

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: Wednesday March 03, 2021

TIME: 4:00 pm

PLACE: WebEx

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Angela Enman (excused from item 3)
Michael Henderson
Adrien Rahbar
Sydney Schwartz
Walter Francl
Karenn Krangle
Margot Long

REGRETS: Brittany Coughlin
Alan Davies
Jennifer Stamp
Marie-Odile Marceau

RECORDING SECRETARY: K. Cermeno

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1. | 526 Granville Street |
| 2. | 8460 Ash Street & 8495 Cambie Street (Ashley Mar Co-op) |
| 3. | 3701-3743 W Broadway |

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1. Address: 526 Granville Street
Permit No. RZ-2020-00053
Description: To develop a 24-storey mixed-use office building with payment-in-lieu parking spaces and 95 bicycle spaces. The total floor area is 11,684.84 sq. m (125,774.57 sq. ft.): approximately 11,445 sq. m (123,193 sq. ft.) of office space and approximately 239 sq. m (2,573 sq. ft.) of commercial space at grade. The proposed building height is 102 m (335 ft.) and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 20.98. The application is being considered under the Downtown Official Development Plan and Rezoning Policy for the Central Business District (CBD) and CBD shoulder.
- Application Status: Rezoning Application
Review: First
Architect: Perkins + Will
Staff: Nicholas Danford + Carl Stanford
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EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (7/0)

- **Introduction:**
- Rezoning Planner, Nicholas Danford, began by noting the rezoning application for the proposal at 526 Granville Street was received back in October 2020.

The project proposes to rezone from Downtown District to CD-1 in order to allow for a 24-storey office building, containing a commercial unit at grade. The proposal includes partial retention of Leckie Block Building constructed in 1898. The Leckie Block building is a three storey B listed heritage building currently containing office and retail uses.

The proposal includes approximately 11,445 sq m of office space on the 24-storeys resulting in a proposed FSR of 20.98 and a height of 335 feet.

The enabling policy that allows for consideration of this proposal is the Rezoning Policy for the CBD and CBD shoulder. This project is located in the heart of the CBD near the intersection of Granville and West Pender Streets.

The enabling policy for this area allows for consideration of additional density for office and other job generating uses. As far as urban design is concerned, the enabling policy does not limit height, tower separation and other form of development considerations.

Development Planner Carl Stanford, began by noting the proposed development is located at the intersection of two lanes (a side and rear lane) and the 500 Granville street block in an area of important heritage character. The subject site is rectangular in shape measuring 15.24m /50' by 36.5m/120'. It is located in the core of the Downtown District zoned DD, sub area B (FSR 9) with an approximate site area of 557sqm (5996sq.ft).

The sites in the surrounding context are mostly zoned CD-1 or DD and are predominantly commercial in character. Granville Street has traditionally been a major retail street in Vancouver's downtown area. The neighborhood is currently characterized by a mix of retail, office, and to a lesser degree some residential buildings. The existing built context includes a

3-storey commercial building directly adjoining the site with the S.F.U class 'A' heritage building located on the other side across the lane. The block also has a number of heritage buildings located in it including a class 'B' building at 560 Granville. There are also three buildings (class 'A', 'B', 'C') along the 600 W Pender and two class B's on the 500 Seymour side. In terms of existing tower buildings, there is a ~17 storey commercial building southwards, an ~17 storey commercial building westwards and the aforementioned 10 storey commercial class 'B' heritage building directly to the east.

The applicable form of development governing policies, which affect the site include:

- The Downtown District Official Development Plan (1975)
- Downtown (except Downtown South) Design Guidelines
- Downtown District (Except Downtown South) Character Areas Description
- View Protection Guidelines (1989, last amended 2011)

Under the existing The Downtown District Official Development Plan (1975), the max outright height under current zoning area B is 91.4m/ 300'. After considering the criteria, the Development Permit Board may increase the basic maximum height to no more than 137.2m/ 450'. There is also a view cone over the site (Viewcone 3.2.3 Queen Elizabeth Park) which is the main height restriction at ~102m/336'. The max permitted FSR under existing zoning is nine.

