

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** April 17, 2019

**TIME:** 3:00 pm

**PLACE:** Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

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

- Amela Brudar
- Helen Avini Besharat
- Derek Neale
- Muneesh Sharma
- Derek Neale
- Jim Huffman
- Jennifer Stamp
- Matt Younger
- Grant Newfield
- Susan Ockwell
- Yinjin Wen
- Jennifer Marshall

**REGRETS:** Colette Parsons

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** K. Cermeno

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1698 W Georgia Street
2.	720 Beatty Street
3.	3429-3469 Fraser Street
4.	1805 Larch Street

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**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Jim Huffman called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. The panel then considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 1698 W Georgia Street  
 Permit No. RZ-2018-00040  
 Description: To develop a 33-storey residential tower with 127 residential strata units. The proposed total floor area is 16,528 sq.m (177,903 sq.ft.), the building height is of 99.25 m (326 ft.) and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 9.39.  
 Zoning: RM-6 to CD-1  
 Application Status: Rezoning Application  
 Review: First  
 Architect: KPF & Chris Dikeakos Architects  
 Delegation: Richard Nemeth, Architect, KPF  
 Jinsuk Park, Architect, KPF  
 Chris Phillips, Landscape Architect, PFS Studio  
 Staff: Leifka Vissers & Paul Cheng

**EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (8/2)**

- **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Leifka Vissers, introduced the rezoning application located at 1698 West Georgia St. The site is located at the intersection of West Georgia Street and Bidwell Street.

The application proposes a Comprehensive Development (CD-1) district to permit a 33-storey residential building to include:

1. 127 market residential units
2. A total FSR of 9.39
3. A building height of 99.25m or 326'
4. 213 parking spaces and 355 bicycle stalls

The site area is 1,757.2 sq. m (18,915 sq. ft.), with a frontage of 39.9 m (131 ft.) on Bidwell Street and 44.0 m (144 ft.) on Alberni Street/Georgia Street. The site contains a billboard and formerly a now demolished gas station.

Immediately to the west of the site is a rezoning application for 1608-1616 West Georgia Street. This rezoning proposes the demolition of the existing restaurant and construction of two residential towers.

The site is presently zoned RM-6. This zoning allows residential and commercial uses, a discretionary maximum height of 64.0 m (210 ft.) and a maximum density of 2.50 FSR.

The enquiry site is within the "**Georgia Corridor**" **Area A of the West End Community Plan and Rezoning Policy for the West End**. Under these policies, rezoning applications may be considered for additional market residential density where the site has a minimum frontage of 39.6 m (130 ft.). Heights of up to 117.3 m (385 ft.) may be considered, subject to view cone restrictions, shadowing analysis, and other urban design considerations. Tower floor plates have a maximum area of 511 sq. m (5,500 sq. ft.).

Consistent with the *Rezoning Policy for the West End*, and the *West End Tower Form Bulletin*, the project may not add additional shadowing on Marina Square Park. This requirement has been met.

The Green Buildings Policy (2009, updated 2017) requires that all rezoning projects achieve either near zero emissions buildings or low emissions green buildings.

In accordance with the *Family Room: Housing Mix Policy for Rezoning Projects*, 35% of units must be family units, having two or more bedrooms with at least 10% having three or more. This application achieves 80% of units as family sized units with 25% having 3 or more bedrooms.

Development planner, Paul Cheng, noted the rezoning policy allows for a certain height to be attainable in this specific area, however it also states additional shadow cannot be introduced onto existing parks or new developments. The applicant has provided diagrams that they are not causing additional shadowing, the tower height and massing has been shaped by the requirement to not shadow Marina Square Park.

This project is located on Georgia Street, which is a major ceremonial street. There are concerns for how the building interfaces with the public realm (streets and mid-block ped link).

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

- 1) Please provide commentary on the proposed interface with the public realm, including West Georgia, Bidwell and Alberni Streets, as well as the proposed mid-block pedestrian mews.
- 2) Please provide commentary on the emerging architectural character of the proposal.

