

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: January 8, 2020

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Jennifer Stamp (Chair)	excused item 3
Adrien Rahbar	
Karenn Krangle	excused item 1
Muneesh Sharma	
Matt Younger	
Brittany Coughlin	
Alan Davies	
Angela Enman	
Walter Francl	
Michael Henderson	
Margot long	
Marie-Odile Marceau	
Sydney Schwartz	

REGRETS:

RECORDING

SECRETARY: K. Cermeno

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 441-475 W 42nd Ave
2. 2710 Kaslo Street
3. 128 E Cordova St

BUSINESS MEETING

Mr. Huffman and Ms. Colette called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. Following a presentation from Assistant Director, Jason Olinek and staff, Ms. Stamp was elected as the new chair and Mr. Rahbar elected as vice-chair. The panel then considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 441-475 W 42nd Ave
 Permit No. RZ-2019-00069
 Description: To develop an 18-storey secured market rental residential building with 124 rental units, a rooftop indoor/outdoor amenity space, and a children's play space above the 4-storey podium; all over one level of underground parking consisting of 39 parking stalls, 4 carsharing stalls, and 291 bicycle spaces. The building height is 61 m (200.1 ft.), the floor area is 12,461 sq. m (134,128 sq. ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 6.67. This application is being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan.
 Zoning: RS-1 to CD-1
 Application Status: Rezoning Application
 Review: First
 Architect: Urban Solutions Architecture
 Delegation: Donald Yen, Architect
 Keith Ross, Landscape Architect
 Staff: Kent MacDougall & Omar Aljebouri

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (9-2)

- **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Kent MacDougall, started with a summary of the rezoning proposal. He then gave a general background on the Cambie Corridor Plan and the vision for the immediate neighbourhood (Oakridge Municipal Town Centre). Kent then spoke to the specifics of the Plan's expectations for the subject site. He then concluded his presentation with a general description of the site, as well as its current and anticipated contexts.

Development Planner, Omar Aljebouri, started by giving an overview of the vision of the Cambie Corridor Plan for the neighborhood, followed by the expectations of the built-form guidelines for the Tower-on-Podium typology. He 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. Density and massing, especially the tower top;
2. Public realm and landscape design. Please consider factors such as treatment of the yards, especially the exterior side yard to the west; treatment of the ground-oriented residential units; and treatment of the raised patios;
3. Any preliminary comments for consideration at the Development Permit stage. Please consider factors such as amenities for the high percentage of family-units (93%), landscape, and architectural expression.

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The applicant noted this is an 18 storey rental building. Level 17, 18 and the roof setbacks from the explicit tower form. The applicant noted this was an architectural gesture to shape and recognize the top. There is a green roof on the west and east side.

The tower form is complimented by the podium level. The podium is prescriptive in the Cambie Corridor policy. The tower expression is brought down to the ground. The project is symmetrical in planning, yet asymmetrical in its elevation design.

Level 19 (roof area) is an amenity area. On level 5, there is a child's play area, with urban agriculture and seating area to allow for supervision. The applicant noted there will be a bit of storage for play equipment and urban agriculture.

There is a generous setback along 42nd avenue. The patios have some hedging for privacy and screening. There is planting along the lane and climbing vines for the wall.

All parking is accessed from the lane and bike amenities are accessible off the lane from the main floor. The applicant noted the car share needs to be accessible to the greater population not just the development and the only way was to allow it on the lane.

The applicant noted they meet the policy guidelines on the energy targets and there will be a rain water management system.

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. Sharma and seconded by Mr. Younger and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **SUPPORTS** the project with the following recommendation to be reviewed by City Staff:

- Design development to the massing to reduce the apparent bulk;
- Design development to consider livability in terms of the units along the lane close to the car-share;
- Design development of the sustainability objectives not to double up and reconsider slab edge projections;
- Design Development to the front yard to clearly define the space as public or semi-public.

- **Related Commentary:**

The panel noted general support for the project. The panel has no concerns with the proposed density.

