

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: Wednesday, September 21, 2016

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, Vancouver City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Russell Acton
Neal Lamontagne
Meghan Cree-Smith
Stefan Aepli
James Cheng
Veronica Gillies
Karen Spoelstra

MEMBERS OF GHAPC:
Glenda Bartosh
Alan Davies
Michael Wiebe
Carol Sill
Glade Schoenfeld
Shelley Bruce

REGRETS: Ken Larsson
Muneesh Sharma
Roger Hughes
Kim Smith
Meredith Anderson
David Jerke

RECORDING SECRETARY: Camilla Lade

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	6465 Vivian Street (2720 E 48th Avenue)
2.	431-455 W King Edward Avenue
3.	530 Drake Street (Covenant House)
4.	575 Drake Street (1280 Seymour Street) (Covenant House)
5.	Blood Alley Square

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Neal Lamontagne called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. After a brief business meeting the panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 6465 Vivian Street (2720 E 48th Avenue)
 DE: Rezoning
 Description: The proposal is for a 4-storey affordable seniors' rental housing building (137 dwelling units) over one level of underground parking (including 32 vehicle spaces and 41 bicycle spaces), with a building height of 14.45 m (47.5 ft) and a floor space ratio (FSR) of 1.55. This application is being considered under the Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney Community Vision.
 Zoning: CD-1 Revised
 Application Status: Rezoning Application
 Review: First
 Architect: NSDA Architects (Ken Wong)
 Owner: Fair Haven
 Delegation: Garry Adams, NSDA Architects
 Kenneth Wong, NSDA Architects
 Daryl Tyacke, ETA
 Carol Mockersill, Fair Haven
 Staff: Graham Winterbottom & Marie Linehan

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (2-3)

- **Introduction:** The Rezoning Planner, Graham Winterbottom, introduced the project as a rezoning proposal to amend the existing CD-1 (7a) zoning and to expand an existing use on site for senior's social housing. The site is located in the Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney area at East 49th Avenue and fronting onto Vivian Street. Currently the site is occupied by a two-storey senior's rental building which was built in 1968 and is reaching the end of its life span. The site is owned by Fairhaven United Homes, a non-profit, faith-based organization which operates a number of senior's rental facilities in the Metro Region. To the west, immediately adjacent to the site, is a three-storey complex care building also operated by Fairhaven. The area is well served by transit and local shopping, noting the location on the frequent bus network along 49th Ave. and proximity to the Killarney Shopping Centre.

The proposal is for 137 units of senior's independent rental social housing, with units rented below market rates. The proposed number of low income units exceeds the city's requirements for social housing projects. The building units are primarily studios, with the unit breakdown being 110 studios, 19 one bedroom units, and eight wheelchair accessible units. The proposed height is 47 feet, slightly above the current height permitted in the existing CD-1 zoning, and the proposed density is 1.55 FSR, increased from the current permitted density of 1.03 FSR. Staff is considering the proposal under the Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney (VFK) Community Vision approved by Council in 2002. The VFK supports the rezoning for seniors' social housing projects in a mid-rise form of up to four-storeys, which are located close to transit and shopping.

The Development Planner, Marie Linehan, continued the introduction, noting that the new four-storey building is to be located at the eastern edge of the block fronting on Vivian Street, and replaces the existing two-storey building in this location. The site frontage is 340 feet and there is no lane at this block.

Setbacks are provided to align with existing buildings on the site and the overall context, with a 24 setback at the south end, and a larger setback of 40 feet at the north end, which aligns with the front yard setbacks for single family homes along West 48th Ave. The building setback along Vivian Street is approximately 20 feet, which is also intended to be compatible with the single family context.

The new parkade will be accessed from the existing parkade entry located off East 48th Ave. The new parkade follows the profile of the building above which allows for retention of existing mature trees at both the south and north yards, and along the Vivian Street.

The grade change across the building frontage at Vivian is not significant at about 5 feet for the lot depth. There is more significant grade change about 10 feet from the high point at the northeast corner to the low point at the southwest corner at the lower level of the existing Care Facility. There is no grade change around the buildings including the existing berm condition at the southwest edge.

In terms of the immediate context, the main entry to the existing Care Facility is at the north elevation. There is a covered walkway at the building perimeter with office uses at the ground floor and individual care rooms at the upper floor. The space between the existing facility and the proposed building is about 33 feet at the ground floor and 40 feet at the upper floors.

The building frontage width is about 275 feet. The mass of the building is broken up with an inset for the main entry at midblock. The north wing is shifted slightly ahead of the south wing in light of the angled property line, and the frontage and roofline are articulated with a series of bays intended to provide visual interest and to reduce scale in light of the predominately single family context.

