

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** Wednesday Sept 30, 2020

**TIME:** 4:00 pm

**PLACE:** WebEx

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Alan Davies  
Brittany Coughlin  
Adrien Rahbar  
Sydney Schwartz  
Walter Francl (absent for item 3)  
Jennifer Stamp  
Karenn Krangle  
Marie-Odile Marceau  
Angela Enman (absent for items 2 + 3)  
Margot Long (absent for items 2 + 3)

**REGRETS:** Matt Younger  
Muneesh Sharma  
Michael Henderson

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** K. Cermeno

### ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

- |    |                             |
|----|-----------------------------|
| 1. | 1640-1650 Albern Street     |
| 2. | 1650 E 12 <sup>th</sup> Ave |
| 3. | 837 Beatty Street           |

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. Address:         | 1640-1650 Alberni Street   |
| Permit No.          | RZ-2020-00031  |
| Description:        | To rezone a site to allow for a 43-storey residential building with 66 replacement rental housing and 198 strata housing units. The eight levels of underground parking contains 268 vehicle spaces and 535 bicycle spaces. The proposed building height is 118.5 m (385 ft.), the floor area is 24,060 sq. m (258,987 sq. ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 14.97. This application is being considered under the West End Community Plan. |
| Application Status: | RM-5C to CD-1  |
| Review:             | First  |
| Architect:          | IBI Group  |
| Staff:              | Thien Phan & Paul McDonnell  |

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT with Recommendations (6 support/ 1 non-support/ 1 abstain)**

• **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Thien Phan, began by noting this is a rezoning, for two parcels with a base zoning of RM-5C coming in under the West End Plan and Rezoning Policy for the West End. The form and design considerations are guided by the West End Tower form siting setbacks bulletin.

The subject site is located mid-block on Alberni Street, between Cardero and Bidwell. Zoning is RM-5C for primarily residential and some compatible retail, office, and service uses. There is approximately 17,280 square feet in size, with frontage along Alberni. The site is currently occupied by a 12 storey rental building with 66-units attached to a vacant 3-storey commercial building that was the former offices of Holyburn Properties.

The properties to the North are zoned RM-6 and include a vacant former Chevron, as well as a White spot and parking lots. Across the back lane is Whole Foods, the associated parking lot, and a residential apartment building all of which front onto Robson Street. There is a marina square park located to the north.

Close proximity to grocery stores, West End Community Centre, Joe Fortes Library and King George Secondary School and the future Coal Harbour elementary school.

In terms of future context, nearby Rezoning applications and pre-applications include a number of towers up to 49 storeys.

The site falls within the Georgia Corridor Character Area of the West End Community Plan.

The enabling policy is the Rezoning Policy for the West End, adopted at the same time as West End Plan. The intent of this policy was for intensification of the West End in specific areas to provide jobs space, housing, and public amenities. It allows rezoning for increased density for market residential when significant public benefits can be achieved for the community.

Area C permits increase in density for market residential where:

- Sites have a min. frontage of 130 ft.
- A typical floor plate is to not exceed 5,500 sq. ft. subject to urban design

- Buildings are to be sculpted to maximize sunlight onto sidewalks and not exceed Queen E view cones
- No additional shadows onto parks or open spaces from 10 to 4 on the spring and fall equinoxes
- Applications contain public benefits.

The site is also within close proximity to public transit currently and planned improvements in the future.

The site is 17,296 square feet with frontage of 131 feet. Slopes 2 meters down to Alberni, absorbed within the first floorplate. The 6-storey podium includes one level of entrance/amenity, five of rental replacement, consisting of 50,000 sq. ft. (66 rental units) while the remaining tower is 210,000 sq. ft. of strata (198 units).

The site plan shows access to underground parking is from the lane. Entrances are from Alberni on Level 1 into the lobby and access to the amenity space.

The existing rental building consists of 66 mostly one-bedroom units. The proposal seeks to replace the rental units with more family units than what currently exists. The proposed 66 rental replacement units would be a mix of bachelor-2 bedroom units, with 36% 2 beds. The building would shadow the private green space to the North but not Marina Square Park.

