

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** December 4, 2013

**TIME:** 4.00 pm

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Joseph Fry (Present for First Two Items)  
David Grigg  
Phil Mondor  
Goran Ostojic (Present for First Two Items)  
Norm Shearing (Chair)  
Veronica Gillies (Present for Last Two Items)  
Bruce Hemstock  
Joseph Hruda (Absent from 1<sup>st</sup> Item)

**REGRETS:**  
Ryan Bragg  
Daryl Condon  
Vincent Dumoulin  
Walter Francl  
Peter Wreglesworth

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

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### ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

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| 1. | 2910 East Kent Avenue South |
| 2. | 2750 SE Marine Drive        |
| 3. | 1700 Kingsway               |
| 4. | 2975 Oak Street             |
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**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Shearing called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There being no New Business the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 2910 East Kent Avenue South  
 DE: 417333  
 Description: To construct one e-storey multiple dwelling containing 54 rental units, and two 3-storey townhouse buildings containing 36 rental units.  
 Zoning: CD-1  
 Application Status: Complete  
 Review: First  
 Architect: DYS Architecture  
 Owner: City of Vancouver  
 Delegation: Dane Jansen, DYS Architecture  
 Gerry Eckford, ETA Landscape Architects  
 Hug Forster, Terra Housing  
 Staff: Paul Cheng and Jim DeHoop

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-0)**

- **Introduction:** Jim DeHoop, Social Planner, gave an introduction to the policy background regarding the project. He mentioned that the three projects before the Panel (the first three items on the agenda) are part of a four site City development project. The City issued a proposal call in August 2012 for six sites across the City. As part of the proposal call, the City wanted to look at innovative means to create new affordable rental housing. The City has chosen a group called the Land Trust as the central proponent to work with. That is a provisional arrangement in that there is no formal contract that has been signed to date. Mr. DeHoop mentioned that staff are open to feedback. The City is providing the land with 99 year nominal lease. As well the City is waiving the DCLs. There are no other government subsidies for the project. The Land Trust is bringing forward equity investments from selected non-profit and co-op providers. As far as the design is concerned, Social Development has not made any input and are relying on the architectural team as well as input from Planning Staff. Mr. DeHoop mentioned that the City has a new housing officer and he will be looking at the detailed business model for the developments.

Paul Cheng, Development Planner, further described the proposal and mentioned that the site is located along the Fraser River. The site has already been rezoned to CD-1 and was part of an overall major project whereby a large portion of the land was already rezoned to allow for development. The site has some major constraints including a slope across the site. The area is meant for townhouses only or smaller buildings. With this project, the program is a little different than what is seen generally in market developments. There is high desire to provide as many 3-bedroom units as possible on the site because of this programming need, the applicant has had to look at a different building topology other than a double-loaded corridor scheme. As a result there is an interesting building topology being introduced which has an open corridor with allowance for the second and third bedrooms to have windows looking into the corridor. There is also a high desire to maximize the number of units that have views out to the water. What is being introduced is a series of flats one on top of another. The townhouses are back-to-back in a row house format.

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

1. Due to the constraints, major required setbacks and a programmatic requirement for 3-bedroom suites, the project proposes a building typology involving an open circulation corridor which permits cross-ventilation and access to natural light.

Are there any design improvements that can be made in order to improve the relationship between the open corridor and the secondary rooms facing it?

2. Provide commentary on the overall strategy for the proposal's pedestrian circulation and access.

Mr. De Hoop and Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Dane Jansen, Architect, further described the proposal for a co-op development. He mentioned that they wanted to make a development that would encourage long-term stays. The site plan sits within a flood plan and requires a 100-foot setback from the high water mark. They provided the courtyard so all rooms have access to daylight. Further, the courtyard opens out into the adjacent park. Their emphasis was for families so that most units have three bedrooms.