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

The overall height, density and form of development, relative to the existing buildings on the site and the overall context, with particular regard to:

1. Articulation of the form along the Vivian Street in light of the long frontage;
 2. Amount and quality of outdoor amenity space;
 3. Preliminary advice on proposed architectural expression and materials for the development permit application.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant introduced the project as providing housing for low income seniors since the 1940s and there is currently a 50 unit residence at the site providing housing for several long term residents. The homes are intended to be independent living for seniors at a convenient location. Along with BC Housing, the mandate is to provide low cost housing for low income seniors, so affordability and maximizing the number of units was important for the project. A simple, compact four-storey wood frame building is proposed. There is ample volume in the units, with a floor to floor height of 10 feet. There is essentially no shadowing beyond the Fairhaven site itself. The rezoning aim is support for the density and height increase. The materials are brick at the base to match other buildings on the site, cement board on the window bays, and composite panels.

The housing for frail seniors needs to be safe. There are no balconies proposed on the project for two reasons: there is a concern about ensuring security and safety, and the other reason is the balcony space tends to become 'an extension of storage space' which then becomes a maintenance issue. The alternative to balconies is seating and outdoor mingling spaces in order to encourage more social interaction for seniors.

The mature trees on the site will be retained, including a significant beech tree. The architectural banding on the building is emulated in the landscape design, with flowering azaleas along the frontage of Vivian Street. Nodes and benches are built into the greater concept of the outdoor space surrounding the building, including a wellness walk. The back space on the west side, between the two buildings, has a generous amenity space with a water feature and covered seating. There is an urban agriculture area at the south side. On the north side there is a terrace with an arbor and a gate with stairs to the sidewalk on East 48th Ave. For the birds, there is a water feature, as well as plant selection suitable for food.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Improve the amenity space by shifting the building further north, and relocating indoor and outdoor amenity space to the south side;
 - Bring natural light into the building common spaces and corridors;
 - Consider balconies or Juliet balconies for units;
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the height and density, as well as the longer frontage, noting Vivian is a wider street. However, most members noted that the building placement and symmetrical planning did not relate as well to the site as it could. It was noted that the building could be shifted to provide a larger setback at the south side versus the north side, with indoor and outdoor amenity space relocated south for better solar access. Some thought the main entry and circulation node should be less internal to the site/building, and relocated further south with the amenity space. It was suggested that the building form could be less compact and shifted apart to bring in more day light and outlook. It was suggested to open up the north and south ends of the long corridor to daylight, and to provide glazed exit stairs at either end.

The absence of private balconies, even Juliet, was noted as a concern. It was suggested that common outdoor space be interspersed within the building at the upper levels. One member noted a different approach to the building planning would generate a better form. One member noted the building could be fine as a quiet background building along Vivian, others noted the form was too boxy. It was suggested to explore opportunities for colour to enhance the quality. Overall, the panel advised the applicant to find ways to bring light into the project.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant thanked the panel and mentioned the location of the elevator and amenity space is critical to the success of the building. The locations are meant encourage interaction and to cut down travel time for residents. BC Housing has set a maximum travel distance from the elevator to unit entries.

2. Address:	431-455 W King Edward Avenue
DE:	RZ-2016-00012
Description:	The proposal is for a 4-storey market residential building with townhouses at the lane (42 total dwelling units) over one level of underground parking (including 54 vehicle space and 63 bicycle spaces), with a building height of 13.7m (45 ft) and a floor space ratio (FSR) of 1.98. This application is being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan.
Zoning:	RS-1 to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	Integra Architecture (Dale Staples)
Owner:	Brent Hanson
Delegation:	Dale Staplos, Integra Architecture Jonathan Losee, J. Losee Ltd. Brent Hanson Diana Klein, Kane Consulting
Staff:	Zak Bennett & Tim Potter

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (0-7)

- **Introduction: Rezoning Planner** Zak Bennett introduced the rezoning application site approximately one block east of the Canada Line station (at King Edward) and presently zoned RS-1. It is approximately 23,088 square feet, with 134 feet of frontage along King Edward and a site depth of 155 feet.

Across the lane, sites are also zoned RS-1 and are included in Cambie Corridor Phase 3 planning. Forms being considered include ground-oriented housing noting that the policy planning is still underway and final direction for these sites has not been determined by Planning. The sites east/west along King Edward can be generally considered up to four-storeys, with consideration for 6-8 storeys approaching the intersection at Cambie. There are eleven approved rezonings and two current applications in the vicinity. The proposal is for a 4-storey residential building and a 2-storey townhouse building facing the lane with a total of 42 rental units with a height of 45 feet set over underground parking accessed through a shared ramp and knock-out panel with the neighbouring site to the west including parking for 54 cars and 63 bicycles. The proposal is being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan, which anticipates residential 4-storey buildings in this area with a suggested FSR range of 1.25-1.75. The proposal aims to deliver secured market rental housing on this site, and to rezone RS-1 to CD-1 Comprehensive Development District under the Cambie Corridor Plan (CCP).

Development Planner Tim Potter introduced the form of development issues for the project, a three site assembly, located on the north side of King Edward between Cambie and Yukon Streets. The site is served by a lane and has a cross-slope of approximately 7 ft. The proposed density is 1.98 FSR and the range for the area is 1.25-1.75 FSR noting the FSR permitted in the plan is an estimate and not a limit that is based on the urban design performance. The building depth is approximately 78 ft., and the side yards are approximately 8 ft.

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

1. How successful is the form of development in the context in terms of its scale and massing and their effect on open space (courtyard) and unit livability?