The site is located in Downtown District (Except Downtown South) Character Area E 'The Core'. High-density office is encouraged with retail continuity to be provided at or near street level. Pedestrian interest should be provided through attractive and highly visible entrances, windows, displays, landscaping where appropriate, and other amenities. Extensive parking is discouraged. City Council has adopted view cones to protect selected threatened public views. The site lies under the view cone 12.2 Granville Bridge at ~109m/359', view cones 9.1/9.2.2 Cambie Bridge at ~105m/343', and view cones 3.2.3 Queen Elizabeth Park at ~102m/336'. No rear setback is required. Treatment of the rear portions of buildings along Granville Street should respond sensitively to adjacent residential developments across the lane so as not to diminish the quality of enhancements to the lane environment. There are no existing residential developments in the immediate area. Separation distances for residential to residential buildings are recommended as a minimum 24m/ 80' and for office to residential tower buildings a range of 18m-24m /60-80' is recommended based on the particular contextual situation. For office-to-office tower buildings, there is no separation requirement.

The form of development is comprised of a solid glazed rectangular 'box' component with an internal diagrid structure, which rests upon the existing 3-storey heritage Leckie building. There is an interstitial sloped glazed transition between the main body of the tower of the Leckie building diagonally recessing inwards along the chiasmus structure. The retail entrance is accessed off Granville Street side and serviced from the rear. The main office lobby entrance is also accessed off Granville Street through a narrow lobby that leads to the main floors above. The building has a small narrow strip of outdoor amenity space located on the roof of the heritage building. The commercial space is serviced by a loading bay at the rear lane side, connected via a loading corridor that runs along the edge of the building. The loading bay will service the commercial and retail components of the building. All bicycle parking and change facilities will be securely housed below grade in the basement level. There is no significant impact from shadowing of the building. The palette for the building has been developed with a liberal use of glass, and unspecified solid panels. The steel diagrid structure behind the glass fades during the day and is visible at night.

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

- Is the height, massing and density appropriate to the subject site, context and execution of the proposed rezoning application?
- Please comment on the architectural design of the proposal, its articulation of massing, whether the rendition of the facades are successful (especially at pedestrian levels avoiding impersonal facades), and if a harmonious spatial volume has been achieved by sensitive proportioning and dimensioning of the building elements.
- Please comment on the contextual fit, considering the buildings compatibility with the surrounding area, its contribution to the general skyline, its proximal relationship with the immediate built environment and its intrinsic excellence of form.
- Please comment on execution of the heritage aspect of the proposal and whether it respects the scale and historic quality of the urban block it inhabits while successfully harmonizing with the existing heritage building on site.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The Leckie Building is one of the surviving buildings of the Romanesque Revival style. The current uses are retail at grade with a mezzanine with two levels of office use and some crawl space.

The City requirement for bicycle parking and other services led to the use of the basement levels below for this purpose.

The conservation strategy is one of restoration. The structural requirements and substantial change of the internal building fabric over the course of time led to retention of the three of the historic facades as being the primary element of the heritage strategy. The intention is to return the façade to its original condition. The Leckie building is a very simple structure and homogenous in its character.

With the Leckie building there are no clear dimensions. This is to create a picturesque building, which diffuses the relationship between the inside and the outside. The applicant noted they are putting new floors back in and will be in the same height and location as before so the relationship to the windows will be maintained in that manner. The applicant noted they are restoring the original entries minus the steps, which would no longer work with the raised grade of the street since its original construction.

There is 21-storey addition above the Leckie building. The applicant noted the proposal is a very conceptually pure. They wished to create a clear juxtaposition to the existing heritage building on site with a contemporary building sitting above. It is a slim structure with elegant proportions and sympathetic to the heritage nature along Granville. The envelope will be triple glazed for sustainability and energy performance purposes. At roof level rain harvesting is proposed. The heritage buildings heat pumps will be separate from the office building above.

At the ground floor there is a unique T-intersection. Loading occurs at the back where there are two class B and one class A loading spaces. There is a service elevator for goods and bicycle access. There are 95 bicycling spots as well as mechanical and electrical services in the basement. The existing streetscape and tree will be retained.

