URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: May 29, 2019
TIME: 3:00 pm
PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall
PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Muneesh Sharma
Jim Huffman
Jennifer Stamp
Matt Younger
Colette Parsons
Yinjin Wen
Helen Avini Besharat
Derek Neale

REGRETS: Susan Ockwell
Amela Brudar
Grant Newfield
Jennifer Marshall

RECORDING SECRETARY: K. Cen

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 3279-3297 Vanness Avenue
2. 1956-1990 Stainsbury Avenue
3. 4175 W 29th Avenue (St. George’s School)
4. 41 W Pender Street
BUSINESS MEETING
Chair Jim Huffman called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. The panel then considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 3279-3297 Vanness Avenue
   Permit No. RZ-2019-00016
   Description: To develop a 6-storey residential building, containing 102 social housing units. The proposed building height is 22.7 m (74.6 ft.) and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 3.49. This application is being considered under the Joyce-Collingwood Station Precinct Plan.
   Zoning: Amendment to CD-1
   Application Status: Rezoning Application
   Review: First
   Architect: ZGF Architects
   Delegation: Patrick Cotter, Architect, ZGF
             David Thompson, Architect, ZGF
             Michael Patterson, Landscape Architect, P+A
   Staff: Derek Robinson & Ji-Taek Park

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (8-0)

• Introduction:
  Rezoning Planner, Derek Robinson, introduced the rezoning application by giving the background information regarding the project. The applicant is proposing to rezone under the Joyce-Collingwood Station Area Precinct Plan to develop a social housing building. The plan allows consideration for height up to 6 storeys and 2.25 FSR on this site. However, the plan includes policy to consider additional height and density to support social housing projects.

  The applicant is proposing 102 units (48% are family oriented) and 1 level of underground parking.

  The FSR proposed is 3.49. The site is 14,300 sq. ft., consisting of 5 vacant lots at the NW corner of Vanness Av and McHardy St. McHardy St is currently undeveloped road and as part of this application. The applicant will develop a partial road extension to allow adequate fire access.

  Properties across the lane are zoned RM-7AN, which allows for 2-3 story ground-oriented stacked townhouses.

  Development planner, Ji-Taek Park, noted that the plan is being reviewed under the Joyce-Collingwood Station Precinct Plan. The built-form is projected to be a 6 story building massing along the Skytrain guideway, and 2 story transitional massing along the lane, with a courtyard in between. Plan does provide policy for additional height and density for social housing projects.

  Plan requires 6 story massing should be setback 15 ft. along the property line facing the Skytrain to provide a buffer from the Skytrain. Proposed setback is 1’-1” from property line. Rear setbacks for 2 story massing should be 6 ft., 4 story should be 12 ft, and above 4 storey should be 20 ft. minimum from the rear property line, to provide landscape buffer and to ensure that overlook and shadow impacts are minimized. Proposed setbacks are 6’-2” for 3 story, 15’-9” for 6 story massing from the property line.

  Plan also requires 12 ft. minimum sideyard setback to ensure adequate solar and ventilation access for units facing into the side yard. Proposed 6’ along McHardy St., and approx. 1’-7” (Lane Bldg.) / 8’-7” (6 story bldg.) along the interior side property line.

  Plan also recommends 25’ clear dimension for a courtyard. Proposed courtyard provides 28’ bldg. to bldg., however with balcony and exterior stair projections, approx. 14’ clear dimension is being proposed.
There will be indoor and outdoor amenity areas are provided at grade and on level 4. Balconies are proposed for family units and Juliette balconies are proposed for studio and 1 bedrooms, as well as units facing the Skytrain guideway.

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

1. Does the panel support the increase in height and density?
2. Does the proposed building massing and setbacks provide adequate transitional massing as intended by JC Station Precinct Plan? - Across the lane / - Across the adjacent property.
3. Please provide commentary on unit livability considering HAD (solar & ventilation access), Skytrain adjacency, quality of courtyard, etc.
4. Please provide preliminary commentary on proposed architectural and landscape expression.

