URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: September 12, 2012
TIME: 4.00 pm
PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Helen Besharat (Chair for Item #1)
Gregory Borowski (Chair) [Excused Item #1]
Vincent Dumoulin
Alan Endall (Excused Item #2)
David Grigg
Bruce Hemstock
Arno Matis
Geoff McDonell
Peter Wreglesworth

REGRETS:
Robert Barnes
Daryl Condon
Veronica Gillies
Norm Shearing

RECORDING SECRETARY: Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

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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: 851-951 Boundary Road (Taylor Manor)
DE: N/A
Description: The proposal is to renovate Taylor Manor, the existing heritage building, and construct a 4-storey addition to repurpose it to accommodate 56 supportive housing units. The renovation and addition will be self-contained apartment units with tenant amenity spaces, as well as, staff office space and amenity.
Zoning: CD-1 (revision)
Application Status: Rezoning
Review: First
Owner: City of Vancouver
Architect: Merrick Architecture
Delegation: Mark Zaitsoff, Merrick Architecture
Mitch Sakumoto, Merrick Architecture
Jennifer Stamp, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects
Staff: Ian Cooper and Sailen Black

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- **Introduction:** Ian Cooper, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal to renovate and repurpose the existing Taylor Manor building, a City owned site with a Heritage “B” building on the Vancouver Heritage Register. As well there is a 4-storey addition proposed for the west side of the property at the rear of the existing building to preserve the heritage façade and forecourt. As well 56 units of Supportive Housing for adults with mental health issues and low incomes is proposed and will be operated by the Kettle Friendship Society. Mr. Cooper described the applicable policy for the site noting that amendments are needed to the CD-1 Bylaw to increase the height from 2.5 storeys to four, to increase the maximum floor area from 0.6 to approximately 0.8 FSR and to add dwelling units to the permitted use list. Mr. Cooper also noted that the Green Buildings Policy for Rezoning which was adopted by City Council on July 22, 2010 and the Large Sites Rezoning Policy apply to the proposal.

Sailen Black, Development Planner, further described the proposal noting that Taylor Manor has been used as an Old Peoples Home since 1918 to 1998 and is currently not occupied. The existing buildings on the site include Taylor Manor and the Adanac Lodge which is a Community Care facility with 75 beds. The proposal will have 56 self-contained apartment units with common amenity spaces. As well five new stalls parking will be added of the main driveway from Boundary Road. No change in the setback is planned to the Taylor Manor to the street. Mr. Black indicated that one of the biggest changes is to the west sideyard. It is proposed that the row of large trees is to be removed and replaced by five new trees in the park. Mr. Black noted that staff have received the Development Permit application and asked the Panel for comments that apply to the design development stage as well as to the rezoning.

Marco D'Agostini, Heritage Planner, noted that back in June 2011 there were alternate siting options presented to the Heritage Commission and staff. The key driving forces was one of the character defining elements that was identified in the Statement of Significance which is the setback of the building from Boundary Road as well as the landscaped open...
lawn and the circular driveway. Based on that component, the location of the addition as proposed now was supported by the Heritage Commission and staff.

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 to the open space and park land on the west;
• Compatibility of the new volume and massing to the existing Manor;
• Design, dimensions and program of the courtyard spaces to function as a common amenity.

Mr. Cooper, Mr. Black and Mr. D'Agostini took questions from the Panel.

• Applicant’s Introductory Comments: Mitch Sakumoto, Architect, further described the proposal noting that there will be 17 units in the heritage building and 39 units in the new addition. The proposal will be a LEED™ Gold certified project. He noted there is a courtyard for the residents and as well a number of common facilities and spaces provided within the heritage building. This includes the common dining room, kitchen, a library and TV room. Due to fire protection and the property line they have held the setback to 12 feet which will also allow for larger windows on that side of the building. Mr. Sakumoto described the architecture. He noted that the detailing will be more contemporary but at the same time respecting the heritage building. They are planning to have natural light in the stair wells and will be adding sun shades on the west façade of the new building. Since the residents probably won’t have a vehicle, they have reduced the amount of parking. An electric vehicle charging station is proposed.

Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans. She noted that Adanac Park originally functioned as the farm for Taylor Manor and that is why the site looks the way it does. She added that they took that into consideration when planning the landscaping. They met with the Parks to discuss how the project will impact the park and what the park can do to support the residents with respect to activities. They have had discussions regarding extending trail systems and potentially moving the children’s play area. Parks has potentially offered a community garden for the residents of Taylor Manor as it is challenging to offer that within the site due to the mature trees and lack of sunlight. They are looking at retaining the trees with the exception of some large trees along the west property line. Around the existing building there are a number of overgrown shrubs which causes a CPTED issue. They are looking at trimming them and putting down new grown cover which will be maintained by Parks. Ms. Stamp noted that they have tried to create a space in the courtyard that is flexible for various activities and sizes of groups of people. Seating will also be provided. An extensive green roof is proposed for the new building.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

• Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:
  • Design development to improve the courtyard;
  • Revisit the west side setback;
  • Consider eliminating the extensive green roof.

• Related Commentary: The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a nice project and a good presentation.
The Panel agreed that it was a tight site and that the setback to the existing building gave very little room. The Panel had no issues with the open space to the west and thought the proposal was compatible with the heritage building.

The Panel thought the dimensions of the courtyard could be improved. They thought it should be opened up more for light access. A couple of Panel members suggested taking some height off the east face or step it back and increasing the width of the courtyard.

One Panel member suggested honoring the historical context of the site with signage. As well adding some kind of hard space for art therapy was suggested. The Panel member thought the Kettle Society would be able to manage that program.

Regarding landscaping, it was suggested that the existing plantings probably aren't worth keeping and that they could be replaced with a different scale of plants. One Panel member suggested adding seating at the front of the building for the residents to enjoy the landscaping. Several Panel members were concerned that the extensive roof could be difficult to maintain. One Panel member suggested eliminating the green roof and using the money for double glazed windows in the heritage building.

Regarding sustainability, one Panel member suggested using a heat pump and using the old radiators in the heritage building. Also it was suggested that the applicant find ways to increase the thermal performance in the heritage building. As well adding solar panels to the roof for future use was also suggested. One Panel member noted that shading devices on the west façade was redundant given the trees that will shade the area.

- **Applicant’s Response:** Mr. Sakumoto said they would revisit the west side setback. Ms. Stamp said that the donor very much likes the rhododendrons so they are looking at keeping the existing plants.
2. Address: 1107 Seymour Street  
DE: N/A  
Description: A proposal for a 15-storey mixed-use building with social amenity space and affordable rental housing with an FSR of 8.69 and a maximum height of 155 feet.  
Zoning: DD to CD-1  
Application Status: Rezoning  
Review: First  
Owner: Wall Financial Corp.  
Architect: Endall Elliot Architects  
Delegation: Alan Endall, Endall Elliot Architects  
Gerry Eckford, ETA Landscape Architects  
Staff: Karen Hoese and Anita Molaro

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- Introduction: Karen Hoese, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a rezoning application for a site located at the southwest corner of Seymour and Helmcken Streets. Emery Barnes Park is across the street on the east side of Seymour Street. Ms. Hoese noted that the site is located within the Downtown District, Area L1; the New Yaletown sub-area. The Policy endorses high density residential development with limited commercial uses.

The rezoning application requests an increase in density and height beyond that permitted under the current zoning. The proposal is for 21,300 square feet of non-profit retail and office space in the lower four storeys of the building, 55,000 square feet of secured affordable rental housing in the upper eleven storeys (81 units) and two levels of underground parking accessed from the lane. Ms. Hoese remarked that provision of affordable housing is a high Council priority. Most recently, 2011, Council endorsed the Housing and Homelessness Strategy which includes strategic directions to increase of the supply of affordable housing. As well the proposal is subject to the Green Building Policy, which requires that rezoning commit to achieving a minimum of LEED™ Gold, with specific emphasis on optimized energy performance.

