

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: July 15, 2015

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Russell Acton
Stefan Aepli
Stuart Hood
Roger Hughes
Ken Larsson
Jennifer Marshall
Meghan Cree-Smith
Julien Fagnan
Muneesh Sharma

REGRETS: Arno Matis
Chris Mramor
Matthew Soules

RECORDING

SECRETARY: L. McLeod

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 6729-6769 Cambie Street
2. 696 E 64th Avenue (8029 Fraser Street)
3. 601 W Hastings Street
4. 1188 Bidwell Street (1675 Davie Street)

BUSINESS MEETING:

Chair Marshall called the meeting to order at 4:01pm and noted the presence of a quorum. There was a brief business meeting and then the Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

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| 1. Address: | 6729-6769 Cambie Street |
| DE: | N/A |
| Description: | To construct a six-storey residential building with six townhouses along the lane. This proposal is for a total of 56 residential units. |
| Zoning: | RS-1 to CD-1 |
| Application Status: | Rezoning Application |
| Architect: | GBL Architects (Joey Stevens) |
| Owner: | Ming Lian Holdings Ltd |
| Review: | First |
| Delegation: | Amela Brudar, GBL Joey Stevens, GBL Jennifer Stamp, DKL |
| Staff: | Graham Winterbottom and Allan Moorey |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-4)

- **Introduction:** Graham Winterbottom, Planner, introduced the site for the rezoning application as consisting of a three lot assembly on the west side of Cambie Street between 50th and 54th Avenue. The proposal is being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan within the Cambie Street 49th to 59th Avenue area. The plan contemplates buildings up to 6 storeys in height with a net floor space range of 1.5 to 2.0 FSR subject to urban design performance. This proposal is for 2.49 FSR.

The Plan also calls for a mid-block connection in order to break up this long block, which this proposal is delivering along the southern edge through a 12'6" dedication. This will be reciprocated on the site to the south when it eventually develops.

North of the site is the 49th Avenue Canada Line Station. There is also an approved rezoning for two six storey residential buildings with townhouses on the lane and a density of 2.49 FSR.

South-East is the Langara Golf Course and immediately south and west are single family homes zoned RS-1. To the south of the site at the end of the block is a rezoning application for two six storey buildings, and one two storey townhouse at the lane with a density of 2.65.

Further South between 54th and 57th Avenues is Langara Gardens, a 20 acre site which is currently proceeding through a planning process to develop a rezoning policy which will guide future redevelopment of the site. Immediately south of Langara is the 25 acre Pearson Dogwood Hospital site. A rezoning policy was approved by Council in 2013,

Allan Moorey, Development Planner, continued with the introduction by noting that this is a three-parcel assembly, mid-block, between 50th and 54th Avenue on the west side of Cambie Street. The area is currently zoned RS-1 residential. The high point is the northwest corner, and there is a 10'-0" cross-fall over the site. The site makes up 23,400 square feet, and has a proposed FSR of 2.49. There is also a 12'-0" ROW and 8'-0" additional semi-private transitional space and a 24'-0" Mews.

Parking entry is at the south-west corner, with the primary building entry off of Cambie Street. Patios behind buffer planting provide a semi-private transitional space with gates and stairs to moderate the sloping grade along Cambie. The building return along the south property line transitions from a 2-storey townhouse form to the 4-storey shoulder. A 30'-0" setback is provided from the rear property line to the building face of the 3rd and 4th storeys of the building return. The building presents 6-storeys and has a height of 67'-0" measured to the roof parapet. There are proposed private roof decks, and a common access outdoor space is collocated with amenity room in the mews. Notably the entry lobby and amenity spaces are all at the same ground floor elevation, and thereby preclude any accessibility issues.

