

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: Wednesday Aug 26, 2020

TIME: 4:00 pm

PLACE: WebX

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Alan Davies
Michael Henderson
Brittany Coughlin
Margot Long
Adrien Rahbar
Sydney Schwartz
Muneesh Sharma
Jennifer Stamp
Karenn Krangle
Marie-Odile Marceau
Jennifer Marshall

REGRETS: Matt Younger
Walter Franci
Angela Enman
Peter Busby

RECORDING SECRETARY: K. Cermeno

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 1063-1075 Barclay Street

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. Address: | 1063-1075 Barclay Street |
| Permit No. | RZ-2020-00028 |
| Description: | To develop a 47-storey residential building with 79 social housing units and 295 market housing units over five levels of underground parking consisting of 357 vehicle spaces and 770 bicycle spaces. The proposed building height is 141.4 m (464 ft.), the total floor area is 30,628 sq. m (329,677 sq. ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 19.1. This application is being considered under the West End Community Plan and Higher Buildings Policy. |
| Application Status: | Rezoning Application (Higher Building) |
| Review: | First |
| Architect: | ACDF Architecture – Maxime Frappier, IBI Architects – Martin Bruckner, Gwyn Vose, Jeff Christianson |
| Landscape Arch: | PFS Studio – Lin Lin |
| Staff: | Thien Phan & Paul McDonnell |

EVALUATION: SUPPORTS with the Panel Comments Addressed. **(10/1)**

- **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Thien Phan, began by describing the Higher Building Policy Intent. In accordance to the Higher Building Policy the design must establish the following:

- (a) Higher Buildings must establish a significant and recognizable new benchmark for architectural creativity and excellence, while making a significant contribution to the beauty and visual power of the city's skyline;
- (b) Higher Buildings are only permitted within the areas identified below in Figure 1 in the map;
- (c) The highest buildings (i.e. ~550-700') are located within the Central Business District and the tallest buildings (i.e. ~700') should be located on one of Vancouver's three primary streets: West Georgia, Burrard and Granville;
- (d) Secondary heights may be considered for buildings at the Granville and Burrard Bridgeheads;
- (e) All other applications for additional height at the two bridgehead locations should be analyzed to ensure that the experiential intent of these gateways is maintained;
- (f) The development should not involve the demolition of a Class 'A' heritage building;
- (g) The buildings should achieve community benefits (i.e. as a recipient site for density transfers; retention of important heritage components; provision of significant cultural or social facilities; or provision of low cost housing);
- (h) In addition, Higher Buildings should be considered with careful effort to provide a lasting and meaningful public legacy to Vancouver and should include careful consideration of the following:
 - (i) The building should include activities and uses of community significance and/or public amenity;
 - (ii) The development should provide on-site open space that represents a significant contribution to the downtown network of green and plaza space;

- (iii) The building should not contribute to adverse microclimate effects;
- (iv) Careful consideration should be given to minimize adverse shadowing and view impacts on public realm including key streets, parks and plazas, as well as neighbouring buildings;
- (v) Signage on the buildings should not be located at a height which exceeds the building's current height limit.

The proposal site has a current zoning of RM-5B, 132 ft. along Barclay Street and 131 ft. along Thurlow Street. The site slopes 10 ft. down towards the lane. The site is currently occupied by strata residential units: one 36-unit building (1990) and one 4-unit building (2003).

The proposal contains:

- 47 storeys of residential with 374 units of housing, consisting of 25% of the residential floor area as social housing and the remaining 75% strata housing
- Total floor area is 330,000 sq. ft. and 7,500 sq. ft. floor plate.
- The height moves into the Queen E view cone at 464 ft. with an FSR of 19.1
- 10 levels of underground parking and 357 parking spaces:
 - 300 condo parking (1.02 stalls per unit)
 - 38 social housing parking
 - 19 visitor
- 770 bike spaces:
 - Class A: 749
 - Class B: 21

The base of the tower (social housing entrance) is narrow to allow for additional landscaping, engaging pedestrians as they approach it, which adds to the human scale, activating the public realm. The project also tapers at the bottom to allow greater openness on at the pedestrian level. Levels, 1-13 contain social housing and levels 14-47 contain strata housing.

The Queen Elizabeth view cone crosses this site at 332 ft. The applicant is proposing to go into this view cone with a height of 469 ft. therefore triggering the Higher Buildings Policy.

Sunlight access is a big part of this application. There are higher forms south and lower forms as we head north to respect and maintain public open space for a very well used pedestrian street. The building terraces as you move up to ensure shadowing respects Robson Street at 4 pm on the spring and fall equinoxes.

