

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: May 7, 2025

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Joe Wai Meeting Room (110), Main Floor - City Hall, 453 W 12th Ave

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Aik Ablimit (Chair)
Helen Besharat
Bob Lily
Tony Osborn
Alan Storey
Sarvnaz Golkar
Allyse Li
Parisa Seyed-Hoseini
Maryam Tashakor,

REGRETS:

RECORDING SECRETARY: M. Sem

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. 8-36 W. Cordova St. 2. 15-27 W. Hastings St.

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 2. 15-27 W. Hastings St.
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Chair Aik Ablimit called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. The panel then considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

- 1. Address:** 8-36 W. Cordova St.
- Description:** To rezone the subject site from HA-2 (Historic Area) to CD-1 (Comprehensive Development) District. The proposal is to allow for the development of a 20-storey mixed-use rental building with a five-storey podium and includes: 219 rental units with 20% of the floor area for below-market units; 179-room hotel; commercial space on the ground floor; a floor space ratio (FSR) of 7.03; and a building height of 66.4 m (218 ft.). This proposal is located in the Gastown sub area of the Downtown Eastside Plan. The proposal requests rezoning consideration of height in excess of the existing policy. The Gastown sub-area allows a maximum height of 22.9 m (75 ft.). This proposal includes a number of heritage properties, and as such, the City's Heritage Policies apply. The application proposes primarily façade-only retention for the Cohen Block (Vancouver Heritage Register Category 'A' and 'B'). This application is being processed and reviewed concurrently with the application to rezone 15-27 W Hastings. (Army and Navy).
- Zoning:** HA-2 to CD-1
- Application Status:** Rezoning Application
- Review:** Second
- Architect:** Michael Green Architecture
- Delegates:** Jill Wanklyn, Bosa Properties
Chris knight, Michael Green Architecture
Joesph Fry, Hapa Collaborative
Brenda Knights, BC Indigenous housing Society
- Staff:** Chee Chan, Rezoning Planner
Hiroko Kobayashi, Senior Development Planner
Elijah Sabadlan, Heritage Planner

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (9/0)

Planner's Introduction:

Chee Chan, Rezoning Planner, introduced the project with a description of the existing site context, followed by an overview of the existing policy framework as well as the anticipated policy context being considered under the Downtown Eastside Plan. Mr. Chan concluded with a description of the site and a summary of the rezoning proposal.

Hiroko Kobayashi, Development Planner then gave an overview of the neighbourhood context in relation to the proposal, followed by the expectations of the built form and public realm guidelines for this project. Ms. Kobayashi then gave a description of the proposed project

before concluding with Staff questions for the Panel.

Two projects were presented together given the same applicant and staff team.

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

Overall form, scale and massing articulation with consideration given to the overall performance as follows:

On the West Cordova site:

- 1) Compatibility and proportional relationship of the new addition to the heritage buildings;
- 2) Impact to the historic urban form and adjacent urban context; and

On the West Hastings site;

- 3) Contribution of the tower development to the existing context and unique sawtooth streetscape.
- 4) The livability aspects particularly on the proposed light well conditions (Treatment of BMR units and amenity spaces.

Staff and 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 **HELEN BESHARAT** and seconded by **MARYAM TASHAKOR**, and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel recommends Support with recommendations:

THAT the applicant team carefully review the summary of panel consensus comments, as reflected in the meeting minutes.

Summary of Panel's consensus comments

1. Panel in general supports the compatibility, proportional relationship of the new addition on West Cordova Street development.
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2. Panel in general support the resolution of the massing on the West Cordova site, although staff to further evaluate the impact to the overall block, given there is no enabling policy.
3. Panel noted to incorporate more generous amenity space that is proportional to the overall density proposed.
4. Panel also noted support to approach to public realm, activation on the lane, but also noted that laneway connection could be further strengthened.
5. Regarding the materiality, it seems to be quite successful at this stage, additional work needed at next design stage while exploring ways to incorporate Indigenous elements and vocabulary.

Summary of Panel Commentary:

Panels are generally in support for the proposed massing, compatibility and height for West Cordova site.

Further considerations to the unit livability, consider increaseing depth of courtyard for consideration on Cordova side.

Panel in general noted incorporating more generous amenity space that's proportional to the overall development proposed.

Panel in general support the public realm approach at the ground level although the laneway connection should be further strengthened in relation to loading and engineering requirements.

Panel noted materiality is successful at this stage, however upper floors along laneway interface should be improved.

Further considerations of incorporation of Indigenous elements and vocabulary should be incorporated.

Smaller CRUs are more helpful for contributions to the street activation and need further program or activation strategies to the atrium space and connection to laneway.

The proposed sky bridge at 7th floor requires further improvements.

Podium level at courtyard level may be reassessed for more daylighting.