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The inspiration and guidelines for the imagery of the building came from looking towards the North shore Mountains and its green and organic elements.

This is one the first big buildings entering downtown and the site will act as one of the gateways to the downtown area.

There are 5 units per floor. At the top of the building the units are bigger.

At the base of the building it steps in and steps out with balconies, punches in the façade, and greenery planted in every balcony. At the bottom there is stone material to provide protection of units from traffic. Shadowing restrictions of Harbor Park gave the building its form. The intent is to mesh the downtown architecture with the softer street scape to the north.

There are 4 different sides facing this building. West Georgia is the monumental side, there are already nice terrace gardens and the intent is to rebuild the human scale characteristics. Landscape response to Georgia street is the most important scale coming into the gateway. At this side there is a lobby, waterfall and exposed art piece. There is a finer fabric around the edge.

There is a mid- block connection through the site which is also serves as a response to the bus stop.

On the Alberni side the townhouses reflect more of the finer-grained nature of Alberni.

There is a large waterfall in the front of the building, water is supplied by catching rain water, and this is to assist in drowning out surrounding traffic noise from Georgia.

This is a high performance building.

The vehicular drop off and loading is happening within the building footprint therefore minimizing on site vehicular exposure.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

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

Having reviewed the project it was moved by Ms. Marshall and seconded by Mr. Neale 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 of the mews, landscape, and scale along Georgia Street;
- Inclusion of trees on the tower, and along Georgia street;
- Design development of the horizontal planter near the base.

- **Related Commentary:**

There was general support for the project.

The buildings contribute nicely to the Vancouver Skyline.

The design reference to the mountains is appreciated.

The renderings are wonderful and help understand the depth of the building.

The treatment of the base with vertical elements is nice.

The form of massing, even though limited by shadowing, is appreciated.

The waterfall feature is beautifully done and inviting.

There is a good approach on all 4 frontages. The façade elements and different street treatments have a nice touch.

The overall emerging architectural character has potential but could benefit from a further design development and simplification, boxes at low levels along Georgia Street appear out of character and could use refining Vertical elements need shadow analysis for success.

Review placement of the towers and if possible look at a more appropriate orientation to explore vertical views. Consider the scale of the entry aspect.

Be careful of the façade extending to grade, there is a slight possibility of this happening.

The parti is strong however since part of the parti is an expression of the planters they need to be well designed. Review design development of transparent balcony rail against the planters. Greenery is critical to the parti therefore details are important for success. Having larger tree planters to tie into parti will give difference scales around the building and add a bit more interest. A key element to this project is to ensure all the planting materials work.

West Georgia is a ceremonial street, most unsuccessful lobbies are the ones that are not directly facing west Georgia and are less transparent. Make lobby and amenity space more transparent.

The midblock connector is the major issue; need to balance privacy with pedestrian traffic and how the patios will work.

There is considerable pedestrian movement from west end to the waterfront that puts demands on the design of the midblock muse and adjacent townhomes. The midblock pathway needs improvement both in the soft and hard landscaping. Do more coordination with the adjacent property and be mindful of the townhomes facing the pathway during various events.

The exit doorways onto the walkway can be problematic. Additionally the exit stairs coming out of the parking is blocking the corner where the amenity could come from.

In regards the townhouses on the muse, potentially get some trees in there to separate from future developments. Inclusion of real trees on the tower and along Georgia Street would be good.

Recommendations from the panel include design development of the muse, landscape and scale along Georgia Street.

Additional comments included there is lots of bicycle parking which is a plus however the path for bikes coming in and out is not clear, panel suggested a ramp for accessibility and bike elevator. It would be good to manage screen loading and parking. The public art in the plaza on Georgia Street is appropriate. The experience of the street in regards to the solar access is important.

