

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: March 30, 2022

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Webex

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Natalie Telewiak	
Jennifer Stamp	excused item 3
Alyssa Koehn	
Meeta Lele	
Adrian Rahbar	
Scott Romses	
Jessie Gregson	
Brittany Coughlin	excused item 1
Alan Boniface	excused 2 & 3

RECORDING

SECRETARY: K. Cermeno

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 688 Cambie St (Vancouver Art Gallery)
2. 6151-6261 Granville St & 1511 W 47th Ave
3. 8460 Ash Street & 8495 Cambie Street

Chair Natalie Telewiak called the meeting to order at 3:05pm and noted the presence of a quorum. The panel then considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 688 Cambie (Vancouver Art Gallery)
Permit No. DP-2021-00171
Description: To develop a new 10 storey building (Passive House) consisting of social, Recreational and Cultural Use, (Library, Art Gallery, Theatre, Artist Studio), Retail Commercial Use, Childcare and ancillary office use; all over 3 below grade levels, 1 serving as a parking level.
Zoning: DD
Application Status: Complete Development Application
Architect: Perkins and Will/ Herzog and De Meuron
Staff: Hamid Shayan

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (8/0)

Planners' Introductions:

Development planner, Hamid Shayan, began by noting this is a proposed DP application for the new Vancouver Art Gallery, a 10-storey passive house and it will be a multi-functional art centre and community space.

The project is located on the Larwill Park site in the cultural district of the Vancouver downtown peninsula. Its boundaries are West Georgia Street to the south, Cambie Street to the west and Beatty Street to the east.

The Gallery has grown and moved three times since it first opened in 1931, with the most recent move in 1983 to the historic courthouse building on Robson Square. There is also a long history of significant planning process been recorded since 2005 when the gallery and City explored 12 sites and concluded that 688 Cambie Street is the preferred option. Later on, Council approved a cultural precinct that included a two block "Heart of the Precinct consisting of the queen Elizabeth theatre and development of 688 Cambie Street.

In 2013, the council authorized of this land under a long-term lease agreement to the Vancouver Art gallery Society, as a not- for profit organization to construct a new innovative purpose-built Art gallery under the Vancouver's Cultural plan.

The site which is currently a surface parking lot, will be divided into two parcels; the northern portion of the site which is currently occupied by 2 temporary modular housing buildings, representing one third of the total site area and will be held by the City of Vancouver for future (Commercial) development, whilst the Vancouver Art Gallery will occupy two thirds of the total site area at the south. The two parcels will be separated by a service lane.

The site is surrounded by public institutions: the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Vancouver Public Library, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Vancouver Community College and the Beatty Street Drill Hall known as the Armoury. It is also located adjacent to the busy Stadium-Chinatown SkyTrain Station and the strip of crosstown restaurants on Beatty Street. Additionally, one block further southeast are two large sports venues, BC Place and Rogers Arena.

The proposed removal of the Dunsmuir and West Georgia Street viaducts permits development of public open green space to the east. Redevelopment in this area provides opportunity for new traffic patterns. Two way traffic is proposed to replace current one way, east bound traffic along West Georgia and Dunsmuir Streets. Connections between neighbourhoods are expected to improve with the removal of the viaducts and planning for enhanced walking, cycling and driving options.

Hamid Shayan continued the new Vancouver Art Gallery comprised of 2 components: A tower building, reaches the view cone limit and expressed as a series of stacked volumes sits in the centre of a rectangular courtyard, framed by a low-rise perimeter wooden structure. At street level, the low building lines the streets and frames an open-air courtyard around the Gallery.

The courtyard is accessible through all three surrounding street facades. As a semi-public space, it is also designed to accommodate daily pedestrian flow through the site from adjacent neighbourhoods. This building also provides opportunities to create art for children and adults, students, local, national and international artists, and citizens.

This application provides required setbacks from W. Georgia and Beatty St. and proposed a 30' wide service lane to separate 2 lots. The main level, accommodated restaurant, café, bar and potential art spaces for the public use around the courtyard.

The parking is at basement 3 and the atrium and other back of house use are located in basement 2 and 1.

