

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: Wednesday, June 3, 2020

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Cisco WebEx Events

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Brittany Coughlin
Alan Davies
Walter Francl
Michael Henderson
Margot Long
Adrien Rahbar
Sydney Schwartz
Angela Enman
Jennifer Stamp
Karenn Krangle
Marie-Odile Marceau

REGRETS: Matt Younger
Muneesh Sharma

RECORDING SECRETARY: M. Sem / K. Cermeno

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 1294 Granville St.
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1. Address: 1294 Granville St.
Permit No. DP-2020-00099
Description: To develop a 6-storey mixed-use building with 29 residential units and commercial retail units at grade. The proposal includes 3 at-grade vehicle spaces and 75 bicycle spaces. The proposed building height is 21.3 m (70 ft.), the proposed floor area is 2129 sq. m (22,918 sq. ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 3.5.
- Application Status: Complete Development Application
Review: First
Architect: GBL Architects
Staff: Carl Stanford
Delegation: Andrew Emmerson, Architect
Bryce Gauthier, Landscape Architect
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EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations 10/0

Introduction:

Development Planner, Carl Stanford, began the presentation by explaining this proposal seeks to develop a single linear corner site to accommodate a stacked 6-storey building comprising of a single level of commercial use on the ground floor and five levels of residential with 29 dwelling units above all under existing DD zoning with an FSR of 3.5 and a proposed height of 21.3m/ 70'. The building will be serviced by a single basement level containing bicycle parking, bulk-storage lockers, and service rooms.

Principle governing policy for the site includes the:

- Downtown District Official Development Plan (1975)
- Granville Street (Downtown South) Design Guidelines (1993)
- High-Density Housing for Families with Children

The proposed development is situated in the Granville Street sub-area of the Downtown South planning area. The proposal is largely aligned with the guidelines intention for providing appropriately scaled density along the Granville Street corridor, and creating a continuation of active commercial frontage at grade. The programmatic arrangement for the site helps meet the primary key objectives of the guidelines; ensuring that the predominant residential uses are oriented away from the busier Granville Street side, maximizing opportunities for south and west natural light.

Under the existing DODP, the density permitted on a site may achieve a maximum permitted 3.5 FSR for market residential (with commercial on the ground floor) and a maximum permitted 6.0 FSR for rental residential (with commercial on the ground floor)

The maximum height restriction for this site is 90', chamfering down to 70' along the Granville Street frontage with consideration for sculpted building elements projecting above. For up to 30 feet in building height, no rear setback is required. Above 30 feet in height, a rear setback of at least 15 feet is required. Upper rear portions of a building may require greater setback to conform to the building envelope described in Section 4.1 of the Downtown Official Development Plan. There is no front or side yard setback requirement.

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. Landscaping should be provided where opportunities exist in rear setback areas, at grade and on roof decks. The application is in line with the 15' requirement. Separation distances for residential to residential buildings are recommended as minimum 24m/ 80' and the proposal satisfies that requirement.

With regard to energy, the combination of punched windows and thermally broken balconies result in a sustainable building envelope. Additionally, the low 'window to wall' ratio assists in providing acoustical benefits to the residential units fronting Granville Street and Drake Street.

High quality residential livability should be achieved for all new dwelling units with regard for privacy, overlook, open space, safety and security, light and ventilation, and access and circulation. Development sites on Granville Street are severely affected by noise, especially from vehicular traffic and from uses which generate a lot of noise, such as bars and cabarets.

The subject site measuring 36.6m (120') by 15.2m (50') is located in the core of the Downtown District zoned DD, area K3 on a rectangular site at the south east corner of the intersection between Granville Street and Drake Street with a lane to the rear and an approximate site area of 557 sq. m (6,000 sq. ft.). There is a sloping grade, falling approximately 2m (7') along Drake for 120' from Granville to the lane while being relatively flat along Granville.

Granville Street has traditionally been a major retail street in Vancouver's downtown area. The neighborhood is currently characterized by a mix of retail, commercial, and residential buildings. The immediate environs to the south, east and west are predominantly zoned DD.

The context is a mix of commercial buildings and more recent residential development. It adjoins an existing 9-storey mixed-use rental building to the northeast. There are two residential towers to the south and west within adequate separation requirements.

The building form consists of a solid linear 'box' component with punched openings that fronts onto Granville and Drake Street over a glazed commercial level with an interstitial glazed transition to its neighbor. The underside of the 'solid box' has been angled upwards to facilitate retail exposure. The roof level of the parapet of the 'box' angles down to open up southern exposure to the amenity. This building steps down along its side, for a massing transition to the proposed neighboring six-storey form. As stated there is no building setback along the Granville and Drake Street sides, and a 15' building setback along the lane edge.

The residential entry is accessed off the Drake Street side. The five residential levels above house a total of 29 units consisting of 83% one bedroom units with the remainder being 2-beds. Each unit has access to a private balcony. The building has amenity space located at grade and on the uppermost floor level. The ground floor amenity space is accessed off the main residential lobby and fronts onto both Drake Street and the lane. The uppermost amenity space is contiguous to a large outdoor south facing amenity area.

The main commercial space on the ground floor is located on the corner of Granville and Drake, allowing for continuous commercial continuity along Granville. This commercial space is serviced by a Class B loading bay at the lane side, connected via a loading corridor that runs along the firewall edge of the building. The Class B loading bay will service the commercial component of the building. All Class A bicycle parking will be securely housed below grade in the basement level.

