

**URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES**

**DATE:** January 24, 2024

**TIME:** 3:00 pm

**PLACE:** Webex

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

Bob Lilly  
Catherine Lemieux  
Craig Taylor (Chair)  
Gabrielle Peters  
Heidi Nesbitt  
Helen Besharat (Vice- Chair)  
Kai Hotson (Vice- Chair)

**REGRETS:**

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** M. Sem

**ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING**

1. 1167-1193 Granville St
2. 4683 Arbutus St

Panel noted for the façade and tower, appreciation for the rhythmic pattern that was developed out of very functional items like the operable windows and encourages that movement through all facades.

Some Panelists noted appreciation for the sustainability strategies. A Panelist noted sustainability performance is reasonable but could further develop passive sustainability and solar shading.

Some concern expressed around bulkiness of the tower and massing needing work while having general support for height and density of the proposal.

The horizontal setbacks are less negotiable than an absolute height limit and if tower could get an extra floor to help mitigate those other issues.

Some Panelists noted that working towards meeting tower setback and separation requirements will help the articulation of the project.

2. Address: 4683 Arbutus St

Permit No.: DP-2023-00609

**Description:** To develop 20 2-storey townhouse buildings over a basement parkade in an existing older CD-1 zone. The proposal includes: 33 rental and 69 strata residential units; A floor space ratio (FSR) of 1.2; A building height of 10.7 m (35 ft.); 153 vehicular parking spaces and 339 bicycle parking spaces are proposed; This application is at the development permit stage.

Zoning: CD-1

Application: Development Permit Application

Review: First

Architect: Formwerks Architectural Inc.

Delegates: Norman Huth, Architect, Formwerks, Architectural Inc.

Kristin Defer, Landscape Architect, ETA Landscape Architecture

Staff: Samantha Patterson, Development Planner

### **EVALUATION: Re-submission recommended (8/0)**

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

Samantha Patterson, Development Planner gave an overview of the neighbourhood context in relation to the proposal, followed by the strategy for evaluating the project given the absence of built form guidelines. Samantha 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. Site planning and organization with particular regard to - site circulation, open space and outdoor amenity space, building arrangement and site porosity, public realm interface and neighbourhood fit.
2. Other relevant comments.

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The applicant, Norman Huth, Architect, gave an overview of the project and noted the design objectives for the site. Kristin Defer, Landscape Architect then presented the landscape strategy.

The planning team then took questions from the Panel.

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

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **HEIDI NESBITT** and seconded by **KAI HOTSON** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **recommends Re-submission** with the following recommendations summarized below:

- The Chair summarized the consensus items as their design development recommendations.

**Summary of Panel Consensus Comments:**

- Site needs a greater level of both physical and visual permeability throughout.
- Provision of more significant and meaningful outdoor gathering spaces and on-site amenity spaces.
- Consider greater variety of materiality and architectural expression throughout the development.
- A general consideration for enhanced accessibility is important throughout the site, in particular, access from the public realm to the site. Pathways should be accessible; and stairs on the pathways should be eliminated.
- Termination and intersection of the exterior pathways both internally and at the intersections with the street should be celebrated with some meaningful elements to encourage pause and gathering.

- Provide greater equity in parking ratios and other amenities between market and rental units.

**Summary of Panel Commentary:**

Panel noted site circulation spaces need to feel more visually and physically porous.

A panelist noted there are no site lines on the east west pathway because it 'jogs'.

Another panelist noted east west public path is very narrow and tight, not comfortable and not very encouraging.

Connections through the site are not really working and to be improved.

A panelist noted site safety concerns with circulation.

A panelist noted the connection with the green spaces, the terminus of the mews at the parking ramp at the north end is not conducive to being a welcoming environment.

Further noting the livability of the one unit that is sharing a front door with the public pathway. The pathway is right up against the building creating an awkward experience on the pathway.

The pathways do not feel welcoming and the stairs on the pathway need to be revised.

Panel noted there is a lack of open and outdoor amenity space. A panelist suggested there is an opportunity for a gathering space where the two paths intersect. A 'heart' for the residents. An opportunity for delight at a shared amenity is encouraged.

Panel encouraged more indoor amenity space and a panelist suggested adding to the top floor by eliminating the high empty roofs.

In general, the Panel encouraged more diversity of material palette. A Panelist noted there is a lot of repetition in the materiality for this scale of development and suggested more variety of architectural styles and use of natural materials in some places.

Consideration to vary the higher empty roof forms. A panelist noted that the uniformity of materials on such a large site does not fit in the neighbourhood.

Panelists suggested looking at the entire block as a whole.

Panel noted the site is too tight, with too many buildings 'squished' on one site. More space between buildings should be considered. Panelists suggested removing some units and increasing space between blocks to have a bit more open space to make the public open space actually function.

Panel noted there is a lack of landscape – no adequate green space and a lack of gathering spaces.

Panelists noted the public realm interfaces need to be celebrated, in particular Arbutus and W. 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave. which can also be potential gathering spots. The west 32<sup>nd</sup> entry to north south mews should be emphasized.

A panelist suggested staff review a mid-block crossing at Arbutus as it is quite dangerous.

A panelist noted discrepancies between the architectural site plans and landscape architectural site plans and couldn't tell which ones were accurate - one of them showed large back patios and other ones showed tiny back patios, noting it makes a difference when looking at the landscape rainwater collection and makes evaluation more difficult.

A panelist noted the inequity of the market compared to the rental units noting, the rental units materials are cheaper, there are bedrooms that are below grade with light wells, some adjacent to a parking ramp, super tiny, outdoor space not as generous and more parking stalls are needed.

Panelists noted units need to be accessible and livable. The visibility standards are lacking.

A panelist noted some units should be barrier free.

Another panelist noted passenger pick up and drop off should be provided.

A Panelist noted appreciation for the cooling strategy of all units.

A panelist noted the landscape submission lacked planting information.

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