The staff and applicant team then took questions from the panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **MR. FRANCL** and seconded by **MS. LONG** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **Recommend Resubmission** of the project with the panel comments addressed and following recommendations:

- Consider a rooftop amenity;
Design development for the parapet condition detail;
- Design development to the south facing wall at the elevator core with intent for additional animation; and,
- Consider measures to animate the lane.

Related Commentary:

There was overall support for the height, massing, siting and contextual fit of the building but some concerns expressed relating to the interface conditions from the new tower to the existing building and detail issues.

Most panel members noted that the building is appropriate to the Granville Street area, aesthetically beautiful, bold and elegant in form. They further noted the unique slenderness of the tower brought variation to the area and would be striking on the skyline.

Most panel members supported the approach with the heritage strategy and noted with interest that the Vancouver Heritage committee did not.

One panelist noted it was challenging to assess the project without any input from the senior planning team of GM regarding the Vancouver plan, the future vision of Vancouver.

Some panelists noted concern about the rendition of the massing at the rear lane side with no setback.

Most panel members highlighted the lack of sufficient amenity in the building. They noted additional amenity at the roof would make sense, as the strip of landscaping space on the Leckie roof was insufficient.

Some panelists noted the tower recess should be pulled back further from the Leckie building parapet and were conflicted about the interface with the Leckie building in its current state. Although the transition was conceptually attractive following the line of the diagrid, the recessed edge was too narrow leading to an uncomfortable rooftop space. It would be preferable to follow a more gently sloped transition.

One panelist noted that the tower had the illusion of greater height due to its slenderness. The class A heritage SFU building on the corner opposite the proposed site was unlikely to develop as a tower site and therefore this location was a logical place for a tower on the block.

One panelist noted at development permit stage the solid portion on the south elevation facing the neighbor will need further consideration as its very prominent and a blank or solid façade there would be undesirable.

One panelist noted that the building was a wonderful addition to the multifaceted Granville Street and incorporated an effective heritage strategy but could use additional animation along the side lane, which offered a potential opportunity for public realm.

Applicant's Response: The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments.

2. Address: 8460 Ash Street & 8495 Cambie Street
Permit No. RZ-2019-00081
Description: To develop the site with three mixed-use towers at 16, 27, and 31 storeys. The proposal includes 1-for-1 replacement of the existing 54 Ashley Mar Housing Co-operative units, 71 additional non-market housing units, and 524 secured market rental units; all over 3-4 levels of underground parking consisting of 195 vehicle spaces and 1,297 bicycle spaces. The total floor area is 48,458 sq. m (521,611 sq. ft.), the maximum building height is 92.8 m (304 ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 8.21. Following the original application submission in July 2019, the proposal has been revised to include additional height and density to accommodate additional market rental housing units, and for increased setbacks along Ash Street to allow for improved tree retention. The application is being considered under the Marpole Community Plan and the Ashley Mar Issues Report (February 11, 2020).
- Application Status: Rezoning Application
Review: First
Architect: Perkins + Will Architects
Staff: Scott Erdman and Derek Robinson

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (7/0)

- **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Scott Erdman, presented this rezoning application at 8460 Ash Street & 8495 Cambie Street, also known as the Ashley Mar Co-op site.

The site is an L-shaped property located in Marpole, south of SW Marine Drive, between Ash Street and Cambie Street, and is bi-sected by a City-owned lane. It is a block away from the Marine Drive Station on the Canada Line. Site is zoned RT-2, currently developed with 2-storey wooden townhouses constructed in 1983. Together the 54 units form the Ashley Mar Housing Co-op.

The site is located within the Cambie sub-area of the Marpole Community Plan, which anticipates mixed-use developments up to 12 storeys in height atop a 4-storey podium. There is no maximum density, rather the density is determined through urban design performance. The Marpole Plan's housing policies also provide direction for the Ashley Mar site and other social housing and inclusionary sites. Rezoning can be considered to renew and increase the stock of social housing, recognizing that projects can include a market housing component (rental or ownership) to assist with project funding. Where new development is proposed and social housing is included, modest increases in height and density can be considered to assist with project viability.

