

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** Wednesday June 15, 2016

**TIME:** 3:00 pm

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Russell Acton (excused for item #3, 4 & 5)  
Stefan Aepli  
Roger Hughes  
Ken Larsson  
David Jerke  
Neal Lamontagne  
James Cheng  
Muneesh Sharma  
Veronica Gillies  
Karen Spoelstra (excused for item #5)  
Meredith Anderson  
Kim Smith

**REGRETS:** Meghan Cree-Smith

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Lidia McLeod

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### ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	424 W Pender Street
2.	454 W Pender Street
3.	618 W 32nd Avenue
4.	375 W 59th Avenue
5.	6304 Cambie Street

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**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Roger Hughes called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. A brief business meeting was held wherein the panel determined that the presentations and commentary for the first two projects would be given at the same time, after which a separate vote would be held for each project. The panel then considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 424 W Pender Street  
 DE: N/A  
 Description: The proposal is for an 11-storey mixed-use building including 72 units of secured market rental housing, with commercial space on the ground floor, and a floor space ratio (FSR) of 8.18.  
 Zoning: DD to CD-1  
 Application Status: Rezoning Application  
 Review: Second  
 Architect: IBI Group (Martin Bruckner)  
 Owner: Onni Group  
 Delegation: Martin Bruckner, IBI Group  
 Vivian Tong, IBI Group  
 Mike Enns, Enns Gauthier Landscape Architects  
 Jason Newton, Onni Group  
 Tim Tewsley, Recollective  
 Staff: Linda Gillan and Tim Potter

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (11-0)**

- **Introduction:** Linda Gillan, Rezoning Planner, introduced the two rezoning applications for 424 and 454 West Pender Street. The site is in area C-2 of the Downtown District (DD) Official Development Plan. It is also subject to the Victory Square Policy Plan. Rezoning can be considered for projects providing public benefits, including social housing, secured market rental housing, or heritage rehabilitation.

The maximum height for this site is 105 ft., with density based on urban design performance. The Green Buildings Policy for Rezoning is applicable to the proposal which requires a minimum of LEED Gold or equivalent.

Tim Potter, Development Planner, continued the presentation noting the site is an infill site that is 52 ft. wide and 120 ft. deep and served by a lane. The proposal is to rezone and enact a CD-1 Comprehensive Development District under the DTES Plan with a proposed density of 8.18 FSR and a proposed height of 105 ft.

At the last review the panel consensus items needing improvement were as follows:

- The overall design lacked sufficient detail for the panel to make a decision on rezoning;
- There was concern about the street elevation and a sense that it had not been developed and informed by an understanding of the context;
- More definition at street's commercial level should be pursued; and
- Landscape should have more tree canopy and improvement in the lane as well as rain harvesting.

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

1. Have the previous comments of the panel been satisfactorily addressed?
  2. Please comment on the expression and composition of the building facades in relation to the existing context.
  3. Are the proposed height, massing and density sought in this application supportable?
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team noted that at the last appearance they did not provide a running streetscape so they brought boards to illustrate that.

The applicant team noted that the mid-block site has different massing. It is meant to accentuate the saw tooth pattern of the other buildings. Pushing the upper floor back improves the shadow performance on the sidewalk. There are dark metal components with concrete cornice, and simple masonry pillars with punched windows in between. There are also Juliet balconies, although some of them are not seen as the guard is inside the units. There is an articulated concrete sidewall, and the proposed brick rises all the way up to the top of the building. Moveable screens with metal framework add privacy and sun screening to the units. The proposed materials are steel, concrete, brick and metal cladding that emphasizes the frames around the windows. There are also steel canopies and a steel cornice executed in a modern way to create a shadow pattern somewhat like a traditional cornice. Three varied colour tones of materials have been selected to reinforce the tri-partite composition of the building.

The design for the sidewalk and public realm will reflect the city standard for pavers and trees. There is a residential balcony with planting on Level 9. At the roof, the program remains the same as previously presented - a social/recreational space that also has an area for urban agriculture. The number of trees has been doubled to expand the tree canopy, and the area for urban agriculture and raised planters has also been increased. A series of rain channels have been introduced to direct water towards the planting beds. There is no room for landscape treatment at the lane.

