

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: July 6, 2022

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Webex

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Natalie Telewiak
Meeta Lele
Scott Romses
Margot Long
Geoff Lister
Reza Mousakhani
Amina Yasin

REGRETS:

Clinton Cuddington
Jesse Gregson

RECORDING

SECRETARY: K. Cermeno

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 315 Main Street

Chair Natalie Telewiak called the meeting to order at 3:05pm. The panel then considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 315 Main Street
Permit No. DP-2021-00795
Description: To develop an 11-storey, mixed-use building with 118 units of Social Housing, Retail, school, office and community use theatre. The approximate floor area is 103,279 sq. ft. and the approximate height is 125 ft.
Zoning: DEOD
Application Status: Complete Development Application
Architect: MA+HG Architects and EskewDumezRipple
Staff: Ji-Taek Park

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (7/0)

Planner's Introduction:

Development planner, Ji-Taek Park, began by noting the proposal is located 307-325 Main St. & 172 E Cordova St., comprised of 5 lots, at the South West intersection of Main St. & Cordova St.

Project is located within the Sub-Area 1 - Main/Hastings, in DTES/Oppenheimer ODP. Allowable height is 98 ft., which can be relaxed to 120 ft. for corner site with maximum frontage of 100 ft.

Allowable density is 1.0, which can be relaxed to 5.0 for social housing, which can be further relaxed to 7.0 for corner site with maximum frontage of 100 ft., with other requirements.

Proposed project is an 11-storey, mixed-use building with retail, school, office and community use theater on the first 2 levels, and 118 units of Social Housing above, including micro dwelling units.

Site context includes an existing heritage-registered building at 172 E Cordova St. (Class C), as well as Imperial Theater.

Proposed form of development in general follows the principals outlined in the DTES ODP, with further "Push & Pull" to express the 'sawtooth' roofline as outlined in the DTES design guidelines.

Proposed finish materials mainly are custom break-formed metal panels in different colour palettes.

For at-grade public realm and pedestrian interest, the proposal provides an active public facing programs, including learning centre, CRU, etc., as well as lobby for the theater and micro market, as Micro CRU's and small scale retail units. In addition, the second level sidewalk/balconies to access the office spaces on 2nd level provides additional opportunity for a dynamic public interface.

Applicant has also introduced some references to the existing heritage aspects of the site, through built-form and restoration of existing signage.

Development also includes micro-dwelling units. Minimum size required by city is 250 s.f., however, the modular construction being proposed (12 ft.X24ft. modules), provides 288 s.f. for micro-dwelling units.

Micro units are provided with generous glazing (7' wide by 8'-6" tall) and exposed CLT ceilings at 9'-6" clear ceiling height.

Packaged Terminal Air Conditioners (PTAC) are integrated into the window system to ensure occupant comfort through all seasons.

Micro-dwelling units are provided throughout level 3-level 6, with higher ceiling height, meeting the city bulletin for micro-dwelling units, to ensure the high level of livability for these small units.

Micro dwellings & 1-bedroom units do not have private outdoor space. However, ample amenity spaces are provided 2 separate levels; on level 2, as well as on the rooftop.

Review of shadow study shows that the shadow just reaching the sidewalk on the other side of the Cordova St. on Summer Equinox.

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

- Does the proposal successfully respond to the DTES design guidelines?
 - From Downtown Eastside/Oppenheimer Design Guidelines
 - 1.3 Built-Form – General Principles
 - Façade Continuity - Reinforce the facade continuity and homogeneity of existing street-fronting development.
 - Corner Developments - In corner location, should respond to their double frontage and to the special opportunity, they have to add character and image to the neighbourhood.
- Does the proposed building interface at-grade provide sufficient pedestrian interest for public realm, especially the lobby and micro-market?
- Please provide comment on the architectural expression, materiality, and landscaping design.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The applicant began by noting the intent of the project is to create a building that is both a good neighbor and provides social housing that supports wellbeing for people, community and planet.

The applicant noted in response to the loss of the tangible heritage, the intent is to establish a living heritage approach and design a building informed by the past and strengthens the community.

The building's micro dwelling units forms the primary building blocks of the architectural parti and organizing principle for the design of the building.

The building ensures a variety of housing types to respond to the needs of the community.

The sawtooth site plan and lot lines are inspired by the height and massing response.

Created an L shape building by fronting the Main St., and provided a level 3 courtyard facing south-west for full solar advantage.

The facades have been setback to provide additional public urban area and a second level sidewalk was created by carving open space on the second floor.

There is a new theatre amenity of the corner of Main St and E Cordova, landscape elements are incorporated into the expanded sidewalk on the ground level, the courtyard on level 3, and rooftop amenity areas on level 11.

Along Main St., there are retail units providing opportunity for local businesses. There is a shared lobby entrance access off Main St.

Materiality includes a cladding concept of folded metal panels, concrete and exposed CLT. Colors are used to highlight the seasons of the maple and reinforce the mother tree concept.

Landscape includes a variety of seating and lounging scenarios. There is a bamboo grove that is divided by a lush enclosure and provides a good habitat for birds. The continuous paving provides a seamless transition between the inside and the outside.

There is also an outdoor leisure dining area, an opportunity for messy play and garden activities. as well as an observatory for mother tree area, many raised planters, and a maple garden.

The applicant noted their sustainability goals is a near-zero carbon operation while providing a healthy comfortable environment with a carbon neutral structure.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **MR. ROMSES** and seconded by **MS. LONG** 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:

- Consider refinement of architectural approach to the building at the ground plane to enhance quality of the public realm;
- Consider further activation of the roof with amenity space or extensive green roofs;
- Consider further covered outdoor spaces, including possible weather protection for second level balconies;
- Consider incorporating further laneway activation, including green space;
- Additional design development and consultation with a wide range of potential user groups to ensure a high level of support and technical excellence in the Golden Harvest Theatre.

Related Commentary:

The panel noted it was an important active mixed-use project with thoughtful layers of heritage.

In general, the panel found the architectural expression to be successful.

The panel appreciated the commitment to carbon embodiment, social housing and community building.

The panel agreed the approach to the corner is effective and appropriate.

The inclusion of outdoor amenities is strong.

The panel noted the landscape design was strong, powerful and contextual. There is a good retention of existing trees along Main Street.

There were mixed opinions regarding the success on façade continuity.

There were mixed opinions regarding the amount of activation at grade.

One panel member noted the two storey podium is more subdued than the upper levels, and to consider influencing the lower building with the spirit of the upper building.

Consider introducing patios to liven the ground plane.

A panel member noted the façade is a bit homogenous, however the colors are successful.

A panel member noted the micro units on the façade create a repetition, consider some variety.

A panel member recommended design development to consider further variety of the façade articulation, with potential to further articulation façade breaks at the saw tooth.

Additional comments included consider overhangs at the second floor balconies to further enhance use.

Consider providing event-planning amenities within the theatre space.

Some panelists noted the proposed development provided a much smaller theatre space; consider further community consultation regarding theatre scale a study on theatre layout, size and related infrastructure that can support larger events.

Consider additional outdoor spaces and greening the lane paired with a water source.

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