Gerry Eckford, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans and mentioned that the open space has a park surrounding the site and so they wanted to create a feeling that it flows into the open space. They have tried to respect the edges and blend a new landscape that has a robust planting along Jellicoe Street to soften the buildings and to focus on the arrival spot. Typical street treatment includes street trees with patios along Kent Street. The open space was created for all ages and includes a small children's play as well as a community garden area and dining area.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Consider expanding the open corridor to create a more commodious space and increase privacy;
  - Consider less of a setback from the river;
  - Consider adding a low wall along Kent Street to improve the planting edge;
  - Consider adding urban agriculture;
  - Design development to lighten the colour palette;
  - Improve pedestrian access to the site.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and applauded the applicant's initiative for rental housing.

The Panel agreed that the 100 foot setback from the river caused the buildings to be pushed too close together. Although the Panel thought the circulation space was logical and liked the open corridor plan they thought atrium space was too tight. It was suggested that the courtyard between the north and south buildings be tightened allowing the atrium space to be enlarged. This would allow for better relationships between the exterior corridors and the projecting bedroom elements. As well they thought the unit layouts could be generally improved. Further design resolution of the transformer location is required.

The Panel supported the landscape plans but wondered about the viability of the planting choices. As well they suggested that there could be a low wall at the sidewalk edge along Kent Street to reduce the planted slope. One Panel member suggested adding urban agriculture to the site. Another Panel member suggested blurring the line between the site

and the park. The Panel would like to see a little more space for community gathering in the form of an outdoor trellis area and seating. The Panel felt that further design development was required concerning the relationship of the western end of the inner courtyard and the street. As well the Panel would like to see the roofs handled in some way to improve the overlook from other developments

The Panel thought the colour palette was a little dark and suggested it could be lightened to make for a better fit into the neighbourhood.

Regarding sustainability, it was suggested that while the project doesn't need to attain LEED™ Gold there should be greater attention given to reducing the energy consumption of the buildings...

It was suggested that there be access to the bicycle storage from the outside rather than going through the main entrance.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Jansen thanked the Panel for their comments. He said that they would revisit the setback for the south building. He added that they have planned for mechanical to be attached in the future to a neighbourhood energy system.

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2. Address:	2750 SE Marine Drive
DE:	417334
Description:	To construct two 11-storey towers connected by a 2-storey podium containing 188 units of non-market rental housing and one 3-storey townhouse building containing 32 units of non-market rental housing.
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Review:	First
Architect:	DYS Architecture
Owner:	City of Vancouver
Delegation:	Dane Jansen, DYS Architecture Gerry Eckford, ETA Landscape Architects Hug Forster, Terra Housing
Staff:	Paul Cheng

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**EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (2-4)**

- **Introduction:** Paul Cheng, Development Planner, introduced the proposal noting that the site is further away from the foreshore and the site has a dramatic slope across it. It is a large site and there is a need for fire truck access. The subarea allows apartment towers up to 120 feet and also rowhouses. Mr. Cheng added that the proposal has a variety of different outdoor spaces for the residents.

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

- Are there any design improvements that can be made to the overall landscape plan in order to maximize the utility and beautification of the open spaces provided?
- Please provide commentary on the overall strategy for pedestrian access and circulation throughout the site?

Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Dane Jansen, Architect, further described the proposal and mentioned that there will be 32 townhouses containing three bedrooms. The towers have a combination of one, two and three bedrooms units as well as amenity spaces. The large open space (the plaza) opens into the multi-functional area as well as a deck area for a barbeque. The fire department has vetted the space and requires an area for multiple vehicles and they need to be able to come into the site and do a full turn around. He said they also see the space as being used for community events for the residents. In terms of getting into the site as pedestrians, there are different routes. There is a sidewalk up the sides of the tower, one up through the centre into the main concourse and there is handicap access. Mr. Jansen described the architecture noting the use of spandrel glass to add some colour and life to both the north and south facades of the buildings.