The applicant team then took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - There are concerns about the architecture not being innovative enough to successfully capture a contemporary expression of a building that is informed by a heritage context;
  - The horizontal expression of the blank wall is fine, but these walls could be better designed to make each of the buildings unique;
  - The lane elevations appear too delicate and disjointed from the muscular street expression; they should be tied together.
- **Related Commentary:** The panel noted that the previous panel comments seem to have been substantially addressed, and that the height, massing, and density are supportable. The building is a modern interpretation of traditional principles.

The decision to increase the height of the building base was good and the expression and composition relate well to the context. The horizontal treatment at the cornice level is also successful; however, the horizontal balconies appear to be discordant with the overall design. Special attention should be paid to the details of the cornices, steel plate covers and canopies because these details are really important to the success of the building.

The broad concrete cornice above the building base seems to be just a plane. Greater relief and detail is needed to improve the motif; if the design for the concrete cornice is left as is it might weather badly very quickly. The building is muscular and has the right 'grit' for the area, but the back of the building is unrelated to the front. Think about tying in the language of this side to the front better. The applicant should also consider design development of the blank wall(s) to distinguish the buildings from each other. One panel member mentioned that it would be good if there was more architectural innovation and the development of a new vocabulary for the design of the facade instead of just paying "*lip-service*" to old buildings. The design at present shows good potential, however at the development permit stage it will be interesting to see if design development progresses further along these lines.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments, especially those relating to the attempt to modernize.

2. Address:	454 W Pender Street
DE:	N/A
Description:	The proposal is for an 11-storey mixed-use building including 69 units of secured market rental housing, with commercial space on the ground floor, and a floor space ratio (FSR) of 8.58.
Zoning:	DD to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	Second
Architect:	IBI Group (Martin Bruckner)
Owner:	Onni Group
Delegation:	Martin Bruckner, IBI Group Vivian Tong, IBI Group Mike Enns, Enns Gauthier Landscape Architects Jason Newton, Onni Group Tim Tewsley, Recollective
Staff:	Linda Gillan and Tim Potter

### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-2)

- **Introduction:** Linda Gillan, Rezoning Planner, introduced the two rezoning applications for 424 and 454 West Pender Street. The site is in area C-2 of the Downtown District (DD) Official Development Plan. It is also subject to the Victory Square Policy Plan. Rezonings can be considered for projects providing public benefits, including social housing, secured market rental housing, or heritage rehabilitation.

The maximum height allowable under the policy is 105 ft., with density based on urban design performance. The Green Buildings Policy for Rezonings also applies to this site which requires a minimum of LEED Gold or equivalent.

Tim Potter, Development Planner, reacquainted the panel with this (corner site) that is 52 ft. wide by 120 ft. deep. The base zoning is the Downtown District Official Development Plan. The proposal is to rezone and enact a CD-1 Comprehensive Development District under the DTES Plan. The proposed density and height for the project is 8.56 FSR, and 105 ft. respectively.

At the last review the panel had consensus on several key aspects needing improvement:

- Overall the design lacked detail in its form and expression;
- The street elevation needs to be informed by its historical context;
- The corner window was not seen as a successful way to address a corner condition;
- The bay windows are well resolved, especially at the parapet;
- The Massing could create a strong bookend with the building at the opposite end of the block, but does not;
- More definition at the street level needs to be provided for the commercial spaces;
- The landscape design should provide more tree canopy; and
- Water harvesting should be explored.

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

1. Have the previous comments of the panel been satisfactorily been addressed?
2. Please comment on the expression and composition of the building facades in relation to the existing context; and

3. Are the proposed height and massing, and density sought supportable?

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The cues for the building massing and the facade are taken from the building at the corner of Homer and Pender Streets. The height of the building base has been raised and a cornice at the base floor level(s) was introduced. This building is LEED Gold certified, and will have a very efficient envelope for heating. On balance it is a far better façade than previously submitted.

The streetscape has a historical reference to underground tunnels in the area. The green wall has been removed. At level 11 there is a communal patio with simple materials, and at the roof a social lounge area takes advantage of the views. The tree canopy has been increased along with the area for raised planter beds. Rainwater is being channeled into the planters. There is also the possibility for a garden or green wall.

