

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: Sept 29, 2021

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Webex

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Michael Henderson
Brittany Coughlin
Alan Davies
Jesse Gregson
Brian Wakelin
Margot Long
Alyssa Koehn

REGRETS: Clinton Cuddington

RECORDING

SECRETARY: K. Cermeno

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

- | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | 2406-2484 Renfrew Street |
| 2. | 277-291 W 42 nd Avenue |
| 3. | 2538 Birch Street |

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: 2406-2484 Renfrew Street
Permit No. RZ-2021-00009
Description: To develop a 14-storey mixed-use building with 179 secured rental housing units and commercial retail space at grade; all over two levels of underground parking, consisting of 123 vehicle spaces and 339 bicycle spaces. The proposed building height is 49.2 m (161 ft.), and the floor area is 13,334 sq. m (143,530 sq. ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 4.07. This application is being considered under the Moderate Rental Housing Pilot Program (MIRHPP).
Zoning: C-1 and RS-1 to CD-1
Application Status: Rezoning Application
Review: Second
Architect: Studio One Architecture
Staff: Chee Chan & Derek Robinson

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (7/0)**• Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Chee Chan, began by noting that this is a resubmission to UDP for a rezoning application for **2406-2484 Renfrew Street** from RS-1 and C-1 to CD-1 under the Moderate Income Rental Housing Pilot Program. The panel previously reviewed this file on July 21, 2021.

The site is made up of seven lots at the north east corner of Broadway and Renfrew Street. It is well served by transit, being directly on three bus routes, including the 99 B-line. The Renfrew SkyTrain station is a 400 m walk down the hill.

Mr. Chan said that under the MIRHP Program, rezonings can be considered for buildings providing 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-\$80,000 per year. Under MIRHPP, 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, which staff are considering for this site. Additional considerations for rezoning include transitions to surrounding areas and homes, and neighbourhood context.

He then presented a comparison of the previous proposal for a 12-storey tower and podium form, compared with the current resubmission for a 14-storey tower and separate six-storey building with a central, mews courtyard. He noted that the unit count has increased slightly, but the FSR of the two proposals are similar, at around 4.07 FSR.

Development Planner, Derek Robinson, began by outlining the consensus items that the Panel recommended back in July and noting that should Council approve the rezoning, the proposal would likely return to the Panel during the Development Permit stage for further review of the material palette, architectural expression, unit layouts and landscape strategy. The focus of today's session is primarily the form and massing.

An overview of the revised form of development proposed in response to the Panel's previous comments, was then presented:

- The massing is now broken at grade along Renfrew with a new mews approximately 35-40 ft. in width at grade
- This creates a mixed use stand alone tower and a six-storey residential building
- The setbacks along 8th Avenue have been simplified and the density has been relocated onto two additional tower floors and so the proposed FSR remains similar
- The tower setback to the lane has been increased from 23 to 30 ft., which reduces the tower floor plate. The result is a narrower tower that better emphasizes its verticality.

An overview of the comparative shadow analysis was then presented. It was noted that staff are generally supportive of the revised approach of placing the height and density at the corner of Broadway and Renfrew, incorporating the mews to break the massing on Renfrew and further stepping down to three storeys on 8th Avenue to the north.

Alina Maness, Landscape Planner, then spoke about the challenges of tree retention on this site and noted staff generally support the tree replacement strategy the applicant has proposed.

The Panel was then reminded that the scope of today's review is to assess the applicant's response to those previous panel comments, and the intent is not to introduce new items for revision that were not previously captured in the original review, as is outlined in AIBC Bulletin 65.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on:

1. Has the revised application responded successfully to the previous consensus advice provided on July 21, 2021

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The proposed building is in keeping with the proposed development to the south. The intersection at Renfrew and the site is a connection of two residential zones by a tech corridor. The tower massing is responding to the tech corridor.

The new scheme separates the tower and podium by creating a courtyard, which becomes a semi-public connection with the block at Renfrew and the lane. The courtyard creates a break in the Renfrew façade.

The courtyard has become the focal point of the development. There are two lobbies at the courtyard. There is a commercial elevator access at the corner.

There is a tower entrance and a podium entrance with a two storey expression with some wood elements.

The concept of the tower and massing is two interlocking volumes and the idea was to cut the corners of the square and to reduce shadows. The expression includes glazing that wraps around the tower.

There is a commercial podium. The commercial units are straight, tall, and individualized to represent individual businesses.

that the proposed massing steps down with grade, which helps create a scale that is more pedestrian friendly. The streetscape has been animated with landscape.

The applicant detailed why tree retention is particularly challenging for this site and then noted the proposal includes a replacement strategy of 53 new trees. There are soil volumes at the front and back of the mews where larger trees can be planted.