Pedestrian walkway at Cambie Street is widened at the Georgia intersection, providing an opportunity for a double row of street trees at the outdoor gathering space at the café/ bookstore interface of the gallery. The lower building also responds to the topography along West Georgia. The roofline follows the slope of the street, resulting in a building that is consistently low from one corner of the block to the next.

Development Planner, Hamid Shayan, also noted that as an additional aspect of the project's relaunch in 2021, the Architect were asked to consider the culture and history of the First Nations peoples of British Columbia in the design and materiality of the façade. Wood and copper both hold significant cultural value in the material history of British Columbia. The weaving concept has been developed in collaboration with local indigenous artists Debra Sparrow.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on:

Public Realm and Landscape Strategies:

With understanding that this building is targeted to be a future cultural landmark, Please provide feedback on the followings:

- a. Courtyard's relationship to the public realm and public /private interface especially at the W. Georgia St. and Cambie St. corner (QE Theatre Plaza). Special attention should be given on:
 - Sense of openness, considered for "Heart of the Precinct" by Council and previous Urban Design Panel

- Creation of a vibrant, creative, and integrated public space
 - b. The overall performance of the courtyard as a gathering space, with special consideration on the scale and proportion, landscape arrangements, and access to daylight.
 - c. The proposed location of the entrances and their contribution to the existing pedestrian realm.

Overall Design Development and Materiality:

1. Does the overall architectural massing adequately respond to the urban design principles? Special consideration should be given to the increased shadow impact on the Queen Elizabeth Plaza resulted from new massing.
2. Does the proposed material treatment serve to enhance the overall Sustainable design principles and cultural references?

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The applicant began by noting there was a change in leadership with the gallery. During the process of revision, the gallery meet with the Chief of the aboriginal host nations and worked with four artist that represent the four aboriginal groups.

The goal is to create a sense of openness while activating the street with a good frontage and activation. The shape of the building is intentional to allow for light and air. The tall geometry being recessed from the City and streets allows for an open space at the bottom. The courtyard has been designed low so that it benefits from the openness.

The corner of Cambie and West Georgia is the entry to the public café and book store and allows one immediately into the program and courtyard. The sidewalks on cambie street have a wideness that spills into the public realm. There will be a gathering space outdoor that can be used for events.

The 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. Boniface** and **Ms. Peeroj** was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

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

- Consider refinement of design perimeter volume to ensure connectivity and welcoming presence for all, with special attention to the SW corner;
- Consider refinement of security approach to ground plane;
- Enhance articulation of lower level volume to compliment upper levels;
- Design development of rooftop treatment and porch like spaces to contribute to sustainability and programming opportunities.

Related Commentary:

The panel was generally supportive of the project.

Panel supported the parti of the building, the general design approach and concept.

The form and boldness of the building has been handled well.

The symmetry of the scheme is good.

The expression of the gallery boxes separated by a bottom open space is successful.

The porch light spaces are a remarkable feature of the building.

A panelist noted the relationship to Queenie square is intriguing and the urban conversation is working well. The shadows in the morning are irrelevant.

Another panelist noted the idea with the gate is problematic as Queenie plaza and CBC plaza does not close at night.

A panelist suggested to express the perimeter of the building differently, presently it is “too Vancouver” with the post and beam expression, it is very familiar.

Regarding the facades, consider could it more open up much more during the summer.

A panelist noted there is an elite attitude towards the street consider the welcoming nature of the site. There is a dialogue from the street that could benefit from opening more and/or consider the corners more.

Consider the gift shop on the corner it is quite sunken due to the grade drop, is there a way to mitigate this.

A panelist noted a one-storey plain is a bit relentless for a storefront, consider opening up more.

A panelist noted the bookstore comes out to Cambie on the sunny side while the restaurant is on the shady side.

Consider making the stair a bit more robust and placing it where people can gather and not just circulate, presently the stairs seem narrow.

The safety issues at various times of day could use more consideration.

There is more opportunity to be more ambitious with the landscaping in the courtyard.

The materiality is interesting and great opportunities have been taken advantage of

The sustainability aspects of the project are successful.

A panelist noted there was no reference to the storm water management in the material.

