URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: August 15, 2012
TIME: 4.00 pm
PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Robert Barnes
Helen Besharat (Chair Item #1)
Gregory Borowski (Chair Items #2, 3 & 4)
Veronica Gillies
David Grigg
Bruce Hemstock
Arno Matis (Present for Item #1 Only)
Geoff McDonell (Excused Item #1)

REGRETS: Daryl Condon
Vincent Dumoulin
Alan Endall
Norm Shearing
Peter Wreglesworth

RECORDING SECRETARY: Lorna Harvey

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BUSINESS MEETING
Chair Besharat called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There being no New Business the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 1862 Barclay Street
   DE: 415926
   Description: Rehabilitate existing heritage designated two family dwelling building and add a new 6-storey infill behind for a combined total of seven dwelling units.
   Zoning: RM-5B
   Application Status: Complete
   Review: First
   Owner: George Abboud
   Architect: Merrick Architecture
   Delegation: Gregory Borowski, Merrick Architecture
               Peter MacRae, Merrick Architecture
               Jennifer Stamp, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects
               R.J. McCulloch, Donald Luxton & Associates
   Staff: Sailen Black

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-0)

• Introduction: Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the proposal in the West End for a new 6-storey residential building. He described the policy for the area noting the recommended height is 60 feet with up to 50% of the site covered by the building. The site is midblock and has a 33 foot frontage along Barclay Street, and is a west of Denman Street. The overall form is within the 60 foot maximum height except for a portion of the elevator core in the centre. The proposal is for five residential units plus two units in the heritage Mason residence plus four parking stalls. The site coverage would increase from the existing 28% to about 58%. A fourteen foot separation is planned between the new building and the retained heritage building at the second level. The proposal will maintain the existing front yard setback.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the architectural and landscape design in general and in particular on the:
• New form of development within the Barclay streetscape, including the front yard design, open elevator, and side walls brought to the lot edges;
• Relationship of new building to existing residence and to nearby neighbours, including windows;
• Detailing and expression of the new building.

Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

• Applicant’s Introductory Comments: Greg Borowski, Architect, further described the proposal noting that when they were approached by the owner originally it was going to be a new building on the site. After some discussion with the owner and neighbours it was decided to restore the house and add a new building. The house has been added onto over the years and in the effort to restore the house it opens up an area at the back of the house to add an infill building. Mr. Borowski described what could be built under the zoning. If they moved the house forward they could get a bigger building but that would mean the loss of some of the character of the property. The house is a reasonably modest house design and was worth leaving it in place as there aren’t many of this type of heritage
Mr. Borowski noted that the lower floor of the house, which is currently a crawl space/basement will be made into a suite as they will excavate down rather than raising the house to make it a liveable space. He described the architectural elements including the colour and material palette. He noted that the main living spaces and the master bedroom spaces are all on the south orientation. The new building will have a studio suite on the ground floor, one suite per floor on levels one to four, and one suite on level five and six combined including a roof terrace. In terms of sustainability there is a low window to wall ratio and the heating/cooling will be a radiant system. The parking will include an elevator to get cars in and out of the underground stalls.

Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans noting that they are planning to use a heritage plant and material palette for the garden around house with a more contemporary palette for the new building. They are hoping to keep as much as possible the garden in the front of the heritage home while excavating the basement. The front yard and patio will be tiered down to the lower unit in the house. They are planning a water feature at the entry to the new building. There is a small garden planned off the studio unit with a patio and the roof top patio space will be an outdoor entertainment space with a kitchen.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Preserve the streetscape for the heritage house and landscape;
  - Consider moving or improving the elevator core for better circulation;
  - Consider adding a common amenity space.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and applauded the applicant for the idea of infill housing in the West End that retains the heritage home.

The Panel thought it was a reasonable approach to preserve the heritage home and thought it was an appropriate modern approach to the new building. Several Panel members thought the elevator core might not be in the right spot and suggested removing the internal lobby addition at grade. They thought the two pieces could sit apart from each other and that a canopy could be added over the elevator door as weather protection. One Panel member suggested having the elevator core on the lane instead. This would improve the circulation which looks too narrow and that the building could be shifted to widen the passageway. There were also some concerns regarding the angle of daylight especially for the ground floor units and the ones on the north side.