Building materials are characterized by the use of brick, metal, cementitious panel, pre-finished charcoal and silver frame glazing systems, and painted concrete.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team declined to give a presentation but took questions from the board and panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design does not merit the 2.49 FSR; density is pushing fit on site
 - Design development to create a stronger entrance and bolder mid-block connector
 - More outdoor space is needed
 - More activation of the laneway is needed
 - Needs to have more of a 'front yard' on Cambie
 - The parking garage requires design treatment
 - More attention should be paid to sustainability
- **Related Commentary:** Although the proposed height, massing and colour-scheme are all supportable this project lacks any real character and does not contribute to the Cambie streetscape. It embodies much of the current developments which already exist, and the applicants are encouraged to mix things up a bit more in their design.

There appears to be a lack of outdoor space which could be solved by increasing the 'front yard' sizes off Cambie Street and adding trees and increasing the size of the patios to allow for furnishing. Making the top patio space public instead of private would also help with this. The courtyard doesn't contribute much to the outside space and needs to be more interesting.

The mid-block connection currently just exists and needs to have a much bolder entryway. The mews doesn't appear to be anything other than a six-foot walkway, and doesn't contribute to the urban fabric. If the vertical brick had a lot more depth and the ends contrasted more with the centre, it would do a lot to announce the front entrance and to better the public/private realm interface.

The amenity space is currently too small and awkwardly located. Look at relocating it in a way which activates the mid-block connector. Applicants should also consider having the building address sustainability with passive design strategies. Overall the building does nothing to warrant the increased density that it seeks, and needs to express more character and vision as well as provide more laneway activation and neighbourly friendliness.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicants thanked the panel and declined to give a further response.

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| 2. Address: | 696 E 64th Avenue (8029 Fraser Street) |
| DE: | DE418968 |
| Description: | To construct a new five-storey mixed-use building. This proposal is for a total of 37 secured market rental dwelling units with commercial tenant space at grade. |
| Zoning: | C-1 to CD-1 |
| Application Status: | Concurrent Rezoning and Development Application |
| Architect: | Cornerstone (Scott Kennedy) |
| Owner: | Paul Athwal |
| Review: | First |
| Delegation: | Scott Kennedy, Cornerstone Merrick Hunter, Chercover Massie Jennifer Stamp, DKL Luke Han |
| Staff: | Cynthia Lau and Marie Linehan |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-4)

- **Introduction:** Cynthia Lau, rezoning planner, introduced the project as a concurrent Rezoning and Development Permit application comprised of three parcels on the southwest corner at the corner of Fraser St and 64th Avenue. The proposal is being considered under the Secured Market Rental Housing Policy (Rental 100).

As this site's existing zoning is C-1, the policy allows for general consideration of C-2 forms of development (e.g. four-storeys and 2.5 FSR)

To the east and west are single-family properties. To the north is a one-storey C-1 site with an auto-body shop. To the south is a three-storey mixed-use building with rental units; kitty-corner is the Super 8 Hotel for which Council has approved an Issues Report.

This rezoning application proposes to rezone the site from C-1 to CD-1 to allow development of a five-storey mixed-use development over one level of underground parking with a maximum building height of 52 ft. The proposal includes 37 secured market rental units.

Marie Linehan, development planner, further described the site noting that Fraser Street slopes down towards Marine Drive in this location, and there is a drop in grades of about 11 ft. along the frontage at Fraser Street.

Under the Rental Incentive Guidelines, we may consider a more C-2-like form of development for these sites. The C-2 zoning allows for 2.5 FSR in a four-storey building form (45 ft. height) with stepped setbacks at the rear intended to mitigate impact on adjacent single family sites across the lane.

Due to the site topography, the building is four-storeys at the north end at E 64th and five-storeys at the south end. The 5th storey encroaches into the 45 ft. height for a small wedge at the south end. The building is under height at the north end. The rear setbacks are generally provided at the main body of the building. A lesser setback is provided where the two-storey portion of the building turns the corner at E 64th. The overall height and rear setbacks for C-2 are shown on the drawings.

