

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: March 27, 2013

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Ryan Bragg
Walter Francl
Joseph Fry
Veronica Gillies
Bruce Hemstock
Joseph Hruda
Phil Mondor
Norm Shearing (Chair)
Peter Wreglesworth

REGRETS:
Daryl Condon
Vincent Dumoulin
David Grigg
Goran Ostojic

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	508 Helmcken Street
2.	4412-4488 Cambie Street

BUSINESS MEETING

The business meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. and the Chair gave an overview of the Development Permit Board meeting on March 25, 2013 where 557 East Cordova Street and 155 East 37th Avenue was presented to the Board and approved. Chair Shearing then called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. The Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 508 Helmcken Street
 DE: N/A
 Description: To construct a 36-storey building with 454 residential units including 110 rental units and a density of 17.4 FSR and a height of 320 feet is proposed.
 Zoning: DD to CD-1
 Application Status: Rezoning
 Architect: GBL Architects
 Review: First
 Delegation: Stu Lyon, GBL Architects
 Andrew Emerson, GBL Architects
 Julian Patterson, Considered Design
 Staff: Michael Naylor for Karen Hoese and Sailen Black

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (0-7)

- **Introduction:** Michael Naylor, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for the corner of Richards and Helmcken Streets at the north end of Emery Barnes Park. The policy under which the tower proposal is being considered is the Metro Core Benefit Capacity Study that was done in 2008. Council endorsed consideration of rezoning applications within the Downtown South that seek additional height and density up to the underside of approved view cones. The intent of the policy is to support public objectives such as provision of affordable housing, heritage and development of cultural, recreational and other community facilities. The public benefit being proposed for this project is replacement of social housing currently located at Jubilee House with a new facility on the other side of Helmcken Street.

Sailen Black, Development Planner, further described the proposal. Mr. Black noted that the proposed site would incorporate the existing lane and easement to the south. The City plans to build a new greenway on the north side of Helmcken Street, and a greenway is contemplated for Richards Street in the future. There is a view corridor extending from Choklit Park to Grouse Mountain that limits the maximum height over most of the site to approximately 324 feet, and a second view corridor that limits the height at one corner to approximately 255 feet.

Mr. Black described the Downtown South guidelines for the New Yaletown area. The guidelines recommend a form of development that is intended to provide for relatively high density living while preserving access to light, view and air for residents. To this end tower plates are recommended to be limited to 6,500 square feet in area, over a wider podium base that forms a well-defined street wall. The maximum width of towers is recommended at 90 feet. Setbacks are required at 12 feet from the street on grade; at 40 feet from the interior property lines for building portions over 70 feet tall; and at 30 feet from the rear yard for building portions over 35 feet tall.

Mr. Black noted that the proposal is designed to fit below and to the side of the two view cones at this site. The lane and southern right-of-way, both currently hard surfaced, will

be incorporated into the project with parking below the lane and pedestrian access over the south setback. The tower is articulated in plan, which is notable in the skyline profile when looking at the top from grade. Floors are fairly consistent from one level to another, with variations in balcony enclosures and subtle angles to some walls. The shape of the base is intended to provide better view lines from nearby streets into Emery Barnes Park than would occur with a typical podium and tower form. A Montessori pre-school is proposed on the bottom two floors, facing into the park. Drop off for vehicles and parkade access is proposed from the lane; with walking drop off via the public passage to the south. Townhouses are proposed on both streets.

Comments were sought on the form of development for this rezoning application in general, and in particular:

1. Taking into consideration current zoning and guidelines;
 - a. Does the Panel support the proposed height (320 feet) and density (17.4 FSR), and;
 - b. Does the Panel support the proposed setbacks (5 feet and 24 feet), tower width (128 feet) and plate size (10,367 square feet), within this neighbourhood context?
2. Given the surround context and its location on Emery Barnes Park, is the proposed form of development for the base of the tower (including open space and setbacks) a good fit for this part of Yaletown?
3. Does the Panel have any advice on the overall design with regard to;
 - a. Neighbourliness including shadow and view impacts,
 - b. Open space and landscape treatments,
 - c. LEED™ Gold strategies and Rezoning Policy for Greener Buildings, or
 - d. Preliminary comments on the exterior composition or expression?

