

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: September 27, 2023

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Webex

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Alasdair Butcher
Bob Lilly
Craig Taylor (Chair)
Federica Piccone
Geoff Lister
Jane Vorbrodt
Jon Stovell
Margot Long
Peeraj Thakre
R. Stefan Aepli

REGRETS: Brittany Coughlin

RECORDING SECRETARY: M. Sem

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 5350-5430 Heather St
2. 3571 Sawmill Crescent
3. 1290 Hornby St

Chair Craig Taylor called the meeting to order at 3:00pm and noted the presence of a quorum. The panel then considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address:	5350-5430 Heather St
Permit No.:	RZ-2023-00022
Description:	To rezone the subject site from RS-1 (Residential) District to CD-1 (Comprehensive Development) District. The proposal is to allow for the development of two 18-storey buildings over 4-storey podiums and includes: 344 secured market rental units with 20% of the floor area secured for below market rental units (approximately 69 units); A floor space ratio (FSR) of 6.28; A building height of 53.3 m (175.0 ft.) with additional height of 3.7 m (12.0 ft.) for rooftop amenity space; and 226 vehicle parking spaces and 642 bicycle parking spaces. This application is being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan.
Zoning:	RS-1 to CD-1
Application:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	Dialog Design
Applicant:	Vance Harris, Architect, Dialog
Staff:	Daniel Feeney, Rezoning Planner Samantha Patterson, Development Planner

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (8/0)

Planner's Introduction:

Daniel Feeney, Rezoning Planner, introduced the project with a brief description of the existing site context, followed by an overview of the anticipated context as considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan. Daniel concluded the presentation with a description of the site and a summary of the rezoning proposal.

Samantha Patterson, Development Planner then gave an overview of the neighbourhood context in relation to the proposal, followed by the expectations of the built form guidelines for this project. Samantha then gave a brief 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. Support for the height, density and overall massing.
2. The success of the public realm interface at Heather Street and secondary active link.
3. The quality and functionality of amenity spaces, in particular, the courtyard configuration (e.g. solar access, proportions).
4. Any preliminary advice for consideration at the Development Permit stage.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The applicant Vance Harris, Architect noted the objectives and gave a general overview of the project. Kristin Defer, Landscape Architect then gave a presentation on the landscape strategy.

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by STEFAN AEPLI and seconded by PEEROJ THAKRE and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel Recommend Support with recommendations with the following recommendations:

The Chair summarized the consensus items as their design development recommendations.

Summary of Panel Consensus Comments

- In general Panel supports the height, density and massing.
- Some Panelists suggested a drop off zone near the tower entry at the active link and Heather St.
- Some Panelists suggested the active link should give back to the community with the integration of seating and other pedestrian friendly design elements.
- Design development to provide some grade level units with accessible entries.
- Further consideration to improve privacy and accessibility to the active link and Heather St. interface.
- Further consideration to the provision of equitable access to indoor and outdoor amenities for both buildings.

Summary of Panel Commentary

General support from Panel on the height, density and overall massing.

Some Panelists noted support for the active link placement and noted there are no issues with the intimacy, interest, scale, and courtyard. It feels like a thoroughfare through a private zone, the walkway can give back to surrounding neighbourhood, encourage spaces along the active link to stop, hang out, and engage with community, encourage design that has accessibility components such as seating or lighting that can be more inclusive and enjoyed by a wider range of people.

Some Panelists noted the public realm interface between the active link and Heather Street intersection requires further design development to improve pedestrian experience. A panelist noted podium massing adjacent the link could be stepped back to improve scale. Panelists noted it feels tight and claustrophobic, and will feel as if it cuts through private realm.

A Panelist suggested planting between at grade units and blinds which go bottom up or top down to create a sense of privacy would be an improvement due to the amount and location of glazing shown.

A Panelist noted the ground floor units are above grade which helps with privacy both on the street side and private link side. Part of the success of the active link is terracing up to the walkway to the private decks.

A Panelist suggested having seating at the ends of the active link.

A Panelist suggested balancing the lighting levels between having a well-lit active link and having light shine into the units.

A Panelist suggested and others agreed re-locating the passenger pick-up and drop-off zone to Heather Street where the two main entries connect and where the public walkway meets Heather Street pedestrian realm, as it would provide better access.

Some Panelists encouraged making entrances to the ground level units more accessible and inclusive for multi-generational users.

A panelist noted the mid-block active link would connect with an elementary school and would require more work to be successful.

A panelist noted elevator location at north building is not convenient or easily accessed.

A panelist noted the need to consider people with visual impairments.

Panelists agreed more equitable distribution of indoor and outdoor amenity spaces with accessible washrooms in both towers would be an improvement.

Panelists agreed the south tower lacked adequate outdoor amenity.

Panelists noted there should be access from south tower to playground from the secondary active link.

Panelists suggested adding an indoor rooftop amenity space with a washroom facility to the podium to make it accessible and inclusive.

A panelist suggested the courtyard design was unclear in terms of programming.

A Panelist noted the courtyard proportions do not work and will be in dense shade, 'it is not a useful space and it will be a vacant space', design work is needed.

A Panelist supports shading and lighting of children's play area and outdoor amenity spaces.

Some Panelists encouraged art could be introduced as a way to create connection to the courtyard space either from the link or lane. .

A Panelist noted appreciation for the extensive roof areas and emphasized the need for a metre of soil depth for the trees and trusted that street trees will also be going in on Heather St.

A Panelist asked for clarification of north tower level 19 on the rooftop, there is no interior amenity space on the landscape plan but architectural plan shows there is.

A Panelist noted the need for indoor amenity at level 5 podium roof deck. .

Panelists noted appreciation for the sustainability strategy for this project – the improvements to window wall ratio without compromising design especially on northern side.

A Panelist noted cement panel façade needs more attention.

A Panelist noted the shade of green is a reminder of 'hospital green'. Note to applicant to be careful when finalising the colour choices that consider built history and visual and emotional impact.

A Panelist noted support for the three dimensionality of the façade and encouraged further design development of the selection and detailing of the fibre cement cladding.

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

2. Address: 3571 Sawmill Crescent
Permit No.: DP-2023-00542
Description: To develop an 18-storey and adjacent 5-storey mixed-use building containing a combined 185 dwelling units and 5 commercial units at grade and a 6-storey building with 54 secured market rental units all over three levels of underground parking having vehicular access from the rear lane.
Zoning: CD-1
Application: Complete Development Application
Review: First
Architect: Dialog
Graham Brewster, Wesgroup
Applicant: Brady Dunlop, Architect, Dialog Design
Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect, Groundswell Landscape
Staff: Hamid Shayan, Development Planner

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (8/0)

Planner's Introduction:

Hamid Shayan, Development Planner, introduced the project with a brief description of the existing site context, followed by an overview of the anticipated context. Hamid concluded the presentation with a description of the site and a summary of the development permit proposal.

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

1. Considering the simplified building form and larger tower floorplate required to accommodate the hybrid mass timber structural system proposed, does the articulation of building elements, expression of the materiality, and building interface with the public realm successfully contribute to the emerging urban character of the neighborhood?
2. Please comment on the design of the site and landscape elements as the contribution of integrating this proposal with adjacent developments.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The applicant, Graham Brewster, Westgroup, gave an overview of the project and Brady Dunlop, Architect noted the design objectives for the site. Jennifer Stamp then presented the landscape strategy.

The planning team then took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **BOB LILY** and seconded by **MARGOT LONG** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel Recommends Support with the following recommendations summarized below:

- The Chair summarized the consensus items as their design development recommendations.

Summary of Panel Consensus Comments:

- General support from Panel on simplifying building and larger floor plates.
- General support from Panel for landscape elements and integration with adjacent developments.
- Panel noted more work is recommended on the bike lounge.
- Panel noted concerns with CPTED issues around the ramp.
- To consider enhancing the quality of detailing throughout the development to support the prefabricated modules.
- To consider increasing the size of amenity spaces.

Panel Commentary:

Panel in general noted support for the ramp noting, it is playful and unique, suggested it could be more embedded to the landscape and incorporating some art into the design of the ramp.

Panel in general supports the mass timbre.

Panelists acknowledged the quality of the detailing is going to make this a unique and successful project.

A Panelist noted allowing larger floor plates has allowed for more efficient floor plates.

Some Panelists noted the façade at the top of the ramp could use further finesse and refinement, noting it is 'brutal' the way it connects to the two building.

Panel encouraged accessibility, universality and inclusiveness of the bike lounge area.

A Panelist noted the bike wall facing the ramp could be friendlier, the void space above the car ramp at the same level does not show enclosed space, and it could be a usable floor space.

Landscaping around the project integrates well with adjacent developments.

The glazing is not integrating with the structure, there is a better way to use the columns.

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

3. Address: 1290 Hornby St
Permit No.: DP-2023-00542
Description:

To allow for the development of a 35-storey building. The zoning would change from Downtown (DD) District to CD-1 (Comprehensive Development) District. On March 11, 2022, the applicant provided an addendum to their December 13, 2018 submission. This addendum forms their updated rezoning application package. The proposal includes: 211 strata-titled residential units; 1,243.2 sq. m (13,382 sq. ft.) of cultural amenity space to be owned by the City of Vancouver; A floor area of 16,659.9 sq. m (179,332 sq. ft.); A building height of 106.11 m (348.13 ft.); A floor space ratio (FSR) of 11.96; 150 vehicle parking spaces and 450 bicycle parking spaces. The most significant changes between the March 2022 submission and the previous December 2018 submission include: Relocation of the elevator core and reangling of the building to improve residential livability and building efficiencies; Increase in the number of housing units from 159 to 211; Additional residential and cultural amenity space floor area; Slight reduction in building height. The previous rezoning application included: 159 strata titled residential units; 978 sq. m (10,531 sq. ft.) of cultural amenity space to be owned by the City of Vancouver; A floor area of 16,165 sq. m (174,000 sq. ft.); A building height of 106.16 m

(348.3 ft.); A floor space ratio (FSR) of 10.28; 105 vehicle parking spaces and 345 bicycle parking spaces. The application is being considered under the Potential Benefit Capacity in Downtown Policy.

Zoning: DD
Application: Complete Development Application
Review: Second
Architect: Buttjes Architecture
Applicant: Dirk Buttjes, Architect, Buttjes Architecture
Staff: Carl Stanford, Development Planner

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (5/1)

Planner's Introduction:

Carl Stanford, Development Planner, introduced the project with a brief description of the existing site context in relation to the proposal, followed by the expectations of the built form guidelines for this project. Carl then gave a brief description of the proposed project before concluding with Staff questions for the Panel. Carl concluded the presentation with a description of the site and a summary of the development permit proposal.

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

1. Has the applicant satisfied the UDP recommendations at rezoning stage as indicated below?
 - a) Simplification and further refinement of the base, middle and top of the building; and,
 - b) Consideration of the choice of the material palette to ensure the highest quality.
2. Does the proposal achieve a satisfactory architectural expression providing a harmonious contextual fit to the neighboring buildings?
3. Does the proposal achieve a successful public realm on all sides of the building providing a lively, well activated, and pedestrian friendly realm?

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The applicant, Dirk Buttjes, Architect noted the design objectives for the site. Amber Paul, Landscape Architect then presented the landscape strategy.

The planning and applicant teams then took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by **PEEROJ THAKRE** and seconded by **STEFAN AEPLI** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel Recommends Support with the following recommendations summarized below:

1. Design development of the cultural amenity space facade relative to the stepping of the tower and the streetscape.
2. Design development to provide enhancements to the quality and character of the public realm at the Hornby & Drake Streets intersection as well as the lane interface.
3. Design development to the detailing of the building to reduce thermal bridging and address sustainability issues.
4. Design development to improve the quality, character and functionality of the level 6 outdoor amenity space.

Panel Commentary:

There was General support on the simplification of the façades expression from rezoning stage to development permit stage.

A Panelist noted the reduced clarity of form from the rezoning stage.

Some Panelists noted the podium and tower blend together without reinforcing or supporting the expression of the other. There are uncomfortable proportions, cluttered expression and a lack of a rigorous parti.

A Panelist noted that if the tower and expression do blend together than it would be better for it to integrate the cultural amenity space into this language

Some Panelists noted concern with the extent of blank walls in the proposal.

A Panelist noted the need for more animation to the front of building with public art.

Some Panelists noted concern with the balconies thermal bridging issues would undermine triple glazing. It's more than half the envelope. They further noted concern with the exposure of the elevator cores elevation from a thermal bridge standpoint. It should be clad to improve energy efficiency not just have exposed concrete.

Some Panelists noted concerns on play area and outdoor amenity being deficient. The ramp takes over usable space and should be part of the play experience. The elements don't seem to work together.

Some Panelists noted concerns on the public realm and paving material treatment being too simple and needing work. The double row of trees are too close to the overhang. Individual trees in small planters is questionable in terms of longevity.

A Panelist noted saw tooth corner expression in the tower rather than the trapezoid is a positive move.

Some Panelists noted the juxtaposition of the sawtooth tower expression with the podium expression isn't working. The horizontal elements at grade don't work well. The expression of the cultural amenity space doesn't modulate well with the sawtooth expression above. It is better on the lane side and should wrap that language around.

A Panelist noted concern with how the sawtooth expression tapers back up to the top of the tower. The terracing combined with the sawtooth expression decreases the strength of that move. It's the same with how the horizontal expression at the base doesn't have enough of a contrast.

A Panelist suggest revising the junction on the Hornby façade, noting it is a 'brutal wall' and looks 'painful'. They need to revisit the junction with a bit of further modulation. It can be resolved by pushing it in more, having careful detailing and further design work.

A Panelist noted the public realm is not well resolved, the architectural expression of ground and second floor of the cultural amenity space is just a long stripe of curtain wall and does not coordinate well with the modular tower above.

A Panelist noted the need for more planting and greenery instead of concrete and hard surface. They encouraged more landscape along Drake St in particular.

A Panelist noted having the double row of trees on Drake St will be challenging as it is a couple feet away from the overhang.

A Panelist noted the need for improved accessibility and encouraged parking stalls that are inclusive and accessible for all users.

A Panelist encouraged combining individual trees and having planters with a large soil volume, to ensure maintenance and longevity could work better.

Some Panelists encouraged more custom nature based play areas.

The Panel in general was unsatisfied with the livability of the dwelling units, the small bedrooms and especially the size of the three bedroom dwelling units.

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