Three commercial units are provided which front on Fraser Street. Rather than extend the commercial base to the lane, a row of four residential units with patios are provided at the rear of the ground floor to provide a more residential character at the lane.

There is an existing, low-lying one-storey building at the site to the south. Under the C-1 zoning, that site may eventually develop as a three-storey mixed use building (35 ft. height). There are some very minor modifications to the massing being looked at, and the expected density is 2.68 FSR.

Advice from the panel was sought for the following:

1. Overall height, massing and density.
 2. Rear setbacks and transition to neighbouring RS 1 sites, particularly at the northwest corner.
 3. Location, size, and quality of the common outdoor amenity and play space.
 4. Overall architectural expression and materials, including the treatment of the interior south side elevation.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team declined to give a presentation but took questions from the board and panel.
 - **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - There are concerns about the return along 64th Avenue from a massing and façade handling perspective
 - The garbage room is wrong-sited and not neighbourly; there needs to be more separation in massing, not just transition
 - The Amenity space could be opened out to make the building function better socially
 - The 'bump' on 64th Avenue should be looked at
 - A look at entryway is needed; the entry for whole building should be celebrated
 - The south-face could create community engagement with its façade
 - **Related Commentary:** The panel commended the applicant on creating a socially responsible project and generally supported height, massing and density. The form of development is in scale with the future of Fraser Street. It was noted that the north-west corner currently looks a bit odd, and the rear setback seems a bit bulky towards the neighbour. There also appears to be a tacked on 'bump' of units which needs to be addressed. The panel held mixed opinions on the southern exposure, with some thinking that it needed more colouration or variation and a brighter accent.

While the building generally looks ok, six volumes seems a bit too much and would be better broken up. More articulation will not break down this mass sufficiently, and other strategies should be explored.

The main entrance location is fine, but needs to be more legible. The side entry is currently very underwhelming and also needs to be more legible. If the "hockey sticks" were reversed it would both help with this and prevent over-heating in the building due to solar exposure. More canopy may also help.

The panel noted that the stairs and elevator could be better designed, with an amenity at the top. In general there needs to be more and better outdoor space, as the current space looks tacked on and overlooks an abandoned parking lot. There is a heavy band of planting which encroaches upon the area. Moving these planters to create a rooftop garden would take advantage of the view and create more amenity space.

Overall the materials are durable and well-weathering. However, the treatment of the south-side needs more work. The south-face on 64th Avenue could create community engagement with its façade (maybe with a revisiting of the Blue-Boy mural).

The single-family neighbours deserve more separation of massing than transition. There is also garbage storage directly beside them that needs to be moved south in order to be respectful.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicants thanked the panel and noted that the panel commentary all touched on things that the applicants are struggling with. The amenity does seem tacked on and could be changed, but it is difficult to position the garbage in a way which keeps it out of the basement entry.

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| 3. Address: | 601 W Hastings Street |
| DE: | 419113 |
| Description: | To construct a new 25-storey office building with a public plaza at grade. |
| Zoning: | CD-1 |
| Application Status: | Complete Development Application |
| Architect: | B+H Architects (Peter Carter and Bruce Knapp) |
| Owner: | Morguard |
| Review: | Second (First as Development Application) |
| Delegation: | Bruce Knapp, B+H Architects Patrick Fejér, B+H Architects Eddie Wu, B+H Architects Peter Carter, B+H Architects Margaret Knowles, Morguard Juan Monterrosa, Enermodal Engineering Peter Joyce, Bunt Colin King for Sailen Black |
| Staff: | |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-1)

- **Introduction:** Colin King, Development Planner, introduced the project as a full DE application post-rezoning for a new office building downtown, in close proximity to Waterfront Station, one of the main features of which was the need to replace the existing public open space with something qualitatively similar.

The panel reviewed the rezoning proposal in November 2013 at which point it was unanimously supported with a number of consensus items for improvement through the DE. These included design development to improve the plaza expression and design development to improve the overall expression of the tower. Consideration was also to be given to opening up the view from the corner to the Seabus terminal, as well as design development to improve the canopy expression. The full minutes were included in the agenda issued to panel members as part of the package.