Mr. Naylor and Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Stu Lyon, Architect, further described the proposal and mentioned that since it is a rezoning he hoped the Panel would comment on the landing of the density, form of development, height and general articulation of the building. He noted that there are some challenges for landing density on the site and the reason for that is the formula for building non-market housing. They will be accommodating the 87 units from the 127 Society and increasing the number to 160 or more units in total. He added that the having the park next to the site is a great asset. They originally had a taller building which needed to be reduced to accommodate the view cones. He added that they have accommodated the setbacks at the ground plane that will allow for a double row of trees. Mr. Lyon described the architecture noting that they developed a floor plate with 13 units on a typical floor in order to make the suites liveable.

Andrew Emmerson, Architect, explained that they wanted to maintain a defined, formalized edge to Helmcken and Richards Streets which is why there is a right angle at the corner. He added that they see the tower as an anchor to the park.

Julian Patterson, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans and mentioned that along Richards Street there will be a series of landscape terraces that will transition to the tower and form individual entry points to the units. At the corner of Helmcken Street is a water feature to reinforce the theme from the park and to anchor the corner. There is a widen laneway that will serve as a pedestrian through route from Richards Street to the new school entrance and to the existing dog park. The pedestrian plaza adjacent to the entrance lobby is created with street trees.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Tower floor plate size is too large for this site;
 - Design development of improve the relationship between the tower and the park;
 - Consider a more sculpted termination at the top of the tower;
 - Design development to better integrate the landscape plans with the park.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the proposal but commended the applicant for including affordable housing in the proposal.

The Panel supported the height but felt there might be too much density which had created a rather bulky building. They noted that the proportions didn't feel right and that the 10,000 square foot floor plates were too large for this neighbourhood. As well they agreed that the top of the tower should be sculpted to assist in making the tower height respond to the backdrop of the mountains. As one Panel member suggested the building should feather more elegantly into the skyline. Another Panel member noted that the tower lost the curved effect at the top of the tower.

The Panel thought the setbacks were too aggressive on the park edge and felt like the building was dominating the park. They noted that there was some confusion in the design of the building as some parts embraced the City's guidelines for the area while other made a conscious attempt to challenge them. One Panel member noted that it wasn't doing either and needed to be one or the other. A number of Panel members noted the way in which the tower meets the ground needed further design development. As well the interface at the park, Helmcken and Richards Streets needed to be reevaluated.

Most of the Panel felt the landscape plans were not sympathetic to the park and the expression was in fact fighting the park. One Panel member noted that there is a rhythm to the park edge that needed to be carried through the landscape plans in the proposal. As well another Panel member thought the neighbourhood context was very important and that this scale needed to be brought to the building form along the street.

The Panel liked some of the sustainability features such as the solar collectors and thought they might help to animate the body of the building.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Lyon thanked the Panel for all their comments. He noted that there are significant challenges with the site but will move forward and look at the form and treatment of the tower. He added that the challenge would be in any significant reduction of the density, as there was considerable enthusiasm for creation of 163 units of non-market housing and the project needed to be 365,000 square feet in total to make it work.

2. Address:	4412-4488 Cambie Street
DE:	N/A
Description:	The proposal is for a residential development containing a total of 102 residential units (19 townhouses and 83 apartments) with a floor space ratio (FSR) of 2.60.
Zoning:	RS-1 to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	Fougere Architecture Inc.
Owner:	Dava Developments
Review:	First
Delegation:	Wayne Fougere, Fougere Architecture Inc. Mary Chan-Yip, PMG Landscape Architects Nelson Chung, Dava Developments Charlie Lorenzen, C. Lorenzen & Associates
Staff:	Yan Zeng and Sailen Black for Tim Potter

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-1)

- **Introduction:** Yan Zeng, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a rezoning application being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan. The site is located in the Queen Elizabeth neighbourhood and is adjacent to the park. There are two bikeways nearby; one along West 29th Avenue and other along Yukon Street. The proposal is for a residential development consisting of two 6-storey buildings fronting Cambie Street with a row of 2-storey townhouses facing the rear lane.

