

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: December 1, 2021
TIME: 3:00 pm
PLACE: Joe Wai Meeting Room, Main Floor - City Hall
PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Angela Enman (Chair)
Alan Boniface
Sydney Schwartz
Adrien Rahbar
Jennifer Stamp
Clinton Cuddington

Guests:
Jennifer Marshall
Laura Jimenez
Robin Williams

REGRETS:
Brittany Coughlin
Alyssa Koehn
Jane Vorbrodt
Margot Long

RECORDING SECRETARY: M.Sem

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. 1059-1075 Nelson Street

BUSINESS MEETING Chair, MS. ENMAN, called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum.

- 1. Address:** 1059-1075 Nelson Street
Permit No.: DP-2021-00589
Description: To develop a 60-storey Passive House tower with 485 residential Dwelling Units, consisting of 102 Non-market Rental units (Social Housing), Market Rental units, and 350 market condo units; all over levels of underground parking with vehicle parking spaces and Class A bicycle parking spaces and Class B bicycle spaces. The building height is 585 ft. (to the top of mechanical screening), the net floor area is, and the floor space ratio (FSR) is. This application is being considered under the Council approved CD-1 Bylaw, West End Community Plan, and the General Policy for Higher Buildings.
- Zoning:** CD-1
Application Status: Complete Development Application
Review: Second (First as DP)
Architect: IBI Group
Delegation: Gwyn Vosi, IBI, Architect
Tom Wright, WKK, Architect
Dan Yang IBI, Landscape Architect
Rick Gregory, Brivia Group, Owner/Developer
Lorne Rickets, RDH, Sustainability Consultant
- Staff:** Hamid Shayan, Development Planner

EVALUATION: Recommend Resubmission (5/1)

Planner's Introduction:

Development planner, Hamid Shayan, began by noting this is the DP application at 1059-1075 Nelson St. The scope of work is to develop a 60-storey passive house residential building contains 501 units, all above 10 level of underground parking. The FOD is approved by Council and already endorsed by UDP.

This presentation is aiming to highlight design modifications from rezoning to DP subject of addressing the previous panel's recommendations and Urban Design Rezoning conditions.

The proposed application has been approved at public hearing on April 28th 2020 to rezone from RM_5B (residential) to CD-1 .The proposed CD-1 Bylaw allows for a maximum height of 585 ft. and a maximum density of 24.7 FSR. The proposed building contains a mix of market strata, market rental and social housing units. This project is located in a unique and busy block at central business district shoulder and will be surrounded by some significant landmark buildings.

This proposal is governed by several council - approved policies including CD-1 bylaw, West End community plan, and higher building policies. At Rezoning, staff concluded that this building complies with policies objectives such as:

Built Form Guiding Principles: Reinforce the Dome-Shaped Skyline, Strengthen the Urban Frame, Adhere to Prevailing View Corridors, Recognize Transitional Role in Form and Scale.

As it was mentioned, the proposal at rezoning was reviewed and supported by the Urban Design Panel on June, 2019 (12 to 1) subject of following recommendations:

Further shaping and sculpting of the crown form

Further design development of the building form to help mitigate the floor plate in relation to the ground plane and public realm.

Further design development of the public realm to support the interaction of the neighborhood.

Explore and provide options for the public amenities.

Further reconsideration of the gap and its functionality in terms of meeting sustainability objective and growing capability of the plant material.

Further consideration of the indoor and outdoor amenities for residents.

The overall form of development which approved by council, complies with CD-1 and all applicable policies in terms of overall height, tower foot print area, tower siting and separation, and view and shadowing. The application also proposes to meet the Passive House standard to achieve significantly lower energy consumption, which meets the enhanced energy requirements of the policy. Staff considered the passive house as an innovative approach which contributed the tallest passive house building to the City.

Besides that, the curved outline as the most distinctive visual feature of the tower is maintained during the development process of the application, and helps it to respond to the expectation of the Higher Buildings Policy. The applicant is also considering an improved window system for this Passive House project that would allow them to use less insulation. Sustainability is supportive of the change in glazing in principle, because it helps advance the technology around zero emissions buildings.

It will slightly increase the FSR and staff approved to add text amendment in CD-1 bylaw to address this change.

Since RZ the design has the following modifications:

The midblock connection has been proposed inside the property by provision of 2.5 m right of way from lane to Nelson St which will be connected to the adjacent property's inter connection.

The floor plate has been revised and increased at ground plane.

Direct access to the elevators provided for social housing from Nelson Street and it is separated from amenity.

As a result of these changes, the diagonal columns are eliminated and the building connected to the ground by extending the columns and vertical elements

Some adjustments have been implemented in the lobby and building interface to Nelson St.

the gaps in the massing have been removed and the elevations have been softened.

the green metal cladding has been introduced as a lighting strategy. the loading requirements has been met at the lane

The H- shape floor plate has been simplified to a more rectangular form. The previous landscaped gaps have been converted to the regular 5-6' deep balconies

the strata market units' amenity floor has been moved up to the 60th floor from level 16. So the large cantilevered balcony has been eliminated.

