centre complex with Eveleigh Street to the north, Dunsmuir Street to the south, and Thurlow Street to the west. Site has some constraints; The Canada way transit link passes underneath from southeast to northwest. The site has a significant slope. From southwest corner, Melville and Thurlow street intersection, it has 22 feet drop to the north at Eveleigh and 11 feet drop to the east at Burrard Street. The applicant recently has done some temporary improvements such as the mural which add to the character of the area.

This proposal is governed by some applicable plans, policies and guidelines and is generally aligned with urban design objectives including:

- Improve the general environment of the downtown district as an attractive place to live, work, shop and visit.
- Maintain the highest standards of design and amenity
- Create distinctive public realm and a unique and pleasing streetscape in downtown district

The proposal is envisioned as a loft-like structure. The cubic form started directly from the ground and articulated with cut-in spaces .The rectangular plate and centred core provide deep leasing depths. The mass of the building steps back at multiple levels, providing many of the office floors with loggias or terraces. Terraces provide access to exterior space from the office and line the south elevation of the development, facing the new Dunsmuir Plaza. They cascade across the facade to allow extra daylight into the breezeways and to the existing facades of Bentall 3 and Bentall 4. The highest occupied level is graced by a large rooftop terrace with ample greenery and planting.

The site also is under 6 intersecting View Cones (B2, C1, C2, 3.2.2, 9.2.1, F1). At this location, the maximum geodetic height is 115.3 meters (378.5 ft.) under View Cone B2. As per the provided shadowing analysis, no extra shadow impact is expected on the nearby public areas however there is some shadow impacts from pavilion to the plaza which staff will be considering to minimize it in their future review process.

Hamid Shayan continued with elaboration on public realm design strategies which comprise of 4 components:

- 1- The Plaza south of 1025 Dunsmuir is re-imagined to align with these aspirations. The entire space along Dunsmuir is regraded, providing an accessible space connecting Dunsmuir, Burrard and Thurlow as well as entries into 1025 Dunsmuir, Bentall 3 and Bentall 4.
- 2- In between the buildings is the Thurlow Breezeway and the Eveleigh Breezeway, leading from the Plaza to surrounding streets. Activating the Plaza and Breezeways with retail, café and restaurant patios and landscaping.
- 3- The Pavilion is a low, mass timber structure and is the most prominent feature of the Plaza. It is simultaneously a café where people socialize and a sculptural object inviting engagement and participation.
- 4- Retail spaces at the first two levels of the building and carefully considered landscape design, aim to activate more fully the corner of Thurlow and Eveleigh, while also increasing pedestrian accessibility, porosity through the site and increased connectivity to the surrounding neighbourhood.

Development Planner, Hamid Shayan, also noted that in order to activate the public life at night, a lighting strategy has been proposed upon staff’s preliminary commentary. The material of the buildings includes Clear glazing installed within dark bronze mullions and trims, concrete piers and fire rated wood spandrel, and wood textured aluminum soffit panels.

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

- 1) Public Realm and Landscape Strategies;

Please provide feedback on the following:

a) The overall performance of introduced plaza area and breezeway connectors as the active and inviting pedestrian links.

b) The quality of the public realm and building interface at Dunsmuir St, Thurlow St. and Eveleigh St.

2) Design Development and Materiality;

Please comment on the architectural expression, articulation of the massing, and material treatment of the office building and retail pavilion with consideration of the below:

a) Is the pedestrian scale and relationship with the context establish a rhythm appropriate with the character of the area?

b) Is the massing sufficiently articulated to produce a high quality addition to the prominent urban culture of downtown Vancouver?

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

- Marianne Kwok presented the design rationale and explanation for the proposed project design.
- Joseph Fry presented the landscape plans and vision for this project.
- Kevin Welsh presented on the sustainability strategies for this project.

Applicant and staff took questions from Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

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

THAT the Panel Recommend Re-submission of the project addressing the Panel member's comments noted in the minutes.

Panel Commentary

Summary

There was general support for the building design with some mixed feedback on the length of the building and the kind of density within the location that it is sited.

There was feedback on the design of the plaza, in particular the pavilion. The panel noted whether or not the proposed public realm design is in response to what is best needed in this area. Most panel members noted that the plaza, and pavilion design should be reconsidered.

Panel commented on the functional design and programming of the elements at the ground plane and what the target use in these spaces should be.

Panel commented on the connection between the pavilion design and office; as one project but distinctive space within the site.

Public Realm and Landscape Strategies

Panel suggest further design development and programming of ground plane.

Some Panel members noted the pavilion could be more supportive of the way people flow through the site and still facilitate access to light on sunny days. Panelists noted the plaza feels like a bypass space and not a place for people to engage and socialize. Comments were also made with concerns to understanding whether this be a “place” or “non-place” or a “place to draw yourself through”.

Some Panel members noted the breezeway provides quality corridor for social gathering and pedestrian connection.

A Panel member noted the breezeway could be wider.

Some Panel members noted non- support for the overall performance in which the plaza in the breezeway is working because people are not being protected from the rain. Panelist encourage rain coverage in and around Bentall buildings three and four.

A Panel member noted concerns with the second layer of landscape blocking the plaza.

A Panel member does not support the location of the amphitheatre being on the street side.

A Panel member noted the orientation of the pavilion will be casted by the shadow and therefore there is no need for canopy.

A Panelist noted there is a need for more open spaces and there are already too many buildings in the downtown core, another building in the plaza is the wrong move; also noting non-support for a pavilion in the plaza.

A Panel member noted concerns with having a retail space at the podium base.

Design Development and Materiality

General support from Panel on the massing of the office building with mixed feedback about the length and density within the existing location.

A Panel member noted the concrete and timber propositions on the inside should not be undone by the use of artificial materials on the outside when perhaps glass could be more beneficial.

A Panel member noted appreciation for the use of interior wall separations to create 60/40, allowing the building to be more of a glass structure.

Some Panel members suggest the building could be taller. Other Panelists commented the building needs to be either taller or shorter than the Bentall building but not the same size. Another Panelist noted the building needs to be a bit narrower.

Some Panel members noted concerns with the plaza; it either needs more open space for pedestrians to encourage engagement or extend the breezeway to move pedestrian traffic through.

Other

A Panel member noted concerns with challenges in heating and cooling of the building in the future.

Some Panel members noted appreciation for the rigour, simplicity, and relentlessness of the building.

A Panel member noted the presentation was incredibly light for a DP application and concerned with how the description of the way the site works is not highly developed and communicated at this level.

END OF MINUTES