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

• **Applicant’s Introductory Comments:**

This project is housing co-op.

The project seeks to be consistent to the single family format in the area. The south side has been reduced in height putting the public massing height lower. To address the issues in the guideway, the project has been set back as far as possible to the north to prevent the stepping out.

The passive house has a clean façade and operative windows to address heating issue and design cooling abilities.

Providing ample installation, triple glazing, providing additional walls, lowering the percentage of windows opening allows for better acoustics.

There is a European court yard in the center to provide better day light access and fine entry for more social accessibility. There is an interior and exterior to the courtyard for seating, community gathering and children play area.

The project would upgrade the McHardy lane to improve social space and retaining existing trees. There would be an introduction of an active area with seating, bike racks, and passenger drop off layby.

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. Besharat and Mr. Sharma 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:

- Develop landscape and the uses of the courtyard
- Further design development to the southern elevation to improve shading, air circulation and modulation to the façade
- Design development of unit livability and exiting.
• **Related Commentary:**

  There was general support for the project.

  The passive house concept, massing and density are well supported.

  Panel members like the accessibility for the project.

  Panel members show concerns regarding the shadowing in the courtyard and kids area.

  Panel members show concerns regarding the setback on lanes.

  Panel members show concerns regarding landscape of the project.

  Most panel members recommend better usage of the roof.

  Most panel members recommend better livability by improving design and providing more amenities.

  Panel members commented that the architectural expression can be improved.

• **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments.
2. Address: 1956-1990 Stainsbury Avenue
Permit No. RZ-2019-00015
Description: To develop 5-storey residential building containing 80 secured market rental residential units with 20% of the residential floor area assigned to moderate income households. The proposed total floor area is 5,830 sq. m (62,760 sq. ft.), the building height is 15.8 m (52 ft.) and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 2.59. This application is being considered under MIRHPP policy

Zoning: RS-1A to CD-1
Application Status: Rezoning Application
Review: First
Architect: Carscadden Stokes McDonald Architects
Owner: 1196908 BC Ltd
Delegation: Ian McDonald, Architect, Carscadden Stokes McDonald Architects
Chloe Boisuert, Designer, Carscadden Stokes McDonald Architects
Staff: Chee Chan & Kevin Spaans

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (6-2)

- **Introduction:**
  Rezoning Planner, Chee Chan, began by noting this application is a rezoning application for four lots at 1956-1990 Stainsbury Avenue, located in the Kensington-Cedar Cottage Community Vision Area. It is just over a 10 min walk from both Commercial-Broadway and Nanaimo skytrain stations.

  This application is being submitted under the Moderate Income Rental Housing Pilot Program or MIRHPP, which is a limited pilot program that enables up to 20 rezonings city-wide for new buildings that provide 100% secured market rental housing, with a minimum of 20% of the residential floor area permanently secured for moderate income households. This program addresses a critical gap in Vancouver’s rental housing market by encouraging development of new units across a range of sizes, and moderate income rental units targeted at households earning between $30,000 and $80,000 /year. This proposal proceeded through the standard rezoning enquiry process before a formal rezoning application was submitted this past January. The policy outlines location criteria. This site met the criteria as a larger site within an RS zone, on an arterial, in an area with existing precedent for four to six storey buildings. MIRHPP anticipates a four storey building form with a relaxable height of up to 6 storeys subject to urban design performance criteria. In addition to adjacency to major arterials, neighborhood context is an important consideration for any MIRHPP, and all projects must consider and respect transitions to surrounding areas and homes.

  These four lots at 1956-1990 Stainsbury Avenue are currently zoned RS-1A, and this zoning extends across the single family neighborhood to the south and west. This irregular shaped site is approximately 205 ft along Stainsbury, 146 ft long along the west lane, and 55 ft wide along Victoria Drive, with a total site area of 23,000 sq. ft. The site is currently developed as four single family houses, with a lane in-between. This portion of the lane will be closed off and sold to be part of the proposed development.