The rezoning was subsequently supported by Council with conditions of the rezoning reflecting panel commentary. The detailed responses to these conditions are outlined on Page 33 of the applicant booklet.

The site is downtown and in the vicinity of the Harbour Centre across the street, the Princess Building to west, and the Royal Bank of Canada building at other end of block face. Current structure on the site was built after rezoning the half-block facing Seymour. The original rezoning included the current underused plaza on the subject site, and Grant Thornton Place at 333 Seymour St. to the north. This plaza was intended to provide an attractive public gathering space for people downtown as open space is very limited in the core. The rezoning identified the potential to use the vertical volume over this urban plaza.

Council indicated its support for rezoning to create employment space if the public amenity could be maintained. The approved rezoning that followed the last UDP appearance established the overall form of development here in terms of height, use, and density.

The proposal includes a 25-storey office tower with commercial space at grade to an FSR of 24.43 with a maximum height of 357 feet as per the rezoning. Main parking is accessed underneath City lane from 333 Seymour; loading and handicapped stalls accessed from lane. In terms of the tower itself, the expressed ‘folds’ of exterior curtain wall in the tower are intended to respond to adjacent forms and the subtle argyle patterning resulting from a reflective mullion cap detail as design development to address concerns around the tower expression.

Much of the previous discussions, advice, commentary and conditions revolved around the plaza in its detailed design. To quantify it, however, the applicants estimated the existing quantity of space as being 8,256 sq. ft. of plaza, 54.8 ft. to top of dome and 9.2 ft. to the underside of ring. The comparative dimensions of proposed plaza space are 3,882 sq. ft. of plaza, 52.8 ft. to the tip of the soffit at Hastings Street, and 29.5 ft. to the soffit in the centre.

The covered, open-air plaza will be secured for public access. Design of the soffit is intended to maximize sun at 12 noon - see shadow study. The water feature is the most prominent element of the west wall of the plaza.

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

1. Have the Panel’s previous comments been addressed?
 2. How does the proposed design of the open plaza, including its floor, walls and ceiling, provide a space for pedestrians that is:
 - a. Attractive to regular and new visitors;
 - b. Accommodating of a wide range of users; and,
 - c. Distinctly and clearly public?
 3. What elements, if any, need improvement?
 4. Looking at all three pedestrian edges (lane, Seymour, and Hasting), would any specific elements benefit from further development?
 5. Does the exterior expression and detailing of the proposed tower respond well to the design of nearby buildings?
- **Applicant’s Introductory Comments:** The applicant team presented the project and noted that they had used panel commentary when redesigning this submission. Changes made include refining the soffit for sunlight and sky access, adding notable public character to the plaza, and integrating visual elements of the plaza ceiling, walls and ground. They also include preserving views through the plaza to the station, enhancing the quality and durability of the plaza finishes, and design development of the tower elements.

Using the metaphor of a well-tailored suit, the concept of the tower is of a face with mullion cap extrusions to reflect light and create a ‘fold’ effect. An argyle pattern is also included on the face.

A main concern with the design was on how to allow the plaza to become more welcoming. This was addressed by re-orienting the stairs and widening the sidewalk into the site. A lot of the ideas regarding paving patterns were created to deal with the soffit treatment of the underbelly of the tower. As well, attention was paid to allowing the elevator lobby to coexist with but retain unique characteristics from the public aspects.

In regards to the separation between the project and the adjacent tower, the applicant team felt that there would be no problems given that both towers held office spaces on the sides facing each other. The applicant team also took questions from the board and panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

- The entry on Hastings should do more to draw people in, and incorporate into the design of a fold better
- The plaza needs to be given over to public more and encourage public use
- The corner planter is not the right orientation, and should address solar access with benches
- Attention should be paid to making sure water doesn't grow slime or smell like bleach
- The plaza does not connect to the station, and as well it could open up to the north at the lane

- **Related Commentary:** The panel thought that there were a lot of interesting elements to the proposal, that it had great buy-in for the vision and strength of design, and like the tailored response. However, these elements don't appear to direct traffic properly through the plaza, and don't quite come together to create a distinctly public space.