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 **MR. DAVIES** and **MS. KOEHN** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **SUPPORT** the project.

Related Commentary:

There was general support to the responses of the conditions from the original submission. The entrance is clearer, the pedestrian scale and moves are much more successful. The slope along the Broadway elevation is much more successful. The public realm deals with the grade changes better and the entrances and different uses of the building are clearer.

A panelist noted to make the expression clearer.

There was no major concern from the panel regarding the massing and there was general support for the height.

A panelist noted there is already an additional six storeys above the 6 storeys in the neighbourhood therefore more supportive of the way the building is.

The panel noted concern for the loss of existing trees and recommended further development of the landscape. Explore opportunity where possible for more planting along the perimeter and properly scale the landscape within the middle of the site.

A panelist suggested pulling the parkade back at the mews to allow additional trees on grade in that area, the existing trees along the existing retaining wall are quite large.

A panelist suggested the trees should be more in keeping of the space and not shape the whole area.

The panel suggested revising the accessibility of the new courtyard. Consider a pathway through the courtyard that is more convenient and accessible for transit and wayfinding.

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

2. Address:	277-291 West 42nd Avenue
Permit No.	RZ-2021-00030
Description:	To develop an 18-storey residential building with 211 rental units over three levels of underground parking consisting of 98 vehicle spaces and 406 bicycle spaces. The proposed building height is 61.3 m (201 ft.) with an additional partial storey for a rooftop amenity space, the total floor area is 12,012 sq. m (129,297 sq. ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 6.73. This application is being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan.
Zoning:	RS-1 to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	RHA
Staff:	Tess Munro & Omar Aljebouri

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (8/0)

• Introduction:

Rezoning Planner, Tess Munro, began by noting this is a rezoning application for three lots at 277-291 West 42nd Avenue. The site is currently zoned RS-1 and occupied by single-family houses, located midblock on 42nd Avenue. It is within a five-minute walk of the Oakridge Mall redevelopment site and the Canada Line Station. The site is located in a high change area, with numerous developments under consideration or approved along 41st Avenue and Cambie, with heights ranging from six to 27 storeys. In September 2020, the Panel reviewed a proposal by the same applicant under the same policy for the neighbouring site to the west. That proposal was approved by Council in April 2021.

Policy

This application is being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan - Phase 3.

In this location, the Plan anticipates either a four-story strata building or a six-storey rental building, with additional height and density considered for the provision of either 100% secured rental with 20% below-market housing or a combination of strata and social housing. This site is located where a tower element up to 18 storeys in height can be considered. A four-storey podium should be provided with a continuous streetwall condition.

Proposal

The applicant is proposing an 18-storey residential building, with 211 rental units, including 42 provided at below-market. A co-located indoor and outdoor amenity space is located on a partial 19th storey in line with the Cambie Plan. An FSR of 6.73 is proposed.

Development Planner, Omar Aljebouri, began by describing the Oakridge Municipal Town Centre as the geographic “centre” of the city and Canada Line, thus representing a significant concentration of urban uses and density in the Cambie Corridor. Off the arterials, a variety of new affordable housing will allow more people to live in this vibrant urban area. A highly walkable neighbourhood featuring an enhanced public realm with wide green setbacks and additional landscaping is anticipated. A diversity of built forms will reflect the importance of the location.

The Built Form:

Expectations for the built form include landscaped setbacks as a visual extension of the public realm; a continuous four-storey streetwall; ground-oriented units that provide visual interest and eyes on the street; vertically-expressed slim towers that are at least 90 ft. apart; tower tops that provide a visual terminus as viewed from street level and afar. An additional partial storey above the prescribed height may be considered for common rooftop amenity spaces contiguous with common outdoor amenity space, which is stepped back significantly to minimize visibility.

The Public Realm:

At the eastern edge of the site, the *Plan* identifies a mid-block secondary active link for pedestrian connection and to break up the block's length. The *Plan* identifies secondary active links to accommodate pedestrian passage, with elements that support an informal space for movement and respite such as low-maintenance planting, informal seating arrangements, and bike parking.

As part of the *Plan's* "Green Network", West 42nd Avenue is designated as a Park Connector. The Network aims to establish a cohesive approach to planting in the Corridor to improve sustainability, increase habitat, and create visual interest. West 42nd Avenue will connect Columbia Park to Cambie and Ontario Streets.

Existing and Future Contexts:

To the West: Active development application for a recently Council-approved rezoning of an 18-storey tower with a four-storey podium.

To the East: A single-family dwelling with an anticipated residential development of up to six storeys.

To the North: Existing lane; a single-family dwelling and a church. Anticipated future mixed-use developments of up to ten and 12 storeys on six-storey podiums.

