

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: September 23, 2015

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

- Stefan Aepli
- Meghan Cree-Smith
- Stuart Hood
- Ken Larsson
- Jennifer Marshall
- Arno Matis (conflict on item #1)
- Chris Mramor
- Julien Fagnan
- Muneesh Sharma
- Roger Hughes

REGRETS: Russell Acton
Matthew Soules

RECORDING SECRETARY: Lidia McLeod

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

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| 1. | 526-548 W King Edward Avenue |
| 1. | 3289 Riverwalk Avenue (East Fraser Lands Parcel 8B) |
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BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Marshall 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: 526-548 W King Edward Avenue
DE: N/A
Description: To construct a six-storey residential building with five units of townhouses at the north lane. The proposal is for a total of 69 residential units

Zoning: RS-1 to CD-1
Application Status: Rezoning Application
Review: First
Architect: Romses Architecture (Scott Romses)
Owner: Tianco Investment Group Ltd.
Delegation: Scott Romses, Romses Architecture
Cristia Craiu, Romses Architecture
Jennifer Stamp, Durante Kreuk

Staff: Graham Winterbottom and Ann McLean

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (3-4)

- **Introduction:** Graham Winterbottom, Planner, introduced the site for this rezoning application as consisting of a three lot assembly on the south side of King Edward Avenue, and to the west of Cambie Street. The proposal is being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan within the Cambie Village neighbourhood. In this area the Plan contemplates buildings up to six-storeys within two blocks of Cambie, and four-storeys westward. Proposals in this area should seek to activate the lane through townhouse uses. The recommended floor area is 1.25 to 1.75 FSR subject to urban design performance.

This area of King Edward and Cambie has been very active and has had numerous approved rezonings. Across the lane is 4139-4187 Cambie Street, which is comprised of two six-storey buildings with 75 units at 2.51 FSR. Immediately north is 563-571 King Edward Avenue, which is comprised of six-storeys and four townhouses for a total of 70 units at 2.43 FSR. The transit station site at 4099 Cambie is comprised of eight-storeys and four townhouses for a total of 65 units at 3.52 FSR. Westward there is the Hobbit House, and 20 three-storey townhouses. East of Cambie there is a recently approved rezoning at 467-495 King Edward Avenue, which has six-storeys with townhouses and a floor area of 2.38 FSR.

Current applications for the area also include 4085 Ash Street at 619-633 West King Edward Avenue. This will be four-storeys, and made up of 31 units and three townhouses with a proposed FSR of 1.93.

This proposal is to rezone three single family dwellings from RS-1 to CD-1 to develop a six-storey building. The proposal includes 69 residential units; 31% of which will be two and three bedroom family units. There will be five townhouse units at the lane and seven garden units accessible from the lane and an interior breezeway. The total proposed floor area is 2.49 FSR.

Ann Mclean, Development Planner, continued by stating that the properties westward towards Heather are part of the same rezoning policy area as the subject site, The sites across the lane to the south are part of the focus area for Cambie Corridor Phase III. The supportable FSR is a range of 1.25 to 1.75 for the four-storey policy area. The adjacent six-storey area to the east can consider FSR in the range of 2.0 to 2.5.

The proposal is for six-storeys on the eastern two-thirds of the site, and four-storeys on the western one-third. A two-storey wing is proposed at the east lane, and two-storey townhomes are proposed at the south lane. A theoretical blended FSR range for the site is 1.75 to 2.25.

Proposed front setback is effectively 5 feet. While the noted setback is 15 feet, Engineering has requested an approximate 5 ft. Statutory Right-of-Way, and the balconies project into the setback by 5 ft. The entry patios project to the ultimate front property line and are about 4 ft. above grade. The four-storey west side yard is setback 10 ft. There is a 4 ft. setback at the lane for the two-storey buildings, and an 8 to 10 ft. setback at the east lane. The courtyard is 23 ft. measured from the face of the balcony to the face of the townhouse.

The current proposal is for a building which is 163 ft. in length. However, the policy and guidelines support a maximum building length of 150 ft.

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

1. Relationship to the public realm (setbacks at the street and lanes) and the effect of building projections (balconies, patios);
 2. On site open space - the amenity of the common courtyards and private patios;
 3. Relationship to adjacent sites with regard to setbacks and overlook and considering future built forms;
 4. On the overall proposal in terms of its form, height and density with regard to the policy and guidelines.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team introduced the project as a deviation from the sameness along the Cambie Corridor. The aim is to promote some memorable moments through a simple form which is less predictable than other projects in the area. The owner supports the mandate of setting a high bar through a powerful simplicity, thus the form has been kept simple and is not overly articulated. The density is 2.43 FSR, which is in keeping with the expectations for the area.