2. How successful is the interface of the proposal towards neighbouring sites at each side?
 3. Please rate the performance of the open space in the courtyard in terms of grading, landscape design and provision of outdoor amenity space for residents.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant introduced the project as a family oriented rental housing site with an aim to achieve 2.0 FSR to make it financially viable. City staff is supportive of rental housing, so the setbacks are therefore smaller at 8 feet instead of 10 feet to accommodate the density. The Cambie Corridor Plan has prescriptive requirements that dictate the form of development criteria. The rental units are on average 1000 square feet, so the size is oriented towards family housing. There is a significant grade change across the site, and the courtyard will be in shadows. The outdoor amenity space is planned to be covered and indoors as well. The amenity space is limited due to the building length. The length comes from the need to get to 2.0 FSR. The courtyard is north facing in shadow most of the time. There is a generous entry proposed.

The landscape proposed along the King Edward façade has deep patios with private access to the ground floor units separated from the street with transparent picket-like fencing, hedges and small trees. The frontage is intended to be animated and livable. Because the entrance is recessed, the intention is to build a welcoming terrace with covered bike parking and benches underneath as well as a gathering space to make it comfortable. The pathways along the sides of the building are intentionally high in order to approach the ground level units on one side. The townhouse building has a good separation from the lane by providing raised entries. The amenity space will be increased and spill out into the common courtyard. There is also a tot sized playground and a seating area planned for the courtyard. The detailing of the paving materials is intended to be lively, bright, and shiny. Sustainability wise, the orientation of the building is good for energy conservation, with shading on the south side and a low window to wall ratio.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - The buildings and design strategy is overpowering the site. It appears to be too much density, and needs to be scaled back;
 - The massing and overhangs further contribute to the crowding of the site;
 - The brick element on the King Edward face was seen by the panel as confusing, noting that it appears to be an entrance, but it is not;
 - The courtyard is too tight, constrained, and dark, leaving no room for gathering and play.
- **Related Commentary:** The panel commended the project for creating more rental housing. However, the panel overall thought the proposed density is excessive and needs to be reduced. Stepping the building will improve the performance. One panel member noted that the façade was well done on the north to south orientation.

The interface should have a different stepping strategy (to properly fit on the site), it is too tight and there are concerns that glazing could create interface problems with adjacent building. One panel member recommended changing the 8 foot setback and shifting it towards King Edward because it would move it south and help with the daylight impacts to the courtyard. Panel members noted three bathrooms and additional media rooms in some of the units were an inefficient use of space and did not warrant the extra density proposed. Another panel member mentioned the depth of the floorplate was excessive for the main building, and a few panel members mentioned the architectural overhang and balconies are unnecessary on the north side.

The courtyard in the current scheme is not a courtyard but merely a circulation space according to one panel member. Another panel member recommended the applicant reconsider the spaces as actual townhouses and create better access to the courtyard. Overall, the current design needs to be revised to make more space for open space and landscaping.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant thanked the panel and will take the comments into consideration.

3. Address:	530 Drake Street (Covenant House)
DE:	RZ-2016-00007
Description:	The proposal is for a 5-storey building with a maximum height of 19.94 m (65 ft) and a floor space ratio (FSR) of 3.06, with no on-site parking. This is one of two proposed social service (institutional) buildings to be used by Covenant House Vancouver (with 575 Drake Street).
Zoning:	DD to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	NSDA Architects (Wanda Felt)
Owner:	Provincial Rental Housing Corp.
Delegation:	Wanda Felt, NSDA Architects Larry Adams, NSDA Architects Amber Paul, DKL
Staff:	Jonathan Denis-Jacob & Marie Linehan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- **Introduction:** Rezoning Planner, Jonathan Denis-Jacob, introduced the site located at the intersection of Seymour and Drake Streets, at the north end of the Seymour off-ramp of the Granville Street Bridge in the Downtown District. The site is occupied with a three-storey wood frame building occupied by the Immigrant Services Society of BC. Directly to the south west of 530 Drake is a 25-foot wide lot with a two-storey commercial building with a yoga studio and an herbal dispensary. More to the south is the eleven-storey Karis Place building which is one of the 14 city owned facilities used for the Provincial Homelessness Initiative Program. Across the lane is a two-storey office building and ambulance station.

The proposal at 530 Drake Street is for five-storey social service building with a maximum height of 19.94 m (65 feet) and a floor space ratio (FSR) of 3.06, with no on-site parking. 530 Drake Street would house 14 shelter rooms and a variety of program spaces for street youth as well as office spaces for Covenant House Vancouver.

The site at 530 Drake Street is currently zoned DD (Downtown District). This proposal is being considered for rezoning under the Downtown Official Development Plan (DODP), the Central Area Plan, the Downtown South Goals and Policies, the Downtown South Guidelines, and the Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

It was noted that the overall proposal comprises two buildings: Item 3: 530 Drake Street (on the north side of Seymour Street) and Item 4: 575 Drake Street (on the south side).

