

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: Wednesday Oct 28, 2020

TIME: 4:00 pm

PLACE: WebEx

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Alan Davies
Michael Henderson
Brittany Coughlin Excused item 2
Margot Long
Adrien Rahbar
Sydney Schwartz
Muneesh Sharma
Jennifer Stamp Excused item 2
Karenn Krangle
Marie-Odile Marceau
Walter Francl
Angela Enman Excused item 2

REGRETS: Matt Younger

RECORDING SECRETARY: K. Cermeno

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 1405 E 15th Avenue and 3071-3047 Maddams Street
2. 1780 E Broadway

1. Address:	1405 E 15th Avenue and 3071-3047 Maddams Street
Permit No.	RZ-2020-00029
Description:	To develop a 6-storey residential building with 79 secured market rental units over one level of underground parking consisting of 24 vehicle spaces and 135 bicycle spaces. The maximum building height is 20.8 m (68.2 ft.), the total floor area is 4,557 sq. m (49,049 sq. ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 2.58. This application is being considered under the Affordable Housing Choices Interim Rezoning Policy.
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	Stuart Howard Architects
Staff:	Chee Chan for Carly Rosenblat & Patrick Chan

EVALUATION: Resubmission Recommended (8/3)

- **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Chee Chan, began by noting this is an application to rezone 1405 E 15th Avenue and 3071-3047 Maddams Street from RT-2 to CD-1 under the Affordable Housing Choices Interim Rezoning Policy.

The site is made up of four lots at the northeast corner of Knight Street and East 15th Avenue and situated across the street from Clark Park. It is located within the Kensington-Cedar Cottage neighbourhood. The site is currently occupied with detached residential houses and includes some tenanted units.

This irregular shaped lot has three street frontages with dimensions of approximately 44 m (144 ft.) along East 15th Avenue Street, 45.3 m (146 ft.) along Maddams Street, and 10 m (33 ft.) of a lane off Knight Street. It has a total site area of approximately 1,768 sq.m. (19,033 sq.ft.). It is also located on TransLink's Frequent Transit Network, with the closest bus station located approximately 100 m from the site or a 2-minute walk (#22 bus).

The site is zoned RT-2 which permits low-density multi-family housing. The applicant is seeking an increase in floor space ratio from 0.75 FSR to 2.58 FSR for the development of secured rental housing. North and West of the site are detached houses zoned RT-2 (single family and duplexes). Across the street to the East is Clark Park and South of the site is a custom CD-1 zone that contains a 5 storey rental building which was constructed in 2017 under the Affordable Housing Choices IRP (density of 2.08 FSR).

Affordable Housing Choices IRP:

Rezoning applications considered under the Affordable Housing Choices Interim Rezoning Policy must meet a number of criteria such as providing 100% of the residential floor area as secured rental housing and meeting specific location requirements. For the subject site's location along an arterial street and within 500 m of a Local Shopping Area, a height of up to 6 storeys may be considered.

Rezoning Proposal:

This proposal is to rezone from RT-2 to CD-1 to permit:

- A 6-storey building with a rooftop amenity area;
- 79 secured rental units of which a minimum of 35% of the units are family oriented;

- The unit mix breakdown is 41 studios, 10 one-bedroom units, 20 two-bedroom units, and eight three-bedroom units;
- The floor area proposed is 49,049 sq. ft.; and
- The proposed density is 2.58 FSR.

There are 24 vehicle parking spaces and 135 bicycle parking spaces in underground parking accessed from Maddams St.

The application is required to satisfy the Green Buildings Policy for Rezonings and is pursuing the low emissions green building standards.

Neighbourhood context is an important consideration, and all projects must consider and respect transitions to surrounding areas. We are seeking specific comment from UDP about this project's fit within the surrounding neighbourhood, and Pat will speak about the details of the form of development with respect to this question.

Development planner Patrick Chan first presented the subject site's surrounding context – noting the neighbourhood comprises mostly low-density houses zoned RT-2. The RT-2 zone allows up to 35 ft. height and are typically have no more than two dwellings per house. Often, the strategy taken in Vancouver is to find ways to transition down to the lower-scale fabric. However, reiterating the rezoning planner's observations, there is a recently approved five-storeys apartment across East 15th Avenue. The subject-site is also on Knight Street which is a major arterial in the city. Then discussing the site condition, Chan noted there is a gentle slope of approximately 2 to 4 ft. from the south to the north property-line; there are also a few large trees, some of which will be retained.

