

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: May 17, 2017

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Kim Smith (Chair)
Yijin Wen
Karen Spoelstra
James Cheng
Meredith Anderson
Helen Avini Besharat
Renee Van Halm
Nell Gasiewicz
Veronica Gillies (excused from item #3)

REGRETS: David Jerke
Neal LaMontagne
Muneesh Sharma
Amela Brudar

RECORDING SECRETARY: Camilla Lade

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

- | |
|------------------------|
| 1. 8615 Laurel Street |
| 2. 5679 Main Street |
| 3. 833 W Pender Street |
-

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Kim Smith called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. A brief business meeting took place before the presentations commenced.

1. Address: **8615 Laurel Street**
 Permit No. RZ-2017-00004
 Description: The proposal is for a 6-storey residential building (comprised of 65 secured market rental units), with a floor area of 3,763 sq. m (40,500 sq. ft.), a floor space ratio (FSR) of 2.50, and a building height of 20.0 m (66 ft.), over two levels of underground parking (35 vehicle spaces and 87 bicycle spaces). The application is being considered under the Marpole Community Plan.
 Zoning: RM-3A to CD-1
 Application Status: Rezoning Application
 Review: First
 Architect: Birmingham Wood (Sandra Moore)
 Owner: South Street Development Group
 Delegation: Sandra Moore, architect, Birmingham & Wood
 Richard Wittstock, developer, Domus
 Julian Pattison, landscape architect, Considered Design
 Staff: Zak Bennett & Danielle Wiley

EVALUATION: SUPPORT with Recommendations

- **Introduction:** Rezoning Planner, Zak Bennett, introduced this rezoning application for a site at the southwest corner of Laurel Street and 70th Avenue, in Marpole. The site is currently zoned RM-3A and developed with a 3-storey apartment building. It is approximately 16,200 square feet with 150 feet of frontage along Laurel Street and 108 feet along 70th Avenue. A 17 foot dedication will be sought at the 70th Avenue property line under this application. Post-dedication, the site is 14,364 square feet area, with 133 feet frontage on Laurel St.

For sites fronting 70th Avenue, the Marpole Community Plan allows consideration of rental residential buildings up to 6 storeys and 2.5 FSR. To the south and along 70th, sites are zoned RM-3A and are primarily developed with 3-storey apartment buildings. Farther north, the zoning is RT-2 and primarily developed with duplexes and single-family houses. There are two nearby rezoning applications: 8242 Oak, an 8-storey mixed-use building with 50 residential units at 3.0 FSR. 8599 Oak, a 6-storey residential building with 36 rental units at 2.5 FSR and includes rental replacement.

The proposal is for a 6-storey secured rental residential building with a total of 65 dwelling units over two levels of underground parking. The maximum 2.5 FSR is proposed. Thirty-five parking stalls (including 5 visitor and 2 carshare spaces) and 87 bicycle parking spaces are proposed.

Danielle Wiley, Development Planner, noted that the site that slopes from north (W 70th) to the south approx. 8 feet. There are mature trees at the north-west corner, which are not shown in the drawings but are expected to be retained.

Ms. Wiley reviewed the key form of development guidelines from the Marpole Plan. The Plan recommends an 8 ft. sidewalk and 6 ft. planted boulevard with a double row of trees on Oak St (where the dedication will be taken). Building width is limited to 100 feet. A minimum 8 ft. setback is recommended above the 4th storey, to transition to existing lower-scale buildings. Corner buildings (as this one is) should have upper-storey step backs and a frontage “character” on both streets, and should step down towards the lane. On slopes sites (like this one), floor levels should step to follow natural grade. Parking structures should not be exposed above grade.