  To the north is a new 6 storey rental apartment building (under construction), another townhouse complex to the north west, and single family housing to the east, as well as a community garden on City owned land.

  This proposal is to rezone from RS-1A to CD-1 for a five-storey divided along Stainsbury Ave into two halves, separated by a 19’-1” entrance courtyard. This will be a rental residential building with 64 secured market rental residential units, and 16 moderate income rental units for a total of 80 residential units. It proposes an FSR of 2.59 and a height of 15.8 m (52 ft.). The proposal is targeting Passive House designation.
Development Planner, Kevin Spaans, began by noting that there is no Official Community Plan (OCP) for the area and therefore there is limited policy direction in terms of form of development. MIRHPP, however, does provide for conditional height up to six storeys. In consideration of contextual fit, City staff determined that five storeys was an appropriate maximum for this subject site.

Single family homes located to the west of the property, across the lane, are situated on 104’ deep lots and therefore the relationship between the proposed building and these homes is approximately 15’ to 16’ narrower than typical. Therefore, consideration must be given to a building massing that sensitively responds to this context. At the rear of the building, a setback from the 20’ lane is provided at grade from 9’-10” at the north up to 12’-8” at the south, with private outdoor space located within the setback for the lane-oriented residential units. From here the building extends up three storeys and then steps back an additional 11’-4” for the remaining two storeys. This setback extends around the corner to the entrance courtyard on Stainsbury Ave and the step back widens to 12’-5” at the south side of the property.

Along Stainsbury Ave the building is set back 9’-4” at grade with a triangular outdoor space in front of the entrance courtyard. The Stainsbury facade presents a three storey street wall on the west end and four storey street wall on the east. The south elevation is generally expressed with a three storey street wall. A central portion of the building at this façade is expressed at its full five storeys. The main entry is located off of Stainsbury within the entrance courtyard with indoor amenity spaces with small outdoor area adjacent. As a result of the building’s orientation and the depth of entrance courtyard, these spaces will be in shade for much or all of the day.

There is a 12’-8” setback provided from the south property line on the south side of the building. The house on the adjacent lot is between 3’-6” and 4’-0” from the shared property line, for a total separation of approximately 16’-0” to 17’-0”. Units are proposed facing the side yard, some with outlook only in this direction. The 12’-8” setback is only slightly above the minimum relaxable setback provided for horizontal angle of daylight compliance in most multi-family residential zones. Some at-grade units are below grade a depth of approximately 2’-0”.

The underground parking is accessed off the lane at the Southwest corner of the site. Because of an approximately 6’-7” cross slope from southwest to northeast, the parkade wall extends above grade mid-way along the lane and for the entire length of Stainsbury Ave. This results in a solid wall at the public realm which is approximately 5’-8” at its highest point.

An outdoor shared amenity space is provided on the rooftop. There are 34 underground vehicle parking spaces and 195 bicycle parking spaces. The applicant has requested a reduction in parking requirements by approximately 43%, credits gained from proximity to transit, 2 car share spaces and additional bicycle parking spaces.

Advice from the Panel is sought on the following:

1. Please provide comment on the height, mass, and density of the proposal, with particular regard given to:
   a. Overall contextual fit;
   b. The relationship of the proposal with the neighboring properties across the lane;
   c. The horizontal division of massing along Stainsbury Ave and the south side of the site;

2. Please provide feedback on the interface between the proposed building and the public realm, particularly where site slopes and parkade design results in exposed parkade walls;

3. Please provide feedback on the livability of the side yard facing dwelling units.
The planning team then took questions from the panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**
  
  Driving factor for the project was the challenge of the parking access.
  
  Project has a 19 feet wide courtyard for better accessibility and large rooftop amenities space.
  