Development Planner, Paul McDonnell, noted the following information,

#### Policy Context - WEST END PLAN

- Floor plate size in Area 'A': Max. 511 square meters (5,500 square feet);
- Building heights should not exceed view corridor limits (except Queen Elizabeth View Corridor where consistent with the General Policy for Higher Buildings);
- Building heights in Area 'A': Max. 117.3 meters (385 feet).

#### REZONING POLICY FOR THE WEST END

- The portion of any new residential building which exceeds 18.3 m (60 feet) in height should be spaced at least 24.3 m (80 feet) from any other residential building exceeding 18.3 m (60 feet) in height.

#### WEST END – TOWER FORM, SITING AND SETBACKS

- Shaping towers so they read as point towers rather than 'slab' towers;
- Rezoning proposals for towers located on Alberni Street can be either "tower in the park" or "tower on podium" depending on the context;
- Upper levels of a tower should be 'tapered' with setbacks.

#### GENERAL SHADOWING 10am-4pm

- Development should not shadow parks between the equinoxes from 10am to 4pm.

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

*With due consideration given to the key principles of the West End Plan, Rezoning Policy for the West End and the West End – Tower Form Bulletin, does the panel support;*

1. The overall height, density, massing, and level of sustainability proposed
2. The design of the ground plane and interface with the public realm, with particular attention to podium elevations, entrances, shared amenities, materials, landscaping and CEPTD

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The applicant noted there are 198 market suites with and 66 replacement suites. The total height of the building is 385 ft.

The site plan has been reviewed by staff, the view cones fit comfortably. The balconies on the east and west they provide shading and privacy for some units. The lower balcony is scaled to the street

Top floor plates recused in scale with corner gardening. The building changes in profile when seen from different angles. The building has a strong indoor and outdoor quality while still managing a strong energy component. There is a front to back connection. The lobby connects through the lane on the Alberni side. The corneous alignment reaches its two neighbours.

Terraces open up to the patios. There is a children play area in the lower right. A few trees have been removed so you can see the base of the building.

Regarding the landscape the goal is to accent the architecture while creating great spaces for the residents to enjoy. The streetscape will be animated by a water feature and elegant town homes.

Outside the main doors there is a path which will access to the amenity without entering the lobby. The lane and drop off will be designed as the front door to the lobby.

A family amenity area will be provided with a direct connection to the lane  
Outdoor play area will take advantage of grade change along the lane

The staff and 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 **MR. DAVIES** 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:

- Increase the total amenity area provided;
- Revisit the ground level studios in its entirety;
- Simplify the articulation of the podium façade.

**Related Commentary:**

There was general support from the panel for the height, density and massing.  
The panel noted it is an attractive building, with an elegant design.  
The stacking floorplate is well thought out.  
The façade created by the shifting floorplate with successful.

The ground plain was positively received.  
There is a strong wayfinding.  
The laneway treatment is well handled.

The panel noted the ground residential units are a little counter intuitive, this could benefit from some revisiting.  
The livability of studio units especially at the lane is a little poor  
The panel suggested calming down the articulation of the podium.  
The crown could be a little more sculpted.  
The proportion of outdoor amenity to indoor is a little off especially at ground level.  
The amenity space is insufficient for the scale of the building.

The panel recommended design development of the landscape concept.  
The panel suggested considering a way to foster more resident interaction.  
Improve the legibility of the primary entrance to the child's play area at the ground level as it is currently a little too small.

Give more allowance to the energy targets.

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

2. Address: 1650 E 12<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Permit No. RZ-2020-00017  
Description: To develop a six-storey mixed-use building with 65 strata residential units and commercial space at grade over two levels of underground parking with 71 vehicle spaces and 117 bicycle spaces. The maximum building height is 22.7 m (74.3 ft.), the proposed floor area is 5,110.5 sq. m (55,009 sq. ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 3.0. This application is being considered under the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan
- Application Status: C-2C1 to CD-1  
Review: First  
Architect: Ciccozzi Architecture  
Staff: Tess Munro and Omar Aljebouri

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## **EVALUATION: SUPPORT with Recommendations (7/1)**

- **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Tess Munro, began by noting this is a rezoning application for one lot at 1650 E 12th Avenue. The site is currently zoned C-2C1 and is occupied by a single-storey commercial development with at-grade parking. It is located on the corner of Commercial Drive and 12th Avenue and is within a 5-minute walk of the Commercial Drive Skytrain Station.