As the building is fairly long, the façade has been split into three pieces through materiality and setbacks to break down a potentially monotonous façade along King Edward Avenue. The ground floor is pulled back 5 ft. from the floors above, and a t-shaped element helps break things up more. The ground floor and t-shape will be in dark brick.

In terms of expression, there is an intentional contrasting element to the simple view-frame boxes. The passive solar strategy is to employ rolling solar screens, which give another delicate layer to the façade.

The west setback was originally 7 ft. which was similar to the adjacent GBL project. After discussion with staff it was enlarged to 10 ft., which seems comfortable and works. However, the community response to this will determine if it is appropriate or not.

The setbacks on the east lane have been pulled back to allow for activation of the lane and create patios for the ground floor units. Through the expression of the building the patios encroach into the setbacks. This gives a setback of 5 ft. to the face of the balcony and 5 ft. to the face of the glass. The courtyard is 23 ft. currently, but could be modified to 24 ft. to increase livability.

Along King Edward Avenue there is a fair amount of grade change and variation. A simple water trough animates the space and creates noise by moving down a waterfall to grade. There is also a 5 ft. wide pathway and planters to support trees, which achieve a very livable relationship.

There is landscaping along the lane to provide a buffer. Along the east lane there is also planting as a buffer and to create livable outdoor space. On the rooftops there is a child's play area and urban agriculture. There is also a lounge with outdoor dining to allow the opportunity to take in the views.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel members.

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

- Design development to reduce the massing and to open up the tight interior spaces
- Design development to reduce the density
- Design development on the balconies to prevent them from bulking up the mass
- The landscape looks cold and has too much concrete
- The streetscape at grade along King Edward Avenue currently seems too formal and does not have enough greenery, the front yard setbacks are tight and the transition from the street is severe at the buildings entrance
- The breezeway needs more sunlight, activation and programming, should consider opening up to a two storey height
- Overall the project needs more landscaping
- The white metal panels may not weather well over time

- **Related Commentary:**

The panel noted that the overall project seems quite attractive.

While the setbacks at the lane seem effective and efficient, consideration should be given to increasing the setback along King Edward Avenue. Increasing the setback along the west side as well would allow for more sunlight into that area. Overall the relationship to the street at grade needs more work to soften the monumentality of the building. Breaking up the horizontality of the building would help with this.

On King Edward the patios are too high in relationship to the street, but a softer edge treatment could help to mitigate this transition. While the balconies at the front provide some solar control, they also decrease sound-proofing for the units and bulk out the building. A number of patios are also below grade, and this should be rethought going forward.

Currently the building appears to be looming and needs to be reduced a bit to provide more space. Reducing the density of the building would help with this and create a better sense of openness. Currently the density is too high and is creating too much tightness in the building, especially in the amenity spaces.

The amenity would be much more successful if it opened into a courtyard to allow people access to air and space, and if it were pushed south to capture more sun. The fireplace in the amenity space will also not work well. More design development is needed to create a unique indoor amenity space.

Design development is also needed of the courtyard and breezeway as the courtyard is too narrow and looks like a walkway. It may be better to enclose the breezeway or, alternately increase its height, as currently it does not work as an amenity space. There is also a missed opportunity to engage the laneway with the breezeway somehow.

Additional landscaping is needed to make the building more welcoming. More screening is also needed in front of the ground floor patios to allow for privacy. More of a buffer is needed around the above grade common outdoor spaces to keep people away from the edge.

The panel thought that the materials and colours of the building were quite striking, and that the waterfall was a nice feature. However, there was a concern that the white panels may not weather well.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel and noted that they are grateful for the comments. A lot of the issues raised were known, and they looked forward to bringing this project back.

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2. Address: 3289 Riverwalk Avenue (East Fraser Lands Parcel 8B)
DE: 418718
Description: To construct a six-storey residential building containing a total of 99 dwelling units.
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete Development Application
Review: Second
Architect: Shift Architecture Inc. (Cameron Halkier)
Owner: Polygon Construction Management Ltd.
Delegation: Cam Halkier, Shift Architecture
Bruce Hemstock, PWL Partnership
Kevin Shoemaker, Polygon Developments
Staff: Allan Moorey
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

Minutes to follow

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.