In July 2019 the proponents of the Ashley Mar Housing Co-op submitted a rezoning application to redevelop the site with social and rental housing that exceeds the height limits of the Marpole Community Plan, while prioritizing the delivery of affordable housing. In February 2020 staff brought forward an Issues Report to Council to gain permission for staff to consider the application, conduct detailed analysis, and seek input from the public and advisory bodies to help shape the proposal. The Issues Report also identified a list of housing affordability and

other criteria to help evaluate this proposal, in addition to future proposals on neighbouring sites identified for social or inclusionary housing. Since that time, staff have also commenced work on analysis for the larger Marine Landing area to support a growing population and employment hub. This work will deliver new guidelines which will help inform future rezoning enquiries on the sites indicated on the map on screen, for social housing or intensive employment uses.

Following the original application submission, the proposal has been revised to include additional height and density to accommodate additional market rental housing units, and for increased setbacks along Ash Street to allow for improved tree retention. The proposal before you is for a mixed-use development, and includes:

- three towers at 16, 27 and 31 storeys.
- 54 replacement co-op units, 71 social housing units intended as an expansion of the co-op, and 524 secured market rental units
- 1 commercial-retail unit fronting Cambie Street
- A mid-block pedestrian connection at the southern side
- A floor space ratio (FSR) of 8.21
- A max building height of 92.8 m (304 ft.)

Development Planner, Derek Robinson, began by noting that the proposal represents a relatively new model for the City of delivering social housing within a 100% rental project, rather than having a strata condo component, as is more typical. We don't yet have that many examples of this model built here in the City. Delivering social housing or below-market rental within a market rental project inherently requires greater height and density, which can pose urban design challenges in certain situations.

The proposal consists of three towers on a site separated by a City lane. The Cambie site has approximately 118' of frontage with a depth of 166' and the tallest proposed tower at 31 storeys. The Ash site has a frontage of 261' and a depth of 166' consisting of two towers on a 6 storey podium, including a 27 storey tower of market rental and a 16 storey tower of non-market Social Housing which is intended to be owned by the Ashley Mar Co-op. There is a proposed subdivision line shown on the plans.

He also noted the sites slope down approximately 6 m from Ash Street to Cambie Street along the lane and the future mid-block connection.

The Council Issues Report allows staff to consider additional height on this site, in order to maximize the delivery of social housing. The Issues Report laid out some general criteria for consideration of additional height. The Marpole Plan does not prescribe density or number of towers for this site and so the primary relaxation being considered is the increase in height beyond the 12 storeys outlined in the Plan.

There is work underway on a set of guidelines for the Marine Landing area, which is work coming out of the Issues report to Council, as well as work on an Employment Lands and Economic Review. While work on these guidelines is happening concurrently with this proposal, staff wanted to highlight a few early emerging directions for context:

Firstly, is an intent to reinforce Marine Landing as a unique gateway into the City of Vancouver. There is also a general recognition that the area is deficient in parks and infiltrating green space. With regard to public realm, the guidelines intend to encourage a connected linear

network of public spaces. Ash street is identified as a Park Connector street, with a focus on connections to the river.

Important to note is that the Guidelines will not set maximum heights or densities, but that said, marine gateway tower is still intended to be the tallest point, at approximately 379' in geodetic elevation. No net new shadowing will be permitted on Ash Park between 10 am and 4 pm on either equinox for any site seeking additional height beyond the Plan.

Also relevant context is the rezoning application at 622 SW Marine Drive across Ash Street which is currently submitted and will come to the panel for review in late April. This is on the triangular site currently occupied with a Denny's restaurant.

Currently proposed on that site is 100% rental with a below market component and a childcare in the form of two towers approximately 32 and 28 storeys high with a six storey mixed-use podium along Marine Drive, three storey residential along Ash Street and retained trees and a mid-sized public plaza to the south along 70th Avenue.

