

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: June 21, 2023

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Webex

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Craig Taylor (Chair)
Jane Vorbrodt (Vice Chair)
Kai Hotson
R. Stefan Aepli (excused from item # 1)
Margot Long (excused from item # 2)
Meeta Lele (excused from item # 1)
Bob Lilly
Geoff Lister
James Cheng (Guest Panelist for item # 1)

REGRETS:

Amina Yasin
Brittany Coughlin

RECORDING SECRETARY: M.Sem

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 1450 W Georgia St
2. 2108 & 2408 Cassiar St. (Skeena Terrace - BC Housing)

Chair Craig Taylor called the meeting to order at 3:15pm and noted the presence of a quorum. The panel then considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

- 1. Address:** 1450 W Georgia St
Permit No.: DP-2022-00505
Description: To develop the subject site with the following: A 46-storey residential tower comprising: 118 strata and 162 secured rental units; Retail space at grade; Floor Space Ratio of 14.12; A total floor area of 26,602 m² (286,055 sq.ft.); A maximum height of approximately 143.52 m (470 ft.); Eight levels of below grade parking and bicycle storage having vehicular access from Nicola Street.
- Zoning:** CD-1
Application: Complete Development Application
Review: Third
Architect: Yamamoto Architecture
Applicant: Taizo Yamamoto, Yamamoto Architecture
Evan Lewis, Wesgroup Properties
David Stoyko, Landscape Architect
Staff: Carl Stanford
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EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (7/0)

Planner's Introduction:

Development Planner, Carl Stanford, began by giving an overview of the neighborhood context in relation to the proposal, followed by the expectations of the built-form guidelines for this project and a summary of the previous rezoning and DP urban design panel sessions. Carl 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. Has the proposal improved the transition from the podium to the tower, and enhanced the clarity of how the building transitions to the local context including providing on-site open space that contributes to the downtown network of green and plaza space?
2. Has the proposal improved the tower's expression and added the clarity based on the previous panel's recommendations?
3. Has the proposal established a new benchmark for architectural creativity and excellence, while making a significant contribution to the beauty and visual power of the city's skyline?

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The applicant Taizo Yamamoto, Architect noted the objectives and gave a general overview of the project. David Stoyko, Landscape Architect then gave a presentation on the landscape strategy.

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **GEOFF LISTER** and seconded by **JAMES CHENG** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel Recommend Support with recommendations with the following recommendations:

- Design development to make the plaza spaces more accessible to the public, celebrating the ceremonial expression and public nature of the plaza space along Georgia St.
- Design development to the detailing of the balconies and columns to enhance the strong parti.
- Design development to incorporate the 'Welcome to Vancouver' sign as public art and to better integrate it with architectural elements and to assist in creating a stronger mid-block crossing.

Summary of Panel Commentary:

- In general, the Panel felt the plaza spaces needed to be more accessible to the public with further development to the tower detailing. They suggested exploration of the sign and mid-block crossing.
- Some Panelists encouraged further work to the plaza and stairs, noting the tapered risers could be a trip hazard.
- Some Panelist noted the network of green and plaza space is unclear in whether it is meant to be public or private spaces. One suggestion was to improve the mid-block connection by opening up the south end. This combined with the entrance for the residential unit may help draw people into the area.
- Some Panelists noted by clarifying the roles of each of the streets it would make the ground plane stronger. They noted Georgia St. is more formal and rigid, while Alberni St. is more pedestrian/ softer in scale and Nicola St provides access to the water further downhill.
- Some Panelists noted the position the guardrails, could create a better hierarchy in front of the columns. They will reflect and refract light emphasizing the twist forms of the balconies even more.
- Some Panelists noted the design should be more ceremonial in character and would like to see more durable materials like stone cladding at the ground level.
- Some Panelists noted the balcony columns feel bulky and their mass seems disproportionate to the concrete slabs and guards.
- A Panelist noted the architectural design is much stronger now with better integration of the podium and tower.

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

2. Address:	2108 & 2408 Cassiar St. (Skeena Terrace - BC Housing)
Permit No.:	RZ-2023-00006
Description:	To amend the existing CD-1 (11B) to allow for a phased masterplanned redevelopment of the 10.8-acre site with buildings between 4 and 36 storeys. This proposal includes: 1924 units of social housing; A 74-space childcare facility; Public open spaces and sport court; 145,759 sq. m (1,568,936 sq. ft.) of residential space; 1,269 sq. m (13,660 sq. ft.) of commercial-retail space; A gross floor area of 148,589 sq. m. (1,599,396 sq. ft.); and A maximum building height of 113 m (371 ft.). This application is being considered under the Skeena Terrace Policy Statement.
Zoning:	Amend existing CD-1
Application:	Rezoning Application
Review:	Second
Architect:	Perkins + Will
Applicant:	Jason LeBlanc, Director of Urban Design, Perkins + Will Margot Long, Landscape Architect, PWL Partnership
Staff:	Derek Robinson, Development Planner Marcel Gelein, Rezoning Planner

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (7/0)

Planner's Introduction:

Marcel Gelein, Rezoning Planner, introduced the project with a brief description of the existing site context, followed by an overview of the anticipated context as considered under the Skeena Terrace Policy Statement. Marcel concluded the presentation with a description of the site and a summary of the rezoning proposal.

Derek Robinson, Development Planner then gave an overview of the neighbourhood context in relation to the proposal, followed by the expectations of the built form guidelines for this project. Derek 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 height, density and massing distribution and its success in creating:
 - a. a welcoming sense of community integrated into the existing neighbourhood fabric; and
 - b. a human-scaled pedestrian experience
2. The overall proposed mix of uses and its ability to meet the daily needs of future residents, considering Council's goal of having 90% of people living within an easy walk/roll of their daily needs by 2030.

3. The public open space network and adjacent building edges, including the ability to:
 - c. achieve a functional, active and inviting public realm interface
 - d. Improve overall site accessibility, and
 - e. serve a diverse range of future neighbourhood needs
4. The draft design guidelines ability to successfully shape future development phases to achieve the stated project principles and design aspirations.
5. Please also comment on any other recommended strategies or considerations to inform future development of the guidelines.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The applicant, Jason LeBlanc, noted the design objectives for the site and gave a general overview of the project. Margot Long, Landscape Architect then gave a presentation on the overall landscape strategy.

The planning team then took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **STEFAN AEPLI** and seconded by **KAI HOTSON** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel Recommend Support with Recommendations with the following recommendations:

- Further development to improve the public open space, pedestrian connection and massing response at the corner of Lougheed Hwy. and Cassiar St.
- Further development to the distribution of height and density in order to step down the massing at key locations, including around the 'neighbourhood rooms', to enhance the human-scale experience. Density can be strategically relocated to the towers.
- Further development and consideration to integrating accessibility features with public art and other site elements throughout the design guidelines.
- Further development and consideration to increasing the amount of local-serving retail and providing flexibility for the future location of commercial and live-work uses on the site.

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