

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

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**DATE:** August 4, 2021

**TIME:** 4:00 pm

**PLACE:** WebEx

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

Michael Henderson (Chair)  
Kelly Lee  
Alan Davies  
Alyssa Koehn  
Brian Wakelin  
Brittany Coughlin  
Natalie Telewiak  
Geoff Lister  
Margot Long

**REGRETS:**

Angela Enman  
Walter Francl

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** M.Sem

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. 1616-1698 W Georgia Street

**BUSINESS MEETING** Chair, MR. HENDERSON, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum.

- 1. Address:** 1616-1698 W Georgia Street  
**Permit No.** DP-2021-00409
- To develop a 33-storey residential tower, including 127 residential strata units; all over 6 levels of underground parking, providing 213 vehicle parking spaces and 335 bike stalls. The proposed building height is 99.25 m (326 ft.). The total floor area is 16,528 sq. m (177,903 sq. ft.) and the floor space ratio (FSR) of 9.39. The application is being considered under the West End Community Plan ([External link](#)) and Rezoning Policy for the West End ([External link](#)).
- Zoning:** RM-6 to CD-1  
**Application Status** Complete Development Application  
**Review:** Second  
**Architect:** Anthem Properties Group Ltd.  
**Delegation:** James Von Klemperer, KPF Architects  
 Nastaran Moradinejad, Principal, PFS Studio  
 Paul Faibish, Senior Vice President, Development, Anthem Properties  
 Jinsuk Park, Architect, KPF
- Staff:** Hamid Shayan, Development Planner

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**EVALUATION: Support with recommendations (8/0)**

Development planner, Hamid Shayan, began by noting this is a proposed DP application after rezoning to develop a 33-storey residential building with 127 strata units, all above 6 storey underground parking, located on the south side of Georgia Street, between Bidwell and Cardero Streets. The residential lobby access is off both Georgia Street and Bidwell Street, with vehicular access off Bidwell Street. The proposed landscaping on the ground plane provides a publicly accessible midblock pedestrian access from W.Georgia Street to Alberni Street.

This is the second panel and the first one as DP. This presentation is aiming to highlight design modifications from rezoning to DP subject of addressing the panel's previous recommendations and Urban Design Rezoning conditions

The proposed application has been approved at public hearing on March 9<sup>th</sup> 2021 to rezone from RM\_6 (residential) to CD-1 under West End Community Plan at Georgia Corridor, Area A. The proposed CD-1 Bylaw allows for a maximum height of 99.3 m (326 ft.) and a maximum density of 9.39 FSR. adheres to the max. Tower floorplate size of 511 sq. m. (5,500 sq. ft.)

The proposal at rezoning was reviewed and supported by the Urban Design Panel on April 17, 2019. The Panel suggested design development of the mews, landscape, and scale along W. Georgia Street and provision of more refinements of the horizontal planters near the base. Additionally, the Panel sought inclusion of trees on the tower, and along W. Georgia Street.

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The proposal responded to the comments and feedbacks from panel and community at rezoning as follows:

- Refinement at mid-block access, since rezoning the applicant has replaced the stairs with accessible ramps. To meet the required slope, the circulation is split between the two properties. They also have revised how the townhouse connect to the mews and Increase the privacy by landscape screening
- Provision of more sitting area at W. Georgia St,
- Planting More trees at the street to enhance public interest
- The planter's and landscape re arrangements to increase the visibility and welcoming of the main entrance
- The refinement at access path to the entrance and also integrating public arts with the public realm functions
- increasing the depth of vestibule and adding vertical feature at main entrance,
- Remove the stairs from the lobby and provide more transparency.
- Increasing the opening area at W. Georgia St. elevation
- The proportion and the materiality of the horizontal planters near the base have been revised.
- Following the mid-block access updates, some revisions have been implemented at the southeast corner facing Alberni St.
- With all the design refinements there is no change of shadowing on Marina Square Park from RZ
- more materiality and details refinements have been proposed in DP application

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

**Public Realm**

1. Please provide feedback on the overall evolution between rezoning and development permit on the following:
  - a. The quality of the public realm, building interface, and landscape design at full perimeter particularly at the mid-block connector & W. Georgia St; ( refer to Rezoning conditions 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, and 1.5)

**Overall Design Development and Materiality**

1. Please comment on the overall evolution of the proposed building design between rezoning and development permit, with special attention to the podium level
2. Does the proposed materiality serve to enhance the overall design concept demonstrated at the time of the rezoning application?

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Applicant began by presenting on the inspiration for the design.

Designed is inspired by the balance between boldness and subtlety of the mountains, aiming to bring a sense of nature to the convenient urban living.

Design Concept:

Stepped Massing

- Interlocking and stepping, expressive volumetric composition, cascade terraces

Green terracotta

- Softening of the edges, trees and tall plants on terrace, integrated greens on façade

Organic Texture

- Breaks away from typical glass boxes, add warmth and human scale

Presented the top tower view, podium landscape and perspective from the southwest corner.

The height of the planters have been lowered but the amount of green space has been not been reduced but increase the transparency. The amount of solid had been reduced to give an appearance, openness, accessibility and permeability to the building, along with the fountain artwork in other textures of green that find themselves at the base.

W. Georgia St front: lobby façade

Lobby façade glazed area increased to 50% of W Georgia Front for higher transparency

Lower ground level planter height from improved visibility

Landscape concept:

The planters in front of the building have been quite a bit more subdued as there is very slight grade difference between Georgia sidewalk and the building floor elevation

Looking at metal planters to minimize the appearance of walls, and try to maximize the green, as much as possible.

