

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: June 8, 2022

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Townhall Room, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Brian Wakelin	excused item 1
Natalie Telewiak	excused item 2
Margot Long	excused item 1
Meeta Lele	excused item 2
Alyssa Koehn	
Clinton Cuddington	
Jane Vorbrodt	
Scott Romses	

James Cheng	Higher Building Panelist
Karen Marler	Higher Building Panelist
Richard Henriquez	Higher Building Panelist

REGRETS:

Reza Mousakhani
Amina Yasin
Adrian Rahbar

RECORDING

SECRETARY: K. Cermeno

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 950 W 41st Ave (Jewish Community Center)
2. 1040-1080 Barclay Street

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

1. Address: 950 W 41st Avenue (Jewish Community Center)
Permit No. DP-2022-00208
Description: To develop on this existing site a new 8-storey Community Centre with a 104-space private childcare facility, subject to Council enactment of the CD-1 By-law, approval of the Form of Development and approval by the Director of Planning. This application is Phase I of a phased development. Phase II on the adjacent site will provide 3 levels of shared underground parking accessible via the rear lane.
Zoning: CD-1 (285)
Application Status: Complete Development Application
Architect: Acton Ostry Architects Inc.
Staff: Ryan Dinh
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS (6/0)

Planner's Introduction:

Development Planner Ryan Dinh noted that this is a development permit application following the approved rezoning in 2018 under the Oakridge Transit Centre and Adjacent Sites Policy Statement, which offers directions for improved public realm, building massing, and transitional edges. The Urban Design Panel reviewed the rezoning application on March 7, 2018, and supported with recommendations. The rezoning application was approved for two phases. The scope of this development permit application is for the first phase, which includes an 8 storey, non profit Community Centre with a 104-space private childcare facility. Some changes have been made to the development permit application including the building setbacks, form and expression. Particularly, the building height is increased by 11 feet and the upper building setbacks were eliminated. As a result, there are some shadowing impact to the plaza of the Oakridge Transit Centre site.

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

1. Comments on the success of the changes being made, and the overall building design in response to UDP's comments at rezoning stage and the design principles of the Cambie Plan, noting:
 - The increase in building height
 - The elimination of upper building setbacks
 - The shadow impact to OTC site.
2. Comment on the success of the overall public realm and landscape design.
3. Additional comments and advice for improvements

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The design is shaped by the site and program. It is vertically stacked due to the site constraints.

The material palette is ceramic and cement panel cladding system in various combinations to break down the massing.

There is curtain wall glazing with vertical fins.

There are three centrally stacked atria connecting the main programs.

The childcare center is located on the eighth floor, which is the top floor, and it is connected with its required outdoor space.

Main changes include:

Increased building height to accommodate structural framing and mechanical services. This will require a bylaw amendment for increased height.

A three-storey theatre is incorporated in Phase 1.

The childcare center moved north to provide single level contiguous south facing outdoor play space.

Landscape

Main differences is the integration of the high school, which will be further animated at the public realm stage with the entries and courtyard, predominantly at the second phase.

The community center will integrate the bike and pedestrian pathway.

More trees are provided at their natural grade in area with larger setbacks.

The landscape goes across the entire roofscape and to the north side. This area will be for festivals and celebrations but also for educational purposes and feature wall with artwork to express the Jewish community.

There are great views to the north passing over to the transit site.

There are opportunities for alcoves and nooks and cultural walks and urban agriculture on the south side.

The applicant noted they are looking at types of plants that represent the Jewish calendar for the site.

Sustainability

Planning for a low carbon and central plant with a transition plan to zero carbon.

The project will focus on resilient construction, emissions conscious design and seeking LEED Gold certification.

This site will integrate well with the rest of the community while meeting the City's requirements for sustainability.

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 **Mr. ROMSES** and seconded by **MS. LELE** THAT the Panel **REVIEWED** the project with the following consensus recommendations to City Staff:

- Improve drop-off circulation for phase 1 with attention to accessibility considerations;
- Improve clarity of vehicle and pedestrian circulation overlap for phase 1;
- Enhance porosity of ground plane including generosity of the entry sequence to further connect to the public realm.

Related Commentary:

The panel was in general support of the project.

This is a strong well-executed project working with a complicated typology. The articulation is successful.

The panel noted the response to previous UDP comments are successful, and the project is an improvement from rezoning.

The panel agreed the height additions and adjustments in terms of the setbacks are reasonable and the related shadow impacts are minor and acceptable.

One panelist noted, the more height there is in phase 1 the more pressure will be relieved from adding density in phase 2.

There was general support of materiality and expression with stacked program. How the massing and horizontally of the façade expression is being handled is successfully.

The panel noted concerns about the overlapping vehicle and pedestrian circulation, noting the high volume of vehicle traffic entering the parkade and below grade drop off, would be crossing the main pedestrian circulation.

Concern was noted regarding the approach to drop-off for Phase 1, particularly given that the temporary Phase 1 drop-off is located in an adjacent parking lot across the street. This approach raised concerns of accessibility and ease of drop-off from the panel.