In connection with these two proposals, several public realm upgrades are expected. The required active link Mid-block connection will connect pedestrians from the south end of the Skytrain station to the proposed public plaza on the Denny's site and the intersection of 70th and Marine. Note that only half the anticipated 30 ft. width of the mid-block is being delivered through this project, with the other 15 ft. to be secured if and when the industrial property to the south redevelops.

You can also see mature tree retention on Ash Street as part of this proposal and along 70th as part of the 622 Marine Drive proposal. As noted, Ash Street is identified as a Park connector street and will be upgraded to include planted corner bulges with seating, stormwater infrastructure, and a raised cycle connection leading down towards the riverfront. A new pedestrian and cycle signal will be installed to cross Marine Drive to connect on to Ash Park.

This application was revised and resubmitted in December 2020 and included several revisions including reduced tower depths, an increase in height, the retention of several large mature trees along Ash Street and the parkade being pulled back from Ash Street to allow for stormwater infrastructure.

All three towers have floor plates of approximately 6500 sq ft and achieve an 80' separation from any other existing, proposed or anticipated future tower.

Both market towers are setback approximately 30' from the shared property line. Normally staff would seek 40' from each property, however, it has been confirmed that sufficient site area is available on both adjacent properties to land the anticipated future towers with a minimum 80' separation.

The Marpole and Cambie plans identify the Marine Landing area as a unique gateway to the City of Vancouver that is the first and last view and impression of the city for people arriving by air and travelling to Vancouver on the Canada Line. The southern elevations of all three towers are likely to remain highly visible in the long term as land to the south is zoned Industrial with a current maximum height of 100 ft. Staff invite the panel to provide comments on this consideration.

A number of existing towers along Cambie Street have a north-south tower orientation. This sets a sort of rhythm to how the transit node is experienced as one moves through.

Staff do recognize that a relative increase in height above the Plan being considered here will have some further incremental shadow impacts on properties and sidewalks to the north and on public spaces around the skytrain station during some of the afternoon hours. A key consideration was to have no additional shadow impacts on Ash Park to the north during either equinox. The additional shadow impact on public space needs to be weighed against the additional market rental and social housing that would be secured through this development proposal.

Given the scope of this proposal, the panel will have a chance to review this project again as part of a DP process, and detailed unit layouts will be available for review at that time. Common indoor and outdoor amenities are provided in the Ash Street buildings including a shared courtyard with adjacent indoor spaces, a shared podium roof garden with adjacent indoor spaces and common rooftop patio space. The Cambie street building provides a common outdoor patio on the podium fronting the street with adjacent indoor space and common rooftop patio space.

Lastly to note is that the Rezoning Policy for Sustainable Large Developments does apply to this proposal, due to the total floor area proposed. The applicant has outlined their proposed sustainability strategy beginning on page 46 of the booklet.

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

Height + Massing

In the context of Council directing staff to consider additional height and density beyond what the Marpole Plan prescribes in order to maximize delivery of Social Housing:

Does the Panel support the proposed massing, height and density?

Does the proposal successfully respond to the existing rhythm and context of towers in the Marine Landing area?

Does the proposal contribute positively to an 'entrance gateway' for the City of Vancouver as seen from the Skytrain bridge crossing the Fraser River, recognizing that future towers to the south may be unlikely due to the existing Industrial zoning?

Please comment on the tower-podium and streetwall relationships to each other, to the mid-block connection and to future mixed-use developments to the north..

Public Realm

Does the proposal contribute to a successful public realm that serves the existing and future neighbourhood?

Does the proposal create a successful interface with the required mid-block connection?

Sustainability + Livability

To inform future design development, please provide any preliminary comments with regard to the sustainability strategies proposed and the overall livability of the development.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The applicant noted delivering affordable housing continues to be a priority for the project.

There are two properties associated with this project on Cambie and Ash Street.

The height and density is following the guidelines along with the setbacks and floorplates with some increase to create more units.

The applicant noted a three-tower expression was the best.

The plan has activated the ground plain as much as possible. There is a mews that will cut through the block.