The applicant team then took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - There are concerns about the architecture not being innovative enough to embody a contemporary expression within a significant heritage context;
  - The horizontal expression of the blank wall is fine, however these walls could be used to make the buildings unique;
  - The relationship to the heritage building across the lane requires more consideration for transition between the two structures;
  - There should be a stronger expression at the upper level; and
  - The corner retail could be more prominent if the height of this space was better expressed.
- **Related Commentary:** The panel noted that the previous panel comments have been addressed, and that the height, massing and density are supportable. The building is a successful modern interpretation of a traditional, heritage context. Both buildings relate much better to the building on the opposite corner, and the sawtooth pattern fits in well with the surrounding context. Something at the ground plane to tie the buildings together would be nice. One panel member thought it would be beneficial if the shadow impact of the corner could be reduced a bit by a reduction in the height by one storey.

While the resolution of the corner is better, the broad concrete corner seems to be just a plane. Some 3D relief is needed which plays a bit more into the desired motif; if the concrete cornice is not changed it may not weather well. The building has a muscular architectural language and has the right 'grit' for the area, but the back of the building does not seem to relate at all to the front. Think about tying in the language of this side to the front. As well, the applicant should consider developing the blank wall design to make the buildings unique from each other.

The punched windows are a good solution, but the applicants should have more fun with reinterpreting how the brick is integrated with the window detailing. The other materials are well selected. One panel member mentioned that it would be good if there was more architectural innovation evident in the design instead of just paying 'lip-service' to old buildings.

The Richards Street frontage needs improvement; it might help to marry this building to the one across the lane. The corner retail space needs to be developed as a great space. The top layer (2 floors) of the building is defined a thin cornice and no expression, which makes it look like a curtain wall broken by a thin band of metal. This area of the façade needs further work to be articulated with greater strength.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked panel for their comments, especially those related to the attempt to modernize.

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3. Address:	618 W 32 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue
DE:	N/A
Description:	The proposal is for a six-storey residential building including 15 residential units and a floor space ratio (FSR) of 2.46. The application is being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan.
Zoning:	RS-1 to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	Shift Architecture (Cam Halkier)
Owner:	The Airey Group
Delegation:	Cam Halkier, Shift Architecture Florian Fisch, Durante Kreuk Ltd. Veronica Owens, Lighthouse
Staff:	Rachel Harrison and Tim Potter

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-3)**

- **Introduction:** Rachel Harrison, Rezoning Planner, introduced the project on the southwest corner of Cambie Street and 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. The proposal is being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan (CCP), which contemplates a residential building up to six storeys.

Across the street is Queen Elizabeth Park, and south of the site is a five-storey residential building, 'The Elizabeth', that was a rezoning approval in 2012. Next to that site are 2½-storey row houses with a laneway houses in the back. This development was approved in 2008 prior to the CCP. The subject site, and houses to the west and to the north are zoned RS-1. Along Cambie these sites can be rezoned under CCP to a height of six-storeys.

Sites west of the lane are in the Cambie Corridor Phase 3 planning area. While ground-oriented housing is being considered, the planning exercise is ongoing and final direction for these sites has not yet been determined. The Cambie Corridor Plan anticipates residential buildings up to six-storeys with a suggested FSR range of 1.5 - 2.0.

This site is approximately 25,000 sq. ft. The rezoning application proposes to rezone the site from RS-1 to CD-1 to allow the development of a six-storey building over two levels of underground parking with an FSR of 2.46. The proposal includes 15 market residential units.

Tim Potter, Development Planner, continued the introduction by stating that the site is on the west side of Cambie Street at 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue across from Queen Elizabeth Park. The site is approximately 80 ft. wide and 122 ft. deep, with some slope across the site. It is also served by a lane. There are single family context (RS-1) sites across the lane with possible Cambie Corridor Phase 3 zoning in the future. Mr. Potter reiterated that the proposed height of the building is six storeys, and a density of 2.46 FSR. Mr. Potter reminded the panel that the density range in the plan is an estimate and not a limit, and is based on the urban design performance.

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

1. Please comment on the relationship to the neighbouring building in terms of its setback proposed on the south side.
2. Please comment on the overall success of the landscape design.

3. Are the overall form, massing and density supportable?

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team introduced the site by mentioning that the site falls significantly from the southeast to the northwest, with most of that fall taking place along W 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. In order to get a more favourable condition the parking ramp was moved from the original shared condition that had been considered on the Elizabeth site to the south.