The enabling policy is the Rezoning Policy for the West End, adopted at the same time as West End Plan. The intent of this policy was for intensification of the West End in specific areas to provide jobs space, housing, and public amenities. It allows consideration for rezoning in the Burrard Corridor for increased density for market residential when significant public benefits can be achieved for the community. This site is located in Area D where 25% of the floor area must be social housing, or 1:1 replacement, whichever is greater.

This is being considered under the Higher Building Policy, which allows for the consideration of buildings within these catchment areas into the Queen Elizabeth view cone if there is a substantial public benefit. These applications are evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Establish a significant benchmark for architectural creativity and excellence and contribute to the beauty and visual power of the skyline.

- A series of open spaces with curvilinear balcony facades with curved soffits add to an intriguing texture. Soft curves that harmoniously complement them. Balconies cascading in a staggered manner that follows the angle of the sun.
- Advance the city's objective for carbon neutrality for new buildings
 - Provide meaningful public legacy with provisions of significant community benefits, on site activities, and uses of community significance
 - Semi private vegetable belt that wraps Thurlow and Barclay with a generous public plaza and pockets of public space
- Minimize shadowing and view impacts on the public realm including key streets, plazas and parks as well as neighbouring buildings.
 - Access to sunlight considered where building height is direct response to the 3 pm equinox limitations to maximize sunlight onto Robson street

The distinguishing feature of a "tower in the park" form is that the tower meets the ground without the presence of a podium. Towers proposed on sites east of Thurlow are to be "towers in the park". On these sites, a front yard and side yard on a side street setback shall be 12 ft. The base of a "tower in the park" can be up to 15% larger than the floor plates above a height of 60 ft.

Ms. Phan noted all higher buildings will undergo an enhanced review by the Urban Design Panel, which will be supplemented with the addition of two local architects as appointed by the Director of Planning.

Development Planner, Paul McDonnell, noted this project is being considered under the Higher Building Policy, which allows for the consideration of buildings within these catchment areas into the Queen Elizabeth view cone if there is a substantial public benefit.

These applications are evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Establish a significant benchmark for architectural creativity and excellence and contribute to the beauty and visual power of the skyline
- Advance the city's objective for carbon neutrality for new buildings
- Provide meaningful public legacy with provisions of significant community benefits, on site activities, and uses of community significance
- Minimize shadowing and view impacts on the public realm including key streets, plazas and parks as well as neighbouring buildings.
- Access to sunlight considered where building height is direct response to the 3 pm equinox limitations to maximize sunlight onto Robson street

The Bulletin lays out requirements for siting and tower shaping, including Maximum Floor Plate Sizes, Setbacks and Tower Separations. Of particular note, the West End Plan designates the site as a Tower in the Park typology, where the tower meets ground without podium. The Bulletin adds additional detail to the Tower in the Park type by stating that the base of a tower can be up to 15% larger than floor plates above a height of 60 ft.

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

1. Is the height, density and massing proposed supportable?

2. Does the proposal establish a significant and recognizable new benchmark for architectural creativity and excellence, while making a significant contribution to the beauty and visual power of the City's skyline?
3. Do the proposed on-site open spaces represent a significant contribution to the downtown network of green and plaza spaces?
4. Does the proposal demonstrate leadership for sustainable energy and efficiency?

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The design rationale was creating a strong sense of belonging with the architecture. A sense of belonging with high towers can be a challenging goal to achieve.

The intent is to provide a sense of belonging through a great sidewalk to building relationship, indoor and outdoor amenities and landscaping. The project favours a great pedestrian experience.

We are looking for the top of the tower to successfully house the mechanical so that the skyline is aesthetically pleasing.

The applicant noted the projected properly responds to the design guidelines and to the adjacent buildings.

The Architectural language was inspired by nature by providing lots of organic shapes. The balcony units respond to the green nature of City of Vancouver. The underneath of the balconies will also be detailed with finesse along with the railings especially for pedestrians walking by. There is a green interface with seating on the sidewalk.

The applicant noted they will be playing around with the densities to create a successful façade. The focus is also the transition of the green areas to other areas of the site and the transition from external to internal via the fenestrations. The intent is for the lobby to have a great connection with the low rise buildings.

The project is working hard to respond to the shadowing on Robson Street.

The applicant noted multiple shadow studies have been completed. The applicant noted all the towers on the North of street will always be in the shadow as the land is sloping down.

The applicant noted they are working with ductile concrete and panels to create a well assembled tailored and attached project site.

Additional comments included the site has various thresholds, there is lots of bicycle storage and loading will be at back of house.

The landscape focuses on two relationships, enhance the tower and park concept and the design is inspired by the nature and organic forms. The landscape around the tower is to enhance the public realm and create a balance between soft and hard scape.

The applicant noted they are looking to eliminate the thermal bridge to create a successful energy efficient building.

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. SHARMA** and seconded by **MS. MARSHALL** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **SUPPORTS** the project with the panel comments addressed.

Related Commentary:

Massing, Height and Density:

The panel generally supported the project.

The massing, height and density are supportable. The building achieves a slender volume.

One panel member was not in support of the height and feels that high rise developments disconnect people from the street and act as a gated community.

The architectural expression is elegant and it will contribute to the skyline of downtown.

The panel feels that this is an elegant building with a clever façade and is visually stunning with its play of shadows on the facades.

There was a concern raised about the number of unique buildings clustered in this area of downtown/westend.

The panel agreed that there is a high standard of creativity and excellence, however they felt that the application did not demonstrate how it will be 'pulled off' given the level of detail in the booklet.

The panel liked the different facades of the buildings, however it was felt that the north and the south elevations need improvement and whether the balconies on the north and south need to be there.

A panelist noted the height is going quite high into the view cone and is concerned with the lack of information regarding elements of the building affecting the skyline. A rendering of a far off view of the tower and its impact on the downtown skyline would have been good to see.

The floor plans are well worked out.

A panelist noted the amenities are well handled.

Social Housing:

The panel commended the applicant for the social housing; however there is no major benefit or economic benefit to the community.

There was concern with the dual entrance; it appears as there is one entrance for the low-income and one for those of higher income, and this does not contribute to the equality and sense of belonging the applicant talked about.

While some panel members felt that the social housing entry is well treated (and understand that the City likely requires this design for the purposes of a distinct air space parcel), many

panel members voiced concerns over the dual entry doors (for social housing and market housing) supporting inequality.

The layout of the social housing units a great, and larger than usual.

Sustainability:

The sustainability details could have been better articulated and integrated into the booklet. Sustainability could have also been better used to describe the architectural response. The panel was supportive of the sustainability strategies such as thermally broken balconies, triple glazing, and air source heat pumps.. An R15 value target for windows and paneling are to be commended.

Reconsider how to handle the North and South fins, the radiator fins are not being used.

A panelist noted the up lighting of the building from a sustainability perspective should not be pursued.

Detailing to consider:

The success of the design will be in the execution of the details.

The renderings are well handled, however it is important to consider how this lightness/calmness will be carry out throughout the design. The success of the project well be dependent on the execution of details and materials used.

The panel had many comments on the balconies. The design of the sculpted balconies are beautiful and the are a nod to the design of some older west end buildings. Many commented on the transition between the scalloped façade and balconies was being treated.

There was some concern how the curved precast concrete balconies meet the slab extension balconies. More investigation is required to understand how these two types of balconies intersect at the same spot where the glass is curved at the corners of the building.

The window pattern on the renderings is beautiful and simple, however the diagrams in the booklet of the proposed fenestration pattern proposed looks like a standard condo window system and it is felt that this is not appropriate. A panelist noted to look at a glazing system that is better suited to the project.

All balconies should be drained internally.

Public Realm and Landscape:

The ground plane has been well treated. The humanizing of the lane interface with the loading and the parking entry is well handled.

While the plaza space on the corner does provide a open space for the public it is felt that it does not make a significant contribution to the open space of the neighbourhood due to its small size. While the design of the small spaces along the edge of the site are beautiful it is not understood how they connect to a network of green spaces downtown. A panelist noted that the public art will be key to making the small spaces along the edge of the site inviting to the public.

The transition to the threshold spaces is nicely handled. The social housing entry is spare on details and the panel suggested adding some seating/benches. One panel member felt that having the entry accessed over a bridge made it feel very exclusive and uninviting which is not fitting for the Westend.

It was not felt that the planting and open spaces surrounding the building is enough to characterize the project as a tower in the park. The term 'forest' is misleading as it is more some trees that have been planted around the building.

The panel felt that the landscape requires more detailing and coordination with the architecture. Tree heights under the building soffit are not resolved and sufficient soil volumes are not known as there are no landscape sections in the booklet.'

The shared (market and non market) outdoor amenity space is well handled, in particular the shared kids play area.

The use of Native plants is appreciated.

More information on the treatment and layout of the roof terrace landscape needs to be provided, as well as understanding their impact on the skyline.

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