

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** July 16, 2014

**TIME:** 4.00 pm

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Greg Bellerby  
Ryan Bragg  
Walter Francl  
Joseph Fry (Excused Item #1)  
Joseph Hruda (Absent Items #1 & #2)  
Arno Matis  
Phil Mondor  
Chris Mramor

**REGRETS:**  
David Grigg  
Jennifer Marshall  
Goran Ostojic  
Maurice Pez  
Matthew Soules

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

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### ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

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| 1. | 450 Gore Avenue   |
| 2. | 311 East 6 <sup>th</sup> Avenue                               |
| 3. | 1710 East Broadway (Broadway and Commercial SkyTrain Station) |
| 4. | 1838 Renfrew Street   |
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**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Bragg called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There was a brief business meeting and then the Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 450 Gore Avenue  
 DE: N/A  
 Description: The proposal is for a 6-storey mixed-use building that includes 81 secured market residential rental units and commercial uses at grade over one level of underground parking.  
 Zoning: RT-3 to CD-1  
 Application Status: Rezoning  
 Review: First  
 Architect: Gair Williamson Architects  
 Owner: GMC Projects  
 Delegation: Gair Williamson, Gair Williamson Architects  
 Joseph Fry, Hapa Collaborative Landscape Architects  
 Jordan Milne, GMC Projects  
 Staff: Dwayne Drobot and Ann McLean

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (3-2)**

- **Introduction:** Dwayne Drobot, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a 6-storey mixed-use building with 1-storey of commercial and grade and 5-storeys of rental residential over one level of underground parking accessed from the lane located on the northeast corner of Gore and East Pender Streets. The proposal is for secured market rental with a mix of 49 one bedroom and 16 two bedroom units. He described the context, noting the 4-storey mixed-use buildings and 2-storey commercial buildings.

Mr. Drobot described the applicable policy to consider the rezoning. The Downtown Eastside Local Area Plan which was adopted by Council in March 2014 said that rezoning applications for residential will be considered for increasing the heights and density from what current zoning permits (RT-3) when the site is fronting on Gore Avenue and all the residential uses are for either social housing or 100% secured market rental housing. There is no specified height requirement and also applicants may consider additional density but there is no specified density.

Ann McLean, Development Planner described the existing land use policy for the site noting that the base zone is RT-3 which is primarily a two family residential zone. Multiple dwellings are permitted on larger lots. The intent of the RT-3 District is to encourage the retention of the historic neighbourhood and streetscape character. The maximum permitted height is 2 ½ storeys (35 feet) with a reduced height of 28 feet at the lane. As well there are external design regulations that require the façade to have a maximum width of 20 feet and the doors and windows to resemble those of buildings on the heritage register.

Ms. McLean further described the proposal and mentioned that the area guidelines in the Downtown Eastside Local Area Plan note the importance of residential heritage character in Strathcona. Some of the key built form guidelines include reinforcing and strengthening prevailing urban fabric; recognizing design opportunities for community serving mixed-use; seeking opportunities to demonstrate creative skillsets in the public realm; and recognizing design opportunities for thoughtful contemporary architecture. Ms. McLean noted that the DTES LAP Policy ask for improvements and expansion of pedestrian and bicycle connectivity

between Strathcona and other neighbourhoods. As well, Engineering Services has asked for a widened sidewalk.

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

Comments on the proposed form, height, density and use with particular regard to:

- Building expression as it relates to context and location in Strathcona;
- Response to Local Area Plan Built Form and place making strategies;
- The building setbacks.

Mr. Drobot and Ms. McLean took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Gair Williamson, Architect, further described the proposal noting they looked at some Asian and contextual influences for the project. He described the surrounding architecture and mentioned that they tried to maintain the solidity of the traditional massings on the street. He described the material palette noting that they wanted the materials to be able to last for 60 years. Mr. Williams mentioned that there is a mix of units including two bedrooms and three bedrooms.

Jordan Milne, Developer, noted that retail spills onto the street and creates vibrancy in the neighbourhood. When the issue of the setback came up, they thought having the retail in context with the surrounding neighbourhood would make a more appropriate treatment. He added that he thought having a different sidewalk width was not in keeping with the context.

Joseph Fry, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans and mentioned that they are designing gardens that have references to elements of Chinese geomancy captured in the formal language and the elements within the landscaping. Urban agriculture will be located in the centre of the deck with a small apple tree and outdoor eating space.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Design development to improve the unit layout;
  - Consider a better location for the bike storage;
  - Design development to add an indoor amenity space with access to the outdoor amenity;
  - Design development to improve the residential lobby;
  - Work with City staff to find an appropriate setback on Gore Street, noting that 16ft may be excessive.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a simple building that had a clear conceptual logic. The Panel felt the proposal worked well with the local area plan.