Some of the Panel thought the elevator could be surrounded with clear glass or to use an elevator that doesn’t need mass at the back of the building to improve the relationship between the two buildings.

The Panel liked the colour palette and thought it was appropriate against the heritage materials. A couple of Panel members thought there should be a common amenity space in the project and suggested the applicant look at the roof top.

One Panel member suggested adding shading devices on the south and west facades of the new building.

- **Applicant’s Response:** Mr. Borowski thanked the Panel for their comments. He said he liked the Panel’s suggestions regarding the elevator core and that they would take another look at the placement of the elevator.
2. Address: 3939 Knight Street  
DE: 415903  
Description: To construct a 4-storey multiple dwelling building with one level of underground parking and commercial space on the main floor level.  
Zoning: C-2  
Application Status: Complete  
Review: First  
Owner: Ken Edra  
Architect: Cornerstone Architecture  
Delegation: Scott Kennedy, Cornerstone Architecture  
Gwill Symonds, Cornerstone Architecture  
Andrew Bobyn, Cornerstone Architecture  
Catherine MacDonald, Catherine MacDonald Landscape Architects  
Staff: Sailen Black

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

• Introduction: Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a site midblock on Knight Street. The proposal is for a 4-storey residential building with 20 units. Two dwelling units are set slightly below the commercial lane grade and behind the loading bay. A light well will respond to the neighbouring building and provide daylight and access for air to the inboard bedrooms. Mr. Black noted that the intent of the District Schedule and Guidelines for the area is to address the wide range of lot sizes, orientations, uses, and neighbouring buildings that occur in C-2, and to achieve compatibility among a variety of uses, as well as between existing and new development; to guide building massing and design for neighbourliness, including mitigation of privacy and visual impacts on adjacent residential; to ensure a high standard of livability for housing; and to ensure that both corridor and courtyard forms of residential continue to be possible in mixed use development, in order to allow a measure of housing variety.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following: Comments are sought on the architectural and landscape design in general, and in particular:
  • Relationship of dwelling unit to commercial lane and loading bay;
  • Proposed light well as response to neighbouring building;
  • Development proposed within rear 20 foot setback to lane; and
  • Liveability for habitable rooms facing into interior light well.

Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

• Applicant's Introductory Comments: Gwil Symonds, Architect, further described the proposal noting that the use of the light wells will bring more light into the units. There is a small meeting room located near the main entry.

Scot Kennedy, Architect, noted that they had a lot of discussion regarding the liveability of units opening to the lane. They felt that the solution for the loading in this project was to maximize the frontage on the building available for other uses and to have a pullout for the commercial bay. They are planning to put pavers to define the space. The units off the lane will have 12 foot ceilings to make them more liveable.

Catherine MacDonald, Landscape Architect, stated that there are two components to the landscaping. There are two side courtyards and the planting on the lane. The courtyards
will have a lower framework of evergreen material with a small tree. On the lane they are looking at adding cedar hedging and pots inside the two lower units.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Relationship of rear lane units to lane grade and loading bay
  - Design development to improve the expression of the residential entry.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a supportable modest infill building.

The Panel thought the landscape and architecture was well handled and that the light wells worked well. A couple of Panel members wondered if the trees within the light wells would survive. They also supported the 20 foot setback on the lane.

They had some concerns with the units at the back being in a high traffic lane and near the loading bay. A number of members suggested moving the unit flat to grade with a nine foot ceiling. One Panel member suggested pushing the CRU back and moving the stairs to make the back lane a utility area rather than a living area. Another Panel member suggested adding a fence or something that gives a boundary around the units. One member suggested making a single unit instead of two. It was also suggested by a Panel member to make the patio area more useable by adding a fence/hedge.

A couple of Panel members thought the residential entry seemed a bit lost and wanted to see a bolder expression to separate it from the commercial entrances. Also, a couple of Panel members thought the canopies didn’t distinguish the entry.

