

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: Wednesday, October 29, 2025

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: WebEx (Teams)

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Helen Besharat (Chair)
Aaron Petruic
Aya Abdelfatah
Aik Ablimit
Allyse Li
Bob Lily

RECORDING SECRETARY: M. Sem

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. 2345-2349 Main St 2. 807-815 Hornby St

Chair Helen Besharat called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. The panel then considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

- 1. Address:** **2345-2349 Main St**
- Description:** To rezone the subject site from C-3A (Commercial) District to CD-1 (Comprehensive Development) District. The proposal is to allow for the development of a 26-storey mixed-use building with a 2-storey podium and heritage retention, and includes: 315 student housing and dormitory units; commercial space on the ground floor; 3 levels of underground cultural spaces (expansion of Goh Ballet); a floor space ratio (FSR) of 21.3; a building height of 67.9 m (223 ft.) with additional height for rooftop amenity space; and retention of the Royal Bank Heritage Building (Vancouver Heritage Register). This application is being considered under the Broadway Plan and requests consideration of density and height in excess of the existing policy. The site includes a heritage building at 2345 Main Street, and as such, the City's Heritage Program and Heritage Policies apply. The application proposes retention of the street façades along Main Street and East 8th Avenue for what was originally built as the Royal Bank building (Vancouver Heritage Register).
- Zoning:** C-3A to CD-1
- Application Status:** Rezoning Application
- Review:** First
- Architect:** Align Architecture
- Delegates:** Mahbod Biazi, Westbank
Adeline Lai, Architect, ALign architecture Inc
Mike Enns, Landscape Architect, Loci
- Staff:** Susanne Ruhle, Rezoning Planner
David Cha, Development Planner

EVALUATION: Recommend Re-submission (5/1)

Planner's Introduction:

Susanne Ruhle, Rezoning Planner, introduced the project with a description of the existing site context, followed by an overview of the existing policy framework as well as the anticipated policy context being considered under the Broadway Plan. Susanne concluded with a description of the site and a summary of the rezoning proposal.

David Cha, Development Planner then gave an overview of the neighbourhood context in relation to the proposal, followed by the expectations of the built form and public realm guidelines for this project. David then gave a description of the proposed project before concluding with Staff questions for the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Adeline Lai, Architect, ALign architecture Inc noted the objectives and gave a general overview of the project. Mike Enns, Landscape Architect, Loci, presented the landscape strategy.

Applicant and staff took questions from Panel.

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

1. Please comment on the proposed density, height and massing with considerations to the following:
 - a) Appropriateness of the proposed 25 storey tower on a 62 ft. site frontage with no lane access;
 - b) Contextual fit with the neighbouring properties
 - c) Compatibility with the proposed heritage retention facades;
2. Please comment on the quality of the public realm interface including loading access along East 8th Ave with driveway crossing on the public sidewalk;
3. Please comment on the façade articulation including large blank wall condition and fenestration.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **Bob Lily** and seconded by **Aya Abdelfatah** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **Recommend Re-submission** and recommends the applicant team to carefully review the summary of panel commentary, as reflected in the meeting minutes.

Summary of Panel Commentary

Panel noted challenges in justifying the height and all the constraints imposed by the narrow site.

In general panel did not think the proposed building will be a positive contextual fit to the adjacent properties and to the overall neighbourhood. Panelist noted there is little setback to the northern property.

Panel supports the heritage retention, it is an important façade that the panel would like to see retained.

In regard to the gap between the heritage façade and the remainder of the building, some Panelists noted the separation is not obvious enough and the proposed tower maybe too imposing and the heritage façade should be the focus.

Panelists noted concerns with loading, unloading, and deliveries.

Panel noted there will be traffic issues on 8th Ave and the way proposal addressed those utilitarian requirements.

Panel recommends some requirements for improved parking.

Panel recommends re-visiting the public realm and loading access.

Some Panelists noted the public realm is outside the property line and needs improvement.

Panel supported the proper articulation of blank facades.

Panel in general noted major concerns with fenestrations, openings and organization of utilitarian and technical aspects of the project that will have major impact to all facades.

Some Panelists noted further consideration to livability and accessibility of units and lack of adequate natural lighting to studio area.

Suggest darker glazing on the side of the building.

On the other façade, it feels much stronger and helps with distinguishing the old and new. Heritage building will work better with an improved interface with the new building.

The public realm can benefit a lot if the ballet centre was brought up and celebrate it on the ground level with natural light.

The heritage retention isn't just about the building and façades, but it is important to celebrate and acknowledge the current use and bring that forth to the public.

The large blank wall condition works really well especially in a building with a lot of artists and students.

Suggest seeing a condition where there's potential to having a changing wall for the public art mural.

Scale of the facade circles and the centre line is out of scale and competing too much with the heritage building underneath.

The property area is maxed out with a large building footprint.

The appropriateness of the proposed 25 tower on a 62-foot site with no lane access is not supportable. It is already congested with traffic on 8th Ave., with the added people, plus pick up and drop off and deliveries in that area it will be challenging, adding the extra volume to the already congested area is not supportable.