The building has a series of three frame extrusions floated over top of the base. There is a composition of glass and wood-like cladding. The upper floors step back with generous overhangs to provide shading for the units. This building has larger units than typical. There are large balconies on the corners of the building and large decks around the face. According to the applicants "the elevator core is used to hang the masses off the south side" and uses panels to add more strength to the building. The main intent of the landscape design is to transition from the building to the private realm by using raised planters to accomplish this.

Along the patio edge there are a few materials used. Glass guardrails allow for over-view. Along Cambie Street is a garden wall with natural materials, and the lower retaining wall is faced with the same material. At the lane is a low-level planter to provide a buffer, and a small plaza with a seating area. The main entry is on Cambie Street. Although this is a concrete building, an effort has been made to source materials referencing the natural environment, such as basalt rock.

The overall window to wall ratio is a lot lower than is typical. There are significant overhangs to reduce overall solar gain, especially on the upper levels. Double-glazed windows have been used to reduce R-values across the building. Rainwater is being collected and filtered for re-use.

The applicant team then took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - The frames are heavy and need design development considering they are the main expression of the architectural language;
  - The exit stair to the north could be better integrated with the landscape;
  - A better landscape transition is needed from the street to the residential units;
  - Design development is needed on the south elevation to improve the blank wall condition and overlook issues towards the Elizabeth development;
  - More work is needed on the exit stair and the terracing along 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue;
  - Use the collected rainwater for irrigation;
  - The upper amenity is too closed in;
  - Open up the main entrance to make it more welcoming;
- **Related Commentary:** Although the panel thought that the massing and form of development were supportable, they were split on supporting the density. Some panel members declined to comment on density at this stage as the massing was not set in stone, while others thought that the proposed density would not work given the context and neighbouring issues. An architectural treatment may be needed to reduce the massing. One person wished that the building was one storey less in order to reduce the shadow impact.

Design development is needed to bring light into the units on the first floor as they currently seem very dark. In addition, there is nothing expressing the entrance on the north elevation except the narrow stairs and a thin frame. Design development is needed to open this up and make it more welcoming.

Some panel members thought the building separation was fine, others thought that the setback to the neighbouring building needs to be increased to be more neighbourly. The blank wall closest to the neighbours needs further design development, and the applicant should consider re-arranging the patios to mitigate overlook issues. The stair tower is not a neighbourly condition. Consideration should be given to whether the stair treatment can be done differently; it probably doesn't need an overrun and the stair should not go straight into the street. It would also make the design better if the scissor stair with the elevator were re-planned to eliminate the north exit.

The stepping along the street edges is fine, but consideration should be given to using more terracing to compensate for the grade. Overall the stepping and planters are an appropriate method of dealing with the grade on this site.

The proposed frames are a bit clumsy and should be reviewed to determine if they are the right architectural expression going forward. It seems like this is a three-part component building, so maybe clarify and celebrate those three parts. However, generally speaking the building look and feel works well considering the location.

With respect to the large patio, consideration should be given to additional programming. Currently, for example, it is not a successful children's space.

The landscape components seem fragmented and need to be tied together or made stronger. The panel also suggested re-using the collected rainwater for irrigation.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their thoughtful comments. This is an opportunity to improve the building, so they will go back to take a good hard look at it.

The issues of overlook will be addressed, and different materials and patterns can be introduced to improve the wall. The top floors also deserve work, as does the frame. The applicants are confident that they will come back with something that will get through the development permit stage. The north stair is problematic and will be better integrated in the future. The residential expression will be re-thought. Overall the applicants liked the comments and thought that this will be a good opportunity to create a better building.

4. Address:	375 W 59th Avenue
DE:	DE420214
Description:	To construct three multiple-dwelling buildings containing a total of 119 dwelling units with underground parking.
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete Development Application
Review:	Second (First at DE)
Architect:	Ramsay Worden Architects (Kurt McLaren)
Owner:	Intracorp
Delegation:	Bob Worden, Ramsay Worden Architects Kurt McLaren, Ramsay Worden Architects Chris Phillips, PFS Studio Tony Kaleel, Intracorp Maki Muramatsu, Greenmura
Staff:	Georgina Lyons

#### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (10-0)

- **Introduction:** Georgina Lyons, Development Planner, introduced the project as a development permit application after a rezoning. This was the first rezoning under the Marpole Community Plan, which allows for buildings of up to six storeys. The rezoning was approved with an FSR of 2.66.