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

2. Address:	720 Beatty Street
Permit No.	RZ-2018-00019
Description:	To develop a 17-storey office building with retail at grade; with four levels of underground parking. And to upgrade the Creative Energy steam plant. The proposed total gross floor area is 57,307 sq.m (616,847 sq.ft), the height is 80.4 m (263.8 ft.) and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 11.55. The application is being considered under the Rezoning Policy for the Central Business District (CBD) and CBD Shoulder.
Zoning:	DD-CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	BIG
Owner:	Ian Gillespie, Westbank
Delegation:	Bjarke Ingels, Architect, BIG Marc Ryan, Landscape Architect, Public Work
Staff:	Nicholas Danford & Paul Cheng

### **EVALUATION: Support (9/1)**

- **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Nicholas Danford, began by noting this application at 720 Beatty Street proposes to rezone the subject property under the enabling, rezoning policy for the CBD and CBD shoulder from DD (Downtown District) to CD-1 to allow for a 17-storey office building with retail units at grade. The enabling policy allows for non-residential rezoning throughout the CBD.

The adjacent site at 701 Expo Blvd. containing a plaza and pavilion is demonstrated in the models and materials for context purposes and is not included in the rezoning application. That site is zoned under BCPED and the applicant has indicated that they intend to apply for development permit for that site at a later stage.

The site size is approximately 51,800 sq. ft. frontage along Georgia 43m(141ft.) and depth 103m (338 ft.), located on the south-east corner of W Georgia and Beatty Street, directly adjacent BC Place stadium. The site is located in Area C1 of the Downtown Official Development Plan (DODP) that does allow for office and retail uses. The DODP currently allows for a maximum FSR of 7.0 and a height of 150 ft. that can be increased to up to 450ft. The site currently contains a two-storey commercial/industrial building that also houses creative energy (steam plant) facility as well as an industrial printing business.

The 17-storey office building has an absolute building height of 263 ft. including appurtenances. The proposed gross floor area of approximately 616,800 sq. ft. that includes 18,500 sq. ft. of commercial space on ground floor this is on top of 4 levels of underground parking. FSR of 11.55.

The site is located between BC Place and Beatty Street, kitty corner from the future site of the Vancouver art gallery. A series of four, 11 and 12 storey hotels located to the west of the site across Beatty Street while a 23-storey multi-family apartment condos that include townhouses fronting West Georgia are located across the street to the north. Directly to the south of the development is a 4-storey Class B heritage building (built in 1914).

Development Planner, Paul Cheng, began by noting this rezoning application deals with 720 Beatty, but the adjacent site is critical in this review in that it offers a new plane of public realm for circulation and place making. The other site is depicted in this package, as a building and as the new filling in of the existing open holes down to Expo Boulevard.

There is a strong urban repair on the ground plane. New CRU's instead of dead facades and newly-produced ground-plane adjacent to the stadium.

Locating a sports stadium in a downtown location poses a special urban design problem. Stadiums typically do not offer a fine-grained pedestrian experience on their edges. Vancouver's solution has been to allow and place buildings up against the stadium to act as edge-givers, street definers and scale transitioners.

If this was proposed under zoning, the maximum 7.0 FSR would result in a building of lesser overall volume. But since the rezoning policy does not provide any urban design guidance, staffs need to assess each project individually. (263 ft. (limited by view cone) across 330 ft. of frontage and 11.55FSR).

The site is not located in a typical context of surrounding similar development. Instead, it abuts against a large stadium of completely different scale. As such, the development of this site should not be expected to emulate the typical tower-podium typology seen in the residential portions of the downtown area. What is proposed is similar to an office slab typology, but with some unusual fold and sinuous bends in the floorplate.

Advice from the Panel is sought on the following:

1. Please provide commentary on the proposed building form's impact on the Beatty Street and Georgia Street public realm with respect to:
  - a) Shadows and ambient light;
  - b) Street enclosure and openness to sky;
  - c) Sidewalk activation;
  - d) Cantilevering of building elements over the Beatty Street sidewalk.

Pedestrian Circulation and Placemaking:

Stadium access and egress used to be informal use of undeveloped private properties, but we have been filling them up with buildings: Casinos, hotels, office towers, so it behooves us to be a little more mindful of the flow of crowds, and the placemaking around the Stadium.

2. Please provide commentary on the proposed pedestrian-oriented circulation pathways and places, including the breezeway, the Georgia Street sidewalk, and the newly introduced plaza area, with respect to:
  - a) Pedestrian comfort;
  - b) Commodiousness;
  - c) Placemaking; and
  - d) Building interface.
3. Please provide commentary on the emerging architectural character of the proposal.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The applicant noted the property came about when asked by a previous council to acquire Creative Energy to help effect a fuel switch. This project is in the first phase of this fuel switch. There are aspects that will remain of the present plant.

An empty property elsewhere will be utilized to build the new plant. Once the move is done, the present plant site will be freed up; however the property will still need to do half the work it is presently doing.

With the new plant the goal is to decrease the amount of gas fuel usage.

This site will be all commercial; this is a response to the lack of diversity of work space and the proximity to the stadium. The office floorplate is about 32000 sq.f, and is an important contribution to the City.

The design intent is to create a large continuous creative floorplate while breaking down the volume. The project feel is a 360 degree building to echo BC place, two allow for an illusion of two rounded volumes opposed to one.

There is an elevator lobby you can look into the plant, with pipes coming out that is part of the history to the site.

The façade on all views plays with a faceted crystalline rounded format. There is about 50/50 transparency opacity. This allows orienting the views and the glass work and highlights the curvature.

The base color is white, glazed enamel, this helps capture the different elements of light that high the building.

There is a pocket plaza and a sloping public realm that goes around Georgia Street and BC place; this will create a dialogue between the sites. The entire ground plain consists of public oriented retail.

The roof will have an amenity for fitness and areas of refuge with oasis of green. The roof will bring a sense of bio diversity with an intensively planted green roof.

The public realm and landscape is a fluid quality of the built edge. The goal is to accommodate the flow of movement through to mid-block connection and along Georgia. There are inserts of timber and gold lighting that contribute to the sense of direction. There are small coves on various corners with a series of gardens. All of the gardens are about portraying the ecological process of death and renewal.

The building caters to the public life and extra energy with the arena next door by creating a series of destinations.

There are discussions to have a school on the lower level with its own entrance and this circular people movement so they are part of the narrative.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
- Having reviewed the project it was moved by Ms. Avini-Besharat and seconded by Mr. Sharma and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:
- THAT the Panel **SUPPORT** the project with the following recommendation to be reviewed by City Staff:
  - Design development of the connection from Beatty street level to Expo Boulevard level (e.g. what will the façade be?);
  - A DP application where both sites can be discussed;
  - Recognize prominence of the corner at Georgia and Beatty street;
  - Design development of the rooftop massing;
  - Work with City too allow for flexibility of street tree placement.
- **Related Commentary:**

In general the panel supported the project at the rezoning stage.

It is a unique refreshing site that will require a lot of care. The theme is fluid and talks about motion.



The floorplate form and character was nicely done.  
The design has nice curves and lines to it and the timber and gold inserts lighting is beautifully done.  
The curvilinear shape really masks the size of the building.  
The proposal has inviting transitions and the curtain wall system is good.  
The retail opportunity is great.  
The exposure of historical elements is a success.

Be aware that the façade may end up with many small 'rooftops' above the facets.  
There are all these great renderings however the vision in regards to the porosity between the spaces needs developing.

The base of the building where it meets the ground needs further design development.

Think about the corner façade and how the building is a background, consider the importance of the Georgia and Beatty corner.

Like how the building is overhangs the public realm.

An important aspect of this project is the pedestrian character especially with linkage to the plaza and the water.

Pay attention to the success of Expo Boulevard. More development is needed from the street level and down to the boulevard. It is important to know what this will be as it is great big opportunity.

It is important to address the future of the Vancouver Gallery corner. There should be more happening at the corner; there will be a lot of individuals walking through here. It is important there is nothing on the sidewalk when crowds are leaving events.

Consider the ambient lighting, rain and sound challenges along the BC place outdoor spaces.  
The rooftop is nicely done.  
Suggest looking if there is space for roof top protection.

Encourage the landscaping to be as bold as the architecture.  
Review the expression of the plant types.  
Consider the spacing of the trees.