The panel noted it was nice to see the number of family units and variety of amenities on different levels.

There were concerns with the livability and tightness of the project. Unit livability and layouts should better reflect family living. Family units should have larger patios, especially the 4-bedroom units. All units are too small.

Regarding the density and massing, most concerns with massing were regarding slab edges and how it adds bulk to the tower. The top of the tower/penthouse levels also added bulk to the massing. There were concerns how the tower is set up and dissects the podium as it comes right down to the ground. The tower should be better integrated with the podium. The vertical framing elements should be thought out as they currently seem tacked on.

Panelists suggested to staff to look at the Polygon application across the street with a similar articulation.

It was noted that the “landscaped terrace” on the podium is not appropriate for family living. Child play should be at the top of the tower, on the south side for better solar access. The tower top indoor amenity is too large and takes away from the outdoor amenity, rendering it unusable. Consider reducing the indoor amenity and improving the outdoor amenity. Wind protection of the tower top outdoor amenity should be explored.

The panel noted concerns with the public realm, mostly to do with the west lane. The car share on the lane was not supported and does not contribute to the livability of units facing that lane. The panel noted the south side front yard (area between the property line and patios) is not clearly defined as private, public, or semi-private. This is an emerging context with neighboring single family homes. Consider something that reads more public is appropriate. There is an opportunity to create more identity for ground related units. The patios should have a stronger planting definition. Privacy concerns of the patios can be addressed through improved planting of the patios.

The panel noted sustainability concerns with the dynamic glass and slab edges – doubling up on same sustainability strategy. Consider how this will affect views from the units outward. Thermal performance of the building envelope should be improved. There were comments regarding thermal comfort, consider providing some cooling in common hallways. Consider alternative cladding to concrete to limit carbon footprint. Dynamic glass should be fully explored. Location and operability of windows are important for the passive approach. Comments on same slab edge around the tower – same solar response on all 4 sides.

Consider another cladding besides concrete.

Make planter depths realistic.

- **Applicant’s Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments.

2. Address:	2710 Kaslo Street
Permit No.	DP-2019-00658
Description:	To develop a 7-storey office tower and a 6-storey College School tower, with semi-public College functions, retail uses and public open space at grade, all over two levels of shared underground parking consisting of 282 parking stalls and 106 bicycle spaces The building height is approximately 28.6 m (94 ft), the total floor area is 64,852.2 sq. m (212,770 sq. ft.) and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 3.0.
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete Development Application
Review:	First
Architect:	IBI Group
Delegation:	Jeff Christianson, Architect, IBI Group Gwyn Vose, Architect, IBI Group Caelan Griffiths, Landscape Architect, PMG Landscape Architect Greg Persanyi, Owner/Developer, The Molnar Group Sean Lindberg, Owner/Developer, The Molnar Group
Staff:	Karen Kallweit-Graham

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (12-0)

• Introduction:

Development Planner, Karen Kallweit-Graham began by noting that the project is a Development Permit Application from a rezoning approved in 2010 for a phased development, under the policy of the Grandview Boundary Mixed Employment Area Plan. New built form under the Plan is intended to transition the area from industrial I-2 zoning to a vibrant mixed use employment area with concentrations of density around Rupert & Renfrew skytrain stations. Context includes CD-1 zones to east and west, I-2 to south, and RS-1 to north. Broadway is a major arterial 2 blocks north and Renfrew skytrain station is 1 block south. The site is approximately 260' x 285' with a cross-fall of 14' from north to south. Proposal is for a 7-storey office building and a 6-storey college building on a shared 2-storey podium over 2 levels of underground parking. It completes vehicle and pedestrian linkages from Renfrew Station and between Renfrew and Kaslo streets. The main floor consists of an office lobby at the corner, retail, and semi-public college functions, all behind a continuous window wall. Street-facing elevations are clad with curtain wall glazing and articulated with 2-storey tall glass fins. North is more opaque with metal panels and coloured spandrel glass.