This site is located at the intersection of West 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Alberta Street. It has a 237 ft. frontage on West 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue and a site depth of 258 ft. There is a significant slope going 22 ft. upwards from the southeast corner to the northeast corner of the site.

To the north is Langara Golf Course. To the west across Alberta Street is an RS-1 single family zone, the same Marpole rezoning policy applies to this area. To the east is a three-storey courtyard townhouse development under an existing CD-1 zone. To the south is Winona Park and a four-storey apartment building.

The application consists of three multiple dwelling buildings containing 119 dwelling units with an FSR of 2.66, and a central courtyard running north-south. The development also proposes to retain two large pine trees off of W 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The north building is six-storeys and 205 ft. wide fronting the golf course. The building is setback 12 ft. from the north and west property lines, and 19.5 ft. from the east property line. The upper two storeys are setback an additional 8 ft. The east building is five storeys and is setback 12 ft. from the south. The setback from the east varies, but is no less than 15 ft. from the property line. The upper two storeys step back an additional 8 ft. The west building is six-storeys along Alberta Street, and is setback 12 ft. from the south.

Parking access is off Alberta Street and leads to 1½ levels of underground parking. The main amenity area is located in the north building off the ground floor of the central courtyard.

The proposed cladding is primarily cementitious board, represented in grey and white on the model, with localized areas of metal panel and stone cladding.

The major revisions since the rezoning include:

- The removal of the bridge that connected the north and west buildings, which was done to better comply with the Marpole Plan's recommended maximum building width of 100 ft.;
- An increased eastern setback on the north and east building to respond to the townhouse adjacency; and,
- Retention of the two pine trees off of 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The panel's consensus on key aspects needing improvement at the rezoning were:

- Design development to ensure an neighbourly interface and good livability at the northeast corner alongside the neighbouring development;
- Design refinement to the north elevation to ensure it is a good backdrop to the public golf course;
- Consider adding windows in the lower level amenity space.

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

1. The applicant's response in addressing the Consensus items from the rezoning UDP appearance (listed above)?
  2. The development's interface with grade. Does the project successfully engage with the public realm and in particular the adjoining property?
  3. The suitability of the proposed cladding materials for a project of this scale.
  4. Treatment of the courtyard and how it addresses the slope of the site.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team noted that the chosen palette is a bit softer than the typical one on Cambie Street. It utilizes stone, clapboard with metal trim, simple detailing, and Hardie 2.0 which is thicker than usual. The base is stone and continuous, and on top of that are box like forms which address the street in a deliberate way to break the mass down into smaller chunks.

The upper floors step back 8 ft. around the property line. To the east is an edge which is agreeable to the neighbours and the City. As there was a desire to retain two large pine trees off the courtyard they have been used to shape the courtyard entry around the rest of the building.

The loading area has been moved to address issues with idling vehicles. According to the applicants the "windows have been opened up considerably" and there are now skylights to bring daylight inside the building. A bridge connection no longer joins the two buildings together; instead the north building has been divided into two visually separate pieces facing the park. Corner windows are being avoided to address concerns about birds and sustainability has been addressed by lowering the window to wall ratio. All the patios terrace down to better relate to the public scale.

There is an eco-corridor along the golf course which has been enhanced through rain gardens and formal plantings. The courtyard is 60 ft. in width and contributes to the livability of the adjacent units. There was a concern about entry doors and access, so there is now more clarity to the lobby entries and the private patios have been lowered.

The applicant team then took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Increase or develop the habitat corridor if possible;
  - Recapture the porte-cochere feel of the building bridge at the rezoning stage;
  - A number of sunken patios are quite dark and should be raised;
  - The white cladding reads very solid or heavy given the expressed intent of the applicant. The details and fenestration give it a very massive look. Rethinking the white paneling and hardy plank detailing might help with this;
  - In general recommend breaking up the building with other types of materials and colours, especially at the north side as it is currently too dark;
  - Design development is needed on the courtyard to make it more family friendly. Consideration should also be given to acoustic mitigation;
- **Related Commentary:** The panel noted that the old iteration had a lovely porte-cochere created by the bridge between the buildings, and this is lost in the current proposal. Try to recapture this if possible.

The units on the north side will be very dark. There should be a portal, or some kind of north to south connection, to bring daylight into these spaces. The units to the east are also too dark, which is compounded by the sunken patios creating unlivable spaces. Design development is needed to lighten up the area.

It appears as though car exhaust may enter some of the units from the proposed parking access. This needs to be remedied.

The dark colour of the proposed cladding in combination with the proposed materials enhances the feel of the project as a large mass. The fake rock, along with the metal paneling and black colour, does not seem suitable. In addition, there is too much white siding which makes the upper storey seem too dominant and massive. Some of the material colours in the lower areas should be lightened, and higher quality materials should be used to lessen these effects.

The courtyard may act as an echo chamber; any noise by kids or the fountain will echo within the space. Consider material or landscape treatments to mitigate this. The central courtyard space also lacks a sense of community engagement for the building. The water feature will be difficult to maintain. Developing the space off the east could help with this. It would be nice if there was a barbeque pit for families or if the amenity room was better connected to the courtyard. Adding additional rooftop gardens would also contribute to the outdoor amenity.

The habitat corridor is a bit narrow, and is an opportunity to use a type of tree which allows for a bit more light on the park edge. Currently it reads more as a dark forest than a park edge, but is a good attempt. By abandoning the walkway, from the previous submission, there is a better interface with the patios. However, more mindfulness is needed with regards to the eco corridor.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their thoughtful comments and clarified that the stone is real, not fake. The landscape and patios will be looked at carefully and fined tuned. As well, the dark cladding will have its tone adjusted and maybe dialed back to charcoal. The intent of the clapboard was to give the building a light feel, but it does come off as too solid. Using another material might mitigate this, though clapboard can be a wonderful material if it is done right. There are some family-friendly opportunities which can be explored for the courtyard.

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5. Address:	6304 Cambie Street
DE:	DE420232
Description:	To construct an eight-storey mixed-use building with 55 dwelling units (including five two-storey townhouse units at the rear), commercial space on the ground floor, and a floor space ratio (FSR) of 3.2, over two levels of underground parking accessed off the lane. The application is being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan.
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete Development Application
Review:	Second (First at DE)
Architect:	Integra Architecture Inc. (Duane Siegrist)
Owner:	L&A Real Estate Investments
Delegation:	Duane Siegrist, Integra Architecture Inc. Amber Paul, Durante Kreuk E3 Eco Group
Staff:	Allan Moorey

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**EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (3-6)**

- **Introduction:** Allan Moorey, Development Planner, introduced the project as an eight-storey mixed-use building with commercial space on the ground floor, and an FSR of 3.2. The application is being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan.

With respect to setbacks there is an east to west pedestrian mews along the northern property line. There is also a mid-block connection east along 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue with a 10 ft. statutory right of way (SRW) along the east property line. A semi-transitional space provides separation, and, when mirrored by the future development to the north, will create a passage.

There is 33 ft. being provided between the primary building and the townhouses, which exceeds the recommended 24 ft. A passage exists north to south from the mews to the courtyard, and east to west from the courtyard to the lane.

There are three Commercial Retail Units (CRUs) towards Cambie Street, and the primary entry is at the northwest corner. At the head of the mews is a public realm amenity with outdoor seating and planting. The amenity room is located next to the residential entry to activate the mews, and has a common access to the courtyard. The three townhouse units are oriented north to further animate the mews, and two also orient east to activate the lane.

The building has a proposed height of 93 ft. over two levels of underground parking. There is an 8 ft. setback along Cambie Street and the east side at the lane. A reduction of massing has been done at the roof level to reduce the perceived building height.

Materials include fiber board, metal panel, painted concrete, and glass metal canopies. There are 55 units being proposed, of which 55% have one-bedroom and the rest have two or three-bedrooms.

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

1. With the introduction of the east to west mews the proposed development has an enhanced porosity around its perimeter. Could the panel comment on the configuration of passages, open courtyards, private and semi-private spaces with attention given the breadth of these, as afforded by the primary and secondary buildings that define them?
2. As this is the second review by the Panel, could the members comment on the previous advice expressed:
  - Design development passages to relieve the harsh relationship between the two-storey and eight-storey mass
  - Design development to relieve the 'canyon' feel of the project
  - A strategy is needed for the mews in the interim while other projects in the area are being developed
  - Design development on townhouse number four and five to make them more livable
  - Townhouses on the lane seem too squat and should not necessarily match the adjacent building
  - The tower entry and CRU need some refinement
  - Increasing the size of the amenity and better integration with the mews
  - Design development of the townhouses to create more activation of the lane
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team introduced the project by noting that the townhouses have been turned onto the walkway to allow the entry and walkway to tie into the landscape strip. There is also a scale difference on the courtyard side for the townhouses, and they have no roof decks to prevent overlook issues.

