

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: March 11, 2015

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Ryan Bragg (Chair)
Walter Francl
Joseph Fry
David Grigg
Phil Mondor (Excused Item #3)
Chris Mramor
Matthew Soules

REGRETS:
Joseph Hruda
Jennifer Marshall
Arno Matis
Goran Ostojic

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

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| 1. | 420 Hawks Avenue |
| 2. | 6929-6969 Cambie Street and 515 West 54 th Avenue |
| 3. | 1177 Jervis Street (formerly 1301 Davie Street) |
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BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Bragg called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. There was a brief business meeting where the Chair thanked the outgoing Panel members for their service and mentioned that the new members will join the Panel at the next meeting. He then noted the presence of a quorum and the Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

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| 1. Address: | 420 Hawks Avenue |
| DE: | N/A |
| Description: | To construct a 7-storey residential building with 26 social housing units, including 20 studio units and six two-bedroom units and an amenity room. |
| Zoning: | M-1 to CD-1 |
| Application Status: | Rezoning Application |
| Review: | First |
| Architect: | Boni Maddison Architects |
| Owner: | Atira Women's Resource Society |
| Delegation: | Anthony Boni, Boni Maddison Architects
Janice Abbott, Atira Women's Resource Society
James Weldon, JTW Consulting (LEED™ Consultant) |
| Staff: | Linda Gillan and Allan Moorey |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- Introduction:** Linda Gillian, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a rezoning of 420 Hawks Avenue. This site is comprised of one parcel on Hawks Avenue at the lane, south of Hastings Street and is being considered under the Downtown Eastside Plan. The application is to rezone from the M-1 (light industrial) to CD-1 to allow for a seven-storey residential building. The proposal includes 26 social housing units, including 6 two-bedroom and 20 studio units. Ms. Gillian noted that this part of Hastings Street (M-1 on both sides of the street) was deemed a let-go area in 1990, as affirmed in the Industrial Lands Policy. The 2014 Downtown Eastside Plan anticipates a mixed-use neighbourhood in the Hastings East area, with rezoning supported for applications which include a minimum of 20-30% social housing. The recommended height range is 45-75 feet and recommended density range is 2.5-4.5 FSR. A height of 72 feet and density of 4.7 FSR is proposed, with shipping containers as the building superstructure. Studio units are 280 square feet and are permitted under the Micro Dwelling Policies and Guidelines, which allows for micro dwelling units if they are secured market rental housing or social housing.

Allan Moorey, Development Planner, reiterated that the proposed project is 7 storeys (72 feet). The project entry is off Hawks Avenue. The project contains 26 units; 20 SRO units and 6 two-bedroom units. These are configured around a common-access courtyard with exterior corridors providing unit access. The most notable aspect of the project is the modular aspect of shipping container construction.

There is a relaxation sought on parking and loading and as such none is provided; however, there are 41 bike stalls. Amenity space is located at grade on Hawks Avenue, with a common access roof deck provided in the south-west corner of level seven.

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

- The building interface with the public realm on Hawks Avenue.
- The architectural expression of modular container construction.

- The interface with the neighbouring Rice block.
- The transition in height to the Rt-3 neighbourhood to the south.
- The proposed height, massing, density and form of development.

Mr. Moorey took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Anthony Boni, Architect, mentioned that this was the second of two pilot projects to use shipping containers. The superstructure of the building is a very straightforward 3-storey stacking with a modern skin. Since the site is so small a decision had been made to extend the urban edge around the corner and step-back the building where there are units. There is a private courtyard in the back with no units facing the alley to provide more sun exposure. The walkways are big to allow for meeting spaces. The shipping containers are exposed on the surface and in places around the building. Colours include a layered, horizontal, Strathcona red.

A four-foot fascia exists at the top, but, being a bit below 75 feet in height, Mr. Boni anticipated the project being able to fit in with the surrounding area over time. Being on the north-side of the lane prevents shadowing of the existing residential buildings, and there is a minimal impact as the building is quite narrow.

Janice Abbot, Atira Women's Resource Society, stated that the purpose of the building is to create independent housing for woman and children. The intention is to create an inter-generational community for women from all walks of life. Unit sizes are the same as the first project at 502 Alexander Street (290 square feet). A livability survey for that project was done after 12 months and returned a 93% positivity response.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider raising the building to provide separation and privacy to lower suites.
 - Consider moving the garden to add openness to the courtyard.
 - Create a better interface with the Hawks Avenue façade.
 - Consider better articulation of the shipping container construction to highlight their use.
 - Consider simplification of the building articulation to emphasise the volume rather than decorative details.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel saw the project as precedent-setting and as a viable use of shipping containers. They thought the applicant used previous projects and expanded upon their form of development in an innovative way.