Anita Molaro, Development Planner, further described the proposal and described the context for the surrounding area. Across the street is Emery Barnes Park as well as a senior centre and a number of residential buildings. Chateau Granville Hotel is across the lane. The proposed site is considered a small site under the current provisions, which means the zoning would limit any development to a maximum height of 70 feet and an FSR of 3.0. However the zoning also permits low cost housing/social housing where the density could be increased to 5.0 FSR and a height of 120 feet. A density bonus provision to increase the density beyond the 5.0 FSR to accommodate public and/or social amenities such as social services centres is also permitted. Through the rezoning an increase in density is being requested to 8.72 FSR of which 2.36 FSR is for replacing the existing social service facilities on the site. Ms. Molaro added that many attributes of the proposal could be managed through a development permit process, however, the increase in height to 150 feet is something the Development Permit Board cannot relax and therefore the application requires a rezoning for the additional height.

The project consists of 81 residential units plus support/amenity space. The first floors consists of the social service agency, level 5 through 15 is the residential dwelling units. The ground floor has to accommodate two entries along its frontages; residential and social services entry along with retail related activities directly associated with the social service centre programs.
Ms. Molaro described the architectural plans noting that the façade expression adjacent to other sites should have the upper part of the massing articulated (above 70 feet) through spatial separation and an animated façade so as not to create a blank party wall condition. The building orientation has also been developed to address the highly visible nature of the site. Given the lower scaled buildings and the goal of achieving a high degree of articulation on the exposed facades on this prominent street, the objective was avoiding high blank walls with limited articulation. The applicant has proposed a strategy where they have provided a modest setback for a portion of the façade. The other variation from the guidelines is that there is a rear yard setback of 30 feet above the 708 foot upper massing.

The roofs are accessible for the residents and an outdoor space is provided off the level 7 floor amenity area.

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

- does the panel support the urban design response developed for this site:
  - tower form, massing, height (150 feet) and density (8.72 FSR);
  - building’s relationship/response to existing, proposed and future development;
  - public realm interface, open space design and landscape treatments;
  - LEED Gold/Sustainability strategies.

Ms. Hoese and Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

**Applicant’s Introductory Comments:** Alan Endall, Architect, further described the proposal noting the form of the building was governed by the Downtown South Design Guidelines. As it is a tight site they had to compensate for the loss of space with the south setback and have pushed the envelope out by three feet on the west property line on the lane side. They wanted to leave the exterior simple so the only articulation has to do with introducing some vertical cladding elements at the lower office levels. The residential floors have a more horizontal expression. They are planning on using the same materials on all four sides of the building. Detailing and texture are from sustainability considerations with elements that have to do energy requirements. On the southeast and northwest faces, they are introducing some vertical solar shading devices with small Juliette balconies. They are greening all the roof areas with an extensive green roof on the upper most roof and solar collectors. To provide visibility inside the building, the corner stair has some animation and an interconnection between levels. They are proposing a LEED™ Gold building.

Gerry Eckford, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans noting that along Helmcken Street there is a reasonable set back with some existing trees. They are planning to have a more open space in front of the grocery store area. They are trying to add a ribbon expression as a paving band similar to the Dr. Peter Centre which has a red graphic for their ribbon. On Level 4 there is a small terrace for outdoor seating and on Level 7 there is a small amenity space with a playhouse element and a seating area. At one end they are proposing a library for borrowing books and storing children’s toys.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

**Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

- Design development with respect to the loading area;
- Design development to improve the layout of some of the units;
- Design development to improve the light quality into the north facing units.
• **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a competent, well-presented project.

The Panel supported the height, massing and density and thought the zero lot line condition was well handled. The Panel also thought the project related well to existing and future developments. They also thought the public interface was well handled. A couple of Panel members noted that it was a refreshing change from a podium glass tower and thought the project would add a lot of richness to the street.