  There is a shared laundry and storage area to provide a social space in the corridor to allow a nexus for people to get together.
  
  Color palette is muted for the building.
  
  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. Neale and seconded by Mr. Sharma and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

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

  - Further design development to reduce the height of the exposed parkade walls.
  - Further design development of the ground level amenity space and units above for improved usability / livability.
  - Further design development to improve the livability of dwelling units located along the south property line.
  - Explore increasing the building mass at the upper levels to reduce the overall building footprint to allow for more distance from the adjacent properties.

- **Related Commentary:**
  
  In general the panel supported the project at the rezoning stage.
  
  Panel members appreciated the contextual fit and colour palette used.
  
  Panel members appreciated that the proposal is being designed to meet Passive House sustainability standards. Some members suggested that the setbacks on upper floors can be reduced to facilitate achieving Passive House standard.
  
  Panel members expressed positive comments regarding the fact that the applicant has prepared an energy model, and materials used in the project.
  
  Most panel members show concern about the exposed parkade wall along Stainsbury Avenue.
  
  Many panel members suggested moving the parking ramp entrance northward to reduce height of underground parkade projecting above grade.
  
  Panel members recommend the reduction of the set back on upper levels to increase livability of certain units and potentially reduce the overall footprint of the building.
  
  Many panel members expressed concern regarding the units at and below grade and noted that grading was not substantially considered in the proposal.
Panel members were concerned about the tightness of the dwelling units and the entrance.

Some panel members show concern regarding the shadowing of the courtyard and amenity rooms.

Many panel members show concerns for the interface of the public realm and recommends better landscaping.

Some panel members expressed concern that a licensed Landscape Architect had not yet been engaged for the project, especially considering the unique grading challenges on the site.

- **Applicant’s Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments and will take the comments into consideration for further improvement.
3. Address: 4175 W 29th Avenue (St. George’s School)
Permit No. DP-2018-01146
Description: To develop phase 1 for St. George’s Senior School, including two 4-storey academic buildings, one dining hall and one level of underground parking accessed from Camosun Street.
Zoning: Approved CD-1, pending for enactment
Application Status: Complete Development Application
Review: Second (First as DP)
Architect: IBI Group
Delegation: David Thom, Architect, IBI Group
Tony Gill, Architect, IBI Group
Karen Kuklin, Architect, Gensler
Dan Yang, Landscape Architect, IBI Group
Jeremy Field, LEED Consultant, Integral Group
Owner St. George’s School
Staff: Kevin Spaans

EVALUATION: Resubmission Recommended (7/0)

• Introduction:
Development Planner, Kevin Spaans, began by noting that this proposal is for Phase 1 of a four phase build out. Currently the proposal site is used as a sports field with the existing senior school to the west which is anticipated to be redeveloped as part of Phase 4. This is a DP after rezoning which saw the entire site rezoned from RS-5 to CD-1. The entire area is zoned RS-5 with single family houses on the east and west sides, Pacific Spirit Park to the south, and a BC Hydro sub-station to the north.

Phase one is concentrated within sub-areas 1, 2, and 6 on land currently used as a sports field. The bylaw provides for a maximum height of 4 storeys in sub-area 1 or a geodetic height of 96.7m. In area two three storeys is anticipated or 93.1m geodetic, and area 6 is reserved for open space. Rezoning anticipated that Sub-area 1 would become the new “Academic Heart of the Campus”. Areas 2 and 6 are intended to provide for a site “edge that welcomes.”

The proposed buildings are the two academic buildings at approximately 52’ tall with appurtenances bringing the total height up to approximately 62’. A two storey great hall is proposed along the west side of the site. Altogether the buildings are oriented in a more traditional quadrangle format, with a publically accessible courtyard area at the southwest corner being relied on to provide a welcoming edge. Access to underground parking is located in line with W 28th Ave on the east side of the site. A significant berm of mature trees provides a buffer at the south side of the site, and along the eastern edge, but the rezoning anticipates that consideration be given to the interim public realm during construction to mitigate impacts on neighbours.