Mr. Chan then presented the building itself. The building takes a typical "4 + 2" massing that sees the topmost two floors stepped back (8 ft. or more in this case) to diminish upper-storey bulk and overall appearance of height. Chan further pointed out the first four floors, which form the "base", is darker in colour to ground the building and to better establish a hierarchy of massing-volumes. A key strategy used in its massing is the way the building terraces down to three storeys on its north-side to "meet" the lower-scale neighbouring context. This terracing also reduces shadow impacts and overlook. Elsewhere, the overall setbacks are at least 12 ft. if not more, and this helps to align the building better with the 20-plus feet frontyards common in the adjacent lots to the north. Landscape-wise, several significant trees are retained along East 15th and Maddams, and these retained trees' location actually help articulate the building wall-planes to further break up sense of bulk. Programmatically, the main-entry is from East 15th Avenue, and an amenity-room and outdoor space is located at the rooftop. Chan also noted the proposed building's equinox shadows from 1000am to 1400pm does not seem to shade Clark Park, but will clarify with the applicant whether the shadows can stave off the park up to 1600pm.

Mr. Chan concluded his presentation with a general question on how the project may be improved at the development stage.

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

Height and Massing

- The height and massing's appropriateness to the surrounding neighbourhood.
- The transition to the lower-scale fabric in terms of minimising shadow, and ensuring a general sense of openness.

Public Realm Interface

- The landscape treatment's connection with the wider public realm

General Livability

- Privacy afforded to neighbours as well as privacy between the proposal's future residents.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

This is a challenging project on a challenging site.

There are significant trees on site and have to contend with three street exposures and no lane access.

The affordable housing supports the rezoning process.

The existing zone is RT-2.

Contextually the project is in keeping with the projects across the street.

This existing corridor is in the proposal for the new citywide policy, therefore can expect a lot of change in arterials in general.

The applicant noted they spent a lot of time researching the neighbourhood and context in which the site is built on. The client was passionate about keeping the existing mature trees therefore the project design concept was "cottage in the woods." They took inspiration from a more Nordic architecture and design. They used staccato moments on the building to show change.

The applicant chose to use high quality robust materials.

They used a heavier darker pallet to ground the building and lighten the building as we move up.

The applicant noted the project is at a part of Knight Street which is at the bottom of the hill.

The neighbouring project is 5 storeys and this project is 6 storeys however the parapet height is same.

They took the RT-2 height envelope and raked it back 45 degrees to define how they stepped back the north elevation.

One level below grade there is parking which also has bicycle parking and storage. The parking complies with the parking bylaw.

Regarding the landscaping, the main element is the retention of the trees. The applicant noted they pulled back the parkade and building slabs to allow more landscaping on the south and east. On the renders, you will see a lot of layered hedging on the southeast to allow for a welcoming approach.

There is a rooftop amenity area with an extensive green roof, including an urban agriculture area and rooftop amenity room. The green roof includes pollinators and incorporated colourful bird friendly birdhouses as part of the bird habitat.

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 **MR. DAVIES** and seconded by **MS. MARIE-ODILE** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **Recommend Resubmission** of the project with the panel comments addressed and following recommendations:

- Review location of parking entry and consider location on E15th;
- Reconsider cabin expression at rooftop amenity and front door;
- Relocate main entry on Maddams Street;
- Design development to the north elevation and reorienting units along the north edge;
- Simplify the massing to create a more unified character and expression.
- Ensure a more layered approach to the landscape surrounding the building and having a more positive relationship with the public realm.

Related Commentary:

There was general support for the height and massing, however some noted with the massing there is a lot going on in the plan elevation and it comes across very busy.

The panel struggled with the north property line and its relationship with the family home that is currently there. Considering there is no future redevelopment planned on this side the success of this relationship is quite important. This elevation reads as a main elevation, there are balconies and suites that face the north property line.

A panelist noted they were not in support of the cabin expression in the front doors.

Many commented on the cladding colour and where they are in the composition. Some panelist noted to review the architectural expression and materiality.

About the public realm there were many comments regarding the hedge, there is a disconnect with the rendering that are showing. The panel would like to see a more layered approach in the lower garden like part.

The panel commented regarding the parking entry and if this could be moved around to 15th, its impact on the park is not a positive one.

There was many comments regarding the three retention and the livability of the units. The tree retention is almost dictating the massing will be a challenge to the building.

The panel noted to reconsider the number of bachelor units and if there could be more two and three bedroom units.

The panel noted to consider the cooling and thermal performance of the units.

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

2. Address:	1780 E Broadway
Permit No.	RZ-2019-00040
Description:	To develop the site with three residential towers, ranging in height from 26 to 31 storeys with retail at grade that includes a large format grocery store. Additionally, the proposal includes a childcare facility and a public plaza running parallel to the SkyTrain station. The proposal has a total of 236 strata units and 452 rental units. The total (FSR) floor area is approximately 59,297 sq. m (638,273 sq. ft.). This application is being considered under the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan.
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	Perkins + Will Architects
Staff:	Kent MacDougall & Carl Stanford

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (6/1)

- **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Kent MacDougall, presented this rezoning application at 1780 East Broadway considered under the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan.

The site is located near the corner of Commercial Drive and East Broadway adjacent to the Commercial-Broadway SkyTrain Station to the west and the 'Grandview Cut' to the east. The site is currently zoned C-3A and is occupied by a single-storey commercial development, a Safeway grocery store, with at-grade parking. The sites C-3A zoning allows for an FSR of 3.0, and could be considered for up to 6-storeys and is currently underdeveloped based on the existing zoning. Adjacent sites along Broadway and Commercial Drive are primarily zoned C-3A and CD-1 and contain a mix of residential, office and retail in low-rise and mid-rise forms. In terms of recent zoning changes in the area, along Broadway, a site was recently rezoned to CD-1(715) allowing for a 12-storey mixed-use building with at-grade commercial and secured rental above currently under construction.

This application is being considered under the *Grandview-Woodland Community Plan*. This area, the Station Mixed-Use and Employment area, is anticipated to evolve into a mixed-use, transit-oriented neighbourhood that introduces renewed opportunities for various types of housing, employment, and retail activity. The Plan for this area includes high-level urban design principles including locating higher-density building forms; and a mix of retail, job space, and housing around transit hubs and arterials that lead to it. At this location within the Station Mixed-Use and Employment area, the Plan anticipates a unique mixed-use development with tower elements of 12-24 storeys above a retail plinth, with commercial at grade, including a large format grocery store, office space, a generous public plaza and an FSR of 5.7. Conceptual site diagrams provided in the Plan that show four or five tower elements and a central and perimeter plaza location. As well, the highest forms are to be situated adjacent to the Grandview Cut to minimize shadowing.

The application is proposing a mixed-use development with three tower elements ranging in height from 25-30 storeys above a retail plinth with a significant public plaza along the western edge of the site and private amenity space on level two.

The proposal includes two secured rental towers and a strata tower with 688 residential units consisting of 452 secured rental units (37 of which are proposed at below-market rates) and 236 strata residential units. Overall, 134,000 sq. ft. of commercial space is proposed including commercial uses at grade with a large format grocery store anchor (~50,000 sq. ft.) with access from Broadway and the Plaza and three smaller CRUs, and food & beverage uses at the south end of the plaza and along 10th Avenue. Office space, a fitness facility, and a childcare facility are proposed on the podium Levels 2-5 under Tower A adjacent to the plaza.

Development Planner, Carl Stanford, then began the presentation by noting the site is situated within the Grandview Woodland neighborhood of East Vancouver, south of Broadway, and east of Commercial Drive. It sits adjacent to the Commercial-Broadway Skytrain station and the busy intersection at Commercial Drive and Broadway. To the east of the site, the Grandview Cut runs diagonally against the site. South of the site is a mix of single-family homes and multi-family low-rise buildings. To the west, Commercial Drive is a busy street lined with a variety of fine-grained retail and commercial establishments. Trout Lake is located several blocks southeast. It is composed of 1 legal lot fronting Broadway and E 10th Avenue. It is currently the site of a Safeway grocery store. The total site area is 9819.1 m² (105,695 sf). It has frontage of ~65m/213' along Broadway and ~84m/276' along E 10th Avenue. There is a sloping grade rising approximately 2.1m (6.9') along Broadway from west to east, a gradual rise of 0.6m (1.9') along the plaza from Broadway to 10th and an increase of 1.6m (5.3') from west to east along the 10th Avenue frontage. The site is currently occupied by an existing retail store (Safeways) abutting up to the Commercial Broadway station with surface parking to the east.