The Proposal:

The development proposes a mid-block tower with a floorplate that generally follows the *Plan's* recommended dimensions. A mid-block secondary active link is provided along the eastern property line. The podium wraps around the corner to address the street and the active link and tapers along the north towards the inside corner and frame an outdoor space that is shared between loading, private patios, a bicycle elevator and an exit path. The main pedestrian access point is the corner double-height lobby with doors facing the active link. Indoor and outdoor amenities are located on the podium and tower roof.

Staff acknowledge that the Cambie Corridor Plan is prescriptive in terms of height and form of development.

Advice from the Panel is sought on the following:

1. Overall massing. Please consider factors such as the tower top and legibility of the tower and the podium.
2. Public realm and pedestrian experience, in particular the active link's treatment.
3. Any preliminary advice for consideration at the Development Permit stage. Please consider aspects such as building articulation given the project's high visibility from Columbia Park; relationship to the adjacent Council-approved tower; and the quality of the indoor and outdoor amenities.

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The applicant noted that this is a sister building to the building to the west, which is under the same ownership and are both are rental buildings. The buildings are operationally integrated with some design differences to each tower.

A common ramp services both buildings and a common amenity area on the shared podium is designed to be accessed by residents from both buildings. The design of the building responded to what the design panel had noted for the neighboring building.

The building is now slimmer and the footprint is prescribed by the Cambie Corridor plan. The impact of both the roof and penthouse has been reduced. A greenway has been introduced along the eastern property line.

The applicant noted this is a low emissions building and the project is meeting the energy targets.

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 seconded by **MS. KOEHN** 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 the southern façade to clearly define a four- or two-storey expression;
- Design development to the balcony expression to provide visual interest and variety;
- Design development to the public realm to improve the midblock connector and ensure future viability; clarify the public and private realms; improve the relationship to the park.

- **Related Commentary:**

The panel noted general support of the massing as proposed per the guidelines.

It was suggested to consider breaking down the prescribed massing and balconies.

There was some commentary around the public realm including appreciation of the current treatment but with further development such as the mid-block connector providing a more robust naturalized landscape and at-grade planting without the use of planters.

There was some commentary around the relationships of the lobby, public realm and the park and further design development to that relationship to better engage them.

A panellist noted to consider providing more outdoor space if it is not an architectural issue.

Further exploration to distinguish the public and private spaces along the street front.

There is some opportunity at grade level units to have more of a dialogue with the public and private.

There was some commentary around the expression of the balconies.

There was some commentary around the nature of the podium and how it has been expressed as four storeys then breaks down at the corner to a two-storey expression and to consider some clarity to the approach.

The tower floor plates are large at the bottom and are struggling with the expression, possibly this plays a part in the lack of clarity at the expression.

There was lots of appreciation for the measures in place regarding accessibility, however as the project develops, the design should pay attention to the landscape and outdoor furniture locations to consider a predictable pattern in the randomness.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments and will consider the comments for further improvement.

3. Address:	2538 Birch Street
Permit No.	DP-2021-00628
Description:	To develop a 28-storey mixed-use building with 200 market rental units and 58 Moderate Income Rental Housing, and commercial retail at podium ; all over five levels of underground parking consisting of 174 vehicle spaces and 94 bicycle spaces. The proposed building height is 87 m (285 ft.) the proposed floor area is 18,305 sq m (197,038 sq. ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 10.5.
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete Development Application
Review:	second (first at DP)
Architect:	IBI Group
Staff:	Hamid Shayan

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (7/0)

- **Introduction:**

Development Planner, Hamid Shayan, began by noting this is a proposed DP application after rezoning to develop a 28-storey mixed use building including 200 market rental and 58 Moderate Income Rental Housing units, all above 5 storey underground parking, located at the south east corner of West Broadway Street and Birch Street intersection.

This area of Broadway is currently developed with two- to four-storey commercial buildings and mixed-use towers. A 13-storey mixed-use strata residential building is located to the east. Directly north and northwest are two office towers at 8 and 13-storeys respectively. The area to the south is zoned RM-3 and is currently developed with low-rise strata-titled condos and rental apartment buildings.

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 floor plans show the commercial lobby access is off both West Broadway and Birch Street, with vehicular access off the lane. The double height at grade retails and office uses located at podium. The office lobby access is facing Broadway St.

3 open amenity spaces are proposed at 4th, 9th and 28th storey. There is no setback from West Broadway while 6' setback is proposed from Birch St. to activate retail frontage.

The proposed application follows the Council approval for amendment of CD-1 (708) on June 2020 which approves the increase of density from 7.07 to 10.55 and the maximum building height from 171' to 282' under MIRHP program.

The proposal at rezoning was reviewed and supported by the Urban Design Panel on July 10, 2019. The Panel did indicate concerns over the overall size and quality of the proposed plaza and recommended design improvements. Additionally, the Panel sought design development to strength the art in relations to the building and design development of the tower and podium integration.