Additional comments include 'be aware of glare'.

Beatty Street may not need the parking. Suggest some drop off spaces especially with the school.

Consider incorporating some public art.

The panel agreed it was unfortunate the project could not be reviewed with the adjacent sports bar in order to provide commentary on the whole site.

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

3. Address:	3429-3469 Fraser Street
Permit No.	RZ-2018-00069
Description:	To develop a 6-storey mixed-use building with commercial uses at grade and 104 secured market rental residential units. The proposed floor area is 8,189.7 sq.m (88,154 sq.ft), the height is approximately 21.5 m (71 ft.) and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 3.42. This application is being considered under the Secured Market Rental Housing (Rental 100) Policy.
Zoning:	C-2 to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	Yamamoto Architecture. Inc
Delegation:	Taizo Yamamoto, Architect, Yamamoto Architecture Daryl Tyacke, Landscape Architect, ETA Landscape Architect
Owner	Lucas Berube, Rize Alliance
Staff:	Robert White & Grace Jiang

### EVALUATION: Support (10/0)

- **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Robert White, began by noting this is a rezoning application for a site on the northwest corner of Fraser Street and East 19th Avenue. It's located within a shopping area extending from generally 16th to 19th avenues.

The site is comprised of two parcels zoned C-2. The south parcel is currently developed with a two-storey commercial building and surface parking, and the north parcel is a surface parking lot. C-2 zoning generally extends north to 16th Ave, and south to 20th Ave. To the west across the lane, sites are zoned RS-1; and to the east across Fraser St a church site is zoned CD-1 (138) with more RS-1 beyond. There is no community plan for this area, however the Riley Park/South Cambie Community Vision, and city-wide rental rezoning policies apply.

This application is being considered under the Secured Market Rental Housing Policy, or Rental 100, which allows for consideration of increases up to 6 storeys and commensurate achievable density for projects where 100% of the residential floor space is rental. There is no maximum FSR under this policy, however typical Rental 100 projects fall between 3.2 and 3.5 FSR. Approved directions within the Riley Park/South Cambie Community Vision related to this site include strengthening important shopping areas, and providing additional housing near the Fraser Street Shopping Area.

This proposal is to rezone from C-2 to CD-1 to permit a six-storey, mixed-use building with a total of 104 secured market rental residential units and commercial retail units at grade. It proposes an FSR of 3.42 and a height of 21.5 m (71 ft.). The proposal includes:

- 2 levels of underground parking;
- 38% family units (5 of the three-bedroom units are two-storey townhouses at the lane).

Development Planner, Grace Jiang, began by noting Fraser St is a north-south oriented street. It is 100 ft. wide, the same width as Kingsway. The existing sidewalk public realm is generous and supports vibrant local shops along both sides.

The site is two blocks south to Kingsway, fronting Fraser St and E 19<sup>th</sup> Ave. The immediate context includes:

- A 4 storey mixed use development to the north with shared property line;
- A 4 storey mixed use development to the south across E 19<sup>th</sup> Ave;
- Glad Tidings church is to the east;
- An approved 6 storey senior rental building is at the southeast corner of the intersection;

- The buildings to the west across the lane are in a form of low-scale residential building zoned as RS-1.

The site is generally flat and has a 211ft frontage along Fraser St.

The rental 100 rezoning policy allows for an increased height up to 6 storey building based on a C2 built form. The 6 storey is consistently interpreted as a height viewed from street level.

The RZ application is for a 6-storey mixed use development, including street-facing commercial units at ground level with 18 ft to 20 ft floor-to-floor height, 2 storey townhouses on the lane side, and rental dwelling units on the levels 2 to 6. The building reads as a 6 storey from streets and 7 storey from the lane. The total building height is 71 ft.

The proposed setbacks include:

- 2 ft. 8 in from both streets;
- 8 to 12 ft. from the lane for the two levels of townhouses; and 50 ft. for the primary building massing on the upper levels;
- The south end follows a stepping form with a 20 ft. setback for level 2 & 3, 35 ft. for level 4, and 46 ft. for level 5 & 6;
- The north end setbacks are generally in line with the development on the north; and
- 6 ft. shoulder setbacks above 4th level on 3 exterior sides.

