

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: April 13, 2022

TIME: 3:15 pm

PLACE: Webex + Joe Wai Meeting Room, Townhall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Natalie Telewiak
Jennifer Stamp
Kelly Lee
Reza Mousakhani
Jane Vorbrodt
Margot Long
Clinton Cuddington
Amina Yasin

Guests Panelists:
Ryan Bragg
Laura Jimenez
Jennifer Marshall

RECORDING SECRETARY: M.Sem

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 601 Beach Crescent
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BUSINESS MEETING Chair, MS. TELEWIAK, called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum.

- 1. Address:** 601 Beach Crescent
- Permit No.:** RZ-2021-00162
- Description:** To develop a 53-storey mixed-use building, consisting of 303 market residential dwelling units and 152 social housing dwelling units, with 2,721 m² (29,288 ft²) of commercial space at grade; all over three levels of underground parking, including 453 parking spaces and 911 bicycle spaces. The floor space ratio is 7.49, the floor area is 43,249 m² (465,525 ft²)
- Zoning:** CD-1
- Application Status:** Complete Development Application (Higher Building)
- Review:** Fourth
- Architect:** GBL Architects Inc.
- Delegation:**

- Staff:** Derek Robinson

EVALUATION: Support with recommendations (7/4)

Planner’s Introduction:

Development Planner, Derek Robinson, briefly outlined the site and context, followed by an overview of the Higher Buildings Policy expectations. He then provided a brief outline of the proposal and an overview of the five Panel consensus recommendations from the previous UDP review in October, 2021. Finally, the staff questions to the Panel were presented, noting AIBC Bulletin 65.

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

- 1) Has the applicant successfully satisfied the expectations of the higher buildings policy including adequately responding to the previous UDP consensus recommendations?
- 2) For future design development please provide comment on newly introduced public realm elements such as the mechanized lift and planted slope along Rolston Street.

Applicant’s Introductory Comments:

Applicant addressed recommendations from previous UDP.

- 1. Resolution of the tower and podium intersection/relationship to provide clear conceptual continuity and approach to all sides of the building;

The tower shape and design intentionally mimic movement and flow when seen from different viewpoints. The design development of the podium becomes a response of how the tower continues this movement and flow to the ground. The podium, as the

receiver and transition to the ground plane, mitigates the inherent slope of the site by creating strong edges that “contain” the flow.

Along Rolston Street, the tower flows down and cascades toward the corner at Beach Crescent.

The resolution of the tower and podium interface and continuity is expressed through form and contrast articulated through a cohesive and simple material and color palette

2. Design development to public realm to demonstrate best practices and accessibility and public safety;

Applicant noted the slope is universally accessible and there were improvements to grading approach to not exceed 5%.

3. Architectural and landscape approach to the Seymour Mews to reflect consistently with the overall project concept and also reflect uniqueness to neighbors;

Applicant noted the design of the façade along Seymour Mews considers both macro and micro scale in order to align with the overall project concept and to reflect the neighboring character.

4. Clear understanding of the materials proposed.

Applicant noted the building material and palette is intentionally simple and gives a great impact.

The main material palette is limestone cladding, the triple glazed curtain wall, some fitted glass panels that are used in the retail section.

5. Design development to demonstrate leadership in sustainability.

Applicant presented the sustainable design strategy as follows:

Passive response:

- 1) Form factor: 5
- 2) Window to all ratio: 51%
- 3) Overall wall: R-7.5 effective
- 4) Steel framing wall w/5” exterior insulation: R-17.0 effective
- 5) Curtain wall spandrel: R-7 effective
- 6) Triple glazed windows
- 7) Thermally broken balconies
- 8) Exterior insulated curbs
- 9) Eyebrows/shades w/point connections
- 10) Enhanced air barrier commissioning w/ 0.1 infiltration target.

Active response

- 11) Direct ventilation w/ HRV @ 78%+SRE
- 12) Mechanical Plant: Air-sourced heat pump (ASHP)
- 13) Domestic hot water: heat pump

Applicant and staff took questions from Panel.

Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **MR. MOUSAKHANI** and seconded by **MS. STAMP** 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) Reconsider materiality, detailing of podium and explore use of local contextual material.
- 2) Recommend applicant coordinate with city staff to define an accessibility solution that is integrated including reviewing city building grades and elimination of an exterior mechanical lift.
- 3) Design development to study envelope detailing relative to window to wall ratio with consideration given to maintaining building concept.
- 4) Enhancement of material in the public realm.
- 5) Design development to improve the expression of the relationship between tower and podium.

Panel Commentary

Panelists commended applicant for improvements and response to previous UDP considerations.

A Panelist noted the materiality and architectural expression of the podium is much more simplified than what has been seen previously.

A Panelist noted the massing design is calmer, better and cleaner compared to previous design.

A Panelist noted the accessibility and public safety for this project of this nature does not meet the City’s higher building requirements for a high quality public realm.

Some Panelists noted this project is not there yet as a legacy project.

A Panelist noted the “dancing pair” motif (with Vancouver House) expects rhythm, proportion, and fluidity of a dancer. The fluidity is dis-continuous, the podium does not connect, there is not enough skin articulation; it needs to move more or in a slightly different way, the current skin and volumetric moves are not working well enough together; there are some elegant forms but collectively the skin and the form of the building are fighting each other in some cases.

In general the Panel recommended removing the mechanical lift altogether as there are concerns with it feeling exclusionary and not improving the public realm despite its intent to provide more accessibility.

Some Panelists noted the mechanical lift will require regular maintenance as it will break down and be out of power at times.

A Panelist recommended an elevator as a simple alternative solution to the mechanical lift.

Some Panelists noted the mechanical lift does not feel accessible, universal nor inclusive; it is not something everyone would feel welcome to use; if the solution to accessibility is not ideal it will create a new barrier of social stigma. The Panel encouraged a solution that is accessible for everyone to use; the design needs to be sensitive to all disabilities including those with visual impairment requiring a lot of signage and visual contrast.

A Panelist noted the lift would be a safety and security issue and it will be too much to ask the developer and landlord to have to manage that.

A Panelist noted ramping all in one spot won't be successful and suggested to break down grade along the edge so there are landings.

A Panelist noted the lift is challenging to resolve and suggested making the stair grander and make use of the city sidewalk for accessibility.

A Panelist noted coming off the off ramp the bridge façade of the podium and tower will be viewed from above which is unfortunately unforgiving because that is where the podium and tower meet at the poorest connection as that is where the continuity is lost. The challenge there is for it to flow and come down, taking advantage of the conceptual approach of a dancing and flowing element, it doesn't flow, it comes down and crashes resulting in a lost opportunity at that point.

A Panelist suggested one way to deal with a slopped site is to break up that experience by having seating at regular intervals and hand rails along the steep section of the sidewalk.

A Panelist noted the way the containment wall comes down to grade with the vegetative slope is a great improvement to the project, it is a typographical move which works for this site quite well, however, it does suggest that it has public access. The applicant was encouraged to look at whether that space can be provided to the community or is there more generosity that can be allowed there.

A Panelist noted if the stairs are going to be left in the current configuration the treads need to be perpendicular to the line of travel to be supported by the code.

A Panelist noted the green slope feature will require a CPTED solution at the top as a safeguard to prevent people from coming down at night. Panelist suggested creating a safety barrier such as a glass wall at the top.

Some Panelists noted inaccessibility of the mews on Rolston could use some more design development.

A Panelist noted the motion and continuity is not convincing between tower and podium. The geometry and the flow of the podium doesn't respond to the tower in a direct way. The podium looks more like a series of rectangular linear blocks on the corners, compared to the

curvilinear nature of the tower, they are incongruent, the upper podium being the contrasting element.

A Panelist noted the lower and upper podium were more aligned and complementary to one another.