The Panel supported the density and thought the building form and expression as well as the materials and attention to detail made for a well-designed project. They thought the design was somewhat contemporary but at the same time had some historical references with the use of materials. They liked the contrasting black and white which they thought made the building stand out. As well they very much liked the addition of stone and brick with but felt the proportions of the brick and white panel was awkward.

The Panel had no concerns regarding the built form although there was some concern with the internal planning regarding liveability and daylight in the long and deep units. As well they noted that the units were very small and had not balcony or access to the outside.

Some Panel members had some concerns regarding the bike storage and wondered if there was a better location noting that the residents will have to bring their bikes up in the elevator.

Although they supported the outdoor amenity space the Panel thought there should be some indoor space as well. The Panel suggested the applicant move the transformer room to make for a better condition on the corner. As well they thought the expression of the residential lobby was too subtle.

Some Panel members were not supportive of the setbacks on Gore Street noting that they were excessive and not in keeping with the rest of the sidewalk setbacks in Chinatown or across the street.

The Panel liked the art wall but mentioned that it needed to be done in a thoughtful way and perhaps could be changed every five or so years.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Williamson said that the floor plans have not yet evolved to their final design. He noted that they are trying to find a solution to the bike storage and that they could probably add an indoor amenity space. Mr. Williamson added that the transformer needs to go on the corner even though he would prefer it to be retail but take another look.

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2. Address:	311 East 6 <sup>th</sup> Avenue
DE:	417971
Description:	To develop a 6-storey building containing 58 residential units and 54 artist studios. The proposal includes 14 non-market Vancouver Resource Society units.
Zoning:	IC-3
Application Status:	Development
Review:	First
Architect:	IBI Group
Owner:	Jameson E 6th Avenue Limited Partnership
Delegation:	Martin Bruckner, IBI Group Jeff Mok, IBI Group Cameron Own, IBI Group
Staff:	Allan Moorey

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**EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (1-5)**

- **Introduction:** Allan Moorey, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a three parcel site on the northeast corner of Scotia Street and East 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He noted the context for the area which includes light industrial use to the west and transitioning to multi-unit residential to the east. The site slopes eight feet to the north and as well slopes three feet to the east. The applicant is seeking a density bonus under the zoning that is allowed for cultural facilities which is the artist studios. The proposal is comprised of 58 market residential units, 54 artist studios and 14 non-market rental units for artists with disabilities. The building presents 6-storeys along East 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 7-storeys at the lane. The proposal is seeking a height relaxation of eight feet along the northern parapet which will require a Board of Variance decision. The U-shaped massing is configured around a common access courtyard that has shared loading space. The parking entry is in the northeast corner and the building entry is on East 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mr. Moorey noted that levels one through three are the artist studios having a clear floor to ceiling of nine feet. Levels 4 through 6 are the market residential units with a clear floor to ceiling height of eight feet. The material palette is brick and masonry with window wall using spandrel glass panel. There is roof deck access for the top floor units.

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

- Comments on the appropriateness of the height, massing and form of development that is commensurate with the additional density being sought through the bonus provision within the IC-3 zone.
- Comments on the livability of the courtyard units with consideration given to shadowing, day-lighting, privacy and interface.

Mr. Moorey took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Martin Bruckner, Architect, further described the proposal and mentioned that one of the reasons for the height of the building was to allow for the nine foot height in the artist studios. All the units meet the horizontal angle of daylight requirement even inside the courtyard. He described the material palette noting the use of brick on the exterior that fits with the context of the neighbourhood. The façade on East 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue has been broken up into three parts and has a series of balconies with a colonnade that extends above the roof.

Jeff Mok, Architect, mentioned that they wanted to have a different material on the base of the building such as stone or textured concrete. The middle portion has masonry and

they looked at different ways of patterning to make it more distinctive and the top of the building is black brick. As well there are metal spiral stairways to the roof top decks. Cameron Own, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans for the site. He mentioned that they will be maintaining the existing trees along Scotia Street and introducing new trees along East 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In the courtyard there is separation from the private patios with low concrete walls and wood topped benches. As well some apple trees will be planted in the courtyard. The edge along the back will be gated from the lane and there will be some plant material up against the building and on the roof there is an opportunity for potted plants.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Consider a lighter colour palette for the building;
  - Design development to reduce the bulkiness of the building;
  - Design development to improve the materials used on the building;
  - Design development to improve privacy for the ground floor units;
  - Consider increasing the corridor width in the elevator lobby;
  - Design development to improve the courtyard space.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the proposal as they thought the building appeared too heavy on the site.

The Panel for the most part supported the height but thought the additional density for the proposal had not been earned. Although there were some interesting aspects to the building it seemed bulky and complementary to the context. It was suggested that stepping the façade might help to produce a less bulky massing. Several Panel members thought the continuous concrete wall at the base to be monotonous.