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

2.	Address:	6151-6261 Granville St & 1511 W 47th Av
	Permit No.	RZ-2021-00065
	Description:	To develop a six-storey seniors housing/community care facility with 226 units (assisted living and memory care). The floor area is 21,008 sq. m (226,130 sq. ft.), the floor space ratio (FSR) is 2.76, and the building height is 24.4 m (80 ft.) to roof parapet; all over one level of underground parking including 115 underground parking spaces and 28 bicycle parking spaces.
	Zoning:	RS-3 to CD-1
	Application Status:	Rezoning Application
	Architect:	RH Architects Inc.
	Staff:	Ryan Dinh and Nicholas Danford

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (8/0)

- **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Nicholas Danford, began by noting the application is for the consideration of a rezoning to the lands at 6151-6261 Granville Street and 1511 W 47th Avenue which consists of 7 lots on the west side of Granville street between W 45th and 47th Avenues. The site has a 472-foot frontage along Granville Street and a depth of 174 feet. The lots contain single detached houses and the site is predominantly surrounded with other single detached lots zoned RS-3. The houses in the assembly were built between 1945 to 1995 and do not have significant character or heritage value.

The proposed development is a six-storey development with a community care facility class B use. This is an institutional use defined in the Zoning and Development By-law as a licensed facility under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act of BC providing residential care for seven or more persons not related. The applicant has proposed that all beds will be licensed and the facility would provide a variety of care levels.

The proposal consists of 226 units with an FSR of 2.76 with 115 vehicle parking spaces on two levels of underground accessed from the rear lane. A total height of 24.4m or 80 ft. is proposed.

The project is being considered under the Arbutus Ridge, Kerrisdale and Shaughnessy, or ARKS community vision. The vision allows for consideration of some small developments designed for seniors near parks, shopping, transit and services.

It is noted that the recently adopted Secured Market Rental Policy would allow for a four to six storey residential form on this site, and four storey form to the west of the site.

Development Planner, Ryan Dinh, presented the project's form of development, and general advice given by staff at the enquiry stage noting the Vision does not provide specific design guidance. The advice include strategies to to reduce the impact of the site's apparent frontage, and ensure compatibility and transition to the scale of the low density context. The proposed massing concept includes 6 storeys broken down in 3 separate blocks by the insets at the entrances. Level 5 and 6 are stepped back from the floors below. Building is wrapped around the site edge, noting potential future development on the adjacent site. Common indoor amenity space is provided on each floor from level 1 to level 4, and a common outdoor amenity space is provided on the roof top.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on:

1. Does the Panel support the proposed density, height and form and massing relative to the direction of ‘small developments’ as per Arbutus Ridge/Kerrisdale/Shaghnessy Community Vision, considering factors such as scale, frontage, and transition?
2. Comments on the quality of public realm along Granville and the lane in relation to the residential areas.
3. Comments on architectural expression to inform future development permit application.

• **Applicant’s Introductory Comments:**

Amica presented their program goals and objectives for senior living.

The applicant began by noting this is a heavily treed site with deep lots.

The significant tree buffer will help minimize the overlook amongst other things.

The building design is continuous and trying to maintain a rhythm to it on the ground plane on Granville St. There are two front doors, the principle front door is at the lane where most of the arrivals takes place and has lots of sun exposure.

Taxis, vans, service vehicles and drop offs will have a side entrance.

It is a big building, the mass has been broken up into three principle masses and the middle mass is broken up more.

The east and south wing have a similar design with a colour palette change

The overall building is concrete with high-end materials.

The sixth & seventh floor has been set back, as it is more of an independent living.

At P1, the applicant noted they are keeping more of the active social elements such as the pool, fitness and theatre, there is light coming into those spaces and it is very welcoming.

The rooftop will be a green roof.

Because the lots are deep, it gives great opportunity to step the building back, and this has allowed for extensive landscaping on the ground and upper levels.

The ground floor will have individual front yards and gates leading to Granville.

The street trees along Granville will be preserved.

The design of working around the presence of the street trees and trees on the lane.

There is a lot of connection throughout the building to the program elements from the parkade to the rooftop these spaces inform the exterior spaces.

The goal is that the seniors feel they are in a natural environment.