The residential entrance is on E 19<sup>th</sup> Ave. The parking and loading are from the lane. Indoor and outdoor amenity spaces are co-located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

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

1. Does the panel support the overall massing, height, and density? In particular the seven storey massing at the lane and its relationship to the low-scale residential to the west.
2. Has the width of the building been adequately broken down to be compatible with existing streetscape?
3. Has the development adequately responded to the adjacent 4-storey buildings to the immediate north and to the south across E 19<sup>th</sup> Ave?
4. Please provide preliminary comment on architectural expression and materiality for development application.

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

This location has great bus lines running up and down on Fraser and Kingsway.

Starting from a C-2 zone, this established the massing. The lower level step backs are also following the C-2 zoning. The 4<sup>th</sup> level is stepped down on the corner to minimize the shadowing.

The design concept is more eyes on the street and family oriented ground units.

The goal is not to push the building height beyond a typical retail level.

Fraser Street is a wide street approach with a simple street wall.

Materiality includes a plain brick. Levels 2 -4 are expressed with a flat skin with punch windows. There is plain brick with steel frames around attached to the edges of steel balconies. There are glazed guard rails and wood buildings with cladding.

The upper levels are simple vertical rhythms and with the new energy requirements will have deep walls. There is a play with horizontal balconies and weather protections.

There is a south west exposure for the outdoor amenity.

The public realm is very straight forward. There are additional bike racks and a residential main entry. At the back, at grade, the townhouses will be screened and gated from the lane.

Landscape includes trees and plant materials that are all low maintenance, for rental aspect that is a plus. Planting is pulled away from edge.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
- Having reviewed the project it was moved by Mr. Neale and seconded by Mr. Wen and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:
- THAT the Panel **SUPPORT** the project.

- **Related Commentary:**

There was overall support from the panel.

This is a great rental building project that is much needed in a good neighborhood.

The simplicity of the building is appreciated, a successful composition.

The architecture is well done. The massing, height, density supported for a rental building.

The buildings are adequately broken down.

The street wall and step backs are well handled.

The building is handled well in relation to adjacent buildings.

The low scale residential portion is well resolved, might be helpful to add a big planter on to the big decks to increase privacy.

The random overhangs on the top are nice.

The materiality is off to a nice start; suggest keeping the fins to the boxes.

The landscape is well handled.

Project would improve even more with a bit of detail refinement. The elevation of the 4 storey building could be better. Consider introducing a bit of a break on the street as Fraser is quite long. Residential entrance needs better definition to be a lot more inviting. Consider accessible ready units.

Take into consideration the three bedroom units at the lane on the left hand side have a tiny deck compared to the adjacent one bedroom with a massive deck.

Review the band along the lane. Deal with the townhouses so they have improved filtration of rain and water to the trees. Concern was voice that the extra height will shade a lot of the retail street. When trying to gain the density do not shade so much, suggesting take ¾ units from top floor and push back more so there is more sunlight on the street and helps in breaking down the wall. Be mindful this is a big project.

Be careful with roof, as further in design process there will be more mechanical penthouse equipment exposed.

Consider extending the weather protection at the top levels, this will make the top floor balconies more useful and act as a shading device.

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

4. Address:	1805 Larch Street
Permit No:	RZ-2019-00003
Description:	To develop a 5-storey residential building consisting of 63 secured market rental units, including 20% of the residential floor area permanently secured for moderate income households. The proposed building height is 20 m (66 ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 2.55.
Zoning:	RT-8 to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	Metric Architects
Owner	Tom Pappajohn, Jameson Development Corp.
Delegation:	Sheridan MacRae, Architect, Metric Scott Mitchell, Architect, Metric Damon Oriente, Landscape Architect, Damon Oriente Ltd.
Staff:	Robert White & Grace Jiang

### **EVALUATION: SUPPORT with Recommendations (6/3)**

#### • **Introduction:**

Rezoning planner, Robert White, began by noting, this is a rezoning application for a site at 1805 Larch St, located in Kitsilano on the southwest corner of Larch Street at West 2nd Avenue. The site is zoned RT-8, and this zoning continues to the west of the Larch St. To the east across Larch St, and south along at W 4th Ave, sites are generally zoned RM-4. The site is comprised of three tied parcels developed with a two-storey church originally built in 1962.

