

FIRST SHAUGHNESSY ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: March 9, 2016

TIME: 4:00 pm

PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, Vancouver City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE FIRST SHAUGHNESSY DESIGN PANEL:

Kathy Reichert	Chair, Resident
Peter Kappel	Vice-Chair, Resident, SHPOA
Mollie Massie	Vancouver Heritage Commission
John Madden	Resident
Frank Shorrock	SHPOA
David Nelson	SHPOA
Joanne Giesbrecht	REBGV (excused for item #2)
Lu Xu	BCSLA
Donna Chomichuk	BCSLA (excused for item #2)
Tim Ankenmen	AIBC

CITY STAFF:

Georgina Lyons	Development Planner
Ulla Victor	Development Planner
Susan Chang	Development Planner

LIAISONS:

Catherine Evans	Park Board Commissioner
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REGRETS: Christopher Richardson Vancouver School Board Liaison
George Affleck City Councillor
Melissa de Genova City Councillor

RECORDING SECRETARY: Lidia Mcleod

1.	2051 West King Edward Avenue
2.	1961 Cedar Crescent

Business Meeting

Chair Reichert called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm and noted the presence of a quorum.

Business:

- Staff Update
- Council Appointments

Project Updates:

Address	Description	Comments
4033 Osler Street	Reconsideration at Council, January 26 th	Council upheld the Director of Planning decision
3688 Hudson Street	Reconsideration at Council, January 26 th	
1341 Matthews Avenue	Reconsideration at Council, January 26 th	
1490 Balfour Avenue	Minor Amendment	Exterior alterations
2083 W 20 th Avenue	Minor Amendment	Relocation of windows
3998 Granville Street	Real Estate Listing	No rezoning
1998 Cedar Crescent	Building Inspector Review	Meets bylaws and approved through Board of Variance
1538 Marpole	Real Estate Listing	Showed a new design that is not approved by the city

Review of Minutes:

- N/A

The Panel considered two applications for presentation

Address: 2051 West King Edward Avenue
 Description: New build on non-protected property
 Review: First
 Architect: Peter Rose Architecture
 Delegation: Don Labossiere, Damon Oriente

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9 in favor, 0 abstentions, 1 against)

Planning Comments:

This is a proposal for a new house on a non-protected mid-block site on West King Edward Avenue. The site slopes significantly from the King Edward frontage approximately 12.5 ft. up to the lane, with an existing retaining wall on the King Edward property line. The existing vehicular access from the lane will be maintained with a new accessory building at grade.

The site is flanked by a relatively new development to the north-west which complies with the old Official Design Plan and guidelines, and therefore has a lesser front yard requirement. There is also a 1950's rancher on a non-protected property to the south-east. The new house is centrally located on the lot with a proposed encroachment into the required front yard. The basement and main storey propose encroachment of approximately 6 ft. into the front yard. The encroachment on the upper level is limited to a bay window.

Questions to Panel:

1. Considering the existing context, is the panel supportive of the proposed front yard relaxation?
2. Can the panel comment on the success of the architectural and landscape design proposals as they relate to the expectations of the FS Guidelines?

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The design rationale emanated from the first time this project was designed prior to the new Official Design Guidelines (ODP). While the ODP affected the design a bit, the new proposal satisfies the new guidelines adequately

The initial idea was to maximize the use of the house and have shared spaces between the house and landscape. This is not a typical First Shaughnessy site. Typically sites create a utopian sense by being bound and away from the bustle of the City. This design tries to emulate that by creating an 'Eden' effect with a lush garden.

Craftsman elements have been used since they sit well over the site. The house is tripartite, and has a real presence. From down below the house is majestic but inviting given the canopy of the trees.

What proved challenging was the creation of a garage at the back where there was previously a large yard. This garage has been turned to give it a coach-house like quality. It has also been tied into the space using fieldstone, which meanders through the site and captures the spaces.

Landscape:

This started out as a fringe site, and has been treated with a traditional First Shaughnessy look. There is now a stepped-stone wall. The planting creates shoulders and a traditional green setting which allows the entry to come up and be offset with terraces.

The back is as interesting and useful as possible. There is a stone wall, a gate, and a path which creates a better-than-average lane approach. Thus the back entry is a real 'front entry' as well. There are trees on the side to try and block the windows, and some layering in both the front and the back.

Panel Commentary:

The panel thought that there seems to be a good sequencing of events going through the house, and that the massing and volume have been handled quite well. While the house is more English-Storybook than Craftsman, it passes in First Shaughnessy. The meandering entrance is also a good fit with the First Shaughnessy Guidelines. Overall this is a nicely thought-out home.

The front relaxation is a problem as the steps project out too much and the building is too close to the street. If all of the setbacks are maxed out then the project loses that 'Eden' feel. The setbacks could be allowable if the building height was lowered by 2 ft. to make the structure look less Teutonic in the front. As it is the ratio for this house is off. So either the house needs to come down or be stepped back more.

The windows seem a bit too high and create a television-screen feel on the front, and the bay window on the front seems a bit out of place. The cathedral window off the stairwell also seems out of place. The French doors at the back are a bit much, but are at the back, so given the suggested modifications could be allowable. The tall vertical window on the west-side seems off balance with the smaller horizontal windows on that side. If this window is to be retained then the trim should be more robust and the glass should be treated or stained to provide privacy to the neighbour. As well, the 7 ft. wall along the north elevation could use more attention. More windows would be a nice addition to this area.

The dormer behind the right-hand gable is a bit un-resolved in how it buries itself into the main roof. The stair on the west elevation is also unresolved as the dormer seems crammed in above it in a weird shape.