The overall height, shape, and expression are supportable by the panel. However, details between the vision glass and spandrels might overshadow the pattern facing south.

The water feature will work well as an attractive centrepiece, especially if it uses lights to animate the area and maybe reflect the design of the building. The planters at the edges should be rotated to create an area to take the sun in, and allow pedestrian flow access to the plaza corner. The restaurant is currently blocking connectivity to the station, but there is an opportunity to tie the space in with the adjacent train station in order to make it more inviting. The public could also be brought into the building itself by creating a rooftop terrace overlooking the lane. Overall the space does not currently feel like it is public, but it has a lot of potential.

The plaza itself does not come across as a public space, and seems ill-designed and squished with the entry and the restaurant. The entries should mesh together instead of competing with each other, and the circulation around the space needs to have more flow. The Hastings Street canopy above the office entrance also seems unclear and does not work well. Currently the terraced stairs make sense, but the relationships between the other pieces create an awkward experience to the door.

In terms of sustainability, the project needs to enhance passive systems by re-looking at triple-glazing instead of heat pumps. While a steam system is needed to heat the building, more needs to be done in order to reduce energy costs. A sign on the water feature explaining that it is recycled will help to alleviate public worry of water waste in our changing climate.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicants thanked the panel, and mentioned that the comments were insightful and will be taken into account.

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| 4. Address: | 1188 Bidwell Street (1675 Davie Street) |
| DE: | 419087 |
| Description: | To construct a 22-storey mixed-use building. This proposal is for a total of 108 secured market rental dwelling units with three commercial retail units at grade. |
| Zoning: | C-5A |
| Application Status: | Complete Development Application |
| Architect: | DIALOG (Adrian Politano) |
| Owner: | Reliance |
| Review: | First |
| Delegation: | Alan Bonifce, DIALOG Adrian Folirand, DIALOG Jason Wegman, PWL Partnership Jon Stovell, Reliance |
| Staff: | Colin King for Sailen Black |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction:** Colin King, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a new mixed-use building under the provisions of the C-5A zoning and the West End Plan on the Davie Corridor. Since this is a complete development permit application there are specific staff questions but any comments on more fine grained design elements including materials and detailing are welcomed.

The site currently hosts a one-storey commercial building at the corner, and a two-storey mixed use building, both facing Davie. Around the corner also on the site is a three-storey apartment with its entrance on Bidwell. To the north is Pendrell Place, with Lord Roberts Elementary beyond. Existing development along the north side of Davie is generally low scale, offering water views from viewpoints up the hill to the east. On the other side of Davie is a four-storey mixed use building with TD Trust at the corner. Diagonally across the intersection is the recent Alexandra tower developed after rezoning, which includes a JJ Bean coffee shop in the restored façade of the heritage Maxine's building at 1209 Bidwell. This corner has an outdoor patio for JJ Bean.

Davie St is identified in the plan as a “Corridor” which is generally where the Plan aims to provide job space and meet the housing needs of the community, while allowing minimum disruption to the neighbourhoods. The West End Plan established the potential for up to 7.0 FSR for new buildings providing secured market rental units. Policy intents coming out of the Plan for the Lower Davie corridor include increased densities to help deepen housing affordability while maintaining existing height limits. Residential floor plates should be set back above the podium and should not exceed 5,500 sf. to maximize views and sunlight on sidewalks. Building materials should include a variety of materials, rather than consist primarily of glass façade, and reflect the architectural character of surrounding buildings. This is particularly important for the lower podium floors, Sculpt built form to maximize sunlight on the sidewalks and minimize private view impacts.

