

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** Wednesday July 21, 2021

**TIME:** 4:00 pm

**PLACE:** WebEx

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Angela Enman  
Alan Boniface  
Clinton Cuddington  
Kelly Lee  
Natalie Telewiak  
Jennifer Stamp  
Adrian Rahbar  
Alyssa Koehn  
Reza Mousakhani      Excused #2  
Sydney Schwartz      Excused #2  
Margot Long

**REGRETS:** Alan Davies

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** K. Cermeno

---

### ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

- |    |                        |
|----|------------------------|
| 1. | 2406-2488 Garden Drive |
| 2. | 2406-2484 Renfrew St   |
-

1. Address:	2406-2488 Garden Drive
Permit No.	DP-2021-00206
Description:	To develop a 6-storey mixed-use building consisting of retail units on the first storey and 122 strata dwelling units on level 1 through 6, all over 2 levels of underground parking having vehicular access from the rear lane subject to enactment of the CD-1 By-Law and Council approval of the form of development. The proposed height is 70.87 ft, and the total FSR is 2.81 (96,210 sq.ft.).
Application Status:	Complete Development Application
Review:	Second
Architect:	Integra Architecture Inc.
Staff:	Omar Aljebouri & Payam Fouladianpour

### **EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (10/0)**

- **Introduction:**

Development Planner Omar Aljebouri, began by noting this is a Development Permit application following rezoning. On December 8, 2020, Council approved the form of development which defines the project's height, density and general massing. At this stage, the project is proposing changes to the form of development in response to the rezoning UDP and public input. Today it is returning to the Panel to discuss these refinements.

The site is located on the north side of Broadway.

North: anticipated up to 4-storey apartment

East: anticipated up to 6-storey mixed-use

South: approved up to 6-storey mixed-use

West: anticipated up to 6-storey and 3.5-storey residential

North-west: up to 2.5-storey duplexes

#### Project Description

At rezoning, the project consisted of two 6-storey forms that are connected at the ground level with a shared indoor amenity. The gap between the two forms was proposed as a common outdoor amenity. Within the south wing, at-grade commercial space fronts Broadway. Shoulder setbacks above level 4 are meant to provide massing transition to the immediate context, especially the duplexes to the northwest. Forecourts were incorporated to break up the overall development's frontage.

#### UDP and Community Feedback at Rezoning

Feedback at rezoning included:

- Development of the indoor and outdoor amenities between the two building to improve solar access, usability and overlook;
- Enhanced transition to the northern lower-form context;
- Enhanced legibility, differentiation and simplified expression.

#### The Current Proposal

In response to this feedback, the proposal offers:

Increased setbacks along the north for greater transition to the lower-form context. Lifting the outdoor amenity between the two buildings for greater solar access, coupled with supplemental indoor amenities. This move also allows for redistribution of floor area after the increased north

setbacks. The remainder of the area and massing is then located within the south wing along the arterial. Current proposal also includes massing and material simplifications and differentiation.

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

1. The proposed strategy to improve the amenities' solar access; massing transition to the northern context.
2. Overall project legibility and massing refinement.
3. Any additional advice.

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The applicant noted the project has undergone changes and improvements to the design since the last UDP and response to the rezoning condition.

The new proposal has three distinct massings. There is a 4 storey linkage between the two massings. The applicant noted they tried to keep many of the original architectural features. The corner units are larger and there is improved cross ventilation.

There is a redistribution of the massing to Broadway.

The building entry and legibility has improved.

The balconies wrap around the corner to enhance street views.

The shoulder setbacks have been eliminated which results in a smaller footprint and better proportions.

The solar access and common amenities have been improved.

The 5<sup>th</sup> floor podium level amenity has improved solar access and there is an indoor amenity on the north wing.

The rooftop decks have been developed. The private spaces have been made up of primarily planters. The units above the commercial component have been divided up by the patio areas and there is ample space with lots of landscape buffer.

The ground floor entrance area has been revised to allow for a wheelchair ramp. Wheelchair access goes from street level to main level.

There is an outdoor dedicated childrens play area. There is planting around the edges of the play space and outwards to the lane to allow for some enclosure and security.

There is a small amenity courtyard for some passive seating and viewing.

Landscape includes patios with some planting for buffer, log features and work bench areas, pre manufactured plants and seating areas.

The materiality has been simplified with more natural neutral tones.

The staff and applicant team then took questions from the panel.

**Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

---

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **MS. LEE** and seconded by **MS. SCHWARTZ** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

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

- Design development to simplify the architectural expression including balconies and materiality to bring greater distinction to the massing while unifying the project;
- Design development to improve the retail articulation and public realm along Broadway;
- Consider programming of outdoor amenity spaces including alternate location for the children's play area;
- Consider alternate use for level 2 outdoor amenity space;
- Consider measures for future resiliency including cooling and passive design strategies.

**Related Commentary:**

General Panel support of the proposed improvements to the amenities' solar access and provision of level 5 amenities.

General Panel support of the proposed transitions to the neighbourhood and massing redistribution.

The panel noted there is a clear attempt to create a gentle massing transition throughout the site, which is positive, and many panelists expressed appreciation for the site challenges.

Some panelists noted that the material palette could still be simplified further, and that there are many moves happening with the materiality and architectural expression.

It was suggested to consider lighter materials at the top to make the upper massing less prominent.

It was noted that the overhangs are still quite prominent.

Some panelists noted the circulation pattern has improved, the entrances are more legible and improvements have been made with the massing and colour palette.

There was some concern with livability, particularly regarding the units over the parkade.

A panelist suggested considering ramps to make some of the ground floor units fully accessible.

The panel noted concern with the retail articulation. Detail work will be needed as the project moves forward.. Special consideration should be given to grading and access at retail entrances.

A panelist noted the retail canopy to be quite relentless and contradictory to the character of the rest of the project, suggesting further attention to help tie it in more successfully.

It was noted that the outdoor courtyard on level 2 and the children play area may be better suited to the upper floor or in an alternate location.

A panelist suggested that replacing the Level 2 amenity with a double-height lobby may help to improve the entry experience.

A panelist noted that the private patios receive the best sun exposure and views while the communal areas receive second best, which is a conflict considering the number of units in the building.

There was commentary regarding the public realm, especially on Broadway, which needs further development to make it more inviting. There was particular concern over the extent of concrete proposed.

A panelist suggested studying shading at grade and considering the use of heat pumps. A few panelists suggested considering cooling and looking at ways to reduce thermal bridging in the massing articulation.

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

2. Address:	2406-2484 Renfrew Street
Permit No.	RZ-2021-00009
Description:	To develop a 12-storey mixed-use building, including 173 secured rental housing units (with a minimum 20% of residential floor area secured for moderate income households) with commercial retail space at grade; all over 2 levels of underground parking, providing 130 vehicle parking spaces and 322 bicycle parking spaces. The proposed building height is 44 m (145 ft.). The total floor area is 13,390 sq. m (144,132 sq. ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 4.08.
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	Studio One Architecture Inc.
Staff:	Chee Chan and Derek Robinson

### EVALUATION: Recommend Resubmission (8/0)

- **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Chee Chan, began by noting that this is a proposal to rezone **2406-2484 Renfrew Street** from RS-1 and C-1 to CD-1 under the *Moderate Income Rental Housing Pilot Program* (MIRHP Program). The site is made up of seven lots at the northeast corner of Broadway and Renfrew Street. It is located within the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood. The site is currently occupied with six single-detached houses and a one-storey commercial building. This full-block consolidation has a frontage of 289 ft. along Renfrew Street and a depth of 122 ft. along Broadway. There is a rear lane to the east of the site. It has a total **site area** of approximately 3,276 sq. m (35,265 sq. ft.). It is located on TransLink's 99 B-line, No. 9 bus along Broadway, and the No. 16 bus along Renfrew Street. The Renfrew Skytrain station is just a 400 m, five-minute walk down the hill. There is a significant slope across the site of approximately 6.7 m (22 ft.) across the entire Renfrew Street frontage. There are a number of tall, significant trees on the site.

The site is located in a C-1 node, surrounded and RS-1 properties to the east, north and west. To the south, there is the large Broadway Tech Centre CD-1 zone with four- to five-storey office buildings. Diagonally across the street is a site that is zoned for four-storey mixed-use rental building. Two other projects of note are two recently approved *MIRHP Program* projects, the northern one a seven- to eight-storey and the southern one a seven-storey building.

As part of the Vancouver Plan quick start action, staff are putting forward a policy update of the Secured Rental Policy to permit rezoning consideration for new rental buildings up to six storeys on RS- and RT-zoned sites along arterials such as Broadway and Renfrew, and three- to four-storey townhouses, "plexes" and apartments one block off the arterial, all as a time-limited pilot. This policy update is anticipated to reach Council in Fall 2021, and is subject to Council approval.