This application is being considered under the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan. This area is anticipated to evolve into a mixed-use, transit-oriented neighbourhood that introduces renewed opportunities for various types of housing, employment, and retail activity. In this location, the Plan anticipates a six-storey mixed-use building, with commercial at grade and an FSR of 3.0.

The applicant is proposing a 6-storey mixed-use building in line with the Plan, with 65 strata residential units. Commercial uses at grade are provided along 12th Avenue and Commercial Drive. A co-located indoor and outdoor amenity space is located on level 2. An FSR of 3.0 is proposed.

Development Planner, Omar Aljebouri, followed by noting the vision for the Commercial-Broadway station is to become a vibrant, accessible, and walkable, transit-oriented neighbourhood with a mix of land uses and scales that give residents, workers, and visitors a high degree of transportation accessibility. Improvements include streetscapes and a public

realm that is comfortable for pedestrians, cyclists, shoppers, commuters, residents, and anyone visiting or passing through the area. The leafy character streetscape will continue to showcase the neighbourhood's heritage aspects. There are five sub-areas or character areas in the Commercial-Broadway neighbourhood. This site is located within the "Station Mixed-Use and Employment" character area.

Some of the Urban Design Principles include:

- Provide mixed tenure and higher-density building forms appropriate for a transit-oriented neighbourhood;
- Encourage a mix of retail, job space and housing primarily focused around the transit hub and along the arterial streets that lead to it; and
- Enhance streetscapes through public realm improvements and innovative building typologies to improve walkability.

The proposal includes a continuous commercial base with residential units stepping back approximately 3 m (9.8 ft.) above level 1 and 0.7 to 1.3 m (2.3 to 4.3 ft.) above level 5. The street corner is marked with a vertical element above level 1. To the south, the building is neighbored by an existing four storey mixed-use building with a zero-lot-line. To the west, the Plan anticipates a four-storey apartment building, which would be set back 2.1 m (7 ft.) from the interior property line. The subject proposal is set back approximately 1.5 m (4.9 ft.) from the interior property line. The building forms an "L" shape that wraps around a common outdoor terrace treated with pavers and some rubber surfaces, complemented by an indoor amenity space. The side yard is used as an exit path. Private terraces on the second level look out into the public realm and have pavers and raised perimeter planters.

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

- Overall massing and density.
- Public realm and landscape strategy. Please consider the street corner's definition and pedestrian experience.
- Any preliminary advice for the DP stage. Please consider factors such as outdoor and indoor amenity design; the public-facing private terraces at Level 2; the principal rooftop.

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The site is in the Grandview-Woodland neighbourhood at Commercial and 12th Avenue. Currently, there is a strip mall with parking on site.

The site is in the view cone; the project intent is to maintain the view cone and higher building elements such as the elevator and the mechanical are to the North West portion of the site. The site is relatively flat. The building footprint is designed in an L-shape. There is some minor stepping in the commercial to allow for a maximum interface. The material palette includes a pattern of brick, horizontal siding and metal panel.

The residential entry lobby is on the left off of 12th Avenue.  
The indoor amenity has direct access to the outdoor amenity.  
There is a strong urban edge is created on the ground plain.

The parking plan includes commercial and visitor parking. There is also residential and bike parking.

There is a generous neighbourhood park and bike lane nearby that is very much used.  
There are street trees on both sides of the site.  
The trees assist with rainwater and provide respite for foot traffic.  
The amenities have seating, children's play and opportunity for urban agriculture.  
There will be clear pathways to encourage visible access.  
High-efficiency irrigation will be used to maintain sustainability.

The staff and 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. KRANGLE** 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:

- Provide corner weather protection (canopy at grade level), and consider lowering the canopy height along 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Commercial Drive
- Reconsider the location of the amenity room at level 2;
- Consider dropping the concrete level 2 slab to accommodate landscape buildups;
- Consider step backs along the west property line;
- Consider strengthening the corner treatment at grade and potentially opening up the corner CRUs.