Landscape outside the property need confirmation to be implemented.

The transition from a massing standpoint is not that generous, the recess could be a little bit more generous to help differentiate the base to top. The base needs some help by pushing the towers back a little bit, with more setback at the top of the heritage component to help create a character defining element which is right at the base.

The circular window reading seems to be imposed and something quite foreign to the context.

The strong heritage base could be a more subtle expression and to be explored at the next design development stage.

Acknowledged the proposal includes a very valuable programmatic competent – arts, culture, heritage retention and student housing.

The site constraints put up a lot of challenges in terms of misalignment as the overall form of development.

Would like to see project come back to panel again before going to DP stage as this is a form of development issue.

Supports the retention of this heritage building at the base, with separation and another mass character at top.

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

2. Address:	807-815 Hornby St
Description:	To rezone the subject site from DD (Downtown) District to CD-1 (Comprehensive Development) District. The proposal is to allow for the development of a 35-storey mixed-use building with an 11-storey podium and includes: 160 hotel rooms; 176 strata residential units; commercial space on the ground floor; a floor space ratio (FSR) of 14.53; and a building height of 108.1 m (355 ft.). This application is being considered under the Downtown Rezoning Policy and the Hotel Development Policy.
Zoning:	DD to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	Boniface Oleksiuk Politano Architects (BOP on behalf of Shop Architects of NYC.).
Delegates:	Angelica T Baccon, Architect, SHoP Architects Nastaran Moradinejad Landscape Architect, PFS Studios
Staff:	Lex Dominiak, Rezoning Planner Samantha Patterson, Development Planner

EVALUATION: Support with no recommendations (5/1)**Planner's Introduction:**

Lex Dominiak, Rezoning Planner, introduced the project with a description of the existing site context, followed by an overview of the existing policy framework as well as the anticipated policy context being considered under the Downtown Rezoning Policy and the Hotel Development Policy. Lex concluded with a description of the site and a summary of the rezoning proposal.

Samantha Patterson, Development Planner then gave an overview of the neighbourhood context in relation to the proposal, followed by the expectations of the built form and public realm guidelines for this project. Samantha then gave a description of the proposed project before concluding with Staff questions for the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Angelica T Baccon, Architect, SHoP Architects noted the objectives and gave a general overview of the project. Nastaran Moradinejad Landscape Architect, PFS Studios presented on the landscape strategy.

Applicant and staff took questions from Panel.

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

Please comment on the proposed height, massing and density given the prominent public corner site with particular regard for:

- a) Overall form and expression
- b) Contextual fit with Robson Square
- c) Tower base

Please comment on the success of the public realm interface with regard to:

- a) The design of the corner plaza
- b) How the building meets the ground
- c) Podium partly wall alignment

Please comment on the proposed new shadowing of Robson Street Village and any potential mitigation measures.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **Bob Lily** and seconded by **Aik Ablimit** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **SUPPORT** the project and recommends the applicant team to carefully review panel commentary, as reflected in the Meeting Minutes.

Summary of Panel consensus comments

Design development to the columns.

Design development to treatment of soffits.

Design development to integration of lighting.

Encourage flexibility of canopy treatment and maintain the quality of design.

Consider taking the lane elevation to the level of the rest of the project.

Pay particular attention to the lane for (drop off and pick up) .

Panel Commentary:

Panelists noted support for the two-storey podium and how it responds to the pedestrian. This is where the Broadway corridor needs to move towards rather than the six-storey podium that is really unfriendly to the pedestrian.

The red maples along Hornby are not in great shape and rather than preserving them Panelist suggested re-planting them with better trees and soil; Also, encourage re-thinking of the oak trees on Robson St.

There could be more expression at the ground plane where it doesn't closely resemble the tower above.

With the continuous weather protection and the solid soffit, there's an opportunity to give the pedestrian realm a slightly differentiated and elevated expression and consider expressing the ground plane as its two-storey volume instead of breaking it up with that horizontal band and continuing the concrete panel underneath.

There is a lot of opportunity to do something interesting with soffit lighting and to help activate the pedestrian realm.

Stronger treatment on the columns at the entrance. A Panelist noted the round column is not the best response and to explore further on treating them differently to reflect more of the overall architectural intent i.e. A-B column, different geometrics or cladding.

Panel in general noted support for how the corner plaza is handled.

Panel in general noted no concern with shadowing.

Panel noted overall form and expression are very elegant.

Encouraged design team to think about the guardrail expression to complement the overall building and the soffits of the balconies.

The bike access could be improved and further developed particularly when you are looking at using a bike elevator to access significant amount of biking on P2, it is a bit tight on the ground floor.

Design development layouts to both minimize overlook balconies from adjacent suites and in terms of the glass solid relationship because it seems there is a mismatch between where there wants to be solid elevation to that strict rhythm and where it will make sense to have glazing to improve the livability of those suites.

Consider accessibility from the street to the interior.

Noted a strong concept that really respects the existing condition but also presents itself as a new contemporary modern building.

Hotel entrance may need to be re-thought to provide more prominence and welcoming feel.

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