The rezoning enabling policy for this application is the *MIRHP Program*, which is a limited pilot program that enables up to 20 rezonings city-wide for new buildings that provide 100% secured market rental housing, with a minimum of 20% of the residential floor area permanently secured for moderate income households with incomes between \$30,000 to \$80,000 per year. Under the *MIRHP Program*, up to six storeys may be considered on C-1- and RS-zoned sites. However, higher forms may be considered for RS-zoned sites at arterial intersections. Additional

considerations for rezoning include transitions to surrounding areas and homes, and neighbourhood context.

This proposal is to rezone from RS-1 and C-1 to CD-1 to permit:

- A 12-storey CLT-construction building with a three- to six-storey podium. The proposed tower height is 44 m (145 ft.)
- 173 secured rental units, with approximately 37 MIR units;
- The total density is 4.085 FSR.

There are approximately 130 vehicle parking spaces and 322 bicycle parking spaces around and in two underground parking levels accessed from the rear lane.

Development Planner, Derek Robinson, began by comparing this proposal with other similar nearby MIRHP Program applications.

This was followed by an overview of the form of development of the podium and tower proposal.

An overview of the proposed public realm interface was then provided, including the shadow impact diagrams.

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

*Height and density* – Does the Panel support the proposed height and density?

*Neighbourhood fit and transition* – Does the proposal set an appropriate expectation for future development?

*Public realm interface* – The overall site design response, in particular the success of the proposed interface with the public realm.

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The applicant noted the site slopes significantly, and the proposal allows for a transition from a major arterial road to the single-family context. The massing strategy of the project is a result of the floorplate of the tower. Between the tower and podium, the building is setback. The building turns the corner and transitions to single-family context to the northeast.

The project commits to enhancing the public realm and the lane through the use of generous landscaping. The applicant tried not to have any retaining walls, and buffered the development from the single-family houses across the lane.

There is a passenger and commercial loading zone on the lane. The parking ramp aligns with the intersecting east-west lane so that vehicle headlights do not project onto houses. The parkade and commercial spaces are set back at the southeast corner to create a plaza. There are individual patios with landscaping in front of residential units along the lane and Renfrew Street.

The outdoor amenity is located on the rooftop of the podium. There are two amenity areas, one at grade, while the other is next to the outdoor rooftop area. There is a lot of planting around the site and large planters along the lane for screening. The amenity roof expression and various activities are held by an arbor that acts like a spine between the amenity room on the south end to the north stairwell. There is lots of outdoor communal space, a children's play area, and a lounge area for adults. There are a large number of replacement trees.

**Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **MS. LONG** and seconded by **MS. STAMP** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **recommends resubmission of** the project with the following recommendations to be reviewed by City staff:

- Design development to improve architectural expression and cohesiveness of elements, simplification of podium base and tower expression to improve neighborhood fit;
- Design development to break up relentlessness of façade along Renfrew Street;
- Design Development to improve the Public Realm and corner condition at and along Broadway;
- Design Development to bring greater distinction to the residential entry and greater clarity of the commercial entry;
- Consider increasing retention of existing trees where possible.

**Related Commentary:**

There were mixed opinions regarding height and density, with some Panel members in support and others expressing concern around shadowing and tree retention.

There was mixed commentary regarding neighborhood fit.

There was support for the lower massing to the north and its transition to the neighboring context, noting the challenges of the site grade.

There were concerns noted with the tower and podium expression as proposed.

There were concerns noted around the transition between the tower and mid-rise components. Panelists recommended elevated architectural and sustainability measures for a project at this scale and location.

It was noted that the corner at Broadway and Renfrew should be better addressed.

Panelists noted concern over the expression of the commercial canopy and podium, some noting the commercial podium expression to be incongruous with the rest of the project.

It was noted that the commercial entries need more clarity and distinction.

Panelists suggested enhancement of the residential entry, some noting that the lobby could be double height for a project of this scale.

There was strong support for the use of mass timber, and panelists encouraged the team to maintain this aspect of the project as it moves forward.

One panelist encouraged finding more opportunities to express the mass timber structure.

There was strong support for the rooftop amenity.

Panelists suggested considering tower roof accessibility as well.

Some panelists suggested considering alternate locations for the ground floor amenities to help them relate better to the communal and public spaces.

There were concerns expressed regarding the lack of detailed shadow studies, making it difficult to assess the comprehensive impacts.

There was discussion regarding tree removal, especially tree size with respect to climate change.

Some panelists discussed alternate ways of making the density work on the site while retaining more trees.

There was commentary on the retail façade and expression, and how they interface with the public realm.

Panelists noted that the retail component should better address the change in grade, and consider a more human scale along the street.



Panelists suggested improvements to the public realm along Broadway. Some panelists expressed concern with the lane interface, noting that it could engage more with the neighborhood. One panelist noted concern around bike accessibility and circulation.

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