The substantial brick chimney should touch the ground, and the area around it could be cleaned up a bit. The chimney should look like a real chimney with stonework all the way up.

The front yard currently does not create a good anti-chamber feel. Since there are no street trees shading this site more height in greenery is needed to give that lush garden and landscape feeling. On the west-side the stairwell feels a bit too exposed, and the planting is too sparse. Some trees and buffer planting are needed to add screening from the neighbour and increase privacy. Overall there is not enough greenery on the site and it does not look very lush.

Chair Summary:

Overall the design looks good. However, comments were made about the dormers, and the chimney not touching the ground. The panel was split on if the house should be setback more. If the house height was dropped by 2 ft. then the setback relaxation could be allowable. Comments were made about the materials on the west-side concerning the tall vertical windows. More filigree and layering in the front would be great, and there needs to be an increase in permeable area to create a more First Shaughnessy look.

Applicant's Response:

The applicant thanked the panel for their comments and agreed that a redesign of the tall vertical window on the west side of the house is needed. This project is not perfect, and the chimney has been on the radar all along. The project was a bit rushed, so the fenestration could be given more thought.

There is little doubt that it would be difficult to move the project forward if the setback relaxation did not happen, but the height could definitely come down.

The comments were very clear, and it is good that the panel recognized that this is a difficult site. The rear yard was turned into more of a front yard at the client's request, and this will be a very used space.

Address:	1961 Cedar Crescent
Description:	Conservation proposal
Review:	First
Architect:	Farpoint Architectural Inc.
Delegation:	John Keen, Donna Chomichuck, Kerri-Lee Watson, Tim Watson

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7 in favor, 0 abstentions, 0 against)

Planning Comments:

This is a proposal for a new accessory building, and side and rear additions to an existing non-conforming protected building. The existing house is non-conforming as it relates to the required yards on this irregular site, most significantly in the rear yard and the western side yard. The proposed addition to the house does further aggravate the non-conforming yards. The newly enacted District Schedule allows the Director of Planning the discretionary ability to relax the yard regulations if the proposed development will make a contribution to conserving a heritage property. The new accessory building will be located in the western side yard, in a location that was previously paved, and it will utilize the existing curb cut and drive way.

Questions to Panel:

1. Does the Panel support the location of the proposed additions to the protected building?
2. Does the Panel believe the proposal complies with the conservation principals as outlined in the Design Guidelines?

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The applicant introduced the project as an existing pre-date house with an addition/renovation. The new houses in the First Shaughnessy District are very prominent, but this one is more modest with a farm-house appearance. Aspects of the house are being rehabilitated as they were damaged during its history as a frat house and boarding house.

The design takes the lower wrap-around porch and changes some of it to add some FSR and make it more attractive. The porch will also be opened up a bit. Essentially the character of the house is being re-asserted.

This site has an additional allowable 3000 sq. ft. of floor space, but the owners think the house is large enough and will not be utilizing it. As part of the rebuilding process the house will be raised to allow for a fuller height basement to be built. The house will then be lowered back to its original height.

The option of moving the house forward a bit is being explored, but ultimately the owners want to preserve the front yard as much as possible.

Landscape:

There are a lot of mature trees on and around the site. These include large conifers, laurel trees, and walnut trees. There is also a very tall hedge across the front which is to be opened up, and filigree to be re-introduced. The approach is to add mixed planting so as not to damage the roots of the trees in the area.

Forced perspective is being used to make the yard look longer. The edges are being masked to make them soft and organic, with more mixed planting around the site. Flowering trees are also being added to create layers.

The garage should not be an issue since it is barely seen and off to the side. There will also be greenery next to it. The 1912 Fire Insurance Map shows a small garage in the same area.

Panel Commentary:

The panel thought that the application was very interesting and supportable. The project is a little drab at the front, however, and could use something a bit special to brighten it up. It may also be advisable to build the accessory building (garage) higher to enable utilization of the upper space.

While the house is a little oddly sited and could be moved a bit, ultimately it is fine the way it is. Having an off-centre house is in keeping with the character of the First Shaughnessy neighbourhood.

It would be good if the clinker brick chimney could be retained to follow conservation principles, but overall the conservation principles are adhered to. The applicant is encouraged to retain the old wavy glass windows.

The house is very seamless and public on the ground floor on the West, East and South elevation, but the North elevation seems cut off. So maybe this elevation could become a private area with a terrace and the house bleeding out onto it. There is a missed opportunity there.

The stair on the west façade is fairly exposed and will get mossy. Either a lot of attention should be paid to how it is detailed, or it should be moved since it will not be pretty.

It is great that the landscape is not geometrical, but the front gate is very far away from the driveway gate and could be closer.

Chair Summary:

The panel likes the proposal a lot and trusts that the applicant will do what she can to retain the original windows. While the siting is fine there were a few suggestions to move the house to allow for the original alignment of the garage; it is not necessary though. The landscape is good, and the changes to the front with the planting and metal are good. The side stairs are important to pay attention to as they seem quite exposed.

Applicant's Response:

The applicant team thanked the panel for the comments and for the idea about the deck. The whole house is a bit off-side, and it shouldn't be made more so. The front yard is being respected with the siting, and it would be hard to move it to the left and forward. Since the house is so off-side already then it is up to the City to say if moving it would be ok.

The owner has a preference for wood fireplaces which are only allowed in certain places, so one of the chimneys will stay in place. The other one may be re-built. Thanks again, and all these comments will all be considered.

The exposed stair will not be concrete slabs, and will be quite nice.

Adjournment:

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 pm.