Gerry Eckford, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping and mentioned that they are dealing with a large slope. The programming for the space is evolving and they have worked with the user groups to define their desire to have a flexible open space for community events. There is a lawn area on one side of the plaza area and a children's play area that is adjacent to the indoor amenity space. The outdoor amenity space has an outdoor terrace and lawn area and an art piece. Access to the rear is not possible due to the slope. A meadow has been proposed between the towers along with buffer plantings adjacent to the ground floor units.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Design development to significantly improve pedestrian and barrier-free access and entry announcement to the site from SE Marine Drive;
  - Design development to further develop the plaza space and other outdoor spaces with deliberate programming of a variety of activities;
  - Consider sustainability measures for solar response and noise abatement;
  - Design development to the overall planting strategy on the site.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the proposal.

The Panel thought the massing was clean and the townhouses were well-resolved, however they felt the site seemed almost too large for the program. They also thought the relationship of the east tower element to SE Marine Drive worked well on the south side by appearing to be visually sinking into the podium and had turned its back on SE Marine Drive. They felt that the how the building met the ground required more design development.

Regarding the functionality of the open spaces on the site, the Panel thought the pedestrian access points were too minimal and would create negative experiences for both residents and visitors accessing the bus stop on SE Marine Drive. They thought the applicant needed to do further design development with the grade up to SE Marine Drive. As well they thought the site did not have a strong identifiable front entrance and felt greater attention needed to be given to the entry sequence to the project both from Kent Avenue and SE Marine Drive. Several Panel members thought the wild flower meadow was not going to look great over time and suggested using other planting material. The sides of the property and SE Marine Drive are fenced and the Panel felt that there could be a much stronger integration of the urban edge along the street and more seamless connection with the neighbouring properties. One Panel member suggested getting rid of the side stairs.

While the plaza meets the technical requirement to accommodate a fire truck, the resulting form and allocated space needs further design development to minimize the impact of the scale. The plaza is large and feels empty. The Panel suggested integrating transition spaces between the different grade elements, such as the children's play area, to allow for a greater variety of uses while minimizing the negative impact of the turn-around.

The Panel thought the approach to the landscaping around the tower bases had the potential to be innovative with a variety of uses. However it was weakened at the site edges and they thought the walls should be eliminated.

The Panel felt that the buildings needed some massing and architectural articulation. A number of Panel members remarked that the tops of the tower should reflect the stepped form of the townhouse units. The color palette could also be reviewed to see if there was an opportunity to help with the buildings expression.

Regarding sustainability, it was felt that there was a lot of glazing on the southwest exposure and required some passive shading features. As well the north side is exposed to traffic along SE Marine Drive and perhaps enclosed balconies could help to mitigate the noise. It was noted that the lack of good transit in this area of Vancouver makes living without a car a challenge particularly for families with school age children and was seen as a major hurdle for this neighborhood to be fully integrated with its neighbors to the north

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Jansen said that their dilemma from the beginning was to get below market rents for the building so they needed to take that into consideration with the cost of the project. He mentioned that their group had already looked at a number of the suggestions made by the Panel. The towers are shaped the way they are to get a 60 foot separation for some privacy between facades. He added that they will look at improving the pedestrian circulation to SE Marine Drive.

Mr. Forster said the most pressing issue for the proposal is the level of rents. They have partners who have contributed a million dollars and whether or not the land trust is successful really comes down to the rents. He said his partners aren't interested in the design, only how it looks financially. He added that they are trying to make it work and thanked the Panel for their excellent comments.

Mr. Eckford also said he appreciated the Panel's comments. Even with the economic constraints the ideas presented by the Panel can be taken into consideration to move the project forward in a positive way.