The applicant noted when developing the cladding strategy they decided to create a more porous façade on the East and West and a more solid one on the North and South façade.

The applicant noted they created a recess on the tower to separate the towers from the podium. Materials used on the podium is brick. The entrance to the tower is very identifiable.

There is a number of townhomes on the lane to make it more active while still pedestrian friendly. The applicant is using as much surface on the tower for the amenity spaces.

The applicant noted they created as much amenity and landscape possible to offset some of the height. Landscape is working closely with the existing coop to create a program that includes nature and quality.

There are ground level patios that respect the townhomes entries and trees. There is a shared common amenity deck. On level seven, there is an expansive kid's play area.

At the rooftop, each tower has separate private area. There is space for lounging and dining.

At Cambie street there are ground level townhouses along the laneway. There are CRU unit entries off of Cambie street that will combine with the residential lobby entry.

The window to wall ratio is 42 percent. All the units have daylight coming in.

The staff and applicant team then took questions from the panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **MR. SHARMA** and seconded by **MR. ENMAN** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

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

- Consider variation to tower form and orientation;
- Design development to the public realm and architecture at the midblock connector and all building faces.

Related Commentary:

There was general support from the panel.

There was general support for the height and massing. The concerns regarding the height and massing were further design development and finesse and bit more differentiation.

There was some concerns regarding the architectural expression however, the panel recognized this is still a rezoning.

The panel noted there is a formalness about the configuration and particularly the way the podium is expressed, the character feels very formal.

The panel noted the podium in terms of architectural expression is well handled the proportions are well thought out its very livable.

The panel noted in an area where trying to create some hype the project is a bit of a loss opportunity. In this regard, it is more successful along Cambie Street. and along Ash Street it's a bit more of a Carte blanc.

There was a number of comments around the public realm especially how the mid-block connector is being evolved there could be more activation. There is a bit of awkwardness with the Townhomes around the midblock connector and awkwardness around the corner and parking entries. The panel noted concern with the steep climbs into their landings.

The panel noted a lot of appreciation for the amount of amenity space being provided above grade.

Applicant's Response: The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments.

3. Address: 3701-3743 W Broadway
Permit No. DP-2020-00888
Description: To develop a 14-storey mixed-use building with 164 secured market rental units and commercial retail at grade; all over two levels of underground parking consisting of 51 parking spaces and 285 bicycle spaces. The proposed floor area is 11,364.4 sq. m (122,325.4 sq.ft.), the proposed building height is 52.6 m (176.6 ft.), and a floor space ratio (FSR) of 5.27.
- Application Status: Rezoning Application
Review: Second (First as DP)
Architect: Leckie Studio
Staff: Patrick Chan

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (5/0)

- **Introduction:**

Development Planner Pat Chan started with the objective of this Urban Design Panel (UDP) Session: To review how the application has responded to the previous UDP's recommendations (March 2020). Recommendations were:

- Develop a more residential character by reconsidering the fin-frame expression
- Improve livability with more direct access to natural light and air; and
- Address the interface with the westerly single-family houses.

Chan then note the height, massing and program were approved at Council Hearing (October 2020), and that this UDP session aims to refine details rather than make large moves. He followed with reviewing the key changes made in response to the UDP's March 2020 recommendations:

- **Replacing the phenolic fin-frame with cement-panels:** This helped lower the building's perceived height and volume as the panels, unlike the fin-frame, neither extended a full floor above the roof-level nor ballooned out two feet from the walls. The cement-panels was also the applicant's interpretation of the neighbourhood's residential context; the panels' fluted surface and texture was a reference to some of the vicinity's residential towers built in the 60s and 70s. Removing the fin-frame also allowed the windows and balconies to have more direct access to natural light and air.
- **Increasing the west setback for Levels 2, 3 and 4:** Increasing the setback from the initial 15 ft. to 20 ft. 'opens' this intermediary space between the building and the single-family houses to the west.