This application is in response to the Moderate Income Rental Housing Pilot Program or MIRHPP, which is a limited pilot program that enables up to 20 rezonings city-wide for new buildings that provide 100% secured rental housing, with a minimum of 20% of the residential floor area permanently secured for moderate income households. This program addresses a critical gap in our rental housing market by encouraging development of new units for households earning between \$30,000 and \$80,000 per year. As part of the MIRHPP process, early proposals were considered during an initial pre-enquiry application period in early 2018 before proceeding through the standard rezoning enquiry and application submission process.

The policy outlines strict location criteria. This site met the criteria as a larger site within an RT zone, off an arterial, in an area with existing precedent for higher buildings; where a height of up to 6 storeys could be considered. Neighborhood context is an important consideration, and all projects must consider and respect transitions to surrounding areas and homes.

This proposal is to rezone from RT-8 to CD-1 for a five-storey, secured rental residential building with 63 market rental residential units, and 13 moderate income rental residential units. It proposes an FSR of 2.55 and a height of 20 m (66 ft.), and includes:

- 56 underground vehicle parking spaces and 113 bicycle parking spaces;
- A unit mix with 45% family units;
- And an outdoor rooftop amenity, with indoor amenity located on the 5th floor below.

Development planner, Grace Jiang, began by noting, this site is situated at the eastern edge of Kitsilano neighborhood. The Larch St is the boundary between RT-8 and RM-4 zones. The built form and neighborhood character are evidently different on the two sides of Larch St. On the west side of Larch St is RT-8 zone, the majority of buildings are in a form of 2 to 2.5 storey duplex and the traditional neighborhood character retains intact in past decades. The subject site is surrounded by heritage properties and pre-date character homes; On the other side of Larch St is RM-4 zone, the

primary building form is 3 to 6 storey apartment building with simple contemporary architectural expression;

The size of the site is relatively larger than regular duplex site. It has a 150 ft frontage along W 2<sup>nd</sup> and 118 ft deep along Larch. The site is very sloping with a 17 ft. cross fall from northeast to southwest corner. Currently the site is occupied by a two-storey church built in 1962 and intense mature trees along the edges. Heritage staff has undertaken a high-level screening. There is no heritage potential and community interest is identified at this point.

The rezoning application is for a 5 storey secured rental development under MIRHPP rezoning policy. At rezoning enquiry, the proposed building height is 6 storeys, which is the maximum allowable height under MIRHPP policy. At pre-application open house public raised strong concern to the overall massing and height. This application reduces the building height to 5 storeys as a response to the public voices. Since the lane is significantly lower than the street level, 3 dwelling units are proposed at lane level, which makes the building read as 6 storeys from the lane. The proposed absolute building height is 51 ft from northeast street corner and 66 ft. from the low point at lane.

The proposed setbacks include:

- 10 ft from Larch St;
- 12 ft from west property line with additional 21 ft on the 5th floor;
- 25 ft from W 2nd Ave. It is generally in line with the original position of the existing building, which allows for large front yard to accommodate existing trees. This pushes the building to the back of the site;
- for the rear massing, the ground floor is 6 ft from the lane, and the primary massing of upper levels is 22 ft from the lane;
- for the southeast end, the first 4 storeys massing are 3 ft from the lane and the top two storeys are stepped back to 18 ft; and
- the top floor is recessed 8 ft on all sides to manage the apparent massing and height.

The residential entrance is on Larch St, commemorating the original location of the church's entrance. An indoor amenity room is provided on level 5 and the outdoor amenity space is located on the main roof deck in conjunction with a provision of green roof.

