

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: October 5, 2016

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Stefan Aepli (excused for item #2 & 3)
Meghan Cree-Smith
James Cheng
Roger Hughes
David Jerke
Karen Spoelstra
Meredith Anderson
Russell Acton
Ken Larsson (Excused for item #3)
Neal LaMontagne
Muneesh Sharma
Kim Smith

REGRETS: Veronica Gillies

RECORDING SECRETARY: Lidia McLeod

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

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| 1. | 210-262 W King Edward Avenue |
| 2. | 1500 W Georgia Street |
| 3. | 101 E 2 nd Avenue |
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BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Hughes 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: 210-262 W King Edward Avenue
Permit No. RZ-2016-00010
Description: The proposal is for one four-storey building on West King Edward Avenue and two-storey townhouses facing the lane (totaling 52 secured market rental dwelling units), over one level of underground parking (54 vehicle spaces and 66 bicycle spaces), with a building height of 13.3 m (44 ft.) from grade, and a net floor space ratio (FSR) of 1.79. The application is being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan.

Zoning: RS-1 to CD-1
Application Status: Rezoning Application
Review: First
Architect: Yamamoto Architecture (Taizo Yamamoto)
Owner: DBBD Projects
Delegation: Taizo Yamamoto, Yamamoto Architecture
Darryl Tyacke, ETA
Staff: Graham Winterbottom & Tim Potter

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (11-0)

- **Introduction:** Graham Winterbottom introduced the rezoning application in the Cambie Corridor for a four-storey secured market-rental building on a site is a three lot assembly on West King Edward.

Sites across Columbia to Ontario are included as part of the planning work for Cambie Corridor Phase III which considers ground-oriented housing forms such as townhouses and rowhouses. To the immediate west of the site is an approved rezoning for a four-storey market residential building.

The proposal is being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan in the Cambie Village Neighbourhood. In this area the plan allows for buildings up to four-storeys with townhouses at the lane and an upper level that step backs above the third level. A density range of 1.25 to 1.75 is recommended subject to urban design performance.

The proposal is for a four-storey residential building with a courtyard and townhouses at the lane including 51 units of secured market rental units with a high percentage (38%) of two and three-bedroom family units. The proposed density for this application is 1.79 FSR.

Timothy Potter continued the presentation by stating that the site is located on the south side of King Edward Avenue at Columbia Street. This is a three-site assembly with 12 ft. setbacks from the property lines. The proposal is to rezone the site for a multi residential development with townhouses at the lane.

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

1. Please comment on how well the built form responds to the Cambie Corridor principles, to the site and its context.
2. Being a rezoning, please offer preliminary advice on the overall architectural expression, quality, and durability of materials that might be considered at next stages of design development.

3. Please comment on the success of the landscape design and the design of the semi-public spaces for the project.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team–y noted that the adjacent project is approved and underway. In light of this, the parking ramp is located on the southwest corner of the site to have the least impact on the adjacent building and on this project's units.

There is a 24 ft. courtyard, with a series of generous patios for the units facing onto it. Stairs and terracing are being used to break up the length of the courtyard and address the grade change. A children's play area is positioned to get the most sunlight in the middle of the courtyard, and there is a seating area at the end of the courtyard to create a community gathering area.

Proposed is a 3:1 tree replacement with a layered graduation in height along King Edward Avenue leading up to the building. A simple, efficient planting scheme is proposed in order to maximize the use of the terraces, and buffer planting is used to provide transition down to the lane.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Lower the density and add more outdoor space for the units on the lane;
 - More brick and fewer cladding materials would be better;
 - Consider decreasing the use of vertical elements as they currently contrast too much with the horizontal roofline and brick;
 - Decrease the amount of glazing to respond to privacy issues at the street corner, especially on the ground floor;
 - Integrate the children's play area into the rest of the courtyard and add more informal spaces;
 - Design development is needed to improve the screening for the transformer.
- **Related Commentary:** The panel noted that this project does exactly what it is asked to do relative to the planning guidelines. While the density is a bit of a stretch it is still supportable, and the building responds well to the Cambie Corridor principles and to the townhouses. There is no architectural expression to this building, and having a fully-glazed bedroom on the ground floor is not the best idea. The upper flats have no balcony which decreases the livability for this space. A cleaner approach to the frontage with a trimmed overhang would be more supportable. As well, the large overhang on the 4th floor contradicts some of the verticality proposed on the lower levels. The form at the corner is a bit confusing and needs some work prior to the development permit stage. The townhouses are not a good transition to the one and two family dwellings in the adjacent neighbourhood. They are too much like the main buildings and need to be differentiated and more transitional in their expression. The building would be more handsome if there was more brick. Currently there are too many materials, and some of them should be removed to simplify the expression.