- **Applicant’s Response:** Mr. Kennedy said he was satisfied with the Panel’s comments noting that some of them they had already debated. He said they would find a way to make the units on the lane more liveable and would look at adding a substantial wall.
3. **Address:** 707 East 43rd Avenue  
**DE:** 415898  
**Description:** To construct a 4-storey residential building with commercial spaces on the ground floor and two levels of underground parking.  
**Zoning:** C-2  
**Application Status:** Complete  
**Review:** First  
**Owner:** Neil Sidhu  
**Architect:** P.J. Lovick Architect Ltd.  
**Delegation:** Andrea Scott, P.J. Lovick Architect Ltd.  
Mary Chan-Yip, PMG Landscape Architects  
**Staff:** Sailen Black

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-1)**

- **Introduction:** Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a 4-storey residential building. He described the District Schedule and guidelines for properties in C-2 zonings noting that the proposal should achieve compatibility among a variety of uses, as well as between existing and new development. As well it should ensure appropriate street scale and continuous street enclosure and pedestrian interest. Mr. Black described the context for the area noting the 3-storey development with a distinctive ‘reverse slope’ roof form that is the neighbour to the north. The proposal will have 29 residential units with two levels of underground parking. As well eight commercial spaces are planned for the ground floor on the south side of the building. The proposal has a solid wall plane with paneled expression along the sidewalk for about sixty-one feet. The recessed elevator core from the south elevation creates a relief to the wall plane above and reduces the apparent height as seen from East 43rd Avenue.

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

Comments are sought on the architectural and landscape design in general, and in particular:

- Pedestrian scale and interest created on both frontages, especially at the blank wall portions facing 43rd Avenue
- Treatment of east elevation, including landscape on grade across rear lane
- Relationship of proposed form to the neighbouring building to the north

Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant’s Introductory Comments:** Andrea Scott, Architect, further described the project noting that the building will have 6,000 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor and three floors of mixed residential unit types from studios to one and two bedrooms above. Each unit will get its own car parking stall and as well one bike parking stall. For the community they have provided bike parking adjacent to the residential front door. Commercial parking is accessed from the lane in a gated section and as well the loading, transformer and access to the underground parking for the residents will be off the lane. Ms. Scott described the material palette and noted that the 4th floor is setback to have terraces. A canopy is planned for East 43rd Avenue and Fraser Street.

Mary Chan-Yip, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans noting the streetscape has been finished with traffic calming and street trees. There is a landscape strip planned for the south side of the site up against the foundation of the building. In terms of the upper storeys, there is some landscaping planned on the second storey decks and the patios will have concrete pavers.
The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Consider simplifying the elevations and continue the brick around the corner;
  - Consider alternative treatment to the blank wall
  - Distinguish the residential entry from the commercial entries;
  - Review the sustainability strategy with respect to solar shading;
  - Review the selection of plant materials on level two and in particular the height of the trees.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the project and liked that the strength of the building was in its simple design.

The Panel supported the massing and did not have any issues with the relationship to the neighbouring building to the north. They thought it was an important site being on the corner of two major streets. A couple of Panel members thought the entry could be improved with one Panel member suggested using a different canopy treatment to mark the entry. There was some concern regarding the west elevation with respect to detailing of the trim, brick elements and windows. As well a couple of Panel member suggesting the elevations could be simplified and the brick wrapped on the corner. One Panel member wondered if the project should have a courtyard scheme which would make the units less deep and more liveable.

A couple of Panel members encouraged the applicant to add landscape treatments to the blank wall on the south side of the project. It was suggested that a green screen and not a green wall could be one way to go or some architectural treatment that allows the greenery to grow on the wall. This would help to relieve possible CPTED issues. Another Panel member suggested landscaping along the property line to improve the lane. As well a Panel member suggested smaller trees be planted on the 3rd and 4th levels and to add plantings that would add seasonal interest.

One Panel member suggested adding some public art along East 43rd Avenue to improve the expression.

Some of the Panel felt the sustainability strategy could be improved. One Panel member noted that the facades didn’t acknowledge their orientation. Another Panel member suggested exploring for future potential for solar ready and commercial heat recovery. As well the applicant was asked to consider triple glazing for heat loss and acoustical issues along Fraser Street. A couple of Panel members suggested adding a skylight to the top floor to add daylighting into the units and circulation areas.

- **Applicant’s Response:** Ms. Scott had no further comments.
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4. Address: 1588 East Hastings Street
   DE: 415817
   Description: To consolidate 1500 and 1550 East Hastings Street and construct a new commercial/residential building with underground parking (1 level of commercial, 3 levels of residential and 2 levels of underground parking).
   Zoning: MC-1
   Application Status: Complete
   Review: First
   Owner: Woodland Hastings Prop. Corp.
   Architect: GBL Architects
   Delegation: Stu Lyon, GBL Architects
             Joey Stevens, GBL Architects
             Peter Kreuk, Durante Kruek Landscape Architects
   Staff: Ann McLean

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- Introduction: Ann McLean, Development Planner, introduced a proposal located on East Hastings Street between McLean and Woodland Drives, west of Commercial Drive. She described the context for the area, noting the light industrial uses across the lane. She also stated that the area is under review through the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan process. The policy will focus on investigating means to better activate the blocks between Semlin Drive and Clark Drive and will look at opportunities for residential and commercial development, enhancements to local services, public realm and streetscape improvements. The proposal is for a 4-storey building over two levels of underground parking. There are three levels of residential units over a commercial podium. There are a total of 102 residential units proposed including 20 rental residential units on the lane and on one floor above. Ms. McLean noted that no setbacks are required however Engineering have requested a 8.5 foot dedication from McLean Drive and Planning have asked for a right-of-way to bring the sidewalk width up to 12 feet to provide a safe and comfortable public realm on McLean Drive.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:
In addition to general commentary on the building form, response to context, and proposed public realm treatment the Panel was asked to comment on:

- the architectural treatment of the building with regard to the guidelines and the emerging character of the area;
- the location and treatment of the residential rental units;
- proposed entry treatment.

Ms. McLean took questions from the Panel.

- Applicant’s Introductory Comments: Joey Stevens, Architect, further described the proposal noting that the site is in an area that is in transition. Since it is a long site and therefore a long building, they wanted to break down the massing so they started with a break to define the residential entry. He described the colour palette which includes painted white brick and charcoal window mullions and as well fritted dark silver spandrel over the balconies. The ground floor will have eight commercial units, a residential lobby and two offices accessible from McLean Drive. He noted that there is a circulation spine through on the ground floor from the lane to the front entry.
Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect, stated that the landscape is divided into a number of components with a commercial/retail base to the building with a hard urban edge. There is a bus stop on East Hastings Street which will affect the spacing of the street trees. On the east end of the lane where the residential units front on the lane, there will be series of patios that are accessible to the lane. There will be privacy screens, hedges and gates. On the upper terrace there are patios that are associated with the rental units. There is also a common amenity patio off the indoor amenity space. It is a combination of basic patio area, some urban agriculture and kids play.

- **Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Look at CPTED issues at the front entry;
  - Consider security issues for the residential units along the lane;
  - Consider access issues for the 2nd floor patio.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a cleverly done project. The Panel commended the applicant for a good project and thought it would make for a more interesting street along East Hastings. They liked the building’s façade and liked the way the residential wraps around to the lane. One Panel member noted that the residential on the lane will need fences and gates for security. A couple of Panel members suggested the applicant use another material rather than fabric for the canopies.

The Panel liked the location of the main entry and thought it was well defined. One Panel member noted that the entry was a little dark due to the blank wall and suggested it could be used for some public art or to find another way to lighten up the entry. Also there were some CPTED concerns. Another Panel member noted that one of the units near the exercise lounge seemed lost.

It was suggested that trees could be added along McLean Drive. As well, a couple of Panel members were concerned with maintenance and access issues for the 2nd floor patio space.

Regarding sustainability, one Panel member noted that noise abatement might be necessary on East Hastings Street and suggested triple glazed windows. As well, there could be solar readiness on the roof and energy sharing with the commercial units. One Panel member suggested adding sun shades on the south and west facades and skylights on the top floor.

- **Applicant’s Response:** Mr. Lyon thought the Panel had some great constructive comments.

**Adjournment**
There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.