Sailen Black, Development Planner, further described the proposal for a site on the east side of Cambie Street between West 28th Avenue and West 29th Avenue. Mr. Black noted that West 29th Avenue forms the northwest edge of Queen Elizabeth Park. He described the context for the area and mentioned that it is detached residential housing to the west, north and east of the site. The proposal has a height of 80 feet with 6-storeys. As well he mentioned that there are a number of proposed setbacks and a twenty-four foot separation between buildings in the courtyard.

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

1. Taking into consideration the Cambie Corridor Plan and its design principles, does the Panel support the development shown in terms of siting, height (six storeys), density (2.6 FSR), and massing?
2. Looking at the south elevation specifically, does the form of the proposed massing successfully address the prominent 29th Avenue frontage with respect to Queen Elizabeth Park?
3. Noting that the plan prescribes a 6 storey height, please comment on the effect of the roof access of the north building on the height, mass and visual scale of the building
4. Given the recommended separation of 24 feet from a main building to its laneway townhouses, please comment on the effect of balconies in terms of the scale of the courtyard and privacy between units
5. Does the Panel have any preliminary advice on the overall design with regard to
 - a. Neighbourliness including shadow and view impacts
 - b. Open space and landscape treatments

- c. LEED Gold strategies and Rezoning Policy for Greener Buildings
- d. Indicative materials and composition

Ms. Zeng and Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Wayne Fougere, Architect, further described the proposal noting the actual height of the buildings are 60 feet. There is a 4-storey wall mainly around the main part of the building using brick, composite panel and punched windows. There are two different treatments at the corners. The upper two floors are setback eight feet. The wings on West 28th and West 29th Avenues step down to three storeys which will be townhouses with garage access. On West 28th Avenue, the unit at the end is a three storey townhouse. They are planning a large roof top garden but there isn't elevator access at the moment.

Mary Chan-Yip, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans and explained that they have given each of the units some separation between the street frontages and their outdoor space at the ground plane. There will be landscaping along the edges and a double row of trees adjacent to the patio areas. Along the laneway, there will be some foundation planting. The courtyard has an outdoor amenity area with some weather protection. There will be some furniture for seating and bike racks. The south roof will be a green roof and the north roof will have an outdoor amenity area with an outdoor barbeque area and picnic tables. Garden plots for urban agriculture and a green space for children's play.

Charlie Lorensen, Sustainability Consultant, explained that they are looking at either geo-exchange heating or recovery heating as well as high efficiency boilers and other key issues regarding rain water collection. The paving elements will be permeable and they plan to use glass in the windows facing west that will reduce solar gain.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to the corner facing the park;
 - Design development to widen the courtyard;
 - Design development to improve privacy between units in the courtyard;
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it met the Cambie Corridor Guidelines.

The Panel supported the height, density and massing however they felt that the building failed to respond adequately to the corner of Cambie and West 29th Avenue. The Panel would support a redistribution of density along the West 29th Avenue facade to create a better relationship to Queen Elizabeth Park and to recognize the importance of this corner. While the Panel acknowledged the Policy of a minimum of 24 foot separation in the courtyard between the two buildings they did not support the projection of upper balconies into this setback which further worsens privacy issues between units. The Panel recommended further design development.

The Panel thought the building could have a stronger linear expression on the street and could be expressed as two buildings. The Panel strongly recommended that the building needed further design development and questioned the "Art Deco" detailing. They supported the edges and landscape setbacks noting they are part of the character of

Cambie Street. As well they supported the landscape plans and liked the roof uses but thought it should have proper access.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Fougere thanked the Panel for their comments and said he agreed with them about the balconies. He explained that the room laid outs still need to be worked out however. As well he agreed that the courtyard could be bigger. He noted that if they make it bigger they will have to setback the lower floors and up through the building to the top floors. As for the massing on West 29th Avenue, he said he thought it was a good idea and will consider how to make that work.

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.