The building has been pushed to the south, so the setbacks have been moved to 18 ft. which creates a generous interface. The intent of the mews was to consider making it about harder urban space. The idea was to use the landscape to make it a usable space and provide a buffer, as well as make it more attractive.

Originally the space between the townhouses and the front building was too tight and dark, so the forms have been pulled apart to really separate the spaces. According to the applicants this "allowed for more fenestration to create more of a connection." On the elevation facing the laneway and walkway there has been work done to relate it more to the pedestrian scale.

The lobby size is increased and the entrance is a bit more viable. The amenity was tucked away in a darker location before, so it has been brought forward to celebrate it and increase usage. Originally there was a vertical expression, but there is a better transition of scale to the laneway now. Overlook has been mitigated and the mechanical is better screened at the roof.

According to the applicants, at the east and west façades the "fenestration has been minimized to prevent overheating". There has also been some editing at the back of the building to break scale down through colour and materials. In addition, an aluminum colour is being used on the west side.

The landscape on the mews is usable. Along Cambie Street there are small pine trees, but some of the planting has been taken away to allow for more commercial use. The intent was to activate the lane.

The applicant team then took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Moving the walkway to the middle would make the mews work a lot better; attention should be paid to the tree selection here as well;
  - Flip the townhouse massing to consolidate the open space adjacent to the amenity space;
  - A rooftop amenity would be supported if it was public;
  - Design development of the flank wall of the t-houses adjacent to the amenity;
  - There is some concern around windows weakening the corners;
  - The frame around the balconies is too heavy and deep;
  - There is too much religious connotation with the crosses created by the glazing framing on the end elevations;
  - The design of the tower should better connect to the townhomes;
  - Design development is needed to unify the landscape along the lane;
  - Change the plum trees if possible to more major street trees;
- **Related Commentary:** The panel noted that there are a lot of interesting elements, but there seems to be some confusion with their expression. The tower entry needs to be better defined, and the balconies to the east and west are very deep and thus are too dark. Additional consideration is also needed of the frame and grids as the crosses they create have too much of a heavy-handed religious connotation.

There is a lot going on with the windows, and they need to be simpler to lighten up the building. In general the question of contrasting materials to form an expression needs to be revisited.

The CRU entry is too strong and seems to signal an importance which it really does not have. The building corners also show floor to ceiling windows which weaken the corner element of the building mass. Having these elements go around the corner is not the right move. In addition, the ribbon on Cambie Street does not appear have a function and may not be the right thing to tie the elements together.

The entry off the mews towards the townhouses seems like a bit of a blank wall, and something should be done to make it more welcoming. Maybe put a window into the townhouse. The mews also needs to be more special; it should be both urban and respectful of its condition.

The frame going around the back is running into the trees and creating darkness; removing it would open up the space in between the building and townhomes. As well, one of the walkways between the main building and the townhomes is only 8 ft. from the townhouse living room windows. It would solve a lot of issues with the landscape and transition between the phases if there was one walkway going through a lane of trees.

There was a lot of energy put into the larger building which lost steam going into the townhomes. These elements need to be better knit together to prevent the townhomes from feeling like coach houses.

According to the panel the horizontal expressions on the townhouses work against the project, and "the townhouses look like decorated models", not buildings. There is a flat feel to them, and they need a lot more work to bring them alive and make the language feel less foreign to the main building. In addition, a uniform landscape treatment between the lane and the townhome entries is needed.

The amenities could be better combined, and creating a public rooftop amenity would be supportable.

The scale of the landscape does not seem quite right, and this may be due to the type of tree. A decision is needed on whether this will be a fully-planted garden or usable space, trees need to be selected which are supportive of that decision. The plums at the front would also be better relocated into the boulevard if possible as other trees would be better in this space.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel and noted that the comments were very good. While the Cambie Corridor has guidelines, they can be worked with. The strongest message surrounded the mews as it is a public amenity, and there is some more opportunity to get this area right. The proportions of the crosses will be looked at to address the symbolism.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.