

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: Wednesday March 31, 2021

TIME: 4:00 pm

PLACE: WebEx

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Angela Enman
Michael Henderson
Muneesh Sharma Excused item 2
Adrien Rahbar
Sydney Schwartz Excused item 2
Walter Francl
Karenn Krangle
Margot Long
Alan Davies Excused item 2
Jennifer Stamp Excused item 1
Marie-Odile Marceau

REGRETS: Brittany Coughlin

RECORDING SECRETARY: K. Cermeno

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 5163-5187 Joyce Street
2. 534-550 Cambie Street

-
1. Address: 5163-5187 Joyce Street
Permit No. RZ-2020-00043
Description: To develop a 32-storey mixed use building with 293 market strata units, commercial use at grade, and a proposed library space on level 2; all over six levels of underground parking consisting of 228 vehicle spaces and 588 bicycle spaces. The proposed building height is 94.1 m (308.72 ft.), the total floor area is 21,484.6 sq. m (231,258 sq. ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 13.10. This application is being considered under the Joyce-Collingwood Station Precinct Plan.
- Application Status: Rezoning Application
Review: First
Architect: J&S Architect
Staff: Kent MacDougall & Ryan Dinh
-

EVALUATION: Resubmission Recommended (9/0)

- **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Kent MacDougall, began the presentation with a summary of the rezoning proposal, which includes a 32-storey mixed-use building with ground floor commercial space. The proposal includes 293 strata residential units, 2 commercial retail units (CRUs), and a second floor library space as an in-kind amenity contribution with a ground floor access lobby. A floor space ratio (FSR) of 13.10 and building height of approximately 94 m (309 ft.) are proposed.

Staff noted that the rezoning site is located along Joyce Street near the Joyce-Collingwood SkyTrain Station and is currently developed with two two-storey mixed-use buildings with commercial retail at the ground floor and rental residential above. The surrounding context is generally made up of small commercial and mixed-use developments to the north along Joyce Street with some mid-rise buildings ranging in heights generally between approximately 12- to 20-storeys. To the southwest of the site are predominantly detached homes moving away from the station.

It was noted that the sites existing zoning is C-2C allows for up to 4-storey mixed-used development. The surrounding area includes a number of Comprehensive Development (CD-1) zoned sites amongst other C-2C zoned sites. Surrounding CD-1 sites include provisions for a range of townhomes, mid-rise and high-rise buildings.

Recent zoning changes in the area, along Joyce Street, just north of the SkyTrain station include a 31-storey mixed-use development with at-grade commercial and strata residential above which is currently under construction; and a recently approved but not yet enacted zoning change for a 36-storey mixed-use building with at-grade commercial and secured rental residential above.

This rezoning application is being considered under the Joyce-Collingwood Station Precinct Plan. The rezoning site is located within the J1 sub-area of the *Plan*, which groups three towers at the station in close proximity to each other. Greater heights are proposed to mark the station and differentiate these new towers from the existing mid-rise towers in the area. Within this sub-area, policies allow for consideration of mixed-use buildings including towers up above a four-

storey building base on sites next to the SkyTrain station where a minimum frontage is achieved. Two station marking towers have been approved under the *Plan* as described above. This rezoning application would be the third, and final, station marking high-rise tower site under sub-area J1 of the *Plan*.

The proposed tower location is slightly south of the suggested location under the *Plan*; staff noted that this site meets the minimum assembly and general location requirements to be considered at this location.

Development Planner, Ryan Dinh, began the presentation by explaining the Joyce Collingwood Station Precinct Plan requires an 18ft minimum setback from the curb along Joyce Street to achieve a widened sidewalk. Towers to be set back from the lane at least 20 feet. The built form guidelines includes maximum height suggested at 189.5m geodetic, which references the TELUS Building's height east of Boundary Road.

The other design parameters include a maximum floor plate of 7,000 sq. ft. with a limit tower width of 100 ft.; a massing with distinct "base-middle-top" volumes with a top that can contribute to the area's skyline; a strong four-storey podium to define the street-wall along Joyce Street, and commercial frontages express a human scale.

The future direction of this area is to create a more active and vibrant local shopping street, and to foster a more physically and socially connected neighborhood with opportunities for improved public life

This application will provide a pedestrian connection to Clive Ave as expected from the Plan. An 18 ft SRW is provided with retails at grade, with a provision of a library accessed from the north of the site. Indoor amenity space is located on level 3 and 4, and the outdoor amenity space is located on top of level 4. The tower is set back approximately 28' from the lane in the south, noting 8' in the north due to the configuration of the site. The proposed building generally follows the built form guidelines. It sits within the geodetic height, with 7000 sq.ft. floor plate, on a 4-storey podium, with a tower width of 87 feet. The tower on podium form includes horizontal balcony expression in the South West, and the exo-skeleton frame in the North East. This is intended to make the tower appear slender and more recognizable, while acting as solar shading devices. The podium is divided by decorative columns to express the pedestrian rhythm.

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

1. Does the Panel support the proposed tower form and massing in relation to the expectation of the Joyce Collingwood Precinct Plan?
2. Comments on the quality and the interface of public realm including commercial spaces and the library presence from the street.
3. Comments on the proposed architectural design with respect to "*create distinction among the buildings and to contribute to the skyline*" as per Joyce Collingwood Precinct Plan.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The site benefits from great access to public transit and great amenities surrounding the area, such as several public parks within a 3 minute distance.

The massing of the development comes from site constraints and public open spaces, and allow for a series of setbacks to connect Joyce Street and Clive Avenue. The tower mass has been reduced to create a slender look.

The two main entrances are the residential entrance and the public library. The public library entrance is highlighted by a large-scale elegant architecture expression. Joyce frontage will be designed to the city's neighbourhood standards. The public realm is activated by the building program, which consists of multiple functions such as the library and commercial space. Will be providing tree line and seating along the edge at the breezeway. Light design features will be provided especially to the entrances.

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 **MS. SHWARTZ** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **Recommend Resubmission** of the project with the panel comments addressed.

Related Commentary:

The majority of the panel supported the height and massing, but not the detailed form.

Some of the members found the podium too tall and suggested to have a podium height that is more aligned with the Plan and reflects the existing context. It was felt that there is a disconnection between the podium and the tower. Consider sculpting of the podium form to reduce the scale and improve the transition.

The exo-skeleton elements were appreciated but required more careful design to be effective and functional to serve as shading devices.

Overall, the architecture design has competing elements. Suggestion of an honest and simple approach to allow for more cohesive and unified design. A united and consistent architectural language should be explored.

The ground level elements including the frames appear inconsistent with the building character. The patterning of the balconies conflicting with the exo-skeleton expression require further consideration. Perhaps locating the exo-skeleton elements more to the west.

Public realm on Joyce Street, at the lane, and the pedestrian connection (breezeway) require further design development and refinement regarding entrances, pedestrian scale, the plaza, the presence of the library at the street front. Proposal lacking the basic gesture at ground floor for gathering, particularly at the plaza and pedestrian connection. Consider more connection

between the library entrance and pedestrian scale. Suggest referring to the North Vancouver Civic plaza as an example of cul-de-sac / breezeway access treatment. The programming of the connection and relationship to the library has potential to be highlight of the project.

Major wood grain feature not appropriate for library entry. Library is indistinguishable from CRUs. Consideration of improving the street presence of the library by bringing the library entry forward to the street so it does not share the entryway with CRUs. The library could be expressed more independently and as a more prominent feature and celebrated.

Provide better connection between the indoor and outdoor amenities.

There was concern with the lack of windows of the indoor amenity and the proximity to the outdoor space. There was general appreciation for the podium green space however, consider further design development of the suites adjacent and how they relate to it, acknowledge there will be privacy issues.

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

2. Address:	534-550 Cambie Street
Permit No.	RZ-2020-00066
Description:	To develop a 22-storey office building with commercial units at grade over five levels of underground parking consisting of 128 vehicle spaces and 204 bicycle spaces. The proposed building height is 92 m (302 ft.), the proposed floor area is 24,527 m (264,009 sq. ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 17.4. This application is being considered under the Downtown Official Development Plan, Metro Core Jobs and Economy Land Use Plan, and the Rezoning Policy for the CBD & CBD Shoulder.
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	MCM Architects
Staff:	Nicholas Danford & Carl Stanford

EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (7/0)

- **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Nicholas Danford, began by noting the rezoning application for the proposal at 534 to 550 Cambie Street was received back in November 2020. The project proposes to rezone from Downtown District to CD-1 to allow for a 22-storey office building, containing two retail units at grade. The proposal includes partial retention of the Cleland-Kent building originally constructed in 1925. The Cleland-Kent building is a two storey 'C' listed heritage building which currently contains office uses. The proposal includes approximately 25,204m² (264,009 sq ft.) of commercial space resulting in a proposed FSR of 17.4 and a height of 92.05m (302').

The enabling policy that allowing for consideration of this proposal is the Rezoning Policy for the CBD and CBD shoulder. This project is located in the heart of the CBD in area C1 of this policy, close to VCC Clark. It allows for consideration of additional density for office and other job generating uses. The Metro Core Jobs and Economy Plan seeking additional job space within the downtown also applies to the site. As far as urban design is concerned, the enabling policy does not limit height, tower separation and other form of development considerations. Nick Danford then passed the rest of the presentation over to their colleague Development Planner Carl Stanford.

Development Planner Carl Stanford noted that the subject site is rectangular in shape and located midblock on the South East side of Cambie Street in the Downtown District sub area C1. It has two flanking side lanes and a lane to the rear. The area around the site has become known as Crosstown where the CBD and Gastown meet. The existing 2-storey Cleland-Kent office building is located on this site and was constructed in 1925. There are also more recent modern additions on site comprising 2 and 3 storey office buildings which are proposed for demolition. The surrounding context is mostly zoned CD-1 or DD and is predominantly commercial in character with a mix of retail, and office. There are some residential buildings in the vicinity including to the rear of the site at 531 Beatty St. The proposed building is separated from the 8 storey residential building at 531 Beatty St by 18m (60') which is the minimum set by city standards. There are also some windows from this building facing onto the proposal. Flanking the site, there is an 11 storey office building to the south west, a 2 storey parkade to the north east (shown on the right) and

directly opposite on Cambie is the campus of the Vancouver community college. There are no separation requirements for commercial tower separation

The primary governing form of development policies which affect the site include '*The Downtown District Official Development Plan (1975)*', the '*Downtown (except Downtown South) Design Guidelines*', the '*Downtown District (Except Downtown South) Character Areas Description*', and, the '*View Protection Guidelines*'. Under the existing Downtown Official Development Plan and current zoning, the total density may not exceed 7 FSR. The rezoning application here proposes a density of 17.4 FSR. The max outright height under the current zoning area C1 is 45.7m (150'). After considering the criteria, the Development Permit Board in area 4 of the plan may increase this to no more than 137.2m (450') subject to view cones. The development proposed would be approximately 92m/ (302') in height. View cone E1 & 9.1 are the main height restriction at 95m (315'). The '*Downtown Design Guidelines (except Downtown South)*' recommend '*that historically important structures on the site of a contemplated new development (such as this one) should where feasible be restored as a condition of development and incorporated into the overall design for the site and that new buildings in an area of older buildings should respect their scale, window rhythms and general facade treatments*'.

Although there are no registered heritage buildings directly on the block, there are a large number surrounding it. This area was an important publishing and press centre. It thrived through the turn of the twentieth century, serving as the central business district for the City before it migrated west after the end of World War 1. Nearby is Victory Square Park focused around the Cenotaph, which was dedicated in 1924 as a memorial to the First World War. It is a highly visible landmark and has been the location of the city's annual Remembrance Day ceremonies every November 11th since its inception. It is also an active public park. The two-storey masonry existing building on site known as the Cleland-Kent Building was constructed in 1925 as a Publishing house building. It is not currently on the register but is valued for its vernacular commercial architecture and history. It important in its role in the development of Victory Square as a hub for newspaper, printing, and engraving businesses. The building is associated with the Scurry family who operated a boarding facility in the building. It is also associated with Joe Forte, the City's first official lifeguard, as this place was his home for a short period of time. This application received support from the VHC on the 15th March 2021 with a recommendation for maintaining the retention of facades, some ground floor improvements, and incorporation of a commemorative aspect.

With regard to site constraints View cones 9.1 and E1 cross diagonally over the site creating two different height restrictions for the project dictating extrusion limits to 95.7m (315') and 81.5m (267') respectively. The building will be required to operate within this height limit. The site does not require any setback at the rear or sides but it does have a livability requirement for dwelling units of a tower separation minimum distance of 18m (60') between the commercial tower and residential buildings.

With regard to shadowing on its neighbors, the proposed building is to the northwest of the residential building so it does not cause any substantial new shadow during the measured times (spring equinox, fall equinox, summer solstice or winter solstice between the hours of 10:00am and 4:00pm). It does partially shadow Victory Square in the afternoon and to a greater degree on November 11th later in the year when shadows are longer towards the afternoon. The project is not located in the Victory Square Policy Plan Area, which states that Victory Square Park should not be shadowed between 10 a.m, and 4 p.m. on the Spring Equinox. However, the proposed development attempts to addresses the intent of that plan with regard to mitigating shadow impact as best practice standard. The Victory Square Policy Plan does not reference limitations on the

important ceremonial Remembrance Day (November 11th). However, the proposed development has been sculpted to minimize new shadow during the ceremony, which touches the west corner of the park towards the end of the ceremony at 11:30am.