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3. Address:	1700 Kingsway
DE:	417335
Description:	To construct a 4-storey mixed-use building containing 48 units of non-market rental housing over one level of commercial retail space.
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Review:	First
Architect:	DYS Architecture
Owner:	City of Vancouver
Delegation:	Dane Jansen, DYS Architecture Gerry Eckford, ETA Landscape Architects Hug Forster, Terra Housing
Staff:	Paul Cheng

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-0)**

- **Introduction:** Paul Cheng, Development Planner, described the proposal for this site on Kingsway between Welwyn and Miller Streets. He mentioned that it is a challenging building site with constraints such as sidewalks setbacks, limited site depth and an irregular shape. He noted that the zoning for the area located due south allows for courtyard rowhouses. Due to the lack of site depth which would produce a highly inefficient and expensive underground parking garage, vehicular parking is located on the surface at the rear of the site. As a result the applicant has been asked for some beautification of the lane as well as some shading devices.

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

1. Are there any design improvement that could be made to the proposed surface parking and loading areas, located at the rear of the site, to improve CPTED, lane beautification and functionality?
2. Are there any concerns regarding the proposed front and rear setbacks of the top storey, with respect to:
  - Impact on street enclosure;
  - Shadowing on adjacent private and public properties;
  - Overlook onto adjacent private and public properties.

Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Dane Jansen, Architect, further described the proposal and mentioned that there are 48 one bedroom units that are targeted to below market rents. Half of the units will be managed by the Kettle Society for their members who fall under the SIL program (Supportive Independent Living) who are people living on a fixed income. In order to keep the rents down they looked at the parking on the surface rather than underground. The parking will be used by the commercial spaces as well as the rental units. Mr. Jansen described the architecture noting a stronger expression to the first three floors with a different expression on the upper floor.

Gerry Eckford, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans noting the minimal planting required. They are developing a little corner plaza with bicycle parking at Miller Street. Along the lane there is an opportunity for coloured asphalt treatment in the parking areas. They are also planning on plantings on the arbour in the lane and introducing new street trees along Kingsway.



The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - The Panel had no substantial aspects needing improvement.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was the right design for Kingsway.

The Panel liked the architecture and thought the built form and setbacks were supportable. They agreed that the colour was smartly used to create the idea that the fourth storey was setback on the lane expression. One Panel member suggested using the same expression on the Kingsway side.

Most of the Panel liked the colour palette while a couple of Panel members thought it might be a little somber. Some Panel members suggested the applicant use the red colour on the frames on Kingsway as well as the lane side. They particularly liked the "telephone booth" expression on the corner.

The Panel supported the landscape plans and liked the use of vines on the arbour on the lane.

The Panel supported the surface parking on the lane and complimented the application for getting a relaxation on the setback requirements.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Jansen thanked the Panel for their comments.

4. Address:	2975 Oak Street
DE:	417330
Description:	To construct an 11-storey multiple dwelling providing 50 rental units with two levels of underground parking and designation of the existing building through a Heritage Revitalization Agreement.
Zoning:	RM-3
Application Status:	Complete
Review:	First
Architect:	CEI Architecture
Owner:	Aquilini
Delegation:	Nick Bevanda, CEI Architecture Mary Chan-Yip, PMG Landscape Architects Mark Mazzenga, Aquilini Kevin Hoffman, Aquilini
Staff:	Marie Linehan and James Boldt

#### EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (2-3)

- Introduction:** Marie Linehan, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a site located at the northwest corner of Oak Street and West 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Located in the RM-3 District, the zoning permits mid-rise towers to 12-storeys. The existing building on the site, the Van Arsdel, is a Heritage B listed building dating to 1928. The structure of the building consists of concrete exterior walls with a heavy timber interior frame. The current proposal seeks to retain the south and east facades of the Heritage building and infill an 11-storey tower. All 50 residential units will be rental and underground parking is provided. The zoning permits tower of the height proposed with additional density being earned via retention and designation of the Heritage building under the Heritage Revitalization Agreement process.