Major conditions from 2010 rezoning were reviewed and include:

1. Design Development to substantially reduce shadow cast on residents to north.
Applicant has addressed this in a number of ways:
 - a. Reduced height of college building from 7 to 6 stories
 - b. Maintained a 40 ft setback at north
 - c. Introduction of and step-back of terraces
 - d. Chamfer of NW corner of building
2. Improve amenity of open spaces for pedestrians by considering the following:
 - a. Achieve 75% transparency in the building walls at grade facing significant open spaces
 - b. Provide continuous weather protection
 - c. Provide more pedestrian features

- d. Provide balconies & roof decks
3. Achieve a minimum LEED Silver rating.

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

1. Is the NW corner and west façade successfully resolved given the prominent access, vehicular traffic and visibility from Broadway along Kaslo?
2. Please comment on the revised massing with respect to neighbourhood context and shadow impacts to the north residential area.
3. Comment on the quality of shared urban open spaces and public realm with respect to 2010 rezoning conditions.
4. Please comment on sustainability features, such as material choices, solar strategy, site design & green infrastructure.

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The applicant noted the massing is based on the rezoning scheme; they have taken a more programmatic input to shape the buildings similar to the college next door.

The overall height of the building has been lowered to the 6th floor. The height difference to the lane is about 6ft.

The open space has been developed to maximize it and make the connection to Kaslo more obvious, it is now a bit wider. The offices adjacent to Kaslo help the pedestrian experience.

The applicant noted they are looking to have a more solid section to minimize the glazing to the terraces on the north. There are operable windows on the south. There is a light green to darker blue color at the top and solid glass spandrels at the back.

There is a deck between the two buildings and continuous weather protection along the public realm at grade.

The central pedestrian and vehicular path is through the center, there is a generous open plaza area. There is an existing parking wall and retaining wall at the north end. There is a right turn and left turn off of Renfrew. There is a drop off public area.

There is a number of small and large gathering and social break out spaces.

There is a half-court basketball area at the east side of the site (up against a previous phase).

There is screening between the office and college building with an intensive landscape strip at the 3 floor. There is rooftop planting which can be layered in for culinary herbs.

Kaslo has street trees marching upwards, trees are of columnar species. The paving pattern is finer than typical sidewalk, paving several deferens paten's through the central plaza area.

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. Francl and seconded by Ms. Marceau and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **SUPPORTS** the project with the following recommendations to be reviewed by City Staff:

- Design development to the terraces as they relate to the chamfered portions of the massing and entries;
- Design development to the service driveway to address CPTED concerns;
- Design development to the south property line and north property line to reconsider linear planting proposed;
- Design development to the rooftops of both buildings to maximize sustainability opportunities through exploration of green roofs as per the rezoning drawings

- **Related Commentary:**

There was general overall support from the panel for this project. The panel noted that the applicant did a good job of responding to the rezoning conditions from 2010. The panel generally liked the simplicity of the form and massing (one calling it 'handsome'), though there was some concern that the relationship between the 'iceberg' massing and the horizontal terraces appeared awkward. Comments regarding vertical fin articulation were generally positive. Panelists noted that while they add appealing visual interest they question their effectiveness as a solar strategy.

In terms of the north elevation, it was suggested that this face be more opaque to reduce overlook and create more privacy for residents to the north. Panel members felt that massing of the northwest corner was well- resolved, given its prominence facing the approach from Broadway.

The panel generally felt that the landscape and open spaces had been well-handled. One member noted there could be better connections between inside and outside functions. The introduction of operable windows was also suggested. It was noted that the planting along the north and south property lines could be more of a programmed and purposeful area rather than just a buffer with long rows of identical plant species – eg. Habitat corridor. Consideration for green roofs on both buildings should be given, which would substantially benefit the project. One panelist noted that green roofs were shown in the rezoning drawings back in 2010, and as such it would be expected to see them in this proposal. It was also suggested that a storm water filter/retention feature could be considered at the northwest corner.

Panel noted that visibility for vehicles and bike way-finding needs to be resolved. Vehicle entry to the parkade off Kaslo creates a second access point parallel to the lane which presents pedestrian safety issues. Panel also noted CPTED concerns at the loading/parkade entry areas.

Articulate ground floor glass.

Consider legibility for how bikes enter the site. Highlight access for bikes over cars.

Consider more differentiation between the office and college expressions.

Consider a more generous canopy/weather protection at grade.

Applicant's Response: The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments and will take the comments into consideration for further improvement.

3. Address: 128 Cordova St
 Permit No. DP-2019-00895
 Description: To develop a 9-storey mixed-use building containing a social service centre, supported residential (120 beds) and emergency shelter (134 beds), a community feeding program, and 46 social housing units; all over one level of underground parking with 13 vehicle stalls and 70 bicycle stalls. The total floor area is 15,317.3 sq. m (164,874 sq. ft.), the approximate building height is 32.5 m (106.6 ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 6.72.
- Zoning: HA-2
 Application Status: Complete Development Application (SHORT)
 Review: First
 Architect: NSDA Architecture
 Delegation: Brian Dust, Architect, NSDA Architects
 Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect, Durante Kreuk Ltd.
 Owner: Derland Orsted, The Salvation Army
 Jim Luggles, The Salvation Army
 Staff: Patrick Chan

EVALUATION: Support With Recommendations (11/0)

- **Introduction:**

Development Planner Patrick Chan introduced this project as situated in the HA-2 zone, across the lane from DEOD lots. A nine-story mixed use building containing community program spaces is proposed. It contains a social service centre (shelter), detoxification centre, 254 sleeping-beds on the lower floors, and 46 long-term housing units on the top two floors. The proposed building will replace the Harbour Light building. The HA-2 zone allows height up to 75 ft., and density based on urban design performance. Under Section 4.3.2 of the HA-2 District Schedule, the Development Permit Board may relax the maximum height pending review of contextual precedence, impacts on the surrounding, and providing amenity (such as social housing) to the area. It should be noted, there are precedent buildings in Gastown that exceed the 75 ft. height.

Chan then pointed the relevant policies and guidelines informing this project as the Downtown Eastside Plan, HA-2 District Schedule and HA-2 Design Guidelines. Collectively, their key objectives are:

- **Community-wellness:** Providing housing and services for vulnerable populations and low-barrier jobs are key objectives. Additionally, The Downtown Eastside Plan is explicit about aboriginal place-making through recognition of the historical and contemporary connections aboriginal peoples have to the area.
- **Fine-Grain Fabric:** A key recommendation in the *HA-2 Guidelines* is the saw-tooth roof profile, especially for wider buildings. This fine-grain fabric may be further emphasized by introducing substantial recesses and breaks on the street-face, narrower more vertical grouping of windows.
- **Heritage Character:** Enhancing the area's heritage character can be done by respectfully interpreting the area's traditional massing, saw-tooth roofs, façade proportions, and materials. Other details may include robust window frames, deep

recessed punched windows, defined columns / pilasters, pronounced cornices, and a well-grounded base layer that together add texture to the façade.

- **Improved Public Realm:** While no requirements for setbacks are outlined in the *HA-2 District Schedule*, the building faces at grade should still add to the pedestrian space. Clear interior-exterior porosity is also important. Additionally, the *HA-2 Guidelines* recommend shopfronts widths and column spacing to be around 20 ft. to continue the prevalent rhythm of the area. Improved lane-side treatment should also be considered as lanes more than just service alleys in the Downtown Eastside area.