The Panel supported the public realm interface and landscape treatments however several Panel members had some concerns regarding the loading area and suggested the applicant have another look. They felt it was a shame that so much corner space was given up to the service bay.

The Panel felt the relationship to the street and the openness that leads into the park worked well. A couple of Panel members had some concerns with some of the unit layouts. As well, a couple of Panel members thought the north facing units wouldn’t get a lot of natural light and suggested reviewing the vocabulary.

One Panel member suggested using the money for public art by adding a three dimensional art installation that is relevant between the art and the AIDS community. Another Panel member thought that acknowledging the AIDS ribbon was a terrific addition.

The Panel commended the applicant for a LEED™ Gold project. One Panel member acknowledged the solar panels on the roof but suggested the applicant might need to increase their sustainability strategy to meet the City’s green initiative. Another Panel member thought there should be more consideration given to social sustainability and to review the public realm for social interaction.

• **Applicant’s Response:** Mr. Endall said he agreed with the comments regarding the units and that they needed some further work.
Introduction: Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a 4-storey building with commercial at the base and residential above. The site is located midblock between East 49th and 50th Avenues on Victoria Drive. The site has a slope and as a result there are five levels at the rear of the building. A pair of two-level condominium units is set below the commercial lane grade and behind the loading bay. Light wells are intended to provide daylight and access to air for inboard bedrooms.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the architectural and landscape design in general, and in particular:
- Relationship of two-level dwelling unit to commercial lane and loading bay;
- Liveability for habitable rooms facing into interior light well and below-grade patio.

Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

Applicant’s Introductory Comments: Gwill Symonds, Architect, further described the proposal noting that the light wells will give more light into the units but will also provide a pleasant outlook to some greenery. The skylights in the center of the light wells which drop light down into the commercial unit. A small meeting room is proposed off the lobby area. Mr. Symonds described the material palette noting the glass fritting system with the top level being clear, the middle section is particularly fritted for colour and the lower section will be a solid frit.

Scott Kennedy said he thought it was important that the units on the lane are two level suites with the living area on the top level. They are kind of a family unit with direct access to the outside.

Catherine MacDonald, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans noting that there is landscaping in the light wells and off the rear units. There is some seasonal variation in the plant material. On the rear there is built-in bench seating and on both sides there will be some cedar hedging for screening and separation from the loading area.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:
- Design development to the loading area;
- Design development to give more privacy to the units in the light well;
- Consider making the residential entry stronger.

**Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal.

The Panel thought the units on the lane were well handled in general, but thought the applicant could improve the layout so the bedrooms aren’t next to the loading area. It was also suggested that the loading area could be rearranged to be perpendicular to the lane by bringing the area to the south side which would require shifting the garbage area but it would allow an expansion of the garden area for the suites. It was also suggested that they could take some floor area out of the retail space to make the area work better.

With respect to the liveability for the habitable rooms into the interior light wells, some of the Panel thought that was supportable but that the applicant needed to study the arrangement of the windows to provide privacy. Several Panel members suggested adding shutters or frits and eliminating decks to improve the privacy interface between the units. One Panel member suggested adding some white noise through a water feature that would create some acoustical separation.

A couple of Panel members suggested the applicant reconsider how the signage band and canopy came together and would like to see the composition of the elevation tie the retail into the residential more strongly instead of having the signage band running across the building. As well they thought the residential entry needed some design development with one Panel member suggested the entry be celebrated more.

There is no requirement for sustainability, but one Panel member suggested a rough-in for solar panels on the roof and individual hot water tanks in each suite.

**Applicant's Response:** Mr. Kennedy noted that they have a commercial tenant in mind so they are going to need every square foot of the retail space but they would look at the loading to see if they could make it work better for the residential units. He added that he thought the comments were fair noting that his team had struggled with every issue the Panel brought up.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.