### **Related Commentary:**

There was overall support for the massing, density and form of development.  
The panel felt the proposal fits the context and will revitalize the corner.

### Massing and Transition

The panel noted the relationship to the neighbouring building to the west could be improved. There was a concern with the narrow side yard to the west and that the western side of the building was 6 storeys straight up (no stepping).

The future development of the site to the west allows for a four-storey building – so the side yard condition will be very tall and narrow for the length of the property line.

The panel recommended providing a setback on the upper two floors. This would allow for a better relief for the street, side yard passage and future western neighbour.

There is a strong street corner that is done well at the top level; however, it should carry down to the ground level.

### Public Realm

Regarding the public realm, consider weather protection and a glazed canopy at the corner. The weather protection could benefit from being lowered and continuous along both frontages.

The panel noted to open up the corner retail more and improve its definition for a better retail/pedestrian experience.

It was suggested to add more planting at the corner and add seating at the corners and along both frontages.

The public realm and corner definition need strengthening, improvement of identification and sufficient space.



The ground landscape is uniform and needs hierarchy, which will help improve the corner. The building entries could benefit from more identity. The residential entry feels hidden. There is good articulation at the street level. Coordinate retail entry doors and landscape planters, the planter placement appears random. The public realm needs more street trees.

#### Amenity Spaces

There was some concern with the size (small) location of the indoor amenity at level 2, and its relationship to the outdoor amenity area. The panel suggested swapping the location of the amenity room with the 2 units to the south for an improved relationship. There was also some concern with the level 2 units facing the outdoor amenity and the privacy/access to light issues. Consider more of a privacy barrier between the common patio and unit patios

It was noted that child play is needed for the site in particular for small kids. Additional rooftop access would be great. If this is not pursued, then a green roof should be considered. Consider continuing the planting at the NE corner. Loading might not need all the head height, so more planting at the outdoor amenity could be achieved.

#### Livability

Unit layouts at the inside corner (B2 and B3 units) should address the very small windows with awkward orientation and limited daylight access.

#### Exterior Design

The proposed colour scheme appears dark. The panel suggested revisiting the colour scheme to improve the massing legibility. Presently the colour palette is a play on light and dark - consider a more lightened cheerful colour.

#### Sustainability

Consider additional shading and low-e glass at the south and west facing sides.

#### Miscellaneous

The rooftop should be green.  
Consider roof access for an additional common outdoor area.  
Corner needs more planting and greenery at level two.

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

3. Address: 837 Beatty St  
Permit No. RZ-2020-00531  
Description: To develop the site with a commercial building containing retail uses on the ground and lower levels, office uses on levels two to five and rooftop amenity space. The building height is 27.3 m (89.57 ft.) from Beatty Street and 30.2 m (99.1 ft.) when measured from the lane. The floor space ratio (FSR) of 5.5 (3,541 m<sup>2</sup> / 38,115.01 sq. ft.), inclusive of a Heritage Density Bonus of 10%.
- Application Status: Complete Development Application  
Review: First  
Architect: McFarlane Biggar Architects + Designers Inc.  
Heritage Architect: Donald Luxton and Associates  
Landscape Arch: Amy Tsang Landscape Architect  
Staff: Kevin Spaans

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### **EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7/0)**

- **Introduction:**

Development Planner, Kevin Spaans, introduced the proposal as being located mid-block on the west side of Beatty St. Contextually, the project is located directly adjacent a line of Edwardian-era warehouse buildings, all of which are classified as 'C'-level resources on the Vancouver Heritage Registry, an east-west lane, and the site of an approved mixed-use redevelopment including a six storey hotel at the corner of Robson St. and Beatty St. At the east side of the street is an eight storey mixed use building at the intersection of Beatty St. and Smithe St., and, most critically, Terry Fox Plaza at the foot of Robson St. As a result of the orientation of the streets, this important public space is particularly susceptible to shadowing by developments on Beatty St. and Cambie St, south of Robson St.

The applicant and City staff worked closely together to ensure that the form of development proposed on the subject site results in no measurable increase in shadowing of Terry Fox Plaza between the hours of 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm on the Summer Solstice - a time when the plaza is well used as a forecourt for sporting events. It is this urban design consideration that defines the maximum supportable height at the site, being approximately 90ft from the Beatty St. building grade.

The proposal includes four storeys built atop the existing 1911 Anglo-Canadian Warehouse Company building, rehabilitating the heritage building and extending the existing mass timber structural system. The first three storeys of the addition align with the outside faces of

the heritage building at all sides, and is measurably set back at the uppermost amenity level. A recessed shadow line at the parapet of the existing building defines the old from the new. Proposed uses are allocated as follows:

- Retail below grade and at Level 1, including a café space fronting the lane;
- Office at Levels 2 through 5;
- Office amenity with contiguous roof deck at Level 6.

Along with the existing heritage warehouses and the proposed 6 storey hotel at the northeastern-most corner of the block, the building establishes a generally unarticulated, planar street wall that is unusual for the city.

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

Please comment on the architectural expression of the proposal, with particular attention given to the following:

- a) The material and proportional relationship of the addition with the existing heritage building;
- b) The architectural and material qualities of the addition, independent of the heritage building; and,
- c) The proposal's relationship with adjacent existing and anticipated developments, and the resultant character of the streetscape.

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The applicant provided an overall introduction to their design concept, noting that this is an interesting and challenging project, with heritage considerations providing additional pressures to get the design of the building right. The site is recognized as being underutilized for contemporary needs, but has value to character of the neighbourhood that must be respected.

The applicant outlined the following main goals of the project:

- To minimize the shadowing impact of the open spaces;
- To respond to the heritage context by reinforcing and enhancing its unique character;
- To uphold the policies and guidelines for heritage buildings, and for the downtown area, so that the building is compatible;
- To reduce greenhouse gas emissions with a target of achieving LEED Gold certification.

Per the application documents, insensitive modifications are to be removed from the heritage building, and original elements will be restored or reinterpreted. While the typical approach to adaptive reuse and additions to a heritage building are to limit height, and provide deep setbacks above the uppermost level of the heritage building, the applicant proposed to the Panel that the design as presented does a better job of reflecting the original design intent of the building while remaining distinguishable. The material palette is proposed to be comprised of light-colour masonry and concrete, with a steel channel separating the addition from the existing building. Window openings gently taper from floor to floor.

The applicant then reviewed proposed improvements to the public realm, including restoration of the existing sidewalk prisms. A retail space is intended to face the rear lane and provide for an enhanced level of activity. Improvements to the lane are not demonstrated in the application materials for reference only, and are not part of this DP Application. Semi-private outdoor space is provided at the uppermost level as an amenity to office workers.

The staff and 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. MARCEAU** and seconded by **MR. DAVIES** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **SUPPORTS** the project.

### **Related Commentary:**

The Panel expressed its support generally for the scale and character of the proposal, noting that it was an excellent project with well-composed and legible application materials. The quality of the proposed restoration, the use of original and new mass timber structural systems, the material palette of the addition, and the relationship between the heritage building and the addition were recognized as being strong contributors to the success of the proposal.

The Panel was supportive of the elegantly applied grid of the addition, and that it did not match the heritage building. The addition is compatible and respectful as well as nicely proportioned and beautifully detailed. The modern masonry expression is sympathetic to the heritage base.

The panel appreciated the thought that went into the expression of the addition, and how it meshes with the existing context. The panel had no concerns with the relationship to adjacent existing and anticipated developments, and the resultant streetscape character. The strong street wall expression honors the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century addition that never happened.

A Panelist noted some concern that the proportion of the addition, being that it is greater than the original building, may appear to overpower the heritage façades. Overall, the Panel felt that the addition was sympathetic and would be a welcome addition to central Vancouver.

The applicants' approach to the design of the rooftop amenity space, and their commitment to enhanced energy performance, with LEED Gold targeted, were appreciated by the Panel. The panel was appreciative of the embodied carbon as part of the mass timber.

The panel was supportive to the activation that is proposed at the rear lane and the proposed stair link between the lower rear lane and the upper north lane. The canopy proposed at the rear lane is an excellent addition.

The panel liked the renewed retail at grade and was supportive of the restoration of the façade.

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