Chan noted the proposed project responded well to these objectives. These responses are addressed through:

- **Height:** Portions beyond the 75 ft. height are set back to allow the masonry volumes to stand more prominently on the block.
- **Massing:** The primary massing consists of two masonry volumes – a skinnier taller eight-story and a wider seven-story – with a well-recessed glass-metal structure striding over partially. This height difference help define a saw-tooth roof profile. In the 20 ft. gap between the two masonry volumes sits a simple concrete frame with a three-story glass façade that serves as the main entry.
- **Heritage Character:** A historic reference is produced collectively by the two masonry volumes, the sawtooth roofline, the pronounced lower and upper cornices, the defined building-base, and the vertical grouping / composition of the punched windows. In contrast to Cordova Street’s “heritage face”, the lane side’s composition of window location and materials is more contemporary; nonetheless this adds visual interests to the lane and serves as counterpoint to the heritage façade.
- **Public Realm:** Double-height windows front on most of Cordova to maintain visual porosity with pedestrian realm. Additionally, the prominently expressed columns coming down to grade help “ground” the base; and these columns spaced at 18 to 20 ft. intervals also continue the block’s sense of rhythm.

Open Space: To improve livability, three separate courtyards are provided – a central larger one, and two smaller ones along the sideyards. There are also a series of smaller shared patios and decks, in lieu of private balconies.

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

Massing + Character

- The additional height’s fit in its immediate vicinity, in terms of scale, transitions and impacts. (Also consider the relation between the masonry volumes and the glass-metal structure over them.)
- Its compatibility with the HA-2 area’s historic fabric, with regards to its overall massing, rhythm, composition, and materials.
- The main entrance’s expression for wayfinding, building identity, relation to the overall composition, and contextual fit for the block.
- The opportunities for indigenous elements in the overall future design and program.

Livability + Amenity

- The units’ livability, particularly the lane- and courtyard-facing ones. (This should take into consideration the lower floors are short-term sleeping units.)
- The usability of the outdoor spaces on Level 3 as well as the smaller ones distributed on other floors.

Public Realm:

- The base's contribution to the pedestrian realm in terms of scale, rhythm, and robustness of the materials
- The relation between the ground level internal programming and the public exterior.

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The applicant noted this project will be the largest government-operated social facility in the downtown area with various programs to help escape homelessness and addiction. The applicant noted it was critical to bring all these programs under one roof, and to provide unrestricted access to much needed support. The building design is influenced by its services.

The program provides shelter, treatment and halfway house beds. The design itself included direct input from all staff, clients and primary funders such as BC Housing and Correctional Services. In addition, the applicant noted they have been in communication with Vancouver Coastal Health regarding licenses. The overall intent is to house all individuals that need a high level of service.

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 Ms. Enman and seconded by Ms. Long; and, the decision of the Urban Design Panel was:

THAT the Panel SUPPORT of the project with the following recommendation to be reviewed by City Staff:

- Design development of the entrance and glass frame component and how it interfaces with the rest of the building with respect to wayfinding and expression of the building.

Related Commentary:

In general the panel supported the project.

The panel noted it was an attractive and competent design. The way the project is broken up is nice and it not all one giant mass. The project respects the character of the area. The panel noted they were in favor of additional space for roof access and additional height. A panelist noted to keep in mind part of the experience in Gastown is the lanes; the building currently looks like Gastown from the front and something else on the back and side.

The panel noted the entry is challenging, especially the glass frame component and how it interfaces with the rest of the building with respect to wayfinding and building expression. A panelist noted a that a big challenge is the HA-2 guidelines does not clearly address the issue and may need to allow for relaxation.

The panel noted further design development is needed with window modulation and placement to address overlook concerns with adjacent units. There was concern regarding lack of daylight in the courtyard. In general the project could use additional daylighting. A panelist noted to the south the courtyard and aperture is a bit claustrophobic.

Some panelists suggested it would be nice to see some indigenous detailing or art at the exterior of the building.

The panel noted they are confident all sustainability requirements will be fulfilled, but to keep in mind lots of articulation can sometimes make this difficult to achieve, as well as ensuring that small units will not be susceptible to overheating.

Applicant's Response: The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments and provided further clarifications.