Principle governing policy for the site includes the:

- The Grandview Woodlands Plan
- C-3A District Schedule (last amended 2016)
- C-3A Broadway Commercial Guidelines
- View Protection Guidelines (1989, last amended 2011)
- Green Buildings Policy for Rezoning (2010, last amended 2018)

Prior to the submission of a rezoning application, the sites base-zone was C-3A (Commercial) District, which permits a maximum density of 3.00 FSR and 6-storeys under base zoning which would be equivalent in height to the podium height indicated in the GW Plan. The Grandview Woodlands Plan Principal Policy Items allows consideration of applications for mixed-use developments with mid-rise and high-rise components. This includes a mix of commercial uses, which may include large format grocery and small-scale retail, service and community serving uses on the first floor. Residential and/or commercial uses are permitted on upper floors. The grocery retail of approximately 4,650 m² (50,000 sf), can be arranged in a one- or two-storey configuration. Perimeter heights will be generally 6 storeys above the retail plinth. At key anchor points within the site, heights range from 12 to 24 storeys above the retail plinth. Highest forms will be situated adjacent to the Grandview Cut to minimize shadowing of the plaza. Density can be considered up to 5.7 FSR with residential uses up to 4.5 FSR, commercial uses of a minimum 1.2 FSR, and a minimum 0.5 FSR for office.

As part of future redevelopment of the site, the plan requires a generous, centrally-located public plaza at grade, ideally located near the middle of the site. In designing this space, ensure the following considerations are taken into account: Building arrangement to optimize the use of public open space. Ensure the site design supports vibrancy in the plaza with varied, grocery and small-scale retail space, office and residential entrances fronting and/or overlooking the open space. Shading/solar access. Skytrain noise mitigation.

The Grandview Woodland Community Plan stipulates the building density/ height maximum is pursuant to clause 7.1.3 of the GWCP, which provisions density in return for additional non-market housing. In all cases where new developments are receiving additional density in exchange for the provision of non-market housing, that housing must meet minimum requirements for social housing as defined in the City's Zoning and Development By-Law and DCL By-law. This will be reviewed in process. One of the other items to consider with regard to policy is the variation on the plans provisions and conceptual diagrams, in particular the height and its impact. The proposal has both additional density/ height: one through the provision of social housing and the other in part via an argument that the conceptual diagrams indicate additional towers and the compression in a lesser number create better spatial relationship and avoids a net loss.

The proposal by the applicant has a total floor space area of approximately 59,297 sq. m (638,273 sq. ft.) or 6.04 FSR. The 3 tower buildings are arranged around the periphery of the site framing a landscaped courtyard that is accessible to the public, residents and tenants. A new 50,000 sf Safeway store, will occupy the ground level of the project with at-grade access from East Broadway, and the public plaza. Adjacent to the Safeway store at grade will be a new 20,000 sf public plaza. The at-grade plaza will link Broadway and 10th Avenue, will be animated with child friendly activities and be fully accessible to the public.

The proposal includes a large format grocery store, strata housing, rental housing, non-market housing, and a 20,000 sq. ft public plaza running parallel to the Sky Train station. The planning of a large format grocery store on the site poses a number of challenges in terms of animation and avoidance of 'sterile edges'. Amenities proposed for the development include a 9,000-sq. ft private daycare centre with outdoor play area, a fitness centre, and an on-site at grade public bike share facility orientated to the 10th Avenue bike path. Access for vehicular traffic and service vehicles for the Safeway store will be from East Broadway across a portion of the Grandview Cut. Access for residential parking will be from East 10th Avenue

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

Does the proposal satisfy the overall intent of the Grandview Woodland Plan in regard to its directions on massing, height & built form considering such items as the below:

- a) The plan proposes more numerous towers with smaller floor plates;
- b) The contextual fit, siting & shaping; and,
- c) The height & expression of individual towers.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The applicant noted the following points were important to the projects design:

There was a strong emphasis placed on the urban and retail street edge animating in particular both the plaza space and along Broadway and E 10th Ave. The renders and images also clearly demonstrate a desire for an animated street edge. The public plaza and the location of its activities and amenity units was critical to this intent with a careful study on what makes Broadway unique conducted prior.

The tower number, placement and separation between them is different from the Grandview Woodland Plan conceptual diagrams in order to facilitate greater light and view penetration. By having 3 towers as opposed to 4 the site is less visually dense with more opportunities for high quality urban design. The exterior modulation of the skin of the towers is based on a structural strategy that has several transitions, in order to break the massing down, achieve high quality urban design, and support the tower. Most of the structural heavy lifting is above the new Safeway grocery store in order to get columns and a grid that facilitate the functional requirements of the new grocery store and residential floors. The form of development for the towers incorporates a series of modulated step terraces taking advantage of the decreasing floor plate size as the tower rises. The applicant noted their goal was to create a feeling of clarity at the open spaces where the massing steps inwards. There is a unique difference of the interior and outward faces of the proposal in response to the context. This assisted in further celebrating the landscape of the courtyard. The applicant noted the difficulty of some of the challenges of the sites constraints were achieving the setbacks while ameliorating the shadow impacts on the open public spaces.

The applicant noted that part of the goal of the project was to build on the civic identity of Broadway with a new urban plaza at level 1 running parallel to the Skytrain station and connecting Broadway and E 10th Ave. This urban plaza has many places to gather, sit, eat and perform. The intent was to merge the high vitality life of an urban life plaza with a lush, upper level 2 courtyard green area. There is a large staircase (54 riser) off the proposed plaza level up to the lush courtyard level which creates a nice relationship between the two. The applicant noted the private amenity spaces on level two are only accessible by the residents of the tower but the level 2 courtyard is proposed to be publicly accessible with no barriers to entry from the grand staircase leading down to the urban plaza. Also included in the amenities of the proposal is a daycare with a colour program and play space.

With regard to the landscaping in the proposal, the upper level terraces have a rich animated program with lots of native and adaptive planting. There are also patios with abundant planting and rooftop planting at the tops of the towers. This project is expected to meet both the green building policies for rezoning and follow the city of Vancouver's policy for sustainable large developments.

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 **MR. DAVIES** and seconded by **MR. FRANCL** 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:

- Design development to the plaza public staircase to level 2 with greater consideration improved public access and porosity to the level 2 courtyard;
- Design development to the plaza to improve its animation, access of daylight, public art provision, weather protection and its relationship with the adjacent podium.
- To enhance to the connection between the project and the Grandview cut.

Related Commentary:

The panel largely supported the use of three higher towers in place of four smaller towers as being more suitable for the site and better for daylighting. The panel felt the project warranted the additional height. Some panelists noted minor concerns regarding the character, how it related to the plan and that the project did not engage as much (with benefits to the public) as it could but overall felt it was an good interpretation.

Most panelists felt an appreciation for the similarity of design language for the three towers but some panellists felt more differentiation between the towers should be explored while maintaining a similar design language with a colour or material variation. The panel supported the sky gardens and how they broke up the tower mass, scaling down while introducing open space. A number of the panel noted the need for appropriate soil depth.

The panel noted that units were generally well day lit as a result of the floorplate layouts especially at the top of the towers. Some panelists recommended stepping back the lower floor plates of tower B further to increase the visual permeability through to the Grandview cut. The panel noted that the alignment of tower C was successfully done.

Most panel members felt the amenities proposed for the scheme for the residents of the towers were quite engaging and approved that the public could access the private gym. A number of panelists noted the daycare location as being sub-optimal with a north facing aspect and the applicant should consider moving to a better-lit location. The panel noted concern regarding areas of shadowing on the site.

The public staircase off the plaza was seen as a good concept. Most panel members felt the large inviting staircase to level 2 was a strong feature however when you reach the top there are visual and physical obstructions that appear to block it off such as some of the landscaping and concierge space. This area could use additional development to better improve its permeability and access to feel more welcoming. Most panel member emphasised the importance of improving and maintaining public access to level 2. Some panel members noted that the entry to the level 2 courtyard could be more porous. Some panel members felt the greenhouses are attractive addition also but seem to add clutter to the level 2.

Most panel members felt that the level 1 urban plaza could use more daylighting and animation. The plaza does not really lead anywhere onto Broadway, compared to east 10th where there is good pedestrian access. This would be a good opportunity to have an art piece or some form of elements to draw people through the plaza as a main attraction. Some panel members felt that there should be a clearly indicated location provided for the public art, such as the plaza and further work on the lighting strategy.

The panel agreed that the office lobby could benefit from a more appropriate pedestrian scale and expression at grade. Some panelist felt the podium facing the plaza appeared a little overbearing. Some panelists suggested breaking down further the horizontal massing of the podium. Most panel members noted that more extensive weather protection around the perimeter building should be explored. The panel agreed that the project overall was a well-considered design, of high architectural merit and a strong proposal with certain areas that could benefit from additional design development.

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