

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: Nov 22, 2023

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: WEBEX

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

- Craig Taylor
- Bob Lilly
- Heidi Nesbitt
- Peeraj Thakre
- Scott Romses
- John Stovell
- Frederica Piccone
- Kai Hotson

RECORDING

SECRETARY: Kathy Cermeno

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 450 Pacific Street
2. 1050 Expo Boulevard
3. 990 Beatty Street
4. 906 W 18th Ave

1. Address: 450 Pacific Street
Permit No.: DP-2023-00630
Description: The department of Non-Market Housing Development and Operations within the City of Vancouver has applied to develop this site with a seven-storey residential apartment building. This proposal includes 91 social housing units; A Floor Space Ratio of 3.41; an approximate floor area of 6,807 m² (73,271 sq.ft.); An approximate height of 23 m (75 ft.) One level of underground parking, accessed off Strathmore Mews. This development application follows the amendments to the False Creek North Official Development Plan and consequential CD-1 By-law Amendments approved in principle by City Council at a Public Hearing on July 13, 2023, and is subject to Council enactment of the amendments to the Plan and By-law, approval of the Form of Development and decision by the Development Permit Board.

Application Status: Complete Development Application
Architect: PUBLIC: Architecture + Communication
Delegation: John Wall, Architect, PUBLIC
Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect, Groundswell

Staff: Michele Alborg

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (Non-Voting)

Planner's Introduction:

Development Planner, Michele Alborg, began by noting that this is an application located at 450 Pacific Street, a 7-storey social housing tower in downtown Vancouver. Ms. Alborg then described the site's existing CD-1 and Guideline's policy, physical context, the proposed massing, and the previous urban design panel and staff's comments. She addressed how the proposal responded to those comments for the proposed façade expression, materiality and finishes, landscape amenity, and public realm interface.

Questions to the Panel:

1. Please comment on how the proposal responds to the previous UDP items, e.g., balconies and architectural expression.
2. Please comment on how the at-grade interface provides pedestrian interest at the project entry, Pacific Street and Strathmore Mews.
3. Please comment on the architectural expression, materiality, and landscape design.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Applicant John Wall Architect for PUBLIC Architecture noted the objectives and gave a general overview of the project followed by Jennifer Stamp for Groundswell Landscape Architecture presenting on the landscape design.

Applicant and staff took questions from Panel.

Questions included roof design/treatment, screening of courtyard, and clarifications regarding the façade materials and colours.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Please see panel commentary below.

Summary of Panel Commentary:

There is support for the project from the panel.

The panel noted it is a strong and thoughtful project.

The architectural expression is an elegant and restrained solution.

Materiality is durable and good quality.

Many panelists noted that many of the concerns from the previous UDP comments have been resolved.

Consider additional layering for the privacy of the ground floor units to create a more pleasant space both from in the inside and outside.

The panel noted more work could be done on the Strathmore Mews. Presently the façade feels long. Consider refinement in detail in the fenestration. Consider the use of more color. A panelist noted the possibility of adding planters and screens to add more variety on the Strathmore Mews side.

A panelist noted the cantilever balconies are small especially for the accessible units.

Consider more glazing in the amenity and the ground floor lobbies to make the project more successful to allow for more natural lighting.

A panelist noted at the top floor amenity outdoor space consider treating the parapet more as a guardrail to create a more beautiful open space.

A panelist noted that the stairs on the Pacific side at the residential lobby could have further improvements at the corner.

The panel noted the landscape design is successful.

The panel chair summarized the issues as:

Explore additional use of colour, fenestration, and layering of landscape to increase privacy for Strathmore Mews.

Explore additional glazing at residential lobby and amenity rooms.

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

2. Address: 1050 Expo Boulevard
Permit No.: DP-2023-00629
Description: The department of Non-Market Housing Development and Operations within the City of Vancouver has applied to develop this site with a 29-storey residential apartment building. This proposal includes: 299 social housing units; A Floor Space Ratio of 5.94; An approximate floor area of 23,215 m² (249,882 sq.ft.); An approximate height of 88.4 m (290 ft.); Three levels of underground parking, accessed off Expo Boulevard. This development application follows the amendments to the False Creek North Official Development Plan and consequential CD-1 By-law Amendments approved in principle by City Council at a Public Hearing on July 13, 2023, and is subject to Council enactment of the amendments to the Plan and By-law, approval of the Form of Development and decision by the Development Permit Board.