Advice from the Panel is sought on the following:

1. Does the panel support the overall massing, height and density? In particular advise on whether it is compatible with the neighbourhood context.
2. Has the proposal successfully respected transitions to surrounding areas and buildings, particularly the relationship to the adjacent properties to the west and south of the site?
3. Please comment on the architectural approach in terms of respecting the character of the area.
4. Please comment on the overall landscape proposal, in particular the lane and the proposed amenity areas.

• **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

This is a unique transitional neighborhood with no loss of housing. This site is all about the trees. This is accepted because the trees are a buffer and it is a contextual neighborhood. In essence this site is doing a lot of things that are neighborly and is a bit taller than what it is in the area.

The building footprint, mostly on the north side, is where the existing buildings were therefore many features were retained.

There are some units with views between trees that allow for eyes on the street. The lane is where the lower levels are approached.

The stepping down on the lane side and on the RT-8 side will be dealt with. There is street level access for two units. There are step planters which will still allow for access.

Originally there were Juliet balconies, but there was a request to have something more substantial. There was also a recommendation to place more balconies on the tree side.

The balconies and windows will add light and comfort and a nice residential feel to 2nd avenue as presently it is quite dark and dense.

There is an amenity on the roof with urban agriculture, children's play area, and seating along with fantastic views to the North Shore and English Bay.

Existing trees have been retained to give a generous setback. The entire thick dense green buffer remains so much of the streetscape has character. The roof is a green roof. The way the roof deck has been laid out to keep things central and away from the edges. This keeps the roof active and the agriculture back from the edges to avoid all overlook risk.

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

- Having reviewed the project it was moved by Ms. Stamp and seconded by Mr. Muneesh 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 reduce the apparent height;
  - Simplify architectural expression , design development of the lane elevation and the south east units at the grade level;
  - Further development of proportions and character.

- **Related Commentary**

There was support for this application at the rezoning stage.

The panel noted it struggled with the need to provide rental housing and how the building fits within the neighborhood.

It is commendable that all the trees are being retained; however, the panel acknowledged the applicant is struggling with meeting the urban design criteria while doing all the tree preservation.

The tree preservation is driving a lot of setback of massing. There is no freedom to change grade with the tree preservation. It comes down to planning staff making a decision between tree retention and trades off for massing and density.

The majority of the units are livable. It was nice to see all the use of brick and the way the top floors are black. The majority of the landscape is done well.

It is the first large building on the block, the building needs to be given a lot of attention as it will set the precedent for future developments.

The buildings have a lot of "ins and outs" makes it more complicated than it needs to be.

The project form and character, such as the balconies, expression, materiality, fenestrations will need improvement at the DP level.

The applicant started to do good job to lower height but could do more. Work with engineering to see if there are opportunities to bring the massing down.

The higher floor heights on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor threw the proportions out and make it look a lot higher than needed. The height and massing is much more than a foot or two. A concern is that it appears deliberate to give the perception of height; there are some vertical elements on west 2<sup>nd</sup> on the elevation, requires a more sensitive approach especially considering the area.

The building looks boxy, the top floor looks choked. With the floor to floor height you can still develop the structure, however there needs to be more understanding of the floor to floor heights. The parapet on the top of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor adds to the apparent massing to the building, appears no effort was made to bring the scaling down. By reducing the 4<sup>th</sup> floor you could bring the top floor within the parapet height of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor and really reduce the massing of the building by increasing the affected area.

Another issue are the units on the lane are only 3ft away with the windows and balconies 3ft off the lane they are somewhat raised, but the one unit below is quite setback.

The livability of the ground floors on the south west corner is not working. Simplify the units at grade.

Struggling with the northwest corner as it sits so high at grade, additionally there is an exit door at the midway point of the elevation which will have a large hang. Look into avoiding having dark lonely spaces behind the trees.

Would like to see some stepping in the west, the lane does need more attention. The Lane elevation is the element that should be the "wow factor."

The use of the rooftop for amenity is nice, be aware more equipment will be going up there. The bike storage accessibility will be problematic. Check with the arborist there level of comfort with additional water on top of the tree roots, related to the proposed bioswales.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments.