

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: Dec 7, 2022

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: WebEx

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Brian Wakelin
Margot Long
Scott Romses
Jennifer Stamp
Clinton Cuddington
Amina Yasin (Excused from item 2)
Adrian Rahbar (Excused from item 2)

REGRETS:

Peeraj Thakre

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 2015 Main St
2. 848 Seymour St

Chair Brian Wakelin called the meeting to order at 3:05pm. The panel then considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 2015 Main St
 Permit No. RZ-2022-00072
 Description: To rezone 2015 Main St from IC-2 to CD-1 to allow for a 25-storey hybrid mass timber mixed-use building with 210 rental units total (168 market rental units and 42 below market residential units), retail at-grade and a rooftop amenity space. 377 bicycle parking spaces and no vehicle parking spaces are proposed. A total FSR of 6.22 for the site and a building height of 77 m (253 ft.) to top of residential parapet (78.5 m (258 ft.) to top of mechanical enclosure) are proposed.
 Zoning: IC-2 to CD-1
 Application Status: Rezoning Application
 Architect: Henriquez Partners Architects
 Staff: Allison Smith, Hamid Shayan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS (5/1)

Planner's Introduction:

Rezoning Planner, Allison Smith, began the presentation by noting that the application is for the consideration of a rezoning to the site at 2015 Main St and 190 E 4th Ave. The property is one legal parcel. A commercial building currently occupies the northern portion of the site and is proposed to be retained as part of the rezoning application. The part of the lot proposed for redevelopment is the surface parking lot in the southern portion of the lot, at the intersection of Main St and 5th Ave. The site has a frontage of 264 ft. and a depth of 132 ft., which is compliant with the minimum dimension requirements to allow for tower development under the Broadway Plan. The existing zoning is IC-2. Surrounding properties are zoned IC-2, I-1B, I-1A and CD-1.

The rezoning application is located within the MCEG sub-area in the Mount Pleasant Centre of the Broadway Plan. The intent of the Mount Pleasant Centre is to strengthen and diversify the area as a vibrant mixed-use area close to rapid transit by providing opportunities for additional housing (particularly secured rental and social housing), job space, and amenities (including cultural facilities and childcare).

The MCEG sub-area allows for the consideration of secured market and below market rental housing up to 25 storeys on this site, with a maximum FSR of 8.5. A minimum of 20% of the residential floor area is required to be secured at below-market rents and continuous active ground floor retail and service uses are required along Main St.

Development Planner, Hamid Shayan, began his presentation by noting that the intent for the Broadway Plan is to provide a comprehensive approach to urban design that creates a built environment supportive to thriving, resilient, and livable communities. To achieve this, a set of Built Form and Site Design Principles has been developed to provide a solid framework to address the complex policy objectives of a densely populated, diverse urban environment. The built form typologies provide design guidance for new developments. Specific design guidelines are established for each typology, while general design guidelines apply to all typologies within each land use category. The built form typologies represent typical conditions, however, site conditions vary significantly across the Plan area and additional consideration will

need to be given on a site by site basis to ensure new development meets the intent of the built form principles and design objectives.

This application is a mixed-use mass-timber development located at mid to high rise typology in the form of the tower with the height varies from 12 to 25 storeys on the 4-6 storey podium component. The proposed height encroaches into the lower Queen Elizabeth Park view sections 3.2.4a. This intrusion can be considered in this area considering to enable opportunities for additional job space and affordable housing close to rapid transit and to strengthen the skyline of Central Broadway as Vancouver's "second downtown". The proposal also complies with the provision of setbacks and tower floor plate requirement entitled in Broadway Plan.

By showing the floor plans, Hamid Shayan noted that this application didn't provide private outdoor open space for residential units. Considering the intent of the Broadway Plan and minimum livability requirements, staff will seek provision of balconies in the form of rezoning conditions.

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

1. With due consideration given to the key principles of Broadway Plan, advice from the Panel is sought on the proposed Height, Density and Overall Massing of the proposal with particular attention to the following:
 - Location and proportion of the tower
 - Contribution to the skyline of Vancouver's "second Downtown"
 - Shadowing on the adjacent open spaces of the public realm
 - View and solar access for dwelling units
2. Please provide comments on the provision of and quality of share indoor and outdoor amenity spaces;
3. Does the proposal, including preliminary arrangement of at-grade uses and building articulation, set a positive framework for the future evolution of Main Street as a high performing pedestrian-friendly street at Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood?

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

This project will act as a prototype for many future sustainable projects.

This is net zero carbon affordable and market rental housing tower.

This new tower is proposed to replace the at-grade parking lot south of the existing building at 2015 Main Street.

The project will reduce embodied carbon by 50%.

To achieve the 50 percent reduction the team is proposing a hybrid mass timber structure to reduce embodied carbon by focusing on the right materials.

The project will connect to district energy to achieve the low carbon energy.

The applicant noted the window to wall ratio will be 30 percent. There will be high performance glass doors and Juliette balconies.

This prototype is 100% secured rental housing including a 20 percent below market rental housing. 35% of the units are family units.

There is retail at grade.

23 floors of secured rental housing.

A rooftop amenity at level 25. The ground floor is completely glazed for retail.

There is a residential lobby facing 5th avenue at the lane. The façade of the towers is expressed by latticework. The exterior expression/cladding panels is a narrative expression of the forests and local nature that provides solar shading.

The exterior of the building is to compliment the warm tones of the interior. The exterior panels are composite panels. At the north façade a potential large mural to enrich the art of the main street area is proposed.

Landscaping is designed in with the overall area.

At grade, there is a setback to allow for wider sidewalks.

At the roof indoor and outdoor amenity areas are proposed. This space will also have areas for seating, multipurpose use, and urban agriculture.

An amenity bike lounge and bike repair area is being proposed.

There is also a residential bike parking and bike elevator.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project it was moved by **MS. STAMP** and seconded by **MR. CUDDINGTON** 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:

- Increase the shared outdoor amenity space;
- Refine the public realm at grade particularly at the lane;
- Recommend an outdoor play space for children be provided.

Related Commentary:

There was general support from the panel for the height, density and massing.

The building design is simple but very bold and strong.

The slenderness from Main Street makes it a handsome and well-proportioned tower.

There was no major concern with the shadow impacts, solar access or dwelling units.

Recommend for planning to look at the panel to review all the drivers at play especially for projects providing affordable housing.

Due to the financial limitations of the project, there was a discussion and concern over the lack of personal private spaces. .

There needs to be an overcompensation somewhere in the project for the lack of balcony space.

Because the building is so simple, consider adding a foil at grade. Consider some public art and look at the interface of the sidewalk.

There was concern with the lack of public space. Consider increasing the amount of amenity and public space. Continue design development of the public realm with benches, canopy detail, public art and planting.

Appreciate the way it is activating the lane.

Support the applicant to push engineering to do more with the public realm at the lane.

Exterior amenity spaces needs to be increased.

Many agreed an exterior play space for children would be beneficial to the project.

A panelist noted accessible units need to be shown at this stage for the success of this project.

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

2. Address:	848 Seymour St
Permit No.	RZ-2022-00039
Description:	Rezone from DD to CD-1 under the Rezoning Policy for the CBD and CBD Shoulder. Proposal for a 30-storey hotel building over four levels of underground parking with a floor area of 22,146 sq. m (238,381 sq. ft.). A floor space ratio (FSR) of 17.7 for the site and a building height of 97 m (317 ft.). 59 underground vehicle parking spaces and 33 bicycle parking spaces are proposed.
Zoning:	DD to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Architect:	Perkins+Will Canada Architects
Staff:	Nicholas Danford, David Cha

EVALUATION: SUPPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS (5/1)

Planner's Introduction:

Rezoning Planner, Nicholas Danford, began the presentation by noting a rezoning application was received for a 30-storey, hotel building at 848 Seymour Street. The proposal is being considered under the enabling Rezoning Policy for the CBD and CBD Shoulder and the Metro Core Jobs and Economy Land Use Plan. The application proposes to increase the allowable density on the site from 5.75 FSR to 17.7 FSR. The building height proposed is 97 m (317 ft.) to the underside of the view cone.

Development Planner, David Cha, began his presentation by noting the key considerations that relate to the Form of Development in the *Downtown Official Development Plan* and the *Downtown (Except Downtown South) Design guidelines*.

Mr. Cha presented the side by side comparison showing the massing differences between what would be allowed under the Downtown District zoning (5.75 FSR density max. for Hotels and 12 storey) versus the proposed rezoning (17.7 FSR and 30 storey). Mr. Cha then presented the shadow studies from the applicant and internal shadow studies showing the comparison of the rezoning proposal and the Downtown District zoning.

Mr. Cha presented the proposed tower separation with the adjacent context resulting from the additional density and larger floorplate proposed on the site and noted that the proposed tower separation does not meet the City of Vancouver's standard for tower separation, which will be included in the conditions of approval. Mr. Cha further explained that City of Vancouver's standard is to maintain minimum 80 feet tower separation between the existing towers and potential future towers nearby for improved privacy and solar access. However, Mr. Cha mentioned that Staff may consider reduction in tower separation to the adjacent L'Aria tower to minimum 60 feet considering that there is no direct line of sight. Mr. Cha mentioned that tower separation below 60 feet is not supported and cannot be considered.

Mr. Cha presented the proposed tower crown, podium expression with operable glazed wall, street to lane connection, lane interface and architectural expression of the passenger drop-off area.

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

1Please comment on the proposed density and resulting building massing with particular consideration given to the following:

- a. Impacts to adjacent development;
- b. Intrinsic excellence of form and its contribution to the downtown skyline and;
- c. Shadow impacts to the adjacent public realm.

2Please comment on the quality of the public realm interface, open space and pedestrian connections strategy at the building frontage along Seymour Street and the passenger drop off zone at the lane.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The applicant began by noting that this project addresses the hotel room shortages in the City. The shortage of hotel rooms has had an economic impact on the City. This project will consist of about 400 rooms, which will boost the economy and create jobs.

The applicant mentioned that this proposal is aiming to address need for Hotel space in the City with density proposed on the site and activation of the public realm.

The applicant presented the site context and mentioned that the subject site has been a surface parking lot for 30 years.

The applicant noted that the proposed height is under the permitted view cone, which will reduce the amount of shadowing on neighbouring properties and further presented the proposed tower separation to adjacent sites.

The applicant presented the introduction of the grid system in the building from the podium, tower and the top of the tower as an articulation that adds visibility and porosity.

The applicant mentioned that there are amenity spaces at the top and bottom of the hotel spaces. To respond to the previous conversation with Staff around larger setback on the ground level along Seymour Street, the applicant mentioned that they addressed this by bringing life back on the street and activating the ground level.

The applicant further articulated that the access at the lane side is important for guests arriving by car and this area will act as their front door. They further explained that they are proposing a demountable canopy in the lane that encroached into the lane that relates to the site across the lane which is owned by the same client.

The applicant then presented the podium expression with two entrances on Seymour Street and the laneway expression.

The applicant noted they are looking to harmonize the materiality of the tower and create something that is timeless.

The applicant noted the landscaping is limited but will introduce as much landscape wherever is possible.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project it was moved by **MR. ROMSES** and seconded by **MR. CUDDINGTON** 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:

- Consider more accessible outdoor areas on the rooftop;
- Design development of the public realm on Seymour Street and the rear lane;
- Reconsider the depth of the setback of the building along Seymour Street.

Panel Commentary:

General commentary:

- In general, the panel was supportive of the proposed building massing and its simplicity in form and architectural expression.
- In general, the panel expressed that there were lack of outdoor amenity areas in the project. More emphasis on the landscape component that reflects Vancouver as a place should be considered with further opportunity for accessible outdoor areas on the rooftop.
- In general, the panel expressed concerns that there were no landscape drawings including public realm interface strategy and storm water management plan.
- In general, the panel were not concerned with privacy and separation with the adjacent developments.

- In general, panel mentioned that the shadow impacts in their opinion are appropriate and anticipated in this area of the City.
- A panelist noted a bit more tower separation to the adjacent building would have been good to see by taking one module off the tower, but also acknowledges the need of a hotel supply and its efficiency of the floor plate.
- A panelist mentioned that the expression of the tower crown and the way the building meets the sky should be improved.
- A panelist mentioned to consider including public art into the project.

Public Realm Interface:

- In general, the Panel noted that the building, particularly the podium, feels tight on all sides to the property line. Although, some panel members agree that pushing the podium forward is a good design move, a setback and breathing room on grade will provide further relief on the public realm interface with pockets for plantings, seating and other activities for the pedestrians and visitors.
- In general, panel felt there is lack of greenery and landscape strategy in the lane. Lighting strategy and materiality of the soffit will be important in making the lane entrance much friendlier.
- Some panelist expressed concerns with the canopy extension into the lane from servicing reasons and also anticipates that the drop-off area will be shaded.
- A panelist mentioned that podium is well executed with high level of porosity and animation, however expressed concerns with the public realm interface and its pedestrian connection strategy from the street to lane should be improved.
- A panelist noted to consider first arrivals on Seymour Street instead of the lane by designating short-term drop-off on Seymour, as most visitors will access the hotel from the street.