This cement-panels version was presented in the Rezoning-Report and at Council Hearing (October 2020). Chan then noted the Rezoning Conditions complemented the UDP's recommendations: to express a residential character; to not increase any impacts on its surroundings (e.g. additional shadowing, etc.); to not increase appearance of height; to develop the public realm and public art elements; and, to attend to livability and privacy issues for both the building's future residents as well as the immediate neighbours. The applicant's Development Permit Application (November 2020) shows a similar building with no changes in height, density or setbacks.

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

How has the revised façade addressed the UDP’s recommendation for a more residential character?

(Notes: Residential character need not mimic existing neighbourhood building-typologies and massing; it can explore different interpretations of “residential-ness” through novel juxtaposition of materials, colours, window-composition, ratio of solid-vs-voids, porosity, balcony-locations, lighting, treatment of soffits, reveals, etc.?)

How does the Building’s Expression relate the broader Public Realm at various levels?

(Notes: How does the building – its choice of materials, colours, etc. – relate to the Alma-Broadway junction at the immediate level of the space around the retail-units and sidewalks; and at the broader block level as it is seen further away? This requires understanding “public realm” as more than the outdoor seating/planting plans.)

How might the Public Art be integrated into the building?

(Notes: Being at a key junction presents an opportunity for the public art to not just be a stand-alone piece but be more integrated into the building design/expression. The public art element may contribute to building identity.)

How has the Entryway Design been expressed?

(Notes: Besides the obvious wayfinding function, entryway design, especially for the residences, is an opportunity to contribute to a building’s identity at a more intimate pedestrian-scale.)

How has the design ensured livability?

(Notes: This relates to the units’ access to light/air, and condition of common/private indoor/outdoor spaces.)

Applicant’s Introductory Comments:

- The applicant noted this project has a relatively high amount of architecture ambition for moderate-income rental housing. But through standardization, the project achieves value and economy.
- The modularity of the unit themselves and 12 ft. x 12 ft. grid module helps the project to remain economical while also helping the design. For example, the modularity of the units and the 12 ft. x 12 ft. grid is reflected in the façade’s modularity. Alongside this grid, the applicant noted they are using precast and prefabricated technology. But they are however still exploring different versions of cladding material for the project. The main idea is to bring value to the stakeholders and residences by focusing on livability, as well as the quality of materials.
- Livability-wise, the balconies can open up to two orientations to improve air-flow and natural lighting; and also helps break down the solidity of the building. Related to this issue, they are evaluating removing the solid infill panels to create more glazing and porosity into the units’ interior. The applicant also noted there are no inboard bedrooms to ensure access to light and ventilation.
- Public realm interface wise, there is a large amount of transparency at the CRU on the corner helps activate the corner, and to connect the inside with the exterior streetscape. The entryways at grade express cycle-friendly architecture. Core aspects of this project is a bicycle friendly culture.

- The applicant noted they are meeting the 35 percent requirement of family units as per the policy.
- The applicant noted they are currently working with public art consultants to see what opportunities there are to integrate art into the building.

The staff and applicant team then took questions from the panel.

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by MR. FRANCL and seconded by MS. LONG and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel SUPPORTS the project with the following recommendations to be reviewed by City Staff:

- Consider the extent of the overhang along Broadway and Alma;
- Continue to further develop the design of the materiality and tone of the cladding; and,
- Consider ways the public art to not interfere with the circulation of the public realm.

Related Commentary:

- There was general support for the project.
- The panel found the project to be a great piece of architecture.
- The moves to create a more residential expression were acknowledged.
- There were some concerns regarding the way the building fit with tis context the panel found it technically tight.
- There was concern with the livability of some of the suites as they are presently tight. In some locations the suites do appear to meet the minimum standards.
- The panel noted further design development with the proportions and materiality. For example, the panel noted volumes 2 and 3 currently are half a shift too far, and suggest bringing it back in a bit. And, the final materiality could be warmer for a friendlier building expression.
- There is a good mix of retail.
- The panel noted there was not a lot of information regarding the public art but hopes it is as high level as the building; and noted to consider its placement to not interfere with the corner of the building. It should be in a place where it can be appreciated.
- The panel found the entryways are successfully designed and do not need further expression or development.

Applicant's Response: The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments.