

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: Sept 15, 2021

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Webex

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Michael Henderson
Kelly Lee
Jennifer Stamp
Margot Long
Brittany Coughlin
Jane Vorbrodt
Geoff Lister

REGRETS:

RECORDING

SECRETARY: K. Cermeno

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 418-496 Alexander Street (450 Alexander St)
2. 2246-2268 E Broadway

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Henderson called the meeting to order at 4:05pm and noted the presence of a quorum. The panel then considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 418-496 Alexander Street (450 Alexander Street)
 Permit No. RZ-2021-00033
 Description: To develop a 16-storey mixed-use building with 181 social housing units, social enterprise space, and a childcare facility; all over one level of underground parking consisting of 35 vehicle spaces and 364 bicycle spaces. The proposed building height is 48.7 m (160 ft.), the total floor area is 12,858 sq. m (138,397 sq. ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 5.67. This application is being considered under the Rezoning Policy for the Downtown Eastside.
 Zoning: DEOD to CD-1
 Application Status: Rezoning Application (SHORT)
 Review: First
 Architect: IBI Group
 Staff: Carly Rosenblat & Hamed Ghasemi

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (7/0)

- **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Carly Rosenblat, introduced the project as an application to rezone 418-496 Alexander Street from DEOD to CD-1 under the Rezoning Policy for the Downtown Eastside. This site is made up of 6 lots at the south west corner of Alexander Street and Jackson Avenue in the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood. It includes lots 418-496 Alexander St, collectively referred to as '450 Alexander St'. The development site is zoned DEOD (Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District) and currently developed with six existing 1-2 storey buildings used for industrial, manufacturing, warehouse, and storage purposes that were built from 1928 to 1983. The site is approximately 24,400 sq. ft. in size and there are no residential tenants on site.

To the north of the site is zoned CD-1 which contains the 2 storey Vancouver Japanese Language School and 4 storey heritage designated Japanese Hall. Beyond this, is Railtown I-4 Historical Industrial district which includes low and mid-rise industrial buildings.

East of the site is zoned DEOD. There is a 2-storey B-listed heritage site that is used as women's housing and shelter and known as the 'Imouto Housing for Women'.

Lots to the south are zoned DEOD and consist of 2-3 storey residential, commercial, industrial buildings and Oppenheimer Park. West of the site are two of Vancouver's oldest houses from 1901 and 1905. They are also zoned DEOD. At the end of the block is Roddan Lodge, a new 11 storey mixed-use building with 213 social housing units, zoned CD-1.

Rezoning potential for the site is being considered under the Rezoning Policy for the Downtown Eastside (2014, last amended 2019) and the Downtown Eastside Plan (2014).

The site falls within sub-area 4 of the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District which permits height up to 100 ft. and density up to 5.0 FSR where 100% social housing is

provided. The applicant is seeking an increase in density and height beyond what is permitted in the DTES Plan.

This proposal is to rezone from DEOD to CD-1 to permit a 16-storey mixed-use building. It will provide 181 social housing units with approximately 44% family units, made up of 2 and 3 bedroom units. The project will meet the DTES Plan's definition of Social Housing. There are deep levels of affordability being proposed to provide a mix of shelter rates, rent geared to income and below market rental

To note, this project is part of the City's SHORT program, which aims for faster production of affordable housing by reducing development approval times for high impact multi-family housing projects.

Carly noted projects qualify for the SHORT program based on a screening process which assesses affordability levels, scale of the project, funding methods, and other factors such as building emissions.

Other proposed uses include a Social Enterprise Space intended to be used by Atira and a 37 space childcare facility. The proposed density is 5.67 FSR which is equivalent to approximately 138,400 sq. ft. in floor area and a height of 48.7m or 160 ft. The proposal includes 35 underground vehicle parking spaces and 364 bicycle parking spaces to meet the City's Parking By-law. The applicant is pursuing Path B Low Emissions green building standard.

Development Planner Hamed Ghasemi began by describing that this application is located at the southwest corner of Alexander St and Jackson Ave. The existing lot pattern consists of 25 ft. parcels and the site is consolidating 8 parcels for a total frontage of 200 ft. facing Alexander St. and depth of 122 ft. along Jackson Ave.

The site is surrounded by several heritage buildings. In the north, Japanese language school and Japanese hall are located which includes a daycare facility. In the east, Sailor's home, a heritage B building is located and in the west, we have two smaller heritage buildings. On the same block, we have the recently approved and under construction "Roddan lodge and Evelyne Saller Center" which is an 11 storey mixed-use social housing building.

Policy/Guidelines – DTES & DEOD

The site is located in sub-area 4 of the DEOD. The policy only speak about small parcels development and does not provide a direction for larger sites.

Hamed noted the built form policies permit height up to 100 feet and density up to 5.5 FSR (including 0.5 FSR to support local businesses).

Urban Design provisions are:

- Minimize shadow impacts on public open spaces
- Contribute to the visual, cultural, and pedestrian experience of important public spaces and monuments

- Respond sympathetically and respectfully, to the surrounding heritage and cultural context
- Ensure pedestrian interest and street vibrancy through ground-oriented tenancies

DEOD – Form of Development:

Hamed described that If we follow the DEOD direction for smaller parcels development, the outcome will be a 10 story high street wall that fully shades the north sidewalk along Alexander St. and limits open views to the skies. The applicant tried other form of development like the terraced form, but similar to Roddan lodge, the building will be a double-wing building to land the allowable density. This typology will also result in shadowing the north sidewalk along Alexander Street, will not have open space on site to provide uncovered outdoor space for a daycare use, and will have limited open views to the sky.

Design Strategy:

Staff and the applicant team worked closely to provide a form of development that particularly fits in this block by squeezing a portion of the density to the corner of the site. The tower on podium typology will minimize the shadow on public realm, provide uncovered outdoor space on site for a day care use, and enhance the streetscape by enlarging the open views to the sky, and provide a better transition from a 6 storey podium to 2 storey heritage houses on the west of the site. Overall, the form of development criteria are:

- Shadow on north sidewalk (minimize?)
- Uncovered childcare outdoor space
- Transition to the west heritage houses
- open views to the sky

Proposal – 1st Floor Plan:

On the ground floor, childcare and social enterprise spaces are facing Alexander St. and residential lobby and indoor amenity room are facing Jackson Ave. The sunny childcare outdoor space is facing the lane.

Proposal- Typical lower floor plans:

A 12 ft. setback on the west of the podium levels has been considered to provide a transition to the west heritage buildings. The broad range of unit mix with 44% family units has been provided to house different demographics on the sites.

Proposal – 7th Floor:

On the podium, a rooftop outdoor amenity has been provided. The squeezed density in the corner has been located in a floor plate of approximately 6800 sq .ft to provide a slim tower expression.

Proposal- Outdoor Amenity Space:

A snapshot of the proposal from the rear. The outdoor space for the childcare will humanize the lane environment and landscape in different levels, at the lane and on the podium, will add visual interest as viewed from public realm.

Proposal- Building articulation:

The dominant materials on the street-facing elevations are cementitious panels and glass. Brick cladding has been provided along Alexander St. which demonstrates the existing lot pattern in the context.

Shadow Study:

Shadow study for both forms of development, a 100 feet tall street wall typology as policy suggests, and tower on podium form which is the current proposal have been provided. The shadow study reflects how the tower on podium form can minimize shadow impacts on public realm.

It is worth to note that the tower will not provide any extra shadows on childcare outdoor space of Japanese hall.

Historical context of DEOD:

We would like to draw your attention to the historical context of the DEOD and how architectural expression can be addressed in this context. Considering that this is the first review of this SHORT project at the rezoning stage (when we ask for feedback on form, height and density), we would like to also seek your preliminary advice for the future phase of the project on how the proposal can differentiate the tower on podium expression in this context from other neighborhoods in the city. What we mostly see for the architectural expression in the DEOD is inset balconies, solid corners, punched windows, robust building base, and detailing such as cornices.

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

1. Given the DEOD anticipates a 100 feet tall street wall typology, and the proposal departs from this policy, please comment on the proposal with respect to:
 - Public realm (including shadows)
 - Provision of uncovered childcare outdoor space
 - Transition and relation to the lower-scale neighbors to the west
2. With respect to compatibility with older buildings in the context of the DEOD, please provide some preliminary advice on how the applicant can address the architectural expression in this context.

• Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Janice Abbott from Atira, introduced the project and explained Atira operates a number of affordable housing projects across the lower mainland.

Janice noted the project goal is to bring family units to the neighborhood. The intent is to house a lot of women into the building who have had their children returned from care and cannot find long term affordable housing, and also bring childcare to the neighborhood.

Martin Bruckner from IBI Architects explained the massing takes its cues from the building to the west. He noted their team has worked closely with City Staff to come up with an appropriate form of development. The tower is higher than the 110 ft limit, however the podium is lower than 6 stories which helps mitigate the shadows to the sidewalk.

Design elements include framed doorways for the principle entrances, punched windows and framed walls to allow meeting preliminary energy model. There is an open space to the daycare at the lane. The proposal includes amenity spaces for the residences. Every unit has balconies. There is a social enterprise space at the ground floor. There is loading access to the side and underground parking access.

The landscape architect explained there is a rooftop amenity area with an intensive green roof with trees such as Japanese maples. The eastern portion of the roof has raised concrete planters. The sidewalk has been widened to the 2ft setback. The street frontages are according to city standards. On the west there is daycare programming and to the east a preschool. There are no existing trees at the moment but the applicant is proposing trees.

The 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. LONG and MS. STAMP 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:

1. To consider strategies to ensure future protection of sun access to the outdoor daycare;
2. To consider adding an indoor amenity space to level 7 adjacent to outdoor roof area;
3. To consider strategies to enhance relationship to neighboring sites in its current development form and future development opportunities;
4. Design development to architectural and landscape details with respect to material, color, neighborhood and cultural references;
5. To consider an accessible washroom on the amenity roof level;
6. Consider additional sustainable strategies such as thermal broken balconies, high performance windows and passive solar shading.

- **Related Commentary:**

There was overall support for the density and how the height is allocated within the site. There are underlying concern with densification with the area overall however with the uniqueness of this project and what it is offering there was support for density and height.

There was concern regarding the relationship to the neighboring existing houses to the west, and the panel noted to continue to be sensitive to those neighbors and do what you can. The project needs to have special attention to ensure it is working closely with the heritage houses as the transition is rough at the moment.

There was lots of conversation around the outdoor space for the childcare facility, with some concern with the interface of the childcare facility play area and the lane. Consider raising the daycare to the seventh level to assist with security and shadowing. Another suggestion was to have the childcare face Jackson Avenue where it will be open to more sunlight.

The panel strongly encouraged the incorporation of an indoor amenity space adjacent to the outdoor amenity space on the 7th floor.

The panel appreciated the simplicity with the overall architectural expression.

A panelist noted the color pallet does play coherently with the project; however, consider a more coherent material pallet and architecture identity of the project especially with reference to other cultural references in the area. .

The level of detail at the rezoning stage is good and further refinement at the development permit is anticipated.

Regarding sustainability there are opportunities for passive shading and passive strategies and some non-passive strategies such as high performance window and thermal breaking balconies.

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

2. Address:	2246-2268 E Broadway
Permit No.	DP-2021-00510
Description:	To develop a 6-storey residential building consisting of 57 market strata units over two levels of underground parking consisting of 47 vehicle spaces and 114 bicycle spaces. The maximum building height is 19.35 m (63.48 ft.), the proposed floor area is 4,216 sq. m (45,382 sq. ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 2.65. This application is being considered under the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan.
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Second (Frist as DP)
Review:	Complete Development Application
Architect:	Omicron
Staff:	Ryan Dinh

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (9/0)

- **Introduction:**

Development Planner, Ryan Dinh, presented this development permit application at 2246-2268 E Broadway, following the approved rezoning at public hearing in January 2021, under the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan. The Plan allows on this site a six storey residential building at 2.65 FSR. The built form suggests setbacks above the 3rd storeys, and further upper storey setbacks on the north side to reduce shadowing. The context and recent approved developments in the area were also presented. It was noted that the rezoning application was reviewed by the Urban Design Panel in July 2020 with recommendation of resubmission. In response to the rezoning conditions and urban design panel's comments, the development permit application follows the building stepbacks as per the Plan. In addition, further setback at the third storey is also provided in the rear to reduce the building massing. The outdoor amenity space was improved and enhance by relocating visitor parking to the underground parkade. Additional outdoor space is provided on the roof top.

Advice from the Panel is sought on the following:

1. Please comment on the response to Panel's previous recommendations
2. Additional comments and advice for improvements with regard to architectural detailing and expression, in particular the 3-storey base.

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The applicant noted the project responds to the main conditions that arose in front of the panel. The policy intent is to have the building on the south side have two stepbacks to maximize daylighting.

The building now steps back on the third floor and above the fifth floor.

The applicant noted they tried to emphasize the three storey street wall and break down to smaller masses to acknowledge the family residences.

The site is trying to mitigate the scale of the building with neighboring buildings

The applicant noted they have increased the use of masonry; there are deeper balconies with some potential timber soffits on the façade facing Broadway.

The identification of the main entrance is straightforward with a freestanding canopy to emphasize the entrance.

The applicant worked to break down the scale of frontage so there is a more pedestrian friendly access to the units. They sit on better grade condition with the adjacent sidewalks.

There are two different kind of three bedroom units. rotating the stairs helps increasing the livability of the corner units.

The applicant noted they have responded to the request to provide more softscape at the front of the residential and added more planting.

The setback off Broadway has been enhanced to improve the public realm.

The parkade slab has been dropped so there can be more landscape at grade.

The landscape has been enhanced on the rear yard and moved the visitor parking to underground.

The applicant noted they provided all the softscape and filtrating elements on the ground floor.

The 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. STAMP** and seconded by **MS. LONG** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

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

- Design development to architectural expression with particular attention to the large surface area, architectural and landscape details such as canopies, trellises, shading and landscape walls;
- Design development to the relationship and to ensure access between indoor and outdoor amenity space and to consider measures to ensure privacy to adjacent private decks;
- Consider revised location for the bike storage room to eliminate the need for a bike lift;
- Design development to suite layout at corner suites to improve the architectural expression and reduce spandrel panel on the exterior of the building;
- Consider additional cooling strategies including a partial cooling and cooling of the amenity and passive solar on the east and west facades;
- Consider additional shading or landscape areas on the common roof amenity deck.

- **Related Commentary:**

The panel generally appreciated the revised massing with the revised stepping.

The panel noted further development to of the articulation of the building, where details and the relationships of the materials, the color and the datum line could use further development. There is no consistency in the architectural language.

The majority of the panel appreciated the revised entry sequence, however noted further refinement to the access of the front door and how it relates to the canopy.

Revise the access to the amenity space so residents do not have to travel through the interior amenity room, consider an additional public access space. The connection between the back of the amenity room and outdoor amenity room is important.

Provide additional shading to the roof.

Consider loosening the formality of the language to the building expression and proportions, it is presently quite rigid and a wilder landscape to assist with the transitions
Consider a cooling common corridor and/or a cooling amenity space especially for vulnerable residents.

The majority of the panel suggested revising the accessibility to the bike parking.
The panel noted it is important to get the process of the passive shading right and provide it at all the right locations.

Applicant's Response: The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments and will take the comments into consideration for further improvement.