Some Panel members thought the corridor width from the courtyard to the elevators was too narrow. They felt that it might be difficult to get large pieces of furniture or art works/supplies through the space. The Panel did not support the colour or material palette as they thought the colour was too dark and the brick emphasized the blockiness of the building. One Panel member noted that the darker masonry at the top of the building made it seem top heavy and suggested a lighter colour or a step at the top of the building.

The Panel thought there could be some treatment of the first floor elevations to provide a sense of privacy. As well some Panel members thought the courtyard could be oriented to the south, however if that was not possible then the space needed to be improved. They felt the space was too dark and could be improved with a lighter colour palette. As well, Panel felt there needed to be a clear delineation between what is considered to be private and public spaces. Some Panel members wanted more of a setback on the street to improve the liveability of the ground floor units.

Some Panel members wanted to see the amenity space face the courtyard with both indoor and outdoor spaces.

It was mentioned that the warehouse precedent was not convincing as the building doesn't have the proportions or the materiality that would reference a warehouse.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bruckner said he appreciated the comments and would consider them as they improve the proposal.

3. Address: 1710 East Broadway (Broadway and Commercial SkyTrain Station)  
 DE: 418037  
 Description: Interior and exterior alterations to the existing SkyTrain Station at Commercial Drive and Broadway, work includes a new outboard platform on the east side of the station, retention and integration of the trusses over the existing Broadway Platform from the new platform structure and an addition of a roof cover to the new outboard platform, a passerelle over the Broadway and Shoppers Drug Mart from the new outboard platform, widening of the existing bridge, replace the mesh on the west side of the station, upgrade north ticket hall entrance, bike storage facility, provisions for future retail.
- Zoning: CD-1  
 Application Status: Development  
 Review: Second  
 Architect: AEOCOM  
 Owner: TransLink  
 Delegation: Hui Hu, AEOCOM  
 Bryan Shaw, AEOCOM  
 Matt Edwards, TransLink  
 Staff: Anita Molaro

#### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-3)

- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Development Planner, introduced the proposal and mentioned that the Panel had reviewed the proposal at a Workshop last year. She added that the applicant team has addressed the concerns and issues raised by the Panel in this submission. Ms. Molaro gave some background on the proposal and described the context for the surrounding area noting the current zoning. The neighbourhood area is being reviewed by the Grandview-Woodlands Plan. At this time there are no conceptual ideas around what the future planning of the area might entail so it is not possible to align the station design with a future context since TransLink has a deadline that they need to move forward with in order to renovate the station. However staff and the applicant team want to make sure the station design will be flexible enough that doesn't impeded with future integrated development around the station.

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

##### 1. Urban Design/architectural aspects:

- Overall station building expression and retrofit strategy with existing station components including the proposed expansion of the east side platform;
- Overall station building design strategy that accommodates for a potential future expansion for an additional west side platform;
- High quality architectural and materiality that also highlights access and openness;
- Overall station design and built form interface/relationships with (including setbacks/proximity and visual access);
  - Existing (Shoppers Drug Mart) and
  - Future development sites:
    - Safeway site
    - West side of Station fronting Commercial Drive between Broadway and East 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

##### 2. Public Realm:

- Achieving good connectivity/accessibility for transit users, pedestrians and cyclists;
- Public realm interface with active edges providing interest and weather protection;

- Achieving a safe environment both within and around the station.

Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Bryan Shaw, Architect, further described the proposal with a PowerPoint presentation. He mentioned that the proposal is about expanding the capacity of the station which is now at a point where the level of service is unacceptable. With TransLink's future ridership projections this will only get worse particularly with the Evergreen Line coming into service in 2016. The other interesting challenge was to take the separate pieces in the structure and try and create a cohesive interchange station. As well it was important to recognize the Expo Line's cultural heritage and find a way to integrate it within the new architecture so that it is not completely lost. He noted that they wanted to optimize the level of service as well as improve pedestrian access with wayfinding and lighting.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Design development to improve the architecture as one cohesive design;
  - Design development to simplify the design language to unify the station;
  - Consider increasing the width of the passerelle;
  - Design development to better announce the entries;
  - Design development to improve the termination of the station ends;
  - Consider an art piece or other elements in the large open space;
  - Consider adding shading devices on the glass.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal, thought it represented a significant progress in terms of what was seen at the workshop, but felt the design needed significant design development.

The Panel thought it was important to have the architectural language carried through from one side of the station to the other to make a simple, unified identity for the entire station. They noted that the station seemed to be an assemblage of parts rather than a cohesive piece. One Panel member suggested an alternative might be to express the three components as three distinct components that are knitted together with the connectors. They also thought the passerelle seemed a bit narrow and that the points of entry hadn't been addressed very well. They wanted to see a sense of upgrading or celebration at the primary entrances rather than just a blue strip announcing the entry. These entries should be considered within the overall architectural language.