The landscape design works well, but the courtyard is too narrow. Consideration should be given to shaving some space out of the units or removing the designated children's play area in order to add more room to the courtyard. Consideration should also be given to reducing the shrubs to create informal spaces and allow people to sit on the lawn.

There are some good design features to screen the parking ramp, but more screening around the transformer is needed.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments and look forward to bringing this back at the development permit stage.

2. Address:	1500 W Georgia Street
Permit No.	RZ-2016-00015
Description:	The proposal is to retain the Crown Life Place building, which has been evaluated as eligible for addition to the Vancouver Heritage Register in the "A" category, and develop a new 43-storey residential building with 217 dwelling units and a restaurant at the corner of W Georgia and Nicola streets, with a total floor space ratio (FSR) of 11.47 for the entire site. This rezoning is being considered under the Rezoning Policy for the West End.
Zoning:	DD to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	Büro Ole Scheeren (Ole Scheeren) Francl Architecture (Stefan Aepli)
Owner:	Bosa Properties
Delegation:	Ole Scheeren, Büro Ole Scheeren Stefan Aepli, Francl Architecture Chris Phillips, PFS Studio Hermann, Nuessger, Bosa Properties
Staff:	Yan Zeng & Sailen Black

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (5-6)**EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (5-6)**

- **Introduction:** Yan Zeng, Rezoning Planner, introduced the project as a rezoning application at 1500 W Georgia Street. The application is coming in under the West End Community Plan and the Rezoning Policy for the West End.

The site is a whole city block bound by W Georgia Street, Alberni Street, Cardero Street and Nicola Street. It is currently developed with an office tower on the western portion, a reflecting pool in the middle and a one-storey commercial building on the eastern portion.

The complex, known as Crown Life Place, was built in 1978. A statement of significance (SOS) was submitted to the City and reviewed by the Vancouver Heritage Commission's SOS subcommittee. The building, including the reflecting pool, was evaluated as an "A" category heritage resource with the potential to be added to the Heritage Register as a Recent Landmark. As part of this rezoning application the applicant is proposing to designate the west building.

The development proposal is to demolish the one-storey building on the eastern portion and construct a 43-storey market residential building with commercial use at grade. A total of 217 strata units are proposed, for a total density of 11.47 FSR over the entire site.

The rezoning policy for this site allows consideration of building height up to 500 ft. subject to view cones, urban design considerations and other relevant Council-approved policies, guidelines and by-laws. The application proposes to build below the Queen Elizabeth view cone, which has a geodetic height of approximately 480 ft. over this site.

Other key development parameters include a minimum site frontage of 130 ft., a typical tower floor plate of 6,500 sq. ft., and minimum separation of 80 ft. between residential buildings that exceed 18.3 m (60 ft.) in height.

As defined in the Council approved West End Community Plan Public Benefits Strategy, increased density above base zoning will be used to fund needed community amenities in the West End.

Context wise, the area contains many existing residential high-rises and some office development. There are a few proposed high-rise residential developments in the surrounding area at various stages of the approval process.

Sailen Black, Development Planner, noted that new buildings must comply with height limitations set by established City view cones, except for the Queen Elizabeth View Cone, where encroachment can be considered. Building below this Cone would restrict the relative height of development to 134 m (440 ft.). Other policies which affect the development include the Green Building Policy for Rezonings, and the Heritage Policies and Guidelines.