One panelist noted the current entry arrival space is programmatically pushing the building to its extreme. The location of the entry is tight and does not work well. Another panelist noted the entry does not have a presence yet. Another panelist noted the large overhang at the entry is a positive.

A panelist noted the podium edge is quite cluttered and concerned there is a lack of freedom for socialization.

A concern noted is there is a lot of ground level programming causing a bit of fortification on the edges, there is not a strong cultural edge connecting to the pedestrian walkway.

Another panelist also noted concerns with the lack of management at the ground level with its many programs, could create a collision.

A panelist noted the permeability with the street and courtyard appears nonexistent.

Concerned phase 1 will have the pressure of responding to the areas of conflict from phase 2, there is high risk for traffic congestion.

Some panelists noted overall concern with vehicle management.

A panelist noted the community would be better served with a public plaza.

A panelist noted it was hard to comment on the public realm as there was a lack of information of the shared street.

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

2.	Address:	1040-1080 Barclay Street
	Permit No.	RZ-2022-00018
	Description:	To develop two residential towers (57 storey West tower and 60 storey East tower). East tower contains 506 market rental units, 130 below market rental units, and retail space. West tower contains 365 market-strata units and 99 social housing units, retail space and a childcare facility; all over ten levels of underground parking, including 832 vehicle parking spaces and 2,256 bicycle parking spaces. Overall FSR is 21.87 FSR, and total floor area is 87,923 (946,391 sq.ft.). Building heights is 174.5 m (572 ft.) (East Tower) and 173 m (567 ft.) (West Tower). This application is being considered under West End Community Plan, Rezoning Policy for the West End, and Higher Building Policy.
	Zoning:	RM-5A to CD-1
	Application Status:	Rezoning Application
	Architect:	Perkins & Will
	Staff:	Tess Munro & Hiroko Kobayashi

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (7/1)

- **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Tess Munro, began by noting that, the site is currently zoned RM-5B and occupied by four multi-family residential buildings that located on the south side of Barclay Street, between Thurlow and Burrard Streets, with Ted Northe lane directly to the south. This application was originally submitted and considered by the Panel in 2017 but was withdrawn in 2022.

The applications have been submitted under the new Rezoning Policy for the West End Plan and 100% Secured Rental Housing Option with Below-Market Rental, adopted by Council in 2020.

Ms. Munro then provided a brief synopsis of this policy, as follows:

- It allows consideration for rezoning on sites within the Burrard Corridor for increased density for market residential when significant public benefits can be achieved.
- This site is located in the inclusionary housing provision area of the Burrard Corridor, where additional density can be considered if at least 25% of the new floor space is for social housing.
- Subject to urban design performance, towers may be considered up to 550 ft. in height.
- In 2020, Council approved an alternative to the current inclusionary social housing requirement in the Burrard Corridor to allow rezoning proposals with 100% secured rental housing in which a minimum of 20% of the residential floor area is secured below-market rental and under the below-market housing alternative, up to 20% additional floor area can be considered.

This site is also eligible for consideration of additional height under the Higher Building Policy:

- Under this policy, additional height above current zoning and policy can be considered with the provision that these higher buildings do not penetrate Council-approved view corridors, with the exception of the Queen Elizabeth view corridor
- The policy requires that any higher building development establish a significant and recognizable new benchmark for architectural creativity and excellence, while making a significant contribution to the beauty and visual power of Vancouver's skyline.
- The policy also identifies other considerations, including the achievement of community benefits, such as low cost housing, on-site open space, and mitigating potential adverse shadowing and view impacts on the public realm.
- They should also demonstrate leadership and advances in sustainable design and energy consumption.

The current proposal is for two towers, each under the two policy options for this site. The East Tower includes a 60-storey 100% rental building with 506 market rental units and 130 below market rental units and west Tower is for a 57-storey building with 365 strata units, 99 social housing units, and a 37-space childcare facility, retail space is provided at grade in both towers. A height of 572 ft. for the East tower and 567 ft. for the West tower is proposed. Development Planner, Hiroko Kobayashi, reminded the Panel of the existing urban character and context, the site falls in a zone of old-stock low to mid-rise rental buildings surrounded by taller residential forms on adjacent blocks. Miss Kobayashi then provided an overview of the proposed development, tower typologies and the public realm as follows:

- Under the West End plan, the developments that applied for RZ under the policy in the Area E of the Burrard corridor should be considered for the Tower in the park tower typology for creating more opportunities for extensive landscaping and public realm spaces at grade;
- According to the Tower Form, Siting and Setbacks bulletin, the developments with a larger floorplate proposed commensurate to the extra floor area permitted by the Policy up to approximately 9,000 sq. ft. for east tower (100% rental building) and 7,500 sq.ft for west tower(Strata + SH);
- This site identified in the General policy of the Higher buildings, the project falls under the Central Business District Shoulder where discretionally building height of 550' and proposed buildings are 545'-0" and 541'-0" in height;
- According to the West End Community Plan, the shadows should not impact on Public Open Spaces nor extend beyond the curb of the side walk on the north side of Robson Street between 10:00am to 3:00pm at the spring and fall equinoxes and both building complies with this;
- There is a court yard open space is proposed between the two towers and this space serves as the primary access point for all the residential lobbies and the child care;
- Retail, restaurant and amenity spaces are facing toward this court yard to activate the public realm space, and landscape feature is proposed toward the lane providing an accessible mid-block connection that contributes to the pedestrian experience.

A series of perspective views toward open courtyard space and from Thurlow and Barclay Street were provided by the architect and were presented by Miss Kobayashi.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on:

1. Does the proposed development establish a significant and recognizable new benchmark for architectural creativity and excellence, while making a significant contribution to the beauty and visual power of the City's skyline? Please consider the proposed height, density, articulation and massing within the existing and emerging urban context.
2. Please comment on the proposed public realm, on-site open spaces represent a significant contribution to the downtown network of green and plaza spaces.
3. Please provide any comments on preliminary material pallets, architectural expression, and details to assist staff review of the future DP application.

• **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The applicant began by noting that the first proposal was submitted in 2018, since that time, there have been several policy changes that took into effect.

The following are the key values to the redesign of the site:

- Positioning of the site in the heart of downtown.
- Unique identity to create a distinct public realm, a neighbourhood hub, an inclusive community.
- Architectural expression to be distinct and recognizable striving for a contemporary balance, design stacked and integrated in the existing fabric of the west end.
- Invest in high quality urban space.
- Right mix of programs for activities and social development.

The applicant noted the success of the project would be in its public realm and how it's knitted into the community.

The shadowing concerns on Robson St have been addressed.

The western podium extends further which accommodates a larger play area for kids. The intersection at Thurlow and Barclay is setback to create a protective space and engages the sidewalk.

The block space is the logical foundation for the towers. The tower becomes light as you go to the top which similar to the mid-century rental buildings seen in the west end. The elevation of expression is orderly and quiet.

Balconies are limited to the north and south elevations. The claddings are rendered as earthy colors. The intent is to have the panels textured and the variables will vary from tower to tower.

There are highly insulated walls that range in density and window to wall ratio. The Thick walls are part of the green building strategy and help meets the targets. Additionally there are triple glazed windows and thermally broken balconies.

LANDSCAPE

The goal is ensure the public realm around the building serves it residences and invites community members. Anticipating a mid-block connector at the center piece of this development.

The intent is create a pocket park that offers green and allows for all kinds of movements. The courtyard is a multi-layered space that is both flexible and comfortable.

There will be a loose group of trees that provides a canopy that brings the courtyard to a human scale. The rest of the public realm wraps around the buildings looks to serve the building. Looking at retail spaces.

The materiality for the landscape includes simple concrete slab expression, linear concrete slabs with introduction of wood for comfort. Texturized group plain with colours for all seasons.

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 **MR. CUDDINGTON** and **MR. CHENG** 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 size of vertical and horizontal recesses and massing breaks;
- consider widening the size of public realm at the base;
- Recommend voids and roofs should be landscaped and some to be commonly accessible;
- Consider creating larger balconies;
- Consider the wind study for comfort.

Related Commentary:

There was strong support in particular for the concept of the site. The new scheme provides extra housing, daycare and opens up the center of the podium.

There was general support from the panel in terms of height, massing and composition but a few panels commented that project could use some breathing room in the density.

The concept of breaking the massing of building into two then into four quadrants is successful. A panelist recommended opening the recess at the podium and having two storey breaks rather than one storey due to the size of the buildings.

The podium and its variance is generally successful, consider making the materials the same for both buildings.

There was strong support from the panel for the quality of the public realm and how it navigates through the tower although consider better ways to integrate the entryways.

A panelist noted the contrast and simplicity of the buildings in comparison to the other developments is successful.

A few panelists noted the project does not speak to the West-end. The West-end is about individuality and with the large vertical aspects and lower face portions there is no individuality, consider connecting more to the human scale and explore how the material of the building and its relationship to the West End.

A few panelists noted the layouts in the ground floor are unlivable and require design development. Consider the window treatment and placement. A panelist suggested exploring whether the elevator lobby could reach the façade at the vertical reveals to improve livability.

A panelist recommended exploring making the façade segments that move up the building heterogeneous to create interest.

Ensure the dimension of the public realm is adequate and consider more of a human scale. Strongly recommend applying layers of accessibility, and consider individuals with visual impairments, provide some spaces to pause and rest.

Recommend finding where you can free up some public realm at the ground level and improve the relationship of the roof and amenity spaces.

There is very little roof deck amenity connected to the indoor and this goes with livability.

A panelist noted to consider additional balcony size and wind tunnel study for pedestrian comfort, especially for the spaces between the buildings.

One panelist recommended the City and Engineering consider shared vehicle and bicycle parking in downtown residential projects instead of individual storage facilities.

Consider more opportunity at the loading zone; the space should be treated as a park first that supports loading.

Additional activations at the lane should be considered.

Applicant's Response: The applicant team thanked to recognize the challenges and for their comments.