City to explore what the proposed development means not only to the adjacent neighboring site but also to the future vision for Gastown area.

Panel noted the integration and overall urban development form resolution is more successful on Cordova than on Hastings St.

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

2. Address:	15-27 W. Hastings St.
Description:	To rezone the subject site from DD (Downtown) District to CD-1 (Comprehensive Development) District. The proposal is to allow for the development of a 40-storey mixed-use rental building and includes: 441 market rental units; 108 below-market rental units operated by a non-profit operator; commercial space on the ground floor; a floor space ratio (FSR) of 22.28; and a building height of 117 m (384 ft.). The Samuel Tower is located in the Victory Square sub area of the Downtown Eastside Plan. The proposal requests consideration of height in excess of the existing policy. The Victory Square sub-area allows a maximum height of 32 m (105 ft.). This application is being processed and reviewed concurrently with the application to rezone 8-36 W Cordova St. (Army and Navy).
Zoning:	DD to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	Second
Architect:	Michael Green Architecture
Delegates:	Jill Wanklyn, Bosa Properties Chris knight, Michael Green Architecture Joesph Fry, Hapa Collaborative Brenda Knights, BC Indigenous housing Society
Staff:	Chee Chan, Rezoning Planner Hiroko Kobayashi, Senior Development Planner Elijah Sabadlan, Heritage Planner

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (7/2)

Planner's Introduction:

Chee Chan, Rezoning Planner, introduced the project with a description of the existing site context, followed by an overview of the existing policy framework as well as the anticipated policy context being considered under the Downtown Eastside Plan. Mr. Chan concluded with a description of the site and a summary of the rezoning proposal.

Hiroko Kobayashi, Development Planner then gave an overview of the neighbourhood context in relation to the proposal, followed by the expectations of the built form and public realm guidelines for this project. Ms. Kobayashi then gave a description of the proposed project before concluding with Staff questions for the Panel.

Two projects were presented together given the same applicant and staff team.

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

Overall form, scale and massing articulation with particular consideration given to the overall performance as follows:

On the West Cordova site:

- 1) Compatibility and proportional relationship of the new addition to the heritage buildings;
- 2) Impact to the historic urban form and adjacent urban context; and

On the West Hastings site;

- 3) Contribution of the tower development to the existing context and unique sawtooth streetscape.
- 4) The livability aspects particularly on the proposed light well conditions (Treatment of BMR units and amenity spaces.

Staff and 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 **TONY OSBORN** and seconded by **HELEN BESHARAT**, and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel recommends Support with recommendations:

THAT the applicant team carefully review the summary of panel consensus comments, as reflected in the meeting minutes.

Summary of Panel's consensus comments

1. Panel noted consideration to improve livability aspect of the BMR units facing the lightwell.
 2. Panel also noted to incorporate more generous amenity space that is proportional to the overall density proposed.
 3. Panel noted support to approach to public realm, activation on the lane, but also noted that laneway connection could be further strengthened in relation to the loading and engineering requirements.
 4. Regarding the materiality, it seems to be quite successful at this stage, additional work needed at next design stage while exploring ways to incorporate Indigenous elements and vocabularies.
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5. Further Street activation along the Hastings streetscape with additional consideration to tower and podium interface articulation.

Summary of Panel Commentary:

Panel recommended to increase amenity area, well below what is required for density.

The proposed tower requires further articulations, consider incorporating the Indigenous elements or vocabulary.

Façade on Hastings and 5ft. Setback from podium to tower should be reconsidered, gesture of the podium and tower podium interface are not working.

Consider some access to nature, and the proposed design should consider and contribute.

Regarding the livability aspect, the proposal needs to reassess for more opportunities for accessing to the natural light, air, and -view.

Working with Indigenous community and operator for BMR units is a positive contribution and impact for the project.

Lack of amenity needs to be improved. Some of the indoor amenity spaces can be converted to outdoor amenity, perhaps more spaces on ground level.

Those BMR units are needed, but there is a way to make them more livable, reconsider the ratio of lightwell.

Amenity spaces need to be improved, they should be proportionally adequate to proposed density.

Panel recommends applicant to work with staff on adjacent tower opportunities and tower separation.

Panel recommends reducing the upper massing; noting it is a massive structure and negative impact on the adjacent heritage buildings through reducing the density and greater tower set back should be allocated.

Panel recommends applicant to review qualities of the original scheme such as the proportions of the massing for the tower component and increasing the livability of the units that are located at podium level facing the lightwell.

Panel recommends further design development on the materiality and articulation.

Panel recommends further activating Hastings Street public realm by incorporating commercial space or public space, make this area more walkable and need some help for more vibrant community.

The proposed sky bridge at 7th floor requires further improvements.

Panel recommends improving the laneway experience.

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