In terms of architectural expression, the west side of the site represents the key interface as this is the side directly adjacent single family RS-5 houses. The east wing’s eastern façade measures 181.5’ with a 30’ stepback at approximately 89’ from the SE corner. This façade is represented predominately as 3 storeys, stepping back at the fourth level. Uses at grade facing east include the administrative space, visual art studios, and an atrium lobby space. Primary points of entry to the buildings are generally oriented toward the quad, but the main
building entrance is located facing south toward the entrance courtyard. There are no points of entry facing directly to Camosun St. The east façade of the great hall is expressed largely as a stone wall with upper level glazing.

As regards materiality, the palette is comprised of four primary materials in a refined and neutral colour palette. These materials are glass, natural stone, terra cotta, and aluminum.

Advice from the Panel is sought on the following:

1. With consideration of the generally anticipated form of development in the Rezoning and the objective to create "edges that welcome", please provide input on the proposed building footprints and orientation;

2. Please provide feedback on the proposed interface with the adjacent context;

3. Please comment on the overall material palette, architectural expression, and landscape design.

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

  The main consideration for the project is symmetry.

  The goal was to create academic buildings on the ground level and a large communal dining hall. The layout of the academic program and the buildings is intended to give students an educational experience similar to that of a post-secondary institution wherein students travel between buildings for classes and general study.

  There is set back of the building to respect the neighborhood.

  The project would include a formal courtyard in the middle. On the west side, there is open space that provides opportunities for indoor-outdoor learning, casual gathering, and moving between classes.

  Materiality considerations are to use local stone and material that have long life and visual prominence.

  The campus has an ease of accessibility and a village feel with a grid system that has its unique street and block plans.

  There are roof gardens and with urban agriculture that provides an opportunity for students to grow and cook their own food.

  The proposal has bicycle parking for staff underground. A bus program is heavily used by both staff and students, and below grade parking is provided for the use of staff only.

  The landscape intent is to provide a plaza and outdoor space for students and staff as well as create a welcoming interface in the community.
The three major landscaping design aspects are edges, views, and open spaces.

The project would provide multiple seating areas on the campus.

The project includes heat recovery and storm water cistern for rainwater retention from roof tops.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

There is no weather protection provided between buildings or at points of entry with the exception of a trellis area to the north side of the interior courtyard.

The project is intended to meet LEED Gold requirements as per the Rezoning.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Having reviewed the project it was moved by Mr. Sharma and seconded by Ms. Parsons and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:
    - **THAT the Panel RECOMMEND RESUBMISSION** of the project with the following recommendation to be reviewed by City Staff:
      - Further development of the landscape element in different zones.
      - Further development of the character of the build coming from sustainably objective.
      - Further development of the character and programing of open space.
      - Further design development of usability and viability of the rooftops.
      - Greater understanding of overall circulation and master plan intent.

- **Related Commentary:**

Panel members showed concerns regarding the drop-off area for the students.

Panel members found the landscape design and expression underwhelming and does not utilized the full potential of the space.

Many panel members found the placement of the seating and amenities weak as the opening space treatment and program is missed.

Panel members commented that the project lacks the consideration of the pedestrian community. Many Panel members noted that they could not understand how pedestrians are intended to travel through the site, particularly when this proposal represents only one phase of a multi-phase master plan.

Many Panel members were concerned about the lack of apparent sustainability strategies in the proposal.

Many Panel members suggest more welcoming edges.

Panel member did not find the satisfaction with the rain protection in the project.
Panel members showed concern about the lack of connection between the interior and exterior program.

Panel members noted that the applicant did not sufficiently explain how the proposal fits into the overall master plan.

Many Panel members recommend open spaces for “accidental” gathering and informal programming for suitable for high school-aged students.