The proposal is for alterations to the reflecting pool, waterfall, and plaza layout. The project proposes an ‘averaging’ approach to floor plates, with sizes ranging from 3,064 sq. ft. at base to 7,569 sq. ft. for levels 28 to 30. The new tower is separated from the existing building by about 87 ft. (26.6 m) and has a distinctive expression with vertical and horizontal elements, and flat and articulated sides. There is also improved public pedestrian access from the Alberni Street side.

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

1. Does the Panel support the proposed form of development including:
 - Height of 133.17 m
 - Setbacks of approximately 2.1 m to Alberni; 1.5 m to Nicola and 0.1 m to Georgia Street
 - Density of 11.47 FSR with total floor area of 46,122 sq. m
 2. Responsiveness and fit of the tower form within this urban context.
 3. Success of ‘marriage’ of existing and proposed, including plaza changes and relation between towers.
 4. Site planning approach including pedestrian routes and quality of outdoor spaces created.
 5. Preliminary comments on the proposed colour and material choices.
- **Applicant’s Introductory Comments:** The applicant team started by noting that Vancouver has a very unique and intense context, and the hope was to engage this context in a more explicit and three-dimensionally active way. The intent was to capture the surrounding typology in the building’s vertical elements as the building creates a gateway when entering Vancouver. There is also a very large open space next to the building, which is quite uncommon.

It is important that buildings are great to live in not just look at, so particular attention was paid to livability. The building has an interplay of deep extrusions which have been folded out to create a three-dimensional space in order to make the middle of the building something special. The footprint where the building meets the ground is being limited to maximize the public realm, and at the top there is a bit of a crown. The three-dimensional aspect also creates large outdoor spaces for the residents of the building.

An attempt has been made to enhance the water feature at the ground, and some spaces have been added to allow for public gathering. There is also a café proposed at the ground level to give back to the area. The building responds to the glass nature of the adjacent building, and the building is meant to softly echo the colours of the surrounding buildings through the articulation of its materials. Exploration is being done with regards to renewable energy sources in order to power the water features and parts of the building.

Along Georgia Street the scale is being maintained through a series of overlays with trees to add interest. The pool depth is being reduced quite significantly, and storm-water will be used to supplement the water system. The connection through the site adds a lot more permeability through the block, with the ability to sit or walk through the space.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consideration should be given to reducing the massing and density;
 - The two buildings, Crown Life and the proposed should either be more complimentary or contrasting in form and materiality;
 - Design development to make the building thinner and more elegant;
 - Design development to better activate the base of the building along Georgia;
 - The intent of the 6500 sq. ft. floorplate is not met well in the middle of the building;
 - Extend the brick along Georgia Street ~~but~~ to maintain the Georgia edge with its landscaped form;
 - Special attention should be paid to the design of the plaza to create a base for the new tower and to act as the integrating element for the composition of the two buildings;
 - Design development of the materiality and the approach to details to work with the materials of the plaza.
 - Design development to improve sustainability.
- **Related Commentary:** The panel thought that the building is an interesting concept with a complicated context. Inserting a major building into such a prominent space is tricky, and more concern with regards to the approach to the plaza is needed. Attention should be given to clarifying the heritage and modern elements, and not blur-the pieces together.

The panel generally supported the proposed height and setbacks, but noted that the building has not earned the asked for FSR yet. The building looks very bulky with the projections, and would fit better on the site if it was a bit smaller. The massing should better speak to the urban spaces along Georgia and the plaza. Currently this building does not seem to advance the story of what Vancouver's identity wants to be.

The building looks strong on Georgia and Cardero streets, but has a lot of blank elements on Nicola Street. The ideas around the pool retention and site permeability will help to make this a valuable space with good public dialogue, and it is great that the waterfall is being kept. However, the building does not yet achieve what it purports to be doing. It wants to be complimentary to the urban context and to the adjacent building, but the architecture is more contrasting. Something should be done to make it either a more complimentary or contrasting form.

It is important that the big plaza ideas be clear with regards to how the site will hold the building. More attention should be paid to plaza programming and how it supports the space. At the ground plane it would be more successful to respect that the different elements ARE different. The urban spaces will be nice, but add more places to sit beside the pond. As well, the brick bank should be maintained to promote the vibrant use by skateboarders. More rain protection is also needed and the public space needs to maintain its generosity.

Attention should be paid to how the colour and materials are handled. A more refined pattern could be used to allow the brick to tie the building more into the plaza. Overall the materials will add to the vibrancy of the City in the rain.

Special focus should be given to building sustainability and not just the sustainability of the water feature. Currently the building only does the minimum in sustainability, and a lot more could be done to make the building speak to passive house or zero energy design.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel and noted that the comments reflect the challenge and ambition of this project. There are high ambitions for this application on all levels, but this is just a beginning and there is room for some issues to be refocused.

3. Address:	101 E 2nd Avenue
Permit No.	DP-2016-00279
Description:	To construct a three-storey building for Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC), including two storeys of retail space at grade with one storey of office above, over three levels of underground parking.
Zoning:	CD-1 Pending
Application Status:	Complete Development Application
Review:	Second (First at DP)
Architect:	Proscenium Architecture + Interiors Inc (Ron Clay)
Owner:	Mountain Equipment Coop
Delegation:	Hugh Cochlin, Proscenium Architecture Sandy Treagus, MEC Robert Fiorvento, Beedie
Staff:	Sailen Black

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction:** Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the site at the northeast corner of Quebec Street and E 2nd Avenue. The site is 29,797 sq. ft. and contains a one-storey commercial and warehouse building.

A 38 ft. setback off Quebec Street and a 5 ft. setback along W 2nd Avenue are required for road widening. The preliminary design for the Quebec Street frontage adjacent to the Mountain Equipment Coop (MEC) building includes a new protected bike lane and sidewalk, but the final design will be determined by Engineering.

The site is in the Southeast False Creek (SEFC) area, with Opsal Steel to west, Meccanica to north and a gas station to the east. Applicable policies and guidelines include the CD-1 By-Law and the Green Buildings Policy for Rezoning.

The proposal is for a three-storey mixed-use building consisting of two levels of retail and one level of office for MEC. There is 45,510 sq. ft. of retail use and 15,166 sq. ft. of office use, along with three levels of underground parking accessed off the lane. Setbacks off the lane are larger in typical SEFC projects, which are intended to provide a green, landscaped space at grade for pedestrians at the lane level. However, the proposed height is lower than typical towers in SEFC, which reduces shadowing.

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

1. Have the previous comments of the Panel been resolved?
 2. Do the new design elements create a high quality of public realm interface on the three accessible sides of the site?
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team started by noting that their hope is to consider this store a flagship MEC store as it will set the trends in materiality and form for forthcoming MECs.

The glass transparency was brought through the building down to Quebec Street. The hope with the proposed materials is to reflect the materials and context of the Olympic village. All MECs have a colonnade concept and feature wood doors.

There is a waterfall feature which goes down the building into the cistern below. Native plants are being emphasized. There is a green roof, but contract negotiations with local roofers have reduced the green roof somewhat. Corten steel is referenced on the planters and second deck.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

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

- The bike-share should be on the Quebec Street side;
- Consideration should be given to the scale of the stone at the base;
- There is too much parking;
- Integrate the sign and the perforated screen it is currently mounted on;
- Activate the lane more.

- **Related Commentary:** The panel noted that a lot of good design ideas and initiatives have been incorporated in the building overall. The previous commentary has been satisfactorily addressed, but more space is needed on Quebec Street for gathering as it currently looks tight.

The lane needs more activation; but not necessarily by planting trees back there. The intent of the lane should be to allow people to look into the building, not just for people to walk through, and exit the building. Consider what is being planted at the back of the building and the special requirements needed so that trees that are planted there do not die. Putting the loading underground is a good step towards activating the lane.

Street presence and the relationship to the public realm is quite good. There is a lot of greenery that will benefit the public realm and the timber structure looks great. However, there should be less parking in an aspiring 'greenest' city.

If the MEC sign is going to sit on the perforated screen then more attention should be given to integrating it better rather than attaching or mounting it to the surface.

The green roof is a responsive environmental element, and the water feature looks nice.

- **Applicant's Response:** We'll keep going and incorporate the comments.

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.