The proposal deviates from the building typology anticipated by the Plan, and staff are testing this alternative form of development through the application and review process. The proposal has three buildings connected by exterior bridges and stairs. An 18ft. courtyard between the north and south buildings provides the main “entrance”, primary building circulation, and outdoor amenity space. The upper storey setbacks are not provided, and the rear yard setback does not meet the requirement under the Plan. Staff have some concerns about the proposed grade alterations (as the front yard on Oak St is “filled in”) and the raising of the main floor elevation on a plinth, which creates retaining walls along the south half of the site. The parkade is exposed, with a 7-foot retaining wall (plus guardrail) at the interior property line.

The courtyard serves as both primary circulation and the main outdoor amenity space. There is urban agriculture located at the lane. The indoor amenity room is located at the north-west corner, contiguous to the courtyard.

Ms. Wiley then took questions from the panel.

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

1. Is the overall approach to massing supportable? Consider:
 - Siting and yards;
 - Breaking massing into separate buildings (for example courtyard typology); and
 - Upper storey setbacks not provided.
 2. Is the interface to the public realm successful? (ie. grade manipulation; raised main floor; retaining walls and terracing at the property lines);
 3. Is the courtyard successful in terms of: a) livability of units (privacy, access to light)? And b) functional common outdoor space?
 4. Do the building elevations adequately express a “frontage character” on both West 70th and Laurel?
 5. Is the provision of family-oriented housing successful? (ie. unit mix; common indoor and outdoor spaces; children’s play opportunities)
- **Applicant’s Introductory Comments:** The applicant team noted that something different was being attempted in the design. The intent is to foster incidental community, by encouraging residents to take the stairs, rather than the elevator, and bump into neighbours. West 70th will be widened with a second set of street trees, so in anticipation the main floor elevation provides a level access. There are steps up to the building from Laurel Street.

The courtyard building typology provides sustainability, livability and social interaction. The courtyard provides cross-ventilation for more dwelling units. It is designed at ground level for more informal meeting and community, and will contain free form play areas and “abstract” objects for all ages. The massing is broken into smaller, individual buildings. The longer buildings on Oak St and Laurel St have a more horizontal expression; the smaller building on the corner is more vertical, to fit into the neighbourhood scale.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

- **Panel Consensus:** Having reviewed the project it was moved by Mr. Yijin Wen and seconded by Mr. James Cheng and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel the project **SUPPORT** the project with the following recommendations to be reviewed by City staff:

- Improve the buildings' relationship to natural grade. Reconsider the "plinth", to improve the interface to Laurel St and the other site edges;
 - Further design development to consider weather protection for exterior circulation and key areas in the courtyard;
 - Improve solar access to the courtyard;
 - Consider security around building entrances;
 - Design development to the materials and details, to consider: durability and weather resistance; a more refined use of colour; and improvement to the landscape design.
- **Related Commentary:** The panel supported the project and noted that the proposal is elegant and beautiful. The building type and character were appreciated. The design meets the intent of the Marpole Community Plan, by providing a finer-grained massing. The frontage character on Laurel is well done, but needs more development on 70th Ave.

There are concerns about the solar access into the courtyard, which is narrow and tall. The panel asked how the space can be programmed and activated, given the 6 months of annual rain in Vancouver. The walkways and stairs are not covered. There is no weather protection for the mailboxes or by the indoor amenity room. Building materials need much more consideration for durability and maintenance, given the exposure to weather. Exposed joints at bridges will be challenging.

The interface to the public realm, and particularly the "plinth", is problematic. The three buildings should each sit on their own ground. The courtyard is raised too high above Laurel St, so that the primary entry is hard to read. The connection to W 70th may not be successful, as it does not have a "public" character and is likely to be gated. The interface to the neighbours at the interior property line is a problem.

Architectural expression should be developed to take solar orientation into account. Material detailing and landscaping need significant design development.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments and agreed more design development will happen. The plinth comments were taken into consideration to overcome the concerns of the panel.