Materials include stone and greenery.

There will be plenty of spaces for people to sit and garden, primarily sitting around gardening, shelter and thermal comfort and comfort from the wind.

There is parameter pathway and connection to the pub and courtyard path is adjacent to the pool deck. There will be lots of seating while securing a simple and safe path.

This building is a green building, following the idea of energy efficiency, near zero emissions and rainwater managements.

. Making sure the envelope performance is kept at a level to support all of its objections.

The project is proposing vegetated roofing to support its rainwater management targets.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

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

Having reviewed the project it was moved by **Ms. LELE** and **Ms. STAMP** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

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

- Consider enhancing the expression of the bridges to reduce visual length of the building and increase porosity as seen from the public realm;
- Consider adding larger open breezeways to significantly reduce the volumes and increase connectivity at the ground plane;
- Consider refining the architectural expression and materiality along the lane to further break up the building length;
- Recommend retention of large conifers along the lane to further reduce impact on adjacent single-family lots.

Related Commentary:

The panel generally supported the density, height, and massing appear appropriate for the site. The panel identified the program and typology as an important addition to the community and appropriate for the site for this type of development.

There was support for the architectural expression and appreciation for the materials used and variety given the length of the façade.

The panel recommended to further breaking up the visual expression of the massing ideas to achieve the goal of further expanding the reveals at the bridges and adding to the visual porosity and transparency as an opportunity to reduce visual length and create pockets that could activate spaces between the buildings.

A panelist recommended changes to the east façade so it is more symmetrical.

The overhung on the south building is contributing to making the building bulkier.

The panelist questioned the building linkages on every floor, could there be some bridges? The linkages are coming across too institutional.

A panelist suggested a two storey breezeway at the entrance consider be able to go from sunny side to shady side a porous building.

A panelist noted there is confusion with the Granville face, back façade and the lane having a frontage to it the sense of three buildings is confusing. The Granville frontage is flat consider more definition while implementing better tree saving strategies.

There is a lack of visible entrance on Granville so it does feel like a back of building.

Do whatever you can to make it read as a 3 storey building.

Considering adjusting some of the buildings heights so the building heights are consistent.

Enhance the spaces of refuge along Granville providing further pockets of public space and provide different amenity spaces along that edge.

There was support for the amount of patios and decks provided
The panel recommended enhancing the ability for continuous walkable loops such as on the roof deck or larger site itself.

The panel recommend further understanding of the tree retention strategy study and not just push it along Granville and the lane side.

A panelist noted caution with high guardrails as seniors can feel locked in be careful of planting that is behind the guardrails.

A panelist noted the building has good opportunity for high-level enclosure; continue working on the exterior insulation. Encourage thermally broken balconies and non-metal windows to improve comfort in suites. Appreciate efforts to reduce the green house intensities anything that can be down to further reduce considering long term usage would be beneficial.

The loading bay area in the back is awkward consider cleaning it up more.

Applicant's Response: The applicant team thanked to recognize the challenges and for their comments.

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3. Address: 8460 Ash St & 8495 Cambie St
Permit No. DP-2022-00069 and DP-2022-00070
Description: To develop 3 mixed-use development buildings, having 16, 27 and 32 storeys, with commercial retail uses at the ground floor, 125 social housing units, including the replacement of 54 existing homes for the Ashley Mar Housing Cooperative and adds 71 new co-operative housing units, 524 secured market rental units for a total of 649 dwelling units, all over 4 levels of underground parking.
Zoning: RT-2 to CD-1
Application Status: Complete Development Application
Architect: Perkins & Will
Staff: Derek Robinson
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EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (6/0)

• Introduction:

Derek Robinson, Development Planner, began by outlining the site location and context, noting the existing Ashley Mar Co-op development, the proximity to transit and the surrounding mix of land uses.

It was noted that the rezoning application was reviewed by the Urban Design Panel on March 3, 2021 and received unanimous support with recommendations. The Panel recommended additional design development to provide variation to the three tower forms and to enhance the public realm interface, particularly along the mid-block connection.

