

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: May 8, 2024

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Webex, Virtual

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

- Craig Taylor, Chair
- Federica Piccone
- Heidi Nesbitt
- Bob Lilly
- Helen Besharat

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 1551-1581 W 7th Ave

Address: 1551-1581 W 7th ave
Permit No.: RZ-2023-00068
Description: To rezone the subject site from C3-A (Commercial) District to CD-1 (Comprehensive Development) District. The proposal is to allow for the development of a 21-storey mixed-use building and includes: Replacement/expansion of the La Maison de la Francophonie (Francophone Community and Cultural Centre) that includes retail space, a theatre, gallery/ multi-purpose space, and office space for non-profit organizations; 125 strata units; A floor space ratio (FSR) of 8.0; A building height of 69.2 m (227 ft.); and 204 vehicle parking spaces and 284 bicycle spaces. This application is being considered under the Broadway Plan

Application Status: Rezoning Application
Architect: Acton Ostry Architects Inc.
Delegation: Russel Acton, Acton Ostry Architects Inc, Architect, Jason McDougal, Perry + Associates, Landscape Architect Shijie Wang, Lighthouse, Sustainability Architect
Staff: Hiroko Kobayashi & Scott Erdman

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (5/0)

Planner's Introduction:

Scott Erdman, Rezoning Planner, introduced the project with a brief description of the existing site context, followed by an overview of the anticipated context as per the policy under the Broadway Plan. Scott concluded the presentation with a description of the site and a summary of the rezoning proposal.

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

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

1. The overall design of the podium and interface with the public realm particularly where the building interfaces along West 7th Ave and Fir St along the Granville Bridge.
2. The proposed tower massing and articulation noting that:
 - The tower floor plate size up to 8,000 sq.ft to support the delivery of an important public amenity.
 - Tower is being shaped to minimize shadowing on adjacent park space.
3. The preliminary material palettes, architectural expression to assist staff review on the future DP application.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Applicant Russell Acton, Architect for Acton Ostry Architects noted the objectives and gave a general overview of the project followed by Jason McDougal Landscape Architect presenting on the landscape design and Shijie Wang, sustainability consultant presenting on the project's

sustainability strategies.

Applicant and staff took questions from Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **Bob Lilly** and seconded by **Heidi Nesbitt** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

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

1. Further design development to the relationship between the podium and public realm, giving the particular attention to the West 7th Avenue and Fir Street interface;
2. Design considerations to the curved balconies and building materiality as an important part of the building expression and should be confirmed at the development permit stage;
3. The applicant reviews the amount of glazing and introduce shading devices.

Summary of Panel Commentary:

There was general support for the application at the rezoning stage, further design development including refinement of the balconies should be achieved at the DP stage.

There was support for the architectural expression in the simplicity.

The panel generally in support for the material palette and massing although some panels noted that further exploration of architectural expression involving with the unique character of the cultural center.

There was support for the increase of the tower floor plate size.

The panel are generally in support for the design of the podium and interface with public realm, further design development can be achieved.

The panel supported the ideas of potential public realm space below the First street off ramp as this would be a great opportunity as part of the revitalization of the area .

Some panelists noted concern with shadowing on the park and adjacent buildings; others noted it seems to be the minimal impact and it does not greatly affect the adjacent buildings.

Consider the orientation of the building, the amount of glazing and providing shading devices throughout.

Other comments included consider the noise and pollution at the rooftop amenity on the west side. Consider a location at the east side.

Consider providing a bicycle storage.

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