Panel members noted that the landscape design of the courtyard lacks character and needs further design elements.

Panel members commented that the roof tops are a missed opportunity for green roofs and / or rooftop amenities and were an overlook concern.

Many Panel members noted that the architectural expression of the building did not sufficiently reflect the importance of the school as a long-standing institution in the community.

- **Applicant’s Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments.
Development planner, Ji-Taek Park, began by noting that this is a development permit application to renovate an existing 4-storey commercial warehouse building in DD (Subarea C2), and a 2-storey addition of 16 secured market rental residential units. Site is also located within the Victory Square Policy Area, and being reviewed under the Victory Square Guidelines, as well as Downtown ODP. ODP allows the DPB to relax, with support of the advisory panel, density (from 5.0 up to 6.0 FSR - proposed 5.65 FSR) and building height (from 22.9m/75ft. up to 32m / 105 ft.- proposed 29.5m / 96.7 ft.) if proposed residential units are 100% secured rental (as proposed).

Vic. SQ. guidelines, to ensure adequate access to sunlight and ventilation, outlines inner courtyard design scheme to provide min. 30' opening for a habitable rooms to face into, or 20' for non-habitable rooms. Proposed courtyard opening provides 18'-6" X 15'-7".

Victory Sq. Guidelines also outlines the built-form to reinforce existing scale and character of street walls in Victory Square, such as narrow building frontages; characteristic “sawtooth” roof profile; and robust continuous street walls lined with fine grain commercial-retail units. Significant setbacks are recommended in the Design Guidelines for new addition on existing building, so that the streetwall reads the ‘Saw-Tooth’ pattern. The proposed addition is setback 77" from the existing facade.

Per Vic. Sq. Guidelines regarding Overall Facade Composition, new development should respect the traditional appearance and proportions of the facades of heritage buildings, which is typically composed with:

- A stronger definition of the ground floor level (typically grounded with a base plate, and defined by a lower storefront cornice);
- Organized upper facade that is complementary to the traditional vertical elements such as pilasters, columns and bays;
- defined upper edge (such as cornice).

The ground floor should provide the fine-grain texture and pedestrian interest by providing an appropriate level of detailing. The design should be informed by, and compatible with, the historic store fronts of the area, without being a replica.
Advice from the Panel is sought on the following:

1. Does the panel support the proposed relaxation of building height and density?

2. Does the proposed 2 story addition fit within the context of West Pender Street's saw-tooth pattern as outlined in Vic. Sq. Guidelines?

3. Does the proposed rehabilitation of the existing facade respect & reinforce existing context of Victory Square, providing the fine-grain texture and detail at ground level for pedestrian interest, and reflect the fenestration patterns of heritage buildings?

4. Provide commentary on unit livability, materiality (for both rehab of existing as well as new addition), architectural & landscape expression.

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

This project is an addition to a 1960 hybrid structure building designed to carry warehouse loads and have retail spaces.

The existing building was kept because of the usability of the existing materials.

The structure for the addition would be wood-frame.

The project would provide office space and 16 residential studio units as well as at-grade commercial space.

The project would have one commercial sized elevator and two stairways.

There are handicap parking and loading dock in the back of the building.

Amenities include a bike repair amenities room.

Project have tree retention program in place for the existing street tree.

Project shows sustainability factor by retaining the existing building and create a further environmental energy envelope for the new construction to meet the new VBBL energy code requirement.

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. Stamp and seconded by Ms. Besharat 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:

  - Further design development of the landscape.

- Related Commentary
There was a majority support for this development permit application.

Panel members supported the relaxation of the height and density.

Panel members appreciate the project as a good addition to neighborhood.

Many panel members appreciate the reuse of the existing building.

Some panel members show minor concerns regarding the character of the façade which require more character shaping and level of detailing at grade, and at fenestrations.

Some panel members recommend a further design development of landscape design.

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