It was noted that this proposal was treated as one application through rezoning, however it now consists of two separate but concurrent DP applications due to the lane separating the sites and it is anticipated that the Panel will vote once for the overall project, but could split the votes if requested.

A general overview of the proposal was then presented followed by an outline of the key design conditions included in the rezoning approval. This was followed by an overview of the staff questions for the Panel.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on:

Has the applicant successfully responded to the following rezoning conditions:

1. Overall Skyline and Gateway Identity

Rezoning conditions sought to achieve:

- A differentiated, distinct, and layered appearance to the tower forms
- Visually interesting and varied rooflines by way of sculpted upper levels and tower top treatment
- An enhanced south façade highlighting the tallest tower as a distinct gateway element

Are there opportunities to further enhance the gateway identity through detailed architectural treatments and material expression?

2. Public Realm Interface

Rezoning conditions sought to achieve:

- A successful interface with the mid-block connection and public treatment at Cambie and the mid-block connection
- An active, safe and engaging 'enhanced lane' experience for pedestrians

Are there opportunities to enhance the public realm interface to further achieve a sense of safety, visual porosity and animation?

3. Sustainability

Are there opportunities to further the sustainability strategy in response to the *Sustainable Large Developments Policy*?

• Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The applicant noted they have worked on three main areas since the rezoning.

Project character viewed from a distance particularly from the south, the podium levels, , and lastly the midblock connection.

The architectural expression harmonizes the three towers. Linking design towers is important for the future context. The tallest of three towers is the cambie tower (tower C), working to distinguish the tower as a gateway statement that is still part of a 'family' architecturally. The tower has silver metal cladding which has allowed it to stand out from the other towers. For this tower, used a higher percentage of glazing, the north and south facades have balconies that extend. The tower has a symmetry to it.

The ash towers are more symmetrical in the elevation expression, the towers read as a pair. There is a metal cladding with a horizontal reveal at every second floor. With the south and north elevations they are quite solid with a 30 percent window to wall ratio. The east and west have a generous balcony expression.

The ash tower podium has been setback, allowing for retention of existing trees. Podiums have been broken with the module of the residential units.

At the midblock connection, the ash street façade is harmonized with the Cambie podium. The units of the lower levels have front doors and porches to make the lane more pedestrian friendly. At the midblock connection there was direct access that has been removed and replaced with balconies.

Each tower has their own rooftop amenity space, looking to maximize solar use while enjoying the program space.

The podium has an amenity space and children play space.

There has been improvements made to the parkade to allow for at ground patios to activate the frontage.

The applicant noted they have further soften the transition of the public realm where the grade drops.

The ground level is retaining the back boulevard trees.

The public realm has been changed to adhere to the Cambie corridor policy.

Because it is servicing a SRW the landscaping is limited in the mid-block connection.

There are green roofs on all buildings this improves the storm water strategies. On the north, there is a public elevator that provides access to the bike storage and car share.

The 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. RAHBAR** and **MR. ROMSES** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

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

- Consider further refinement of the south façade of Tower C to further distinguish the building's presence as a gateway building;
- Consider additional passive solar strategies to enhance performance and architectural expression.

Related Commentary:

There was general support and appreciation from the panel for the detail of the presentation and incorporation from previous UDP and rezoning comments.

There was general support for the architectural expression and materiality and overall language of the different components of the block.

A panelist noted a better response to the south elevation has allowed for an improved proposal.

There was concern noted to further distinguish the towers to clearly express the gateway character, especially with tower C.

The incorporation of artwork is an opportunity noted as an opportunity to add to the expression of the building as a gateway.

The panel recommended further pushing the concept of the folded ribbons to further this language to increase visual presence.

There was support for the ground plane, the variety and public realm because of retaining the trees and increasing the setback created an enhanced expression and addition of the light and midblock connection. Improve the experience as much as possible within that context.

A panelist noted the position of the urban agriculture is a bit deficient. The landscape plan appears a bit overwhelming.

A panelist noted the sustainability targets are being met however consider triple glazed windows and thermal balconies for comfort. Suggest looking carefully at the cooling strategies, shading, partial cooling and large operable windows. These are low cost ways at providing some relief.

Applicant's Response: The applicant team thanked to recognize the challenges and for their comments.