2. Address:	5679 Main Street
Permit No.	RZ-2017-00007
Description:	The proposal is for a 6-storey mixed-use building including 49 secured market rental units, 750 sq. m (8,072 sq. ft.) commercial use on the ground floor, a floor space ratio (FSR) of 3.66, and a building height of 23.2 m (76 ft.), over two levels of underground parking (52 vehicle spaces and 70 bicycle spaces). This application is being considered under the Secured Market Rental Housing (Rental 100) Program.
Zoning:	C-2 to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	MGBA Architects (Chris Gowing)
Owner:	Jeremy Waldman, Rendition (E41)
Delegation:	Chris Gowing, architect, MGBA Julian Pattison, landscape architect, Considered Design Daniel Roberts, LEED consultant, Kane
Staff:	Tiffany Rougeau & Danielle Wiley

EVALUATION: Recommend RESUBMISSION

- **Introduction:** Tiffany Rougeau, Rezoning Planning, introduced this rezoning application for a single lot at the northwest corner of Main Street and 41st Avenue. The site is currently vacant, zoned C-2 and is being considered under the Secured Market Rental Housing Policy (Rental 100). The site is approximately 11,657 square feet with 110 feet of frontage along Main Street and 105 feet along 41st Avenue. The lots along Main Street are zoned RT-2 with a small C-2 node at the 41st and Main Street intersection. The remainder of the surrounding sites are zoned RS-1 and are developed with single-family houses.

The proposal is for a 6-storey mixed-use building including 49 secured market rental units and 8,072 square feet of commercial at grade, over two levels of underground parking. An FSR of 3.66 and a building height of 76 feet are proposed. The proposal includes fifty-two parking stalls and 70 bicycle parking spots.

Danielle Wiley, Development Planner, noted that the site is triple-fronting, with Woodstock Ave as a third street frontage. This is an unusually small C-2 “node” that covers a single street intersection (rather than a stretch along an arterial). To the north and south, there is a mix of one and two-family dwellings. To the east across the lane, there are single family houses on double-fronting lots. Seven foot dedications along Main St and W 41st Ave will be taken for a future turning lane, bike infrastructure and/or other transportation improvements, so the site is effectively reduced from 104 x 112 feet to 97 x 105 feet.

The Rental 100 policy doesn’t contain form of development guidelines, but instead instructs staff to apply the guidelines and intents of the base zoning. C-2 zoning requires very specific setbacks to transition to an RS-1 neighbour across a lane: 20 feet from the PL at the 1st storey (for commercial use at grade); 35 feet at the 2nd and 3rd storeys; and 45 feet at the 4th storey. Typically, in rezonings that allow additional height, staff requires an further 6 feet setback for additional storeys. C-2 zoning also requires a minimum 8-foot setback at the 4th storey along street frontages.

The proposal deviates significantly from these standard setbacks, especially at the south-west corner. Staff has concerns that the massing would unduly impact the RS-1 neighbour across the lane. The proposal has a 2-foot setback at the lane for the 1st, 2nd and 3 storeys. A 15 foot set back is provided at the Level 5, and 20 feet at Level 6.

An 8-foot setback is provided at the 6th storey (but not the 5th) for a portion of the Main St and 41st Ave street frontages. This setback is not provided at the corner; the intent is to give the building a stronger corner expression at this major street intersection.

Commercial/retail use is proposed along both Main St and 41st frontages. This 1st storey is proposed to be overheight (approx. 20ft) with mezzanine space. The main residential lobby is located on Woodstock Ave. One townhouse unit, as well as the parkade access, loading and the PMT are located off the lane. There is an indoor amenity room with a small patio at Level 2. The rooftop provides a larger outdoor common amenity space.

Ms. Wiley then took questions from the panel.

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

1. Does the building massing successfully transition to the RS-1 properties across the lane? (Consider visual impact, overlook and shadowing.)
 2. Is the massing and composition of the primary street elevations (Main & 41st) successful? (Consider “reduced” upper storey setbacks.)
 3. Is the at-grade interface to Woodstock Av successful? (ie. residential and commercial lobbies; bike facilities & townhouse)
 4. Is the provision of family-oriented housing successful? (ie. unit mix; common indoor & outdoor amenities; opportunities for children’s play).
 5. Is the overall density and massing supportable?
- **Applicant’s Introductory Comments:** The applicant team started by noting how the massing and setbacks turned the corners on 41st Avenue. Commercial space on the ground floor wrapped all the way to the lane, so that the lane space could be activated. The proposed mass has been pulled around the corner.

The proposed green roof incorporates urban agriculture, communal benches and “dark” paving treatments to reference the banding on Main Street.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

- **Panel Consensus:** Having reviewed the project it was moved by Mr. James Cheng and seconded by Mr. Yijin Wen, and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel recommend **RESUBMISSION** of the project after incorporating the following comments:

- Revisit the massing, form and character, to define a clear “parti”. The massing should be revised to better relate to the three different street frontages, and to transition to the single family neighbours. More clarity of form and materials is needed;
- Greater design clarity and strength for the building entrances and building elevations, particularly at the pedestrian level, is needed;
- Improve the amenities, by relocating and/or reconfiguring the indoor amenity room, and creating opportunities for children’s play;
- Improve accessibility for cyclists (including functionality of bike rooms).

- **Related Commentary:** The panel noted that the massing feels heavy. The over-height commercial level is pushing up the building height. The panel also noted that the massing seems arbitrary, and that there is no clear “parti” to the building. The building fronts onto two major streets and but the facades don’t differentiate between them. Most members felt that the transition to the RS-1 neighbour was not successful.

The panel commented that the townhouse on Woodstock Ave seemed “isolated” and could be deleted. The residential entry is not clear, and possibly should be relocated. Some panel members were concerned about the commercial entrances at the ends of the block, and suggested that they would better animate the street if they were closer together.

One elevator may not be sufficient. Bike access and bike rooms require more careful planning. The amenity space on the roof is fantastic, but more variety in children’s play elements should be provided. The amenity room is “squeezed” and has an awkward relationship to the adjacent dwelling units; it could be relocated closer to the roof. Consider the acoustics of the amenity.

- **Applicant’s Response:** The applicant team thanked panel and said that the massing concerns were well taken.

3.	Address:	833 W Pender Street
	Permit No.	DP-2017-00064
	Description:	To develop a 13-storey hotel, including 106 units, a restaurant on the ground floor, a building height of approximately 153.7 feet, and a total floor area of 63,865 sq. ft., all over two levels of underground parking (20 vehicle spaces) accessed from the lane.
	Zoning:	DD
	Application Status:	Complete Development Application
	Review:	First
	Architect:	Studio One Architects (Shoghig Tutunjian)
	Owner:	Noordin Sayani
	Delegation:	Tomas Wolf, architect, Studio One Architect Shoghig Tutunjian, architect, Studio One Architecture Kristina Zalite, landscape architect, Jonathan Losee Ltd.
	Staff:	Marie Linehan

EVALUATION: Recommend RESUBMISSION

- **Introduction:** Marie Linehan, Development Planner, introduced the project as a development permit application in the Downtown District for a new 13-storey hotel with 106 units, and a common roof deck amenity. The building height is approximately 153.7 feet with a total floor area of 63, 865 square feet and 20 underground spaces accessed from the lane via a car elevator.

It is a small infill site at 52 feet by 120 feet. It is in a subarea (B) of the Downtown where residential uses are not permitted. Continuous ground floor retail or service uses are required, noting that Hotel is a service use.

The permitted density is 9.0 FSR (56, 111 SF). The Development Permit Board may permit an increase in the floor space ratio for hotels of 15% of the floor area used for guest accommodation (largely the upper levels) subject to urban design considerations. The proposal is seeking the 15% increase (7, 749.8 square feet).

The height limit under the Downtown District ODP in this subarea is 300 feet, with potential for 450 feet subject to DP Board Approval and View Cones. The Queen Elizabeth View Cone would limit height to approximately 344 feet, in the absence of a view shadow.

There is an existing 8 storey office building on the 52 by 120 lot to the west. The higher towers in the immediate context were approved through a rezoning process.

To the east is a CD-1 rezoning site, the Exchange. This site redevelopment included retention and restoration of the Old Stock Exchange, a Heritage A building, and a 31-storey tower (375 feet) with mixed commercial uses (no residential) at approximately 21.5 FSR.

To the north across the lane is a CD-1 rezoning site, the Jameson. This site included retention of 2 heritage buildings along W Hastings Street, and a new 36-storey tower (380 feet) with commercial and residential uses, the latter being located at Levels 14 and above, and a density of 23.1 FSR.

The physical urban environment of Downtown should be of a very high quality. The Guidelines note that:

- (a) Buildings should be sympathetic to the pedestrian environment and should avoid impersonal facades, especially at pedestrian levels.

(b) Tower portions of Downtown buildings should be evaluated with respect to their compatibility with surrounding structures, their contribution to the general streetscape or skyline.

Ms. Marie Linehan then took questions from the panel.

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

1. Height, massing and density
 2. Overall architectural design, façade composition and materials, in particular the design of the east side wall adjacent the Exchange site as that elevation will be exposed in the long term.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team started noting the density was maximized in the proposal. A deck on the roof is proposed with a ground floor lobby and entrance and coffee shop. The design above the adjacent podium includes an exposed sidewall, and there are coloured accent panels arranged in a playful rhythm in the design. There are metal panels and spandrel glass as well as accent panels attached to the concrete walls proposed. There was a recess created in the middle of the side wall, the building connects to the ground with a solid base. There is a staggered treatment of the stones that references the upper floor treatment, and the roof deck is used by the hotel guests. There is a glazed canopy proposed that is 'sculptured' and continues into the lobby. The canopy will become a feature and animate the street. There is a sculpture proposed in front of the building.

There is verticality and different patterning for the ground floor tiles. The water feature with a low reflecting pool and a band are the main features of the roof deck design.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

- **Panel Consensus:** Having reviewed the project it was moved by Mr. Yijin Wen and seconded by Ms. Helen Avini Besharat and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel recommend **RESUBMISSION** of the project after incorporating the following comments:

- All facades need design development for quality, light, solar gain, response to context and orientation, to provide meaning to the accents in the facades, and to incorporate a stronger design intent
 - Look at the ASHRAE standards which will influence façade design
 - Revisit height and massing to bring more light into the building, giving some relief to the side loading of the building
 - Ensure a pedestrian friendly treatment at West Pender, including relocation of services to the lane
- **Related Commentary:** The design should be of a high quality as expected under the design guidelines for the Downtown District, but the quality has not found itself yet. It is a tight site and the form of the building is affected. It was suggested to eliminate the 8 internal rooms and provide an atrium to bring light into the entire building, revisit the height to relocate those rooms and move the lane massing closer to West Pender. Primarily, solve the façade problem. The window wall is not appropriate in terms of a quality treatment. Expression and materiality needs improvement and is not 'state of the art'. While there are no LEED requirements under the zoning, the panel noted that ASHRAE will need to be addressed in the façade design. The corner wrap of the windows as a bookend should be further developed in terms of detail. The panel had questions about the design rationale and detail for the accent panels. The panel noted that the common rooftop design is positive, but the roof garden should be all season.

Pop up for stair and elevator needs work noting it is viewed from adjacent towers. Look at the structure of the building and solve issues before the DP stage

The laneway function needs further study. There should be more detail on the location of services noting the project is at the DP stage, as well as adjacent services, treatments and parkade access at the lane, and traffic management at the car elevator. Strongly recommend lighting strategy from the beginning.

Finally, the quality of the pedestrian experience should be further considered, particularly location of services. The sculpture is not suitable as public art. Look at the mechanical services and make sure they are at the lane.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel and added that they were struggling with the height.
- **Adjournment**
There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.