The policy supporting the proposal is the City's *Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-21*, which calls for a 'Housing Continuum' consisting of a range of housing options available to households of all income levels, extending from emergency shelter and housing for the homeless, through to affordable rental housing and homeownership. In particular, the proposal relates strongly to priority actions in two Strategic Directions of that document:

Strategic Direction 2:

- **Priority Action 2:** Target low barrier shelter, supportive housing, and social housing in neighbourhoods with significant homeless populations and limited capacity, and to specific populations (e.g. youth, urban Aboriginal, mentally ill, women, etc.).

Strategic Direction 3:

- *Priority Action 2:* Strengthen the focus of the Urban Health Initiative on homelessness, with an emphasis on improving health, safety, food security, employment, and social supports;
- *Priority Action 4:* Focus our efforts with partners on preventing and eliminating homelessness.

The expansion of shelter beds and attendant support services is also consistent with Council's July 7, 2015 motion asking staff to report back on progress made on implementing the BC Representative for Children and Youth recommendations related to the City of Vancouver arising from the Representative's report, *Paige's Story: Abuse, Indifference and a Young Life Discarded*.

Development Planner, Marie Linehan, continued the introduction, noting that site is located within Downtown South which is primarily a high density residential neighborhood. The prevailing form of development consists of a townhouse base providing a lower street wall punctuated by two widely spaced towers per block face up to 300 feet in height. 80 foot spacing between towers is intended to contribute to a general sense of spaciousness.

Both 530 Drake Street and 575 Drake Street are small sites with 50 feet and 75 feet frontages, respectively, and would not meet the minimum frontage requirement for a typical tower development. Under the Downtown District Official Development Plan (DODP), these sites would typically be limited to 70 feet AND 3.0 FSR overall. As well, there is a further limit on institutional uses to 1.0 FSR. However, under the DD ODP, social housing, regardless of lot size may seek 120 feet and 5.0 FSR.

While Covenant House is a social service center, which is an institutional use limited to 1.0 FSR, staff recognise that their program has aspects that similar to a social housing use. Therefore, staff reference the parameters for height and density for social housing in reviewing the rezoning application at 575 Drake. For 575 Drake, the proposal is less than 120 feet in height and just slightly over 5.0 FSR, so is fitting generally within the expected form of development for social housing sites. For 530 Drake, the proposal is less than 70 feet in height and just slightly over 3.0 FSR, so is fitting generally within the expected form of development for a site of this size.

For 575 Drake, a rear yard setback of 30 feet is required above 70 feet, which is provided. In terms of the 80 feet tower separation, 72 feet is provided at the north side, mitigated with notching along the inside edges. 75 feet is provided at the rear lane (east) noting that the lesser setback is largely due to the building across the lane being set at less than the 30 foot rear setback.

A continuous street wall is required in Downtown South, and at corner sites, it is intended to extend along the flanking street to the rear property line and down the lane as shown. Roofs at the rear should be landscaped and consider issues of privacy and overlook.

Another important pattern in Downtown South is the public realm treatment which is intended to ensure a highly walkable neighbourhood. Street edges are heavily "greened" with a double row of street trees and building setbacks accommodate a wider sidewalk. More active or commercial uses at grade are not required, in fact they are limited to corner sites, but the general objective for new buildings is to create safe and attractive street frontages with visual interest for pedestrians.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the overall height, density and form of development, relative to the Downtown South context, with particular regard to the public realm treatment and landscaping.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant introduced the project as consisting of two programs that are going to be separated. There will be a shelter and sanctuary component. For the shelter component at 575 Drake, there are currently 25 women, and the beds are intended to be increased to 75, with an addition of amenity rooms. For the sanctuary component at 530 Drake, there will be a day drop in program where outreach workers will encourage clients to join the program. The attempt is that the two buildings would 'bounce' off each other in terms of materials and colour that are identifiable as Covenant House. There are two neighbouring orphan sites that cannot be purchased by Covenant House.

Landscaping responds to the Downtown South guidelines and the programming of the building. Along Drake Street there is a double row of trees with soft landscape at the bottom of the building. The grade change along Drake is more significant so the landscaping terraces upwards. There is an amenity patio on 530 Drake, and the walls do not have guard rails. There are separate public and staff entries. There are stone clad feature walls on both sites. They provide seating and define spaces, giving structure to the landscape without providing too much seating that encourages loitering. At the roof amenity terraces, there is a cafeteria and ample space for outdoor seating and eating, and along the top there are open gathering spaces. There is urban agriculture along the lower and upper deck proposed.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - The architectural treatment at the lane needs relief.
- **Related Commentary:** The panel appreciated it was challenging site with buildings in close proximity and commended the proposal design overall, and recognized the important program of the site to provide social services. The scale met the grain and complexity of the neighbourhood. There were no concerns about the height, density, form of development, or tower separation. One panel member noted that the colour palette is 'fresh'.

There was support for outdoor amenity space. With regards to the public realm, some of the panel felt there could be issues with the long term viability of softscape. A few panel members suggested hardscaping and another suggested raised planters. One panel member recommended one row of trees instead of two along Drake Street. One panel member recommended adding a mural or art to soften the 'edges' of the building. There were minor concerns about 'turning the corner' on the schemes. The 530 Drake design was noted as a more cohesive, simpler design. One panel member noted the balcony expression and base were more successful on 530 Drake.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant thanked the panel.