Panelists noted improvements with the resolution of podium and expression of the tower.

Panelists suggested further exploration on the way in which the building resolves itself to the ground. Some Panelists noted the podium could benefit from a more gradual transition to the ground.

Some Panelists noted the connections to Seymour Mews is well resolved and consistent with the overall project concept.

Some Panelists encouraged the landscape flow up onto the podium edge.

Regarding the curtain wall glass portions of the podium, a Panelist noted it is not clear on the tower, what is glass and what is solid spandrel. In addition, the two-storey mass that is around the pool, feels like an office. Panelist encourage there to have a more residential feel to it.

A Panelist noted appreciation of the curved line on the façade to help anchor the curvature of the massing as it expressed the design intent. The curved line from the tower to the ground provides visual continuity.

A Panelist noted the quality of materials and landscape have deteriorated from the last iteration.

In general Panelists noted the previous iteration of the limestone treatment was more successful because it was treated and expressed in a more contemporary fashion.

Panelists suggested design development to the limestone. A Panelist noted there is an imperialist kind of quality to it that might go against the dancing form.

In general Panel highly encouraged applicant to use regionally specific materials.

In general Panel noted the limestone felt foreign to the project and could benefit from a more local interpretation focusing more on the embodied carbon and local aspects of the materials.

A Panelist noted the building has become a clutter with a series of façade approaches.

Panelists noted there is opportunity to further enhance the use of materials on market, affordable market housing and roof decks.

Some Panelists encouraged enhancing the quality of materials along the public realm on Rolston.

Some Panelists found the heaviness of the material added monumentality. A Panelist noted the coffered and sloped ledger is not appropriate for this location could benefit from further design development.

A Panelist noted the Seymour Mews has a better grade relationship to the existing. Panelist suggested using similar materiality to what is across the mews to unify elements of the ground plane.

A Panelist noted appreciation for the limestone, it helps anchor the project to the site and the overall movement.

A Panelist suggested the applicant be more mindful of the material palette chosen, to ensure it stays simple and less busy, there are concerns it may get busy again.

A Panelist noted the limestone element is convincing if viewed as a plinth, on top is the dress of the dancer. Panelist noted the challenge is when the dress comes down to the tower and doesn't make sense at the upper podium. The plinth makes sense but there is a piece in the middle that needs to be addressed partly due to the geometry of the upper podium in the middle with the dress. There is a challenge with tower-podium that needs to be addressed.

A Panelist noted the curvilinear motif is lost in places on the tower where there is a decorative element of sun shade, and in some areas it straighten up and becomes a straight line, lacking continuity of the motif that is chosen.

A Panelist noted the Seymour mews has improved.

Panelists commended the different elements of sustainability included in the project.

Panel encouraged opportunities to further push the expression of sustainability in the public realm.

Some Panelists noted having greenery is more important than mitigating water use in this environment. They suggested roof decks as a sustainable approach.

Panelists commended the inclusion of social housing in this project

A Panelist encourage applicant to find solutions to keep people on its site in a socially sustainable way and not running for cover under the minimal eaves provided.

A Panelist noted the building system can be fully electrified.

A Panelist noted carbon reduction of locally sourced material is an opportunity to provide savings in the future.

A Panelist noted there were no comments about urban agriculture or food security.

A Panelist noted the complimentary forms interacts well with the neighbouring tower.

Panelist noted concerns with equity and safety of the play areas for non-market and market residents which is just below the bridge ramp, creating an unhealthy environment, as tire debris in those outdoor spaces comes off the bridge. Panelist suggest trees and landscape to help mitigate that.

Panelist noted at the top of the lift there is a door that swings out causing accessibility concerns.

One Panelist noted for a DP submission, the landscape package is very minimal.

The massing is more simplified and provides better legibility.

A Panelist suggested design development of the parkade entrance.

A Panelist noted concern with the window wall ratio, when shadow boxes are going to be incorporated in the building.