The Panel noted that it was important how the station mixed with the surrounding context. One Panel member asked the applicant to consider how they would design the station if all the buildings weren't there. Some Panel members were concerned with what would happen to the station if the site next to the station built to the maximum height as a blank wall would be up against the station. It appeared to the Panel that the context had not been well considered and should be prior to the end of the design development.

The Panel thought the applicant should pick one structure system and take it through the whole station. They also thought that where the design gets weak is at the ends of the station and reads like two or more buildings.

A couple of Panel members mentioned that the moment when you come down the escalator to the bridge is an opportunity that hasn't been taken into consideration. It is a large space and perhaps could use an art piece or other elements.



Regarding sustainability, the Panel noted that there aren't any sustainability features expressed in the proposal. There were some concerns regarding how the passerelle would be ventilated being that it would get hot since it is mostly a glass box. As well they wanted to see some shading devices on all the glass.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Shaw said they appreciated the Panel's comments and that they had brought some good ideas. He mentioned that some they have already thought about but might have discarded too hastily.

4. Address:	1838 Renfrew Street
DE:	417682
Description:	To construct a 4-storey mixed use building consisting of 48 residential units and commercial units over two levels of underground parking on the existing site.
Zoning:	C-2C1
Application Status:	Development
Review:	Second
Architect:	Cornerstone Architecture
Owner:	Renfrew 2 Homes Ltd.
Delegation:	Andrew Bobyn, Cornerstone Architecture Scott Kennedy, Cornerstone Architecture Peter Kreuk, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects
Staff:	Marie Linehan

#### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- Introduction:** Marie Linehan, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a development permit application that was reviewed at rezoning by the Panel. The site is in the C-2C1 zoning along Renfrew Street and is at the southeast corner of Renfrew Street and East 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. In describing the context for the area, Ms. Linehan mentioned that the adjacent site is a 5-storey seniors' community care facility which was a CD-1 rezoning site. The zoning across the lane is single family RS 1. The proposal is a mixed-use building with commercial at grade and 3-storeys of residential above arranged around a central courtyard. The main residential entry is at Renfrew Street with a secondary entry at East 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. The parkade entry is at the low point off the lane and as well there a loading space and three residential units. There is a 15' setback at the rear which cannot be relaxed and staff are seeking a wider sidewalk along Renfrew Street to provide a 20 foot sidewalk from curb to building face. As well there is a height relaxation being sought to align with the adjacent building which Planning supports. The maximum permitted height is 45 feet and it is measured from the base surface. There is room in the height envelope at the rear and a slight encroachment at the front.

Ms. Linehan reminded the panel of the Key Aspects Needing Improvement from the previous review, in particular the courtyard which was a primary concern. As well there was a larger bridging element at the courtyard containing the stair well and two bedrooms per floor. The stairwell has been brought into the building and the bedroom 'returns' deleted. The courtyard width has been increased to provide 20 feet walkway-to-walkway and 28 feet from the building face. The width matches the width of the adjacent courtyard.

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

- Design development to improve the spatial quality of the courtyard;
  - Design development to improve the loading bay;
  - Consider adding some rain cover over the top floor walkway;
  - Design development to improve the entry.
- Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Scott Kennedy further described the proposal and mentioned that they have elected to create a complete circular system around the middle courtyard. They tried to open it up as you move up in elevation. They changed the overhangs to glass to get more light into the courtyard. There is a little seating area in the courtyard near the elevator. To emphasis the entry they added a little more brick. The rear hasn't been changed other than eliminating a stair which has been reworked internally that

allows for more greenery on the lane. On the ground level, they brought the glass around the corner to emphasize the retail space.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Design development to improve the entry expression;
  - Consider removing the banding on the façade;
  - Consider adding more colour to the façade.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought there was a big improvement with the courtyard space.

The Panel thought the applicant had addressed the Panel's previous concerns. They thought the courtyard was more livable and the lower entry lobby and upper courtyard piece worked well together. However, they thought the entry was somewhat diminutive and could use a bolder expression. The Panel noted that the entrance on the side street was barely noticeable. Some Panel members thought the expression of the brick without the banding would be a cleaner expression. One Panel member suggested extending the vertical brick elements or creating a clearer logic to the use of masonry.

The Panel supported the landscape plans however one Panel member thought some screening was necessary in the courtyard against the units for more privacy.

Some Panel members thought the building could use more logic in the splashes of colour on the Renfrew Street façade while bringing joy to the building's expression.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Kennedy thanked that Panel and though the comments were fair.

### Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.