Working with the subtlety of the grades in order to create a layered landscape in keeping with the architectural language of the building that talks about layering of green over a more solid and robust ground.

Working with the artist who has proposed the public art in the northeast corner and worked with them to create a hospitable environment for the art and make it interactive.

At Alberni, the frontage is generously planted on lower level and the higher level to provide some privacy and to maintain the green nature of the street.

On Georgia St, we have managed to come up with a way of providing an accessible road while distributing the planting on both sides of the mews to allow for some feeling of green from the bottom to the top. Some seating has been added at the mouth of the mews

On the upper levels, incorporating more substantial planting and maximizing the flexible space for the residents as they can program the generous patios; this language of green is carried through those balcony edge planters that climb down the facade.

Regarding the mews, as opposed to a relentless set of stairs climbing up, they have been turned them into a ramp, allowing the green to jump from one side to the other to make it equitable between the two properties but also provide a continuous sense of tree canopy with as much as possible green at grade.

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

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

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

1. Improve porosity and pedestrian interface with the base of the building along Georgia Street, with particular attention to Georgia at the mid-block connector.
2. Design development to the entry, to achieve greater porosity, legibility and to review the expression of the column at the entry to support the overall concept.
3. Ensure rezoning conditions for planting species and edible plants are met.
4. To review the location and overlook of the amenity deck locations to support an equitable approach and broader appeal.

#### **Panel Commentary**

Panel noted the vast improvement of the pedestrian mews over what was proposed at the rezoning stage.

Panel noted the seating improvements are sufficient along the pedestrian mews.

Panel noted the planting is successful. Regarding the integration of the accurate planting and planting above, Panel noted the first move back in the rezoning stage was more ambitious or more faithful to the parte and now it's being chipped away to make a safe inactive public realm. It feels a bit manicured as it comes down to the ground.

Panel noted the materiality feels a little thin with the switch to the corten steel when there is all this stone available; stone does not really play out well in the public realm in Vancouver and there's an opportunity here for that; these kinds of substantial stone moves can ground the project, more fully and more wholesomely.

Panel noted the massing and the detailing and architectural expression are well articulated and will significantly contribute to the streetscape.

Panel noted the materiality and delicate nature on the façade of a residential building giving it a very committed kind of attempt to articulate the architecture on the public realm.

Panel noted support for the two level townhomes providing a great public realm response along Alberni St at the side of the building.

Panel suggest lowering the landscape wall at the north edge could be lowered down to mitigate issues.

Panel noted the attempt to widen planters on Alberni St is successful, providing a good division between the semi-public spaces and private spaces.

Panel suggest the parkade exhaust at northeast corner to be relocated.

Panel encourage the applicant to give legibility to entrance and to amplify its prominence perhaps by adding more glazing. Currently, it seems hidden from the street and feels closed off as the doors are tucked around the corner.

The entry plaza at Georgia and Bidwell needs to be opened up more or possibly move to the corner, it feels like a maze to find the entrance.

Panel noted the lobby needs to be more visible. Panel suggest fine tuning the façade treatment to make the lobby more visibility and identity.

Panel noted it will be good to see how the final selected public art for this project can be contributed to the coherence of the project's beautiful architecture expression.

Panel noted the stone material and natural elements on this corner are a strong addition to the public realm.

Panel encourage applicant to review the entry and expression of the column.

Panel encourages the applicant team to look at the amount of materials, different types of stone concrete, with the concept of the natural drivers and connection to the to the mountains. Panel noted by seeing how much of that concept can be achieved with changes in texture with just a few different materials could simplify the experience from the public realm. It would be clearer if there were fewer materials and few more rules with how those materials are used in terms of the kind of porosity and the different rhythms.

Panel noted it was disappointing not to see any edible landscape on any roof decks and amenities.

One of the Panel members noted the amenity on the east side is a lost opportunity; if it was on the west side, it would connect to Bidwell, it would reinforce the parte of having a stronger planting on the mountain side, and it would have a stronger connection to a park across the street.

Panel noted more planting would reinforce the parte.

Panel appreciates the passive shading elements reflect the local landscape; In addition, the textured concrete planters and how they reflect other local architecture and precedents in Vancouver's urban landscape, while fitting into a very modern project that is on a prominent ceremonial street.

Panel encourage opportunity for more family oriented outdoor space; suggestion around the fitness studio deck opportunity for children's play area.

Panel encourages gathering spaces along the exterior that are public facing amenities open to all users and age groups.

Panel encourage further development of the column at the entrance.

Panel appreciates seeing sustainability targets being met.

Panel noted a ramp at the mid-block connector was 100% required. There is concern with the way it is developed primarily about the recognition of it as a connector from Alberni to Georgia St; from Georgia there is path way but it appears as a dead end and therefore not serving its function. Panel ask to review and address this issue and look into a strategy.

Panel noted concern with entrance to the parkade; Panel suggest to pay attention to what the interior building envelope looks like as the opening is about a third of the building elevation along that street and this space has not paid attention to a loading space and garbage days. In addition, there are security concerns within that space and Panel suggest to address these security concerns through the architecture or through technology means.

Panel appreciates the concept of the base of the mountain coming down to grade. Panel suggest if there are locations within the project where it can break away from the concept and have one off for unique situations.

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