Application Status: Complete Development Application
Architect: PUBLIC: Architecture + Communication
Delegation: John Wall, Architect, PUBLIC
Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect, Groundswell
Staff: Hamed Ghasemi

EVALUATION: Support with recommendations (Non-Voting session)

Planner's Introduction:

Hamed Ghasemi, 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. Mr. Ghasemi 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. Have the previous recommendations from the panel been addressed:
 - Increase the size of amenities;
 - Add retail (non-dwelling uses) on the ground floor;
 - Enhance the public realm interface along Nelson Street (underneath Cambie Bridge) through the landscape;
2. Please comment on the architectural expression of the building considering the modern expression of flatiron building typology; ex. Façade articulations, repetition, materiality, etc.
3. Please comment on the public realm interfaces including adding a small plaza at the corner of Expo and Pacific Blvd.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Applicant John Wall Architect for PUBLIC Architecture noted the objectives and gave a general overview of the project followed by Jennifer Stamp Landscape Architect presenting on the landscape design.

Applicant and staff took questions from Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Enhance the public realm interface at the corner of Expo and Pacific Boulevard.
Enhance the architectural expression at specific locations of the building. Eg. Axial view of Pacific Blvd, double-height balconies, lower floor/s with horizontal 3d wall panels, etc.
Please see the panel commentary below.

Summary of Panel Commentary:

There was support from the panel for the project.

The panel noted the previous recommendations from the panel have been addressed. The panel commended the applicant team for the strong parti, increasing the amenity space, and setting the bar high in terms of the social strategy.

The double height balconies are highlighted nicely and this side meets the entries successfully. A panelist noted to hang on to the glazing at both corridors as this makes it a successful space with nice natural lighting.

A panelist noted to keep in mind the parti should be reinforced through the various materials so that it reinforces and celebrates the form of the building.

A panelist noted it would be nice if the form faceted cladding was used throughout the project.

A panelist noted at the end elevation where its narrow the horizontal solid guard that goes up the surface is the least interesting, going forward would be nice if this could be worked in with the rest of the language of the project, as right now it is relentless and repetitive.

The expanded mesh used in areas such as the Expo sidewalk and loading/parking ramp can be considered as an opportunity for a public art especially if used in the areas where the mesh is at the public realm.

Consider more seating at the public plaza at the corner. Consider benches that are conversational to each other and have the art piece as the focal point. Presently the mini plaza feels more of an expanded sidewalk.

A panelist noted it is important to not make the children's play space sterile, these spaces have a responsibility to the children, it is important to consider proper design and installation so that it is a well-used space.

Consider a stronger landscape expression at the two story void spaces.

A panelist recommended expanding the organic landscape design of the children’s play area into the design of the mini plaza at the corner of Expo and Pacific Blvd.

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

3. Address: 990 Beatty St
Permit No.: DP-2023-00631
Description: The department of Non-Market Housing Development and Operations within the City of Vancouver has applied to develop this site with a 28storey mixed-use. This proposal includes: 283 social housing units, a fire hall and daycare. A Floor Space Ratio of 7.54; An approximate floor area of 21,732 m² (233,924 sq.ft.); An approximate height of 85.4 m (280 ft.) Two levels of underground parking, accessed off Expo Boulevard. This development application follows the amendments to the False Creek North Official Development Plan and consequential CD-1 By-law Amendments approved in principle by City Council at a Public Hearing on July 13, 2023, and is subject to Council enactment of the amendments to the Plan and By-law, approval of the Form of Development and decision by the Development Permit Board.

Application Status: Complete Development Application
Architect: Francl Architecture
Delegation: Stefan Aepli, Architect, Francl Architecture
Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect, Groundswell
Staff: Michele Alborg

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (Non-Voting)

Development Planner’s Introduction:

Planner, Michele Alborg, began by noting that this is an application located at 990 Beatty, a 28-storey mixed use social housing tower in downtown Vancouver. Ms. Alborg then described the site’s existing CD-1 and Guideline’s policy, physical context, the proposed massing, and the previous urban design panels and staff’s comments. She addressed how the proposal addressed those comments for the proposed façade expression, materiality and finishes, landscape amenity, public realm interface and shadowing.

Questions to the Panel:

1. Please comment on how the proposal responds to the previous UDP items, e.g., balconies, façade development, public realm activation and integration of the firehall.
2. Please comment on how the at-grade interface and landscape provides pedestrian interest and comfort at the Beatty, Nelson and Expo frontages.
3. Please comment on the architectural expression and materiality for both the tower’s long and short facades.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Applicant Stefan Aepli architect for Francl Architecture, noted the objectives and gave a general overview of the project followed by Jennifer Stamp, landscape architect, presenting on the landscape design.

Applicant and staff took questions from the Panel.**Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

Please see panel commentary below.

Summary of Panel Commentary:

There was general support from the panel.

The majority of the panel noted the applicant resolved previous comments successfully.

Some panelists noted the project could benefit from a bit more simplification.

The architecture tower top feels top-heavy.

Consider some contrast on elements of the tower to reinforce to its height and slenderness.

Consider interlocking or connecting the lower and upper tower form so that it reads as single elements while celebrating the change of uses and expressing the terra cotta reveal more successfully.

Consider reducing the number of materials used however still celebrating contrast in the building design.

The reveal midway up the building feels odd and heavy at times.

Consider the reveals relationship with the indoor amenities.

The expression of the balconies is strong.

The balcony and façade development have improved.

Consider celebrating the entrances along the public realm to increase the arrival experience.

Consider some greenwall elements or vines. Consider the wayfinding to the entrances such as changes in paving.

A panelist noted the entry to the firehall is lost.

A panelist noted the outdoor amenity space is not as usable.

A panelist noted the ground floor and floor level amenities' ceiling heights are quite low and there are units above on level two, would be nice if these were full height to the upper podium to celebrate the corner and maximize transparency.

Consider a different treatment at the corner of the stair tower so there is more transparency in this area. As the tower elements conceals a lot of the Fire Hall.

Consider extending the landscape up to the terra cotta level to add some depth and variation.

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

4. Address:	906 W 18 th Ave (Part 1 & 2)
Permit No.:	DP-2023-00648 (1) & DP-2023-00649 (2)
Description:	(Part 1) To develop this site, consisting of: 58 townhouse units; A six storey strata residential building with 43 strata residential units; A childcare at main level with underground parking.
	Part (II) To develop this site, consisting of: A six-storey rental building with 77 rental units; 25 moderate income housing units with underground parking.
Application Status:	Complete Development Application
Architect:	Yamamoto Architecture
Delegation:	Evan Lewis, Architect, Wesgroup Taizo Yamamoto, Architect, Yamamoto Architecture David Stoyko, Landscape Architecture, Yamamoto Architecture
Staff:	Samantha Patterson & Omar Aljebouri

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (6/0)

Planner's Introduction:

Samantha Patterson, 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 policy. Ms. Patterson concluded the presentation with a description of the site and a summary of the rezoning proposal.

Omar Aljebouri, Development Planner gave an overview of the neighborhoods context in relation to the proposal, followed by the expectations of the built-form guidelines for this project. Mr. Aljebouri 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. Addressing the Panel's concerns from the rezoning stage.
2. The quality of open spaces (e.g. active link, central family gathering space, courtyards.)
3. The architectural evolution and contextual fit.

4. The quality of private amenities.
5. Any additional advice.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Applicant Evan Lewis and Taizo Yamamoto Architects for WesGroup and Yamamoto Architecture noted the objectives and gave a general overview of the project followed by David Styoko, Landscape Architect presenting on the landscape design.

Applicant and staff took questions from Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Please see panel commentary below.

Summary of Panel Commentary:

Comments from previous panels has been resolved.

Significant improvement over the course of the development of the project.

Good massing and setbacks on the upper floors of the taller buildings.

Some panelists noted there was a lack of density on this site.

The corrugated cladding building is not as successful consider some further refinement. Appears too industrial consider something more fitting

The simplification of the project is a positive however consider embellishing those brickwork details as moments of delight through the design. Consider generating consistency throughout the project.

There is a good amount of open space.

The addition of the park is a positive.

A panelist noted the central family gathering space is a bit tight.

The Semi private spaces should be enhanced generally to create moments and facilitate interaction.

A panelist noted the private amenities are small.

A panelist noted at the active link there is a semi-circle playground area; there is an opportunity to simplify the circulation to give space to a play area.

A panelist noted to consider the moments where the paths cross as good opportunities for refuge and social gathering. Consider adding some seating.

A panelist noted the ramp is compromising the entry lobby space a bit.

Ensure the soil depths provided for the trees over the parkade are without significant retaining walls so the views of the semi-private spaces are more functional and usable.

The central gathering space: simplify the circulation to give back to the play space. Deviating from the orthogonal circulation would be great. It does not feel like a true gathering and play space.

Private townhouse courtyard could use some communal amenity space. The courtyards between the townhouses are narrow. Try your best to make them more functional. Try more informal naturalized landscape.

Private amenities are very small. The rental building amenity is very small.

There is the possibility for neighbours to stop and talk. Further development especially the two active links with a node that is not celebrated. Try to make this more special.

Consensus items:

Revisit the corrugated cladding for something more fitting with the residential context.

Ensure sufficient soil depth on underground parking for trees.

The semiprivate spaces (central gathering space; townhouse courtyards) should create moments for social interaction.

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