The Panel thought the density, mass, and form are supportable and appropriate to the context of the neighbourhood currently, and as it evolves.

The Panel had some concerns around the public realm and the public/private interface of the building. It was suggested that the building should be raised, or the ceiling raised to suggest separation and create privacy for residents in the lower suites. The amenity space and/or suites on the bottom could also undergo a change in use in order to facilitate this change. The transition to the south is acceptable, although more generous open space on top of the building would be preferable.

There was support for the proposed social spaces; however, there are questions about whether the courtyard was challenged too much. A public garden should have more access to light, and the courtyard would work better as a children's play area. To this end, the Panel suggested that the garden be moved to the roof to both make it more usable and

open up the courtyard. The Panel also thought an intentional revision to the breezeway should happen, with the goal being to encourage a variety of uses. A better relationship between the amenity space and the courtyard was also encouraged.

Some Panel members thought that cross-bracing might not be appropriate for this development style, and that there was potential for more windows or perforations on the south side to enhance the livability for the units located on that facade. There was a real desire to see a clearer expression of the containers and a modulation of the Hawks Avenue facade. The Panel thought the facade didn't necessarily relate well to the container construction as it currently looked like a window wall. They also thought that articulation of the glazing system would better reflect the rhythm of the containers. In addition, the decorative, applied elements referencing the adjacent buildings were seen to be extraneous.

Although there was an appreciation for the articulation, the Panel thought that breezeway spaces should be functional and show clear logic in their offsetting of the container as the current incarnation looked a bit haphazard. If container movement was made then the stairs should be re-assessed to add openness.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Boni and Ms. Abbott had no additional comments.

2. Address:	6929-6969 Cambie Street and 51215 West 54 th Avenue
DE:	N/A
Description:	To develop two 6-storey residential buildings with one 2-storey townhome and an amenity building along the back lane. The proposal is for a total of 74 dwelling units.
Zoning:	RS-1 to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	Ramsey Worden Architects
Owner:	Mosaic Homes
Delegation:	Bob Worden, Ramsey Worden Architects Stanley Hsu, Ramsey Worden Architects Peter Kreuk, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects Benn Duffel, Mosaic Homes
Staff:	Michelle McGuire and Allan Moorey

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- Introduction:** Michelle McGuire, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a four parcel assembly at Cambie Street and West 54th Avenue. She noted that the Cambie Corridor Plan allows for residential buildings in this area up to 6-storeys. The site is directly north of Cambie Park with the Langara Golf Course to the east of the site. Further to the south, along Cambie Street, is Langara Gardens and the Pearson Dogwood Lands. To the west is RS-1 residential. Ms. McGuire noted that the application proposes to rezone the site from RS-1 to CD-1 to allow development of two 6-storey residential buildings, with one 2-storey townhouse and one amenity building along the lane. This, over one level of underground parking. The proposal includes 74 units, parking for 84 vehicles and 96 Class A bicycle parking spaces and 6 Class B. Ms. McGuire mentioned that the Green Building Policy for Rezonings applies to the site.

Allan Moorey, Development Planner, further described the proposed development. There is a 2.7m (9'-0") cross-fall to the southwest across the site. The proposed setbacks conform to the Cambie Corridor Plan. The proposal is for two 6-storey buildings that frame a courtyard east and south with the townhouse/amenity building completing the western edge along the lane. The proposed courtyard width of 5.4m (18'-0") does not adhere to the 7.3m (24'-0") recommended in the Plan. A notable aspect of the project is a 4-storey masonry frame element, set off the north building, on Cambie Street, 2.4m(8'-0")/either side. This frame constitutes the 4-storey shoulder recommended in the Plan. Behind the frame, continuous balconies run the face of the building. On the west elevation the frame is lighter in expression with a metal mesh component carrying trailing planting between balcony support structures. On the south building, along West 54th Avenue, a 6-storey masonry frame element defines the southwest corner. The 4-storey shoulder recommended in the Plan is somewhat irregular on this building and much of it reads as 6-storeys. Parking entry is from the lane in the northwest corner of the site.

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

- In this area the Cambie Corridor Plan identifies a 6-storey form of development with a 4-storey shoulder setback to mitigate massing, height and assist in transitioning to adjacent \$-zoned residential. In the proposed development, comments were asked for on the clarity of the recommended setback.
- Given the perceived bulk of the proposed development, comments were asked for on whether the proposed setbacks are appropriate.