James Boldt, Heritage Planner, mentioned that the proposal went to the Vancouver Heritage Commission and was supported. Unlike a lot of other façade exercises, the two main facades retained really are the only notable surviving aesthetic features of the building. Mr. Boldt remarked that the heritage consultant for the project felt that there was little on the interior of value. It was always a modest building and was built by a CPR executive for his family. The façade is somewhat monolithic and lent itself to a retention exercise. Mr. Boldt said they were fortunate to have a full set of the original architectural drawings for the building. Some of the Commission's concerns included how the building turns on the north side including materiality and making a visual connection into the building. The façade is in original condition in that most of its features are still in place. All that has changed are the windows that have been replaced as well as the lights on the exterior. Mr. Boldt added that another comment from the Commission was whether the tower should be more prominent in terms of its expression or whether it should be more muted and simple.

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

Comments on the interface between the new building and the heritage façade at the:

- Southwest corner building return;
- Interior northeast corner connection to the tower.

Ms. Linehan took questions from the Panel.

- Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Nick Bevanda, Architect, further described the proposal and mentioned that the building is a period revival style and in the 1920's the

modernist movement was taking place around the world. It does have a modernist aesthetic with some historical gestures. He mentioned that they cut the elevation back on the north side since it didn't have any details and was a poured in place concrete wall with punched window openings. They are proposing a neutral transition into the new building using glass material that is respectful to the historical building. Mr. Bevanda described the architecture and the proposed materials. He said they would replace the windows with painted wood as was original in the heritage building. As well they are planning to rehabilitate the façade and repaint it to the original colour. Mr. Bevanda said they wanted the new building to be compatible with the heritage building with a neutral colour palette that would enhance the original colours of the historical building. The heritage building will have two bedroom units and one bedroom units in the tower from the third storey up. He noted that there are 25 parking stalls below grade with two stalls for visitors off the lane. As well they have 63 Class A and 6 Class B bicycle storage spots in the underground parking area.

Mary Chan-Yip, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans and mentioned the streetscape has been defined with a layering of plantings to help define the edge of the building. On the north side of the site is two patios at the ground level that have some screening to provide the occupants with some privacy. On the west side is an amenity space with a community garden, play area and some outdoor seating. There is a large beech tree on the site that will be retained and they will be adding two additional trees on West 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Consider having the entry at sidewalk level;
  - Design development to improve the integration between the heritage building and the new structure;
  - Consider adding some heritage elements in the tower;
  - Consider aligning the building with other buildings along the street;
  - Consider retaining the heritage planting on site;
  - Consider improving the programming in the outdoor amenity space;
  - Consider a different colour palette;
  - Design development to include passive design elements.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the proposal as they felt the tower was not well integrated with the heritage building.

The felt that the fabric of Oak Street was changing and didn't think this particular architecture respected the heritage building or the streetscape. By lifting up the building three or four feet an awkward plaza condition was created at the entry to the tower. The Panel wanted to see the entrance to the new building at the level of the sidewalk and aligned with the entrance to the heritage. As well they did not support how the stairs meet the old building and thought they should more respectful to the heritage building.

The Panel agreed that it was appropriate to incorporate a new structure on the site but they didn't support the way it were integrated. As well some Panel member would like to have seen some heritage elements in the tower. A couple of Panel members thought the bedrooms next door to the front door wasn't supportable.

The Panel noted that the building is not aligned with other buildings along the street. As well the southwest corner feels uncomfortable and should return the corner for a better view up the street.

The Panel did not support the landscaping plans and felt that there should be some retention of the heritage planting. As well they thought there was an opportunity to look at the tree selection along the lane. Some Panel members thought the outdoor amenity space could be better programmed to invite people to use the space.

The Panel did not support the colour palette and felt the new building didn't blend well with the heritage. They noted that white is a modern colour but wasn't giving respect to the heritage and in fact stood out more against the older building.

Regarding sustainability, the Panel felt that there needed to be some passive design on the facades especially on the south and west sides.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bevanda mentioned that the reason the new building has steps up from the street to the entry is that there are steps just inside the main entrance in the historical building and since they wanted the floors to be at the same level in both buildings then needed to step up the building. As well they wanted the window levels to match.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.