Broader built form guidelines coming out of the Plan include ensuring that new development does not adversely impact shadowing on recognized public open space and Village areas as a performance measure to ensure that these spaces have solar access when citizens are typically more active. New development should be responsive to adjacent and nearby private views by shaping built form to optimize performance.

The C-5A district schedule allows for 7.0 FSR; density may be increased 10% by the Development Permit Board through transfer of heritage density. The DP Board may also increase height 60 ft. to a maximum of 210 ft.

The Proposed Development includes a 22-storey residential tower with commercial space at grade with an FSR of 7.4, or 95,756 square feet. It also includes retail podium with continuous commercial ceiling heights of 16.5ft fronting Davie Street, and turning the corner to provide a double height residential access lobby on Bidwell Street.

Materials move from the more glazed residential frontage to substantially solid expression at the residential entry, which seems appropriate and in line with the guidance. Coming onto the lane we have loading, car-share and disability, and parking access with a projection at the lane edge housing stair and gas meters screening this.

High rise portion of tower is set back 40 ft. from the interior property line, to accommodate similar development on the adjacent site and achieve the 80ft separation between towers required. Achieving the 80ft separation from the tower at Pendrell and Bidwell derives the tower location. Floor plates are typically 4,396 sq. ft. which is narrower than guidance allows. There is also additional area below 60ft giving floor space between the tower and the podium.

A Residential Provision states that the building include 100% secured market residential of 108 units. 25% of units are two bedrooms or better to accommodate more families staying in the West End, and units typically have around a 9ft ceiling height. Three outdoor common spaces for residents are provided at levels 3, 7, and 22.

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

1. Can the Panel comment on the proposed element extending above 210 ft.?
 2. Is the built form sculpted to maximize sunlight on the sidewalks?
 3. Looking at all three pedestrian edges (lane, Bidwell, and Davie), would any specific elements benefit from further development?
 4. Does the detailing of the building reflect the architectural character of surrounding buildings?
 5. Does the Panel have any advice on the approach to sustainable design?
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team declined to give a presentation but took questions from the board and panel.
 - **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Explore creating porosity and activation at the corner of the lane
 - Have the landscape extend around the corner to the lane to allow for lane activation
 - Design development of the top piece to add to the skyline
 - The solar shade seems tacked on and should be redesigned
 - The entry should be more prominent
 - The driveway could be a drop-off location, and could make the laneway more connected to the building
 - Suite-by-suite HRV and thermal balconies should be considered

Related Commentary: The panel commended the applicant on their application package, and agreed that the proposal is strong and has produced a very handsome building which embodies West-End characteristics. The height, massing and density are all supportable, but the applicants should consider relocating the stair on the corner of the lane as the pop-out in massing seems to be a bit foreign in that location. Suite-by-suite HRVs would increase space in the units and be more sustainable. Triple glazing, insulate balconies, or thermal glaze would also be great. Overall the panel appreciates the attention to detail embodied in the project. With its interesting character and reflection of the neighbourhood, the building is both unique and fits in well with its surroundings.

The street edges seem to be well-handled with tapered posts and plated sidewalks. Sunlight on the sidewalks also seems to be maximized. The entrance should be stronger as it currently does not seem prominent enough. Overall there is good access to outdoor space and amenity space within the building.

Detail on the building has good articulation and makes an effort to relate to historical context. Motifs seem to be in-line and consistent with the West-End.

Although the roofline seems to be a bit heavy the flat-aligned roof makes sense. The smaller floor-plate allows for daylight on the sidewalks.

More thought should be given to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) to enhance personal security for building residents with eyes on the lane. Extra windows may help to solve this issue as well as allow extra light into the building.

Consideration should be given to flipping the core so the corridor could be naturally lit and look up Davie Street.

Amenity spaces are generous both indoors and outdoors which contribute greatly to livability and community resilience.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their time and comments.