- At present, the proposed mews between the primary building frame and townhouse units is 18 feet. Between the two primary buildings, 24 feet is proposed. Comments were asked for on whether sufficient “free area” is provided for daylighting and ventilation opportunities.
- The east elevation of the primary building along Cambie Street proposes continuous balconies over the face of those units behind the frame element. From a livability perspective, comments were asked for on the potential impact this may have on daylighting/ventilation opportunities.
- Comments were asked for on the proposed height, massing, density and form of development with respect to the Cambie Corridor Guidelines.

Ms. McGuire and Mr. Moorey took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant’s Introductory Comments:** Bob Worden, Architect, further described the proposal and mentioned that they looked at the demands and quality of wood frame construction from a structural and durability point of view. They are working within the Cambie Corridor Guidelines to enliven the streetscape and lanescape and develop the pedestrian quality of the neighbourhood. He noted that the suites are a bit larger than are typical with the intent that they will be purchased by people downsizing in the neighbourhood as well as families. Mr. Worden described the architecture and mentioned that they created two entries on Cambie Street with one leading into the mews. Mr. Worden described the material palette noting the use of brick and metal screens.

Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans for the proposal and mentioned that along Cambie Street there is a series of outdoor spaces for the north building which will be fenced and hedged. The lobby entrance and bike storage is off Cambie Street. On the west side of the north building there is some outdoor patio spaces and green screens. The amenity building has some outdoor space for children’s play and a garden plot. Along West 54th Avenue there are outdoor patio spaces. As well there is a bike share space.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to give the south building a greater presence;
 - Design development to improve the setbacks;
 - Design development to improve the clarity of the massing;
 - Design development to improve the townhouse/amenity buildings and distinguish the two;
 - Consider lightening the tone of the colour palette;
 - Consider having both building’s entries either off the mews or off Cambie Street.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a successful project.

The Panel supported the form, height and density but some Panel members felt the south building could have a greater presence with a corner setback that falls in line with the Guidelines. Some Panel members thought the setbacks seemed to be a bit aggressive and thought the massing could use some improvement. Other members thought the presence on the street was warranted.

The Panel thought the height and density was acceptable but the massing needed some more clarity and simplification. With regards to the townhouses and amenity space some

Panel members thought these were detrimental to the proposal and that they could be a 1-storey series of buildings or a fence and challenge the Guidelines because of the nature of the site. Some Panel members thought the townhouse and amenity space should have a different look considering they are different uses. As well, since the amenity is not consolidated between the indoor and outdoor spaces, maybe there was a benefit to putting them together.

With regards to the balconies, there were no concerns that they are inhibiting access to daylight and ventilation. By in large, the Panel thought they worked well and were a successful element on the proposal.

Some Panel members thought the south building had too much grey in the colour palette and encouraged the applicant to create a greater sense of depth and modulation with the façade. As well they thought there could be an entry off the park.

The Panel thought that both buildings were trying to do too much architecturally and that there could be simplification and more rigor in the approach. As well they removal of some of the fussy designs would help to simplify the expression.

The Panel thought the mews was a little narrow but not much different from other projects on the Cambie Corridor but there could be a better link between the mews and the lobbies. They noted that one building has an entrance on Cambie Street while the other building has its entrance off the mews and thought that they should both have a similar approach. However, the Panel thought the access from Cambie Street to the lane through the mews was successful.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Worden thanked the Panel for their comments and said he appreciated the amount of thought that was put into them.

3. Address:	1177 Jervis Street (formerly 1301 Davie Street)
DE:	418742
Description:	To construct a 19-storey mixed-use building with commercial at grade and a total of 90 dwelling units above, 28 of those being social housing units.
Zoning:	RM-5D
Application Status:	Complete Development Application
Review:	First
Architect:	DSDA Architects
Owner:	Intracorp
Delegation:	Tom Staniszakis, DSDA Architects Richard Henry, Richard Henry Architects Peter Kreuk, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects David Jacobson, Intracorp
Staff:	Colin King

EVALUATION:

- **Introduction:** Colin King, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a four lot assembly at the corner of Davie and Jervis Street with lane access to the rear identified as the Lower Davie Sub-Area B in the West End Community Plan. He explained that this was a new zone and described the West End Policy. He noted that the RM-5D zone was developed as part of the plan allowing for 7 FSR subject to the provision of 20% social housing designed as a turn-key facility for the City and according to the City's housing policy group's specification. The Plan also mentions a podium height of 3-storeys with heights of towers up to 190 feet subject to the constraints of view cones. As well the West End Plan talks about building materials that include a variety of materials rather than consisting of primarily glass facades that reflect the character of the surrounding buildings, particularly at the podium level. Mr. King noted that the four lot assembly includes three pre-date dwellings and one post-date. As well the project proposes the removal of ten on-site trees and four street trees, as well as tree removal that will require neighbour consent. The proposal is for a 19-storey building with market residential above a 3-storey podium. The social housing entry is off Davie Street and there is a small retail component at the corner with the market residential entry from Jervis Street. As well the social housing has its own amenity space to the rear interior side yard and an adjacent outdoor amenity space in the side yard. The condo tower element has an indoor amenity space at grade with contiguous external amenity space along Jervis Street. The tower will contain 63 market units including 60 2-bedrooms with large private balconies on the corners. There will be 115 parking spaces that include 94 private, 13 social housing, 6 visitors and 2 for the retail.