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

- Design refinements at the corner plaza by increasing the depth
- Increase the at-grade setback at Birch St.
- Some refinements on massing above the main entry canopy
- Design modification to integrate the public art to the massing and emphasize the residential entry at Birch St.
- Massing revisions to better integrate the tower and the podium
- Revise the balconies expression
- Provision of design and landscape refinements at outdoor amenities
- More materiality and details refinements have been proposed in DP application

With all the design refinements the drawings show there is a quite similar shadowing on the office building and pedestrian walkway at north side of W. Broadway St.

Advice from the Panel is sought on the following:

Public Realm

Please provide feedback on the overall evolution of public realm interface between rezoning and development permit with particular consideration of:

- a. improve how the building transitions to and interfaces with the ground plane;
- b. the definition/articulation of the entry points for the different uses satisfactorily achieved;
- c. improve how the art integrates into the building

Overall Design Development and Materiality

1. Please comment on the overall evolution of the proposed building design, architectural expression, and articulation of massing between rezoning and development permit
2. Does the proposed materiality serve to enhance the overall design concept demonstrated at the time of the rezoning application?

Quality of Outdoor Amenities

Please comment on if the proposal sufficiently established high quality open spaces for outdoor amenities with regard to spacing, layouts and furniture, adequate lighting, landscape, indoor privacy

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The applicant noted the building is now slender at three steps.

The building is wrapped to have a 3D expression.

The massing is enhanced by shifting balconies.

The public art has been integrated in the parti of the massing.

The public plaza has been enlarged along Birch Ave. The plaza gained about 200 sf with added benches. The applicant noted the space of the public art has been extended and they are working with Artist, Debra Sparrow.

The amount of glazing along the lane has been increased. Along Broadway, the retail frontage has been broken down. The office portion introduced a glass vertical elevator.

The floor plan becomes smaller and smaller to create articulation in the stepping of the pattern. Materials include a white beige brick at the top to make the tower feel lighter and at the lower portion a darker brick. The applicant noted they tried to respect all the buildings along the Broadway that use brick. A column comes down to the ground.

There are increased setbacks on Birch Street, which allowed to incorporate the public art into the ground plain and widened the sidewalk.

There will be passive seating and lots flexible space. The applicant noted they attempted to add at grade planting at the corner however limited with the parkade.

There are three main amenity levels, which the applicant is working to make the spaces work well and together.

There is urban agriculture, a dog run and plenty of seating.

There are various amenity spaces with a kids play area.

The project is proposing an artificial turf area that can be used all year long between adults and kids.

The applicant is proposing a green roof infrastructure for some rainwater management.

Artist, Debra Sparrow, noted the public art is a reminder of the first peoples and the importance of the environment. This particular design creates a feeling of sense of calming water which is important for the life we live today.

Ms. Sparrow noted including this Art shows Vancouver is moving in right direction by being part of the process.

Regarding sustainability, most of the windows are at balcony locations so there is a natural overhang.

At the southwest façade, the railings have an extension. The project falls under the greens building policy Plan B. The applicant noted a lot of the focus at this stage has been around energy and design for low energy, passive design measure envelopes with high effectors procedures and window to wall ratio. As well as passive cooling, measures such as cross ventilation and operable windows.

The project is beating teddy targets and low emission green targets.

The design also considers future infrastructure so tenants can bring their own AC if they desire.

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 **MR. DAVIES** and seconded by **MS. LONG** 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 the tower form to ensure significant development to the building stepping and massing strategy with respect to livability and form factor and to reduce complexity;
- Consider the provision of an indoor amenity space adjacent to the outdoor amenity space on level 4 .
- **Related Commentary:**

In general, the panel is supportive of the development from rezoning in terms of public realm and how the building interacts with the ground plain.

There were mixed reviews on the buildings massing and the stepping of the building.

Some noted design development with the evolution of the buildings massing.

There was some appreciation of the stepping of the building and how the integration and expansion onto Birch Street are more meaningful and powerful.

Some panelists noted there is a bit of an issue with the composition and stepping, it has a life of its own and feels foreign to the project.

From the quantity of outdoor amenity space, ensure an indoor amenity space is available.

A panelist noted having the kid friendly amenity at the rooftop opposed to the podium is a bit concerning.

A panelist noted the public realm is relying too much on the buildings architecture to make it a nice space. The site in comparison to the other developments has too much concrete and trees. If this area of Broadway Street want to have a transit corridor needs to be further developed.

The banners and blank walls are a bit overkill as they are competing with the waterfall effect of the public art.

The panel recommended the use of high quality materiality in the building.

A panelist noted to consider breaking down a few of the balconies to improve livability.

There was a wide spread appreciation with the public art.

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