The palette for the building has been developed with a contemporary use of color, and materials including white brick, architectural concrete, glass, and anodized aluminum that have a link to the past with a reference to the historic use of brick along Granville St. The brick face dissolves at various locations around the building form, diffusing the edges of the roofline and residential base, to lighten the visual perception of the overall building mass.

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

1. Please comment on the architectural expression, & articulation of massing of the project with consideration of the below:
 - a. Is the scale and relationship with the neighboring buildings/ Granville St area appropriate and does the articulation of the proposed form establish an expression consistent with the character of the area and a successful integration with the historic context of the streetscape?
 - b. Consider the expression, color, reflectivity, shape, proportions, fenestration, material treatment, and detailing with regard to the above.
2. Please comment on if the proposal sufficiently establishes high quality residential livability for all new dwelling units with regard to privacy, overlook, spacing, open space, safety/security, adequate lighting, ventilation, access and circulation?
3. Please comment on the success of the public realm interface with particular consideration of improve how the building transitions to and interfaces with the ground plane and the definition / articulation of the entry points for the different uses satisfactorily achieved?

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The applicant noted that the scale of the proposed building is an appropriate response to the contextual scale of Granville and Yaletown and that the project has a clean monolithic massing with the intent to reinforce the corner of the building rather than trying to consolidate several styles. The goal was to keep a simplified design, and a more contemporary take appropriate to the area. The building is limited to 6 stories in height. A shoulder extension was provided to the adjacent existing mixed use residential building.

The main residential entry is located away from the busier Granville St frontage on Drake St. The overall focus is on the corner and main entry. Materiality includes a simple punched brick expression diffusing at the edges. There is solar shading at the south west elevation for the commercial and residential. The applicant noted that they tried to limit any physical impediments regarding accessing the commercial CRU. The frontage at the ground floor is glazed with hardscape landscaping at the front and back. The outdoor amenity off Drake St. helps soften the south corner.

The applicant noted that every dwelling unit has an outdoor space in the form of hanging balconies with the provision of a large outdoor communal space amenity at roof level. Screening has been provided at the rooftop. The amenity space at roof level is intended as a fun area for the occupants and any children with play areas expressed for all age groups.

The applicant noted the building has a beautiful façade. The façade borrowed some references from the streetscape and brought it to the design. The applicant used the idea of contrasting colors and diffused patterning with the public realm. The applicant noted they picked up on patterning with contrast paving and fused brick patterns. The same paving expression is continued on to the lane. The laneway has some buffer planting along its edge. The entry on Drake has a more of a landscaped character, so this was the right place to have more planting and create a buffer. The applicant noted they hope to express with linear street furnishings, bike racks and benches.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

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

- Design Development to the recessed residential lobby on Drake St to balance CPTED concerns while providing a more workable and generous lobby space.
- Design Development to enhance the livability of the units.
- Design Development to review the ground floor loading bay access corridor requirements with the City of Vancouver.

Panel Commentary

The Panel supported overall the massing, form, scale and relationships of the building and appreciated the contemporary expression, the goals of the project, its urban living and working space provision. The Panel also appreciated the inclusion of shadow study considerations at roof and at grade.

The Panel felt the design was an appropriate response to the urban heritage context. The building is a playful use of heritage elements in a contemporary scheme.

The Panel felt the building is an appropriate scale given the corner location.

The Panel appreciated the detailed materiality study and how it connects to the heritage context and materials. The Panel commented that the material palette is a little monochromatic and suggested some animation with color or a color gradation, perhaps on the balconies to give them more definition.

The corner balconies are staggered with a glazed mullion. Consider continuing solid brick to the corner.

The Panel in general supports the livability of the units but noted concerns with some dwelling units. In particular the Panel noted the livability issues of the junior one bedrooms and suggested exploring an open studio concept or other solution to address these concerns.

The Panel suggested exploring brick on the North East façade where the horizontal metal cladding is and strongly encouraged privacy screens for the balconies. They were supportive of the business amenity space at grade but noted it could benefit from further consideration and

programming to be successful. The business amenity will also need some screening from grade.

The Panel had concerns with how the commercial loading corridor drives the location of the core and compromised the livability and size of the units above – due to the lightwell behind the core. The Panel strongly suggest that the City Engineering and Planning review this requirement. A 300sq. ft. junior one bedroom is not livable.

The Panel appreciated the recessed quality of the residential lobby and how it presented itself to the street but noted some CPTED concerns to be addressed. The Panel suggested reviewing the solid wall on one side and examining the depth of the entry. The Panel also suggested exploring additional movement and articulation in the expression of the Drake St façade.

The Panel supported the landscaping and rooftop amenities overall but noted some concerns. It would be challenging to accommodate a hot tub at roof level given it will need barrier free access to it, changing facilities and other requirements. The Panel noted there may be visibility, privacy and potential acoustic issues regarding the level six amenity deck location looking as it does towards adjacent properties and being so close to the mechanical plant.

The Panel appreciated the high quality paving materials proposed at the lane. The Panel noted that although stainless steel for the planters at grade may be too costly for the applicant they could also explore the use of galvanized steel or other good quality treatment that will tie into the heritage material palette.

The Panel appreciated the provision of the tree planting at the lane, providing some greenery and screening but strongly encouraged the applicant to provide a sufficient amount of structural soil to ensure long term health and success.

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