In RZ staff recommended to consider quality, appearance, durability and energy performance of materiality and detailing to be integral to design intent.

The crown has been revised by provision of mural walls.

The DP shows smoothing out the envelope to eliminate the steps. This requires sloping the glass and horizontal metal band to simply follow the curve.

With all the design refinements there is no change of shadowing particularly on Nelson Park and school from RZ.

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

1. Overall Design Development and Materiality
 - a) Please comment on the overall evolution of the proposed building design, architectural expression, articulation of massing, and material pallet between rezoning and development permit.

 - b) Does the proposal establish a significant and recognizable new benchmark for architectural creativity and excellence.

2. Public Realm
 - a) Please provide feedback on the overall evolution of public realm interface between rezoning and development permit with particular consideration of:
 - i. How the building transitions to and interfaces with the ground plane;
 - ii. The quality of the public realm and building interface at the lane;
 - iii. The overall performance of the north-south through-block connector as an active and inviting pedestrian link.

3. Sustainability, Microclimate and Biodiversity
 - a) Please comment about the building's contribution to these aspects in relationship to its anticipated architectural excellence.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Principle changes:

- The middle internal openings that were previously there, the benches were already removed. The entire change to the plate that occurred was a compression of it to keep the area the same but to alleviate and get more setbacks on the sides.

- Another change was the built form in the materiality is the skin itself. Before it was a made up of a series of terraces where everything was orthogonal. Now it is a smooth form that runs all the way up. The smooth form is made up of three tones of metal panel. There is still the silver band for the horizontals, a dark charcoal for the verticals and the green band in the middle as an accent that runs up both lane side and street side of this project. Lighting will be added to make building notable and seen from distant views, an iconic building on the skyline.

- At grade, the columns are pushed into the building face to increase public realm. There is one side dedicated to the community to have pedestrian walkway with bench seating and planters. On the alternate side facing the neighbor there is more private area for the affordable housing component.
- Also at grade, the indoor amenity space was enhanced and programmed, it was left a bit looser at rezoning stage, now it shows meeting rooms, lounge, family area, storage and office.
- The mid-level amenity space was re-located to the upper level of the building. Everyone in the building will be getting all the high level views not just the penthouse units.
- On the roof apartment it use to be a private deck for the penthouse units, now it will be a public amenity for the building.
- There is an elevator access that connects the amenity indoor to the amenity outdoor which is one level lift and will not require to increase the size of the apartment.
- The apartments remain the same height, everything is compressed into that volume for the mechanical purposes that is required.
- The detailing of the railing is intended to be a clear glass rail without any vertical extensions. It will be a high end detail and there are curve glass on those balconies.
- At top of the building, it was made up of segmented rings that were sticking out of the façade and straight at the top, there has been a slight re-curved inwards but it is now a smooth form curving inwards. This subtle change will make the building look smoother, cleaner, and simpler in its design.
- The intention of the feature at the top behind the glass is to create something artful on the wall, it is a feature that will be colourful and textural and will be seen from various buildings around town from distance views.

Landscape goals are to foster resilience, sustainable and healthy communities in the west end context.

To achieve these goals landscape provides the following design solutions:

- Along Nelson, mature trees will be made and concrete sidewalks will be re-paved.
- The south side landscape along Nelson Street has three pocket plazas, one in front of each entry and one in the middle. Bike racks are provided at each entry plaza. Aligning with the center of the building, a sculpture creates the focal point in front of the building. Planters and wavy seating on both sides frame this pocket plaza. The planters will use the same material as the building facade.
- The east side landscape features pedestrian pathway connecting Nelson Street and Ted North Lane. This space is generously sized by an enhanced 2.47m wide SRW on this property, which is contiguous with the existing 2.47m wide SRW path on the neighbouring property. The pathway is characterized by planter beds with integrated seating that allow clear sightlines

from both public roadways for safety. Extensive planting beds provide a pleasant green open space in which to relax.

- The west side landscape features a large outdoor patio, an edible landscape area, and children's play area adjacent to, and visible from, the social housing lobby and indoor amenity room. Continuous planting beds at the perimeter of these spaces provide privacy from the public roadways. The fence along the property's west boundary is designed to provide privacy while maintaining the neighbour's access to natural light.
- Including edible and native plants throughout the site.
- Bird friendly design.
- Level 21 to rooftop amenity was created to have a large social gathering area.
- The outdoor amenity space for market housing is on the mechanical roof level, and includes a hot tub, lounge area, BBQ area and seating area. Planters with trees and groundcover define the various areas.
- Integrate as much planting as possible to help with stormwater management.
- Regarding glazing, the original design had a window system that had a thick wall assembly to reach passive house levels. Looking at solutions to include curtain walls that can still achieve the thermal targets. There are discussions also with manufacturers to use vacuum glass.
- Sustainability, it is meeting the City of Vancouver targets as a passive house building.

Applicant took questions from Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **MR. BONIFACE** and seconded by **MR. CUDDINGTON** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel Recommend Re-submission to the project with the following recommendations to be reviewed by City Staff:

- 1) Design development to improve activation of the ground plane and public realm to better foster neighbourliness and community building.
- 2) Design development to how tower hits the ground to enhance contextual relationship and neighbourliness of ground plane.
- 3) Design development to increase quantity of amenity and arrangement of rooftop amenity space and proposed programming and improve social sustainability.
- 4) Design development to architectural expression and materiality to speak more to the passive house and residential nature of project and the origin of design concept, including east and west facades.
- 5) Consider relocating children's play area to south west corner of site.

Panel Commentary

There was strong support for achieving Passive House and provision of social housing.

There were mixed comments on the evolution from rezoning to the development permit stage. Some noted the benefits of simplification and others noted a de-volution that was less than hoped for.

Some panelists noted the concept for the form and materiality have become dis-associated from the origin of the project, some describing it as a diagram that has not developed.

Some panelists noted the opportunity for passive house uniqueness could be expressed on the building rather than using green paint and light.

Panel noted the building feels quasi-residential and quasi-office, feeling more corporate than residential.

Some panelists noted the unique form for a passive house is refreshing i.e. the balconies are hiding the inner walls of the building, adding variations that one might not see on a passive house.

Panelists noted the contextual relationship and neighbourhood fit should be considered.

Some panelists noted appreciation for the quietness and simplicity of expression.

Panel lamented the loss of landscape on the building.

Panel noted concerns for resolution of building at top and bottom of building.

Panel noted the crown is more defined.

A panel member noted the architectural creativity is evident especially the glazing.

A panel member noted the site looks less congested than it did at rezoning in particular the bottom two floors.

Panel suggested further design development of the tower to ground plane.

A panel member encouraged using the height to its advantage by sculpting the top and making it more elegant. The parti is not clear.

Panel noted the removal of the protruding amenity deck since rezoning makes the form more cohesive, and there is much improvement to the column at grade being less congested.

Panel noted concerns with the ground plane. There were suggestions to activate the ground level to provide more open space. Currently, it is lacking and pinched around the building and is dismissive of context.

Some panel members were concerned the ground plane was more abrupt than needs to be and suggested changing the colour or depth to give it a more smooth appearance. Another panel member noted when the tower hits the ground plane the acute corners feel very abrupt. It was also noted how the building lands on the ground is very dismissive. There is no clear relationship with landscape and programming.

Panel noted a lost opportunity by filling in the bands with residential rather than communal space. The original scheme had open spaces with planting going all the way up the building. The current scheme feels the building is packed with residential space.

A panel member noted with 501 units going into the neighbourhood there are concerns with density and impact on the sense of community.

Panel noted the separation of the amenities, encouraging more mixed uses and better connections.

One Panelist noted a single entry would be beneficial, rather than separate market and non-market entries.

Panel noted there was a loss of green space from rezoning to the development permit stage.

Panel noted the children's play area lacks sunlight. Panel suggested moving the children's play area to the south west corner which could help support the social interaction of the project.

A panel member noted the kids play area could use more naturalistic elements with a focus towards younger kids as there is already a park and elementary school nearby.

Panel suggest design development to the separation of the parkade ramp from the pedestrian spaces.

Panel noted the central seating area would benefit from greater consideration of programming and design.

Regarding the street right of way, Panel noted there is a lack of programming and it needs more activation.

Panel noted there is a lack of amenity and suggested giving the extra FSR gained from using thinner walls to achieve Passive House to provide greater amenity.

One panel member noted separation of indoor and outdoor amenity at the roof could be better connected.

Outdoor amenity for the non-market does not feel sufficient

One Panel member noted concerns with the livability of units being too small.

Panel noted there is lack of social sustainability in the project. It is missing neighbourliness and response to context.

Panel suggested integration of landscape to help with cooling and to further support the sustainability of this project.

A panel member expressed concern around the green lighting elements, cautions that the impact of lighting regarding dark sky principles and impact on neighbours at night.

Panel noted green lighting and graphic wall treatment are not enough.

Panel noted concerns with the colour green. Panel suggest further exploration of a less literal use of a metaphor to be more timeless. In addition, it is not working the metal panels and will look out-dated very quickly.

Panel noted there is a lack of integration between the landscape, materials and architectural design; and there needs to be reconciliation between landscape and architectural expression. The landscape wood fencing is not supported.

A panel member noted the planters along the right of way, 900 mm for root volume is not adequate.

A panel member noted there needs to be more connection to the public realm. Reconsider dividing the planters, relocating the public art to the right of way, and relocating the entry.

Panel appreciates the highest level of energy efficiency is brought to this project but has concerns with lack of sustainability beyond energy efficiency.

Applicant's Response: The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments and will work with City staff. It is a hardworking building that has a lot of elements that needs to be economical viable to reach sustainability goals. A very challenging project.