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

- Commentary on the massing and expression of the tower element as it relates to the extension of the concrete frame to the balconies at the building corners;
- Comments around the livability of the smaller units at grade and second floor of the podium in the recessed area to the interior side yard.

Mr. King took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Tom Staniszakis, Architect, further described the proposal and mentioned that the interesting challenge for the proposal is that there are three very specific uses that have to be integrated. They wanted to make sure that the uses are distinctive from each other and live comfortably together. He noted that the emphasis in the unit mix that is focused on large spaces that are open and airy, furnishable
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plans and as well access to outdoor space. They believe the building will cater to families, couples and downsizers and is complemented by 28 units of social housing. The social housing is about providing housing for families and singles.

Richard Henry, Architect, described the project as the first one of its kind in the West End and will be an interesting model for future developments. Mr. Henry noted that there are two kinds of textures to the west end: the towers and the texture of the street. There is a lot of repetitiveness in the existing towers in terms of their balconies, fenestrations and expressions. They are simple buildings. In contrast to that there is a very vibrant, energetic street character. The scale of the streets is usually 1 to 3-storeys and is prescribed in the OCP. There is vitality to those buildings that they tried to pick up in the proposal. Mr. Henry described the architecture and mentioned that there are three pre 1935 homes on the site as well as a little apartment building which they decided to express in the proposal. This will play up the contrast between the market tower component and the social housing component. The entrance to the market tower is on Jervis Street and has a commercial component as well at ground level. Mr. Henry said that they have developed some large suites and very useable balconies that are weather protected. He described the material and colour palette and said he felt that the proposal would fit its context.

Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans and mentioned that there is an amenity space on the west side of the building which is primarily for the social housing with some children's play, gathering spaces with an outdoor kitchen. There are existing street trees on Davie Street with landscaping to separate the entrances of the ground floor units. The commercial unit on the corner has an outdoor patio area. The amenity space for the tower is at the residential lobby with an outdoor space and children's play, an outdoor kitchen and fire pit making it a multi-purpose outdoor space. There is a hedge around the outdoor amenity to define the space and separate the space from the street. There will also be some plantings on the lane. The private decks will have some low profile green roofs on the edges.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider improving the colour and material palette;
 - Consider taking the brick right around façade on the podium.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a well-developed and rational scheme.

The Panel supported the massing, height and scale of the proposal. They commended the applicant for the generous suite sizes of 1,200 to 1,300 square feet. They liked the reference to the older apartment buildings in the area with the use of a white box frame on the podium.

Some Panel members thought the tower could have several more storeys and as well there were some members who thought the podium could be taller. If the podium was taller there could be one floor of retail with three floors of residential above.

Although most of the Panel supported the material and colour palette they thought the darker colour tended to recede a bit and as a result the column depth was lost against the glass. They wanted to see the colour be a bit brighter on the balconies as well. They noted that the brick façade that is applied to the upper floors on the podium turns the corner and stops and thought it should be carried through the facade. Also, a couple of Panel members

had concerns regarding the use of corten steel on the building with one Panel member noting that it was somewhat odd in how it terminates at the top on Davie Street.

Most of the Panel was not concerned with the livability of the small studio that looks southwest as they thought it would get a fair bit of afternoon daylight. However, a suggestion was made to flip this unit with its neighbor to the north to provide more light access to the studio.

Some Panel members thought it was surprising to see a residential frontage along Davie Street considering that it challenges the current conditions. They thought it was a lost opportunity to not have retail along that frontage. As well several Panel members thought the wide sidewalk was ridiculous and that perhaps it could be softened with a second row of trees.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Henry said he thought the Panel had some good comments. He noted that removing the social housing component would make the project untenable and they wouldn't be able to get the 7 FSR. He added that they originally had a 4-storey podium but it wasn't support by staff.

Mr. Staniszki stated that he didn't understand the rationale for sidewalks but would explore opportunities to make the 7 foot sidewalk work better.

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.