4. Address:	575 Drake Street (1280 Seymour Street) (Covenant House)
DE:	RZ-2016-00007
Description:	The proposal is for a 10-storey building with a maximum height of 35.52 m (116 ft) and a floor space ratio (FSR) of 5.15, with four underground vehicle parking spaces. This is one of two proposed social service (institutional) buildings to be used by Covenant House Vancouver (with 530 Drake Street).
Zoning:	DD to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	NSDA Architects (Wanda Felt)
Owner:	Provincial Rental Housing Corp.
Delegation:	Wanda Felt, NSDA Architects Larry Adams, NSDA Architects Amber Paul, DKL
Staff:	Jonathan Denis-Jacob & Marie Linehan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- **Introduction:** Rezoning Planner, Jonathan Denis-Jacob, introduced the site located at the intersection of Seymour and Drake Streets, at the north end of the Seymour off-ramp of the Granville Street Bridge in the Downtown District. The site is occupied with an existing two-storey wood frame building owned and used by Covenant House. Directly to the northeast of 575 Drake Street is a 25-foot wide lot with a one-storey commercial building currently being used as a car wash / auto detailing business. Further north is a 30-storey strata-titled residential tower, and across the lane is a 32-storey strata-titled residential tower.

The proposal at 575 Drake Street is for 10-storey social service building with a maximum height of 35.5 m (116 feet) and a floor space ratio (FSR) of 5.15, with four underground parking spaces. 575 Drake Street would house shelter rooms, a variety of program and amenity spaces for at-risk street youth, as well as office spaces for Covenant House Vancouver.

The site at 575 Drake Street is zoned DD (Downtown District). This proposal is being considered for rezoning under the Downtown Official Development Plan (DODP), the Central Area Plan, the Downtown South Goals and Policies, the Downtown South Guidelines, and the Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

The proposal is to rezone the site from DD to Comprehensive Development (CD-1) to allow the construction of a new social service facility with a density of 5.15 FSR and a height of 35.5 metres (116 feet).

It was noted that the overall proposal comprises two buildings: Item 3: 530 Drake Street (on the north side of Seymour Street) and Item 4: 575 Drake Street (on the south side).

The policy supporting the proposal is the City's *Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-21*, which calls for a 'Housing Continuum' consisting of a range of housing options available to households of all income levels, extending from emergency shelter and housing for the homeless, through to affordable rental housing and homeownership. In particular, the proposal relates strongly to priority actions in two Strategic Directions of that document:

Strategic Direction 2:

- *Priority Action 2:* Target low barrier shelter, supportive housing, and social housing in neighbourhoods with significant homeless populations and limited capacity, and to specific populations (e.g. youth, urban Aboriginal, mentally ill, women, etc.).

Strategic Direction 3:

- *Priority Action 2:* Strengthen the focus of the Urban Health Initiative on homelessness, with an emphasis on improving health, safety, food security, employment, and social supports;
- *Priority Action 4:* Focus our efforts with partners on preventing and eliminating homelessness.

The expansion of shelter beds and attendant support services is also consistent with Council's July 7, 2015 motion asking staff to report back on progress made on implementing the BC Representative for Children and Youth recommendations related to the City of Vancouver arising from the Representative's report, *Paige's Story: Abuse, Indifference and a Young Life Discarded*.

Development Planner, Marie Linehan, continued the introduction, noting that site is located within Downtown South which is primarily a high density residential neighborhood. The prevailing form of development consists of a townhouse base providing a lower street wall punctuated by two widely spaced towers per block face up to 300 feet in height. 80 foot spacing between towers is intended to contribute to a general sense of spaciousness.

Both 530 Drake Street and 575 Drake Street are small sites with 50 feet and 75 feet frontages, respectively, and would not meet the minimum frontage requirement for a typical tower development. Under the Downtown District Official Development Plan (DODP), these sites would typically be limited to 70 feet AND 3.0 FSR overall. As well, there is a further limit on institutional uses to 1.0 FSR. However, under the DD ODP, social housing, regardless of lot size may seek 120 feet and 5.0 FSR.

While Covenant House is a social service center, which is an institutional use limited to 1.0 FSR, staff recognise that their program has aspects that similar to a social housing use. Therefore, staff reference the parameters for height and density for social housing in reviewing the rezoning application at 575 Drake. For 575 Drake, the proposal is less than 120 feet in height and just slightly over 5.0 FSR, so is fitting generally within the expected form of development for social housing sites. For 530 Drake, the proposal is less than 70 feet in height and just slightly over 3.0 FSR, so is fitting generally within the expected form of development for a site of this size.

For 575 Drake, a rear yard setback of 30 feet is required above 70 feet, which is provided. In terms of the 80 feet tower separation, 72 feet is provided at the north side, mitigated with notching along the inside edges. 75 feet is provided at the rear lane (east) noting that the lesser setback is largely due to the building across the lane being set at less than the 30 foot rear setback.

A continuous street wall is required in Downtown South, and at corner sites, it is intended to extend along the flanking street to the rear property line and down the lane as shown. Roofs at the rear should be landscaped and consider issues of privacy and overlook.

Another important pattern in Downtown South is the public realm treatment which is intended to ensure a highly walkable neighbourhood. Street edges are heavily “greened” with a double row of street trees and building setbacks accommodate a wider sidewalk. More active or commercial uses at grade are not required, in fact they are limited to corner sites, but the general objective for new buildings is to create safe and attractive street frontages with visual interest for pedestrians.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the overall height, density and form of development, relative to the Downtown South context, with particular regard to:

1. Tower separation (less than 80 feet),
 2. Outdoor amenity space (rear roof deck), and
 3. Public realm treatment and landscaping.
- **Applicant’s Introductory Comments:** The applicant introduced the project as consisting of two programs that are going to be separated in two buildings. There will be a shelter and sanctuary component. For the shelter component at 575 Drake, there are currently 25 women, and the beds are intended to be increased to 75, with an addition of amenity rooms. For the sanctuary component at 530 Drake, there will be a day drop in program where outreach workers will encourage clients to join the program. The attempt is that the two buildings would ‘bounce’ off each other in terms of materials and colour that are identifiable as Covenant House. There are two neighbouring orphan sites that cannot be purchased by Covenant House.

Landscaping responds to the Downtown South guidelines and the programming of the building. Along Drake Street there is a double row of trees with soft landscape at the bottom of the building. The grade change along Drake is more significant so the landscaping terraces upwards. There is an amenity patio on 530 Drake, and the walls do not have guard rails. There are separate public and staff entries. There are stone clad feature walls on both sites. They provide seating and define spaces, giving structure to the landscape without providing too much seating that encourages loitering. At the roof amenity terraces, there is a cafeteria and ample space for outdoor seating and eating, and along the top there are open gathering spaces. There is urban agriculture along the lower and upper deck proposed.

- **Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - The agricultural garden space should be moved to the uppermost roof for better sun exposure;
 - The design scheme for 575 Drake is not as successful as 530 Drake;
 - A few panel members noted that the ‘tower transition from the base’ at 575 Drake needed more work, and more of a ‘connection to the podium’ is recommended.
- **Related Commentary:** The panel appreciated it was challenging site with buildings in close proximity and commended the proposal design overall, and recognized the important program of the site to provide social services. The scale met the grain and complexity of the neighbourhood. There were no concerns about the height, density, form of development, or tower separation. One panel member noted that the colour palette is ‘fresh’.

There was support for outdoor amenity space. With regards to the public realm, some of the panel felt there could be issues with the long term viability of softscape. A few panel members suggested hardscaping and another suggested raised planters. One panel member recommended one row of trees instead of two along Drake Street as a more appropriate response to the urban setting of the project. One panel member recommended adding a mural or art to soften the 'edges' of the building. There were minor concerns about 'turning the corner' on the schemes. The 530 Drake design was noted as a more cohesive, simpler design. One panel member noted the balcony expression and base were more successful on 530 Drake.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant thanked the panel.

4. Address: Blood Alley Square
 DE: N/A
 Description: Blood Alley Square is an important, historic public square in the heart of Gastown, nationally designated historic district. The Downtown Eastside Plan identifies the redesign for Blood Alley Square and the adjacent Trounce Alley as a priority. The City has hired Enns Gauthier Landscape Architects, to lead a team of consultants to redesign Blood Alley Square / Trounce Alley public area in attempt to improve its functionality while preserving identified heritage values. The Statement of Significance was developed in 2010 and the Commission was involved in its processing. This document has now been used to assist in developing new design concepts and preserving key character-defining elements. The new design and cost estimate are expected to be completed by March 2017. Following that, staff will take a report to City Council for the approval of the redesign and funding request for construction of the project. The purpose of the meeting is to present the concept design for Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley and to receive initial feedback.
- Zoning: HA-2
 Application Status: Workshop
 Review: First
 Architect: Enns Gauthier Landscape Architects (Bryce Gauthier)
 Owner: City of Vancouver
 Delegation: N/A
 Staff: Zlatan Jankovic, Tom Warren & Helen Ma

EVALUATION: NON-VOTING WORKSHOP

- **Introduction:** Tom Warren, Project Manager, Engineering and Helen Ma, Policy Planner, presented an update on work completed for Blood Alley Square, two concept designs, and gathered feedback from the panel and guests. The project included a detailed design and cost estimate of Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley, a heritage conservation strategy, a stewardship strategy and a solid waste study. Enns Gauthier Landscape Architects was hired by the City to lead a team of consultants for the work.

The project started in May 2016 with kick-off public consultation events. The project is now in concept design and refinement stage. Detailed design is to be completed in January 2017, and staff will bring a report to Council for the approval of the detailed design and construction budget. Construction of the project is dependent on funding availability and City Council approval, and is estimated to be in March 2018.

The Council approved Downtown Eastside Plan directed Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley to be rehabilitated in conjunction with an adjacent development as a “quick start” project in the Plan. The project also supports goals in the Council-approved Transportation 2040 and Healthy City Strategy.

The project site is on City-owned land and is located in Gastown, a designated historic area in Vancouver and a National Historic Site. Blood Alley Square provides much needed open space in Gastown. In recent years, new retail and restaurants have opened with access directly from Trounce Alley, which begin to bring more visitors and patrons to the square. The square is well used by the community who has hosted local and city-wide events.

Initial feedback indicates that the community feels strongly that the square remain a space where everyone is welcomed.

The square is in a state of disrepair: 16 dumpsters are located in the alley and the square. Brick and cobblestone pavements have been damaged and repaired with asphalt. Site furnishings, including bollards and globe lights have been damaged. Parking and loading activities are unregulated and chaotic.

The redesign is an opportunity to improve the place and reinforce its status as the “heart of Gastown”. The design intends to: increase safety and introduce programming, include opportunities for the low-income community, reinforce and enhance the heritage (1970s) character.

The Blood Alley Square statement of significance (SOS) was completed in 2010 and included historical context and character defining elements. The area is part of the traditional Coast Salish territory. While Trounce Alley was part of the 1870 town-site survey and has existed as a commercial alley since then, Blood Alley Square was created in the 1970s as part of the Gastown beautification project. Construction of the square was completed in 1973. The granite and brick paving, bollards, globe lights, granite planters and trees were installed in the 1973 improvements. The SOS included a list of character defining elements (CDEs). The concept design includes heritage conservation strategy to address the character defining elements.

Two rounds of public consultation were completed. 187 people completed a questionnaire about the 2 concept designs. Additional meetings were held with stakeholder groups and advisory committees. Initial feedback confirmed that the public valued the retention of trees and the character of the square. The top amenity chosen by respondents was more seating. There was a desire to include restaurant patios to activate the square. Some respondents also felt it is important that the square remains a public place where people do not need to spend money to enjoy the space. This feedback was incorporated into the concept design options.

The concept designs were informed by site analysis of heritage character, circulation, tree retention and integration with the adjacent development at 33 W Cordova. Concept design 1 features a large, open square. This design emphasizes the heritage qualities and retains the original outline of the square. Concept design 2 features a multi-leveled square. This design emphasizes the long-term health of trees with expanded planters. The square is divided into two zones for passive seating and larger events. Both designs include 3 loading bays, one class B and two class A's to act as drop-off/pick-up areas for people with disabilities, reuse of brick and cobblestone paving materials, replacement of the 3 locust currently trees in poor health with 1 healthy mature tree, and raising a portion of Trounce Alley to create a “speed table” to emphasize it as a pedestrian oriented space.

An arborist completed a report on the health of the 9 trees on site. The report indicated that the 3 locust trees are in poor health and are unlikely to survive re-development. The strategy is to replace them with 1 large mature tree that is shade tolerant. 1 small pine tree is proposed to be removed due to its poor health and sub-optimal location within the square. The 5 tulip trees are in good condition and every effort will be made to retain and improve their health.

The next steps include selection of preferred concept design, advancing to detailed design, completing a waste management strategy and completing a stewardship strategy. The project will be brought back to the panel and committee for further comments in the future.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team declined to give a presentation on the application.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - N/A
- **Related Commentary:** The panel and visiting GHAPC members asked questions and gave feedback to city staff. Most panel members mentioned that the sequence should have instead been for the workshop to follow the design proposal of the site building. The interface of the development and the relationship with the development is required to understand the proposal. Another panel member mentioned there were 'constraints' that made it difficult make a better solution for the site design.

Public access to 33 West Cordova is still unknown going forward, but the intention of Planning is to retain pedestrian access. Panel members recommended leveling off the courtyard grades and re-configuring the planters. A panel member mentioned the mismatch of the seating area and the garbage that appear too independent of one another.

John Atkins was mentioned as the heritage consultant on the project. He is planning the re-habilitation and re-design. One GHAPC member inquired about the technical knowledge of the consultancy, and stated that there needs to be two Statements of Significance (SOS) that should be included, the one for the local area as well as the SOS for Gastown as a National Historic Site. One UDP member requested further documentation included in presentation materials that clarifies the national heritage elements at the site as well as the design elements.

A GHAPC member inquired of city staff how the two SOS have informed the character and urban response to the two proposals. City staff responded that not only the SOS but public engagement informed the design response. For example, the retention of the materials is planned in both concept renderings, and the SOS informed how to re-use the materials and upgrade them. Through public engagement, the staff found that the public wanted the materials to be re-used.

A GHAPC member expressed that the Standards and Guidelines used for the SoS were outdated, from the year 2004, and requested the newer version be used to inform the SOS.

A UDP member clarified that the alley materials were all installed in 1973. Paul Cheng Development Planner, clarified that the grade will be raised in the new designs, in the new designs and expressed that the design for 33 W Cordova would 'make up the difference' between its ground floor and the new grade set at the property line. Furthermore, some of the current grades are incorporated in the design.

A GHAPC member was concerned that the visual renderings had context in terms of the interface of the buildings. Engineering staff noted that 33 W Cordova is 'a blank slate' currently. The east and west facades are currently blank on the renderings. A GHAPC member wanted to clarify how much of the square was public and if there would be gates implemented to block public access. The City consultant responded that the space would remain public and following policy guidelines. However, there will be loading spaces required by the private development.

The planter sizes are planned to be expanded to allow for tree retention.

A GHAPC member expressed concern about the lack of expressed pedestrian interface on 33 W Cordova and the square, and city staff said that it would be integrated further going forward.

A UDP member questioned whether the character defining elements from the 1970s had been identified as successful or not, because some might not be worth maintaining. City staff mentioned that the elements are used in a better way than before. Another UDP member questioned the value of 'imposing' 1970s character on the site.

A UDP member suggested a public art strategy be integrated into the proposal. City staff mentioned both designs would have a metal band along both sides of the alley to place historic names or places of historical significance. On the east and west facades, there might be projections lit onto the blank facades for special events. The industrial artifact in the middle of the square was noted as possible public art. Signage, wayfinding, will be implemented at the site.

A GHAPC member mentioned the timing of the proposal should be clarified. City staff mentioned the design could be moving forward despite the lack of a finalized design for 33 W Cordova. City Staff Paul Cheng expressed the hope that both design processes would inform one another as they are both developed in an iterative process. Furthermore, any use of public space for private use would require a permit.

A UDP member inquired as to why the design was being implemented at this point in time. City planner Helen Ma said that it was a 'Quickstep' from the DTES Plan put into place in 2014 and meeting the main objectives from the 'Quickstep'. A UDP member also wanted to clarify how the planning staff would continue to keep the space 'open' and 'welcoming' to all members of the public. In response, Planning completed a social impact assessment to manage change in the area, and the objectives informed the design concepts. The quality of the public realm material was cited as an important piece of the design because of how much the site is used as a 'living room' for the community.

Development Planner Paul Cheng responded by presenting three main areas of concern for urban design:

1. The retention of as many trees as possible.
2. The desire to raise the grade of Blood Alley Square so that it does not 'dip down' as it does now
3. To implement 2 class as an initial loading requirement, which has since evolved into 1 class B and 2 class B spaces

The UDP panel Chair encouraged GHAPC members to give their opinion on what needed to be protected in terms of heritage. A GHAPC member replied by stating that the SOS document needs to be re-considered because it is not describing specific heritage value of design elements in the proposal in a more current version. A GHAPC member mentioned the 'arbitrary' diagonals in the plaza that need to be researched. The SOS from 2010 was also mentioned as outdated. Planning staff Helen Ma clarified that there might be an opportunity to re-interpret other layers of history at the site. A GHAPC member iterated that the community should identify the heritage values at the site.

A GHAPC member expressed desire for the commercial laneway to be retained. The area should not become sanitized, and should retain the 'grit' of Gastown. Trees should be retained as much as possible, and the space should be retained as public to all types of community members. The garbage 'problem' should also be fixed.

One UDP member suggested there were 4 major components to consider:

1. The practical engineering side
2. The social side through policy direction
3. Urban design
4. Historical value

Another UDP member suggested there should be a 'light' touch to the space with a 'clear' urban design response. The uniqueness of the historic space should be considered, and even though it is only 1970s, it is still part of the 'genealogy' of the space, but the era does not need to drive the historical context of the design.

One UDP member supported two SOS going forward, in order to conceive a new design. Character elements of Gastown should be more considered than 1970s design. Also, the grade should be re-considered, and the 'gentle' grading in Concept 2 is preferred. Finally, because the city is a living fabric that develops over time, there should be a new design that compliments the historic design, which is also reflected in Concept 2.

A GHAPC member stressed the importance of the main pedestrian interface on Carrall Street and to integrate the pedestrians and cyclists into Carrall Street. The critical historic spaces on 33 W Cordova should be planned so the square elements can re-inforce the design. Night use lighting should be historical, authentic and welcoming as well as 'gritty'.

A UDP member stressed that without knowing the design of the building proposal the square design would not fit, and could be a 'dangerous' proposition for specific safety elements. The mews is disconnected. Concept 2 is a better and more contemporary interpretation.

A GHAPC member applauded the workshop and thanked staff for their efforts. Furthermore, the original design intent should inform the re-design of the square.

A UDP panel member believes there is too much in the design of the square. Also, that Blood Alley is not the 'heart' of Gastown. The space should have a few things done well, not 'a little bit of everything'.

A GHAPC member stated that the lackluster design elements of the 1970s do not need to be retained. Both UDP and GHAPC members mentioned that not all the trees need to be retained.

A UDP member stated that if the grade does not change, there is no point in planning the square. A few members pointed out that the waste management should be combined with the design and planning stages of the square and developed further early on.

There should not be too many loading zones because it is a pedestrian area. The connectivity with pedestrian movement is very important.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant thanked the staff for the workshop. With gentrification concern in the area, the question is the purpose of re-design. If it is to retain the functionality of the square, then it is a matter of fixing problems and intervention should be limited. If it is to boldly remake the square, then it is an opportunity for something creative and whimsical to be implemented. Contemporary design can exist with heritage retention. The mandate of the design should not be too muddled and the hope is for a bolder, more creative proposal and a public art strategy going forward.

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.