

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: December 11, 2024

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Webex-Virtual

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Aik Ablimit
Arno Matis
Catherine Lemieux
Craig Taylor (Chair)
Helen Besharat
Kai Hotson
Michele Cloghesy

REGRETS:

RECORDING SECRETARY: M. Sem

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 1525 -1555 Robson St.

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

- 1. Address:** 1525 -1555 Robson St.
Permit No.: DP-2024-00900
Description: To develop the following on this site: A mixed-use building, containing 393 secure market rental dwelling units, distributed amongst: a 28-storey West tower, with an approximate height of 283 ft. (86 m), a 29-storey East tower, with an approximate height of 293 ft. (89 m); a combined floor space ratio of 9.625; over two levels of retail, and four levels of parking.
- Zoning:** C-6
Application: Complete Development Application
Review: First
Architect: Arcadis
Delegates: Clement Pun, Architect, Arcadis IBI Group
Michael Reed, GWL Realty Advisors
Stephen Vincent, Landscape Architect, Durante Kreuk Ltd.
Ali Mohammadzadeh, Senior Energy Engineer, Stantec
Staff: Hamid Shayan, Development Planner
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EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (5/0)

Planner's Introduction:

Hamid Shayan, Development Planner 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. Hamid then gave a description of the proposed project before concluding with Staff questions for the Panel.

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

- 1) Please comment on the quality of the public realm and building interface along entire frontage with consideration of the below:
 - a) Pedestrian scale of the retail frontages at Robson and Cardero streets and how it relates to the commercial character of the area.
 - b) Lane interface and how it contributes to the pedestrians' interests and activity.
 - c) How the podium transitions to the adjacent residential building at east.
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- 2) Please comment on the architectural expression, articulation of the massing, and material treatment with consideration of the below:
 - a) Is the massing sufficiently articulated to produce a high-quality addition to the prominent urban culture of the west end area?
 - b) Consider the expression, colour, reflectivity, shape, proportions, fenestration, detailing, and environmental aspects with regards to the above.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Clement Pun, Architect, Arcadis IBI Group noted the objectives and gave a general overview of the project. Stephen Vincent, Landscape Architect, Durante Kreuk Ltd. then gave a presentation on the landscape strategy. Ali Mohammadzadeh, Senior Energy Engineer, Stantec concluded with a presentation on the sustainability strategy.

Staff and 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 **HELEN BESHARAT** and seconded by **KAI HOTSON** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **Support with Recommendations** with the following recommendations summarized below:

1. Further design development to improve pedestrian interests at lane while maintaining the utilitarian functionality required of it.
2. Further development of the tower tops to reduce the arbitrary composition of the stepped forms relative to the articulation of the towers.

Panel consensus comments

Panel in general support the pedestrian scale of the retail frontages at Robson and Cardero St.

Panel in general support the podium transitions to the adjacent residential building.

Panel in general support the overall expression with consideration given to reflectivity, solar shading and further detailing in the design at the DP stage.

Panel Commentary

Further exploration of the entries from the sidewalk. Anticipate it will be a better public realm experience if you can enter from the sidewalk.

Encourage improvements to the entry of the elevator from the downstairs to the entrance of the grocery store. Also, façade of grocery store can be improved.

Canopies and entries along Robson feel squished moving east, encourage studying the heights.

Noted opportunity for landscape adjacent to amenity room.

Some Panelists noted transparency on level 2 is really important, often the facades get covered up.

At the top of the building, the mechanical penthouse feels a bit arbitrary, more attention to where it stops and starts and how it might tie into the massing expression at the top of building; there is no alignment with any of the articulation or the grid or the fenestration that's occurring with the tower and steps from one tower to the next don't have any integration. Steps are not big enough to provide any meaningful termination of the towers and wonder if they are they necessary at all.

Some Panelists noted the dark glazing is concerning.

A Panelist noted the dark glazing is successful and not concerned with the building being dark as it is inherently recessive, not bulky; Panelist noted these sorts of buildings should act like shadows and they should disappear within the shadows around the lighter colored buildings and more prominent ones.

A Panelist encouraged review of the visible light transmittance of the grey glass, having minimize the amount of solar heat gain and increase its solar shade and optimize its visible light transmit.

Lane could be further animated with more lighting and art.

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