The 22 storey office tower form has a sculpted angular upper body crown that extends up to the view cones with the angular slice generated to mitigate shadow casting onto Victory Square. The building program is primarily office space with some retail components at grade. The building has a floor plate area that varies from approximately 1406m² (15,132sq.ft) to 859m² (9,250 sq.ft) for the low-rise and high-rise floorplates respectively. The ground floor is made up of an open lobby area flanked by two retail spaces fronting onto Cambie Street. The bottom three levels are set back to allow for a widened public realm and to respect the heritage building. Reveals are carved on the North and South corners of the building to articulate the massing and the building is stepped to provide outdoor amenity on Levels 13, 14, and 15.

The proposal envisages the retention and restoration of the three exposed facades of the existing Cleland-Kent Building on site. These would be incorporated into the base of the new office building. At the rear, a portion of the existing façade would require removal to allow for vehicular access to the building. The office building steps back from the heritage building by pushing the first two floors behind the Cleland-Kent building façade. This results in full floor 'reveals' surrounding the façade on all sides. The Cleland-Kent Building as part of this application will be added to the Vancouver Heritage Register as a category "C" resource. A Restoration Covenant will be registered on title to secure heritage conservation and ongoing maintenance, as a condition of the rezoning enactment.

The ground floor retail spaces include a potential café opening directly onto the lobby at the south end and a potential flagship restaurant or bistro to occupy the historic Cleland-Kent Building across its two levels. The storefront is differentiated at grade by using the heritage building as an anchor point/ entrance for the restaurant giving further delineation to the retail space at grade. The lobby entry is emphasized with framed portal doors. Within the setback, glazed office floors and a double height lobby space are articulated by double height structural glazing and the defined bronze entry portal. The rear of the ground floor includes service spaces, parking access, and loading. Below grade, parking and bicycle parking are accessed off the rear lane with dedicated, separate entries.

At level 2, there is a double height office lobby void, the second level of the bistro and mezzanine office space. Articulation is provided via linear slots and façade treatment. Level 4 steps outwards to form the largest floor plate of the building continuing up to level 12. At level 13 the building steps in on its north eastern edges providing outdoor amenity. At level 14 the building steps in again opening its north eastern edges providing outdoor amenity offering views toward the waterfront harbor. Levels 15-22 form an angular slice for both shadow performance measures and view cone compliance that form the upper body/crown of the building.

The façade expression is informed by both the building's historical context referencing traditional window masonry openings as well as performative building envelope design for greater solar control. The texture created on the façade is intended to respond to fenestration qualities found within the Cleland-Kent building façade in addition to buildings within the immediate context of Crosstown, Gastown and Chinatown. Materials used include red brick, light oak wood, metal, concrete and glass.

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

- Please comment on the execution of the heritage aspect of the proposal, its relationship with the existing building on site, whether it sufficiently mitigates impact on victory square and adequately celebrates the history of the site.
- Please comment on the contextual fit, considering the compatibility with the surrounding area, and its relationship with the immediate built environment particularly the adjoining residential building.
- Please comment on the design expression of the proposal, its massing, and if a harmonious spatial volume has been achieved by a sensitive proportioning with the Cleland Kent building and overall dimensioning of the building elements.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

The applicant noted this is an interesting site due to its proximity to the sky train station. Many cycle pedestrian routes pass this site. Historically this site is the original provincial courthouse. The applicant emphasized they are keeping the main face, rear face, and treating the lane façade as main façade for Cleland-Kent Building on site as part of a strategy to respect the historic area and Victory Square. The applicant noted it was important to study how the spaces of Victory Square were used during specific programming throughout the year with modifications to the building in response. There is some shadowing in the afternoon and the applicant noted they consequently sliced a portion of the upper stories to create some relief and mitigate severe shadowing onto Victory Square.

The buildings programming primarily includes office space, retail and some outdoor amenity spaces on the terraced portion of the building. These are located on the 13, 14, and 15th floors. At grade, there is an opportunity for café type seating. There will be raised planters at the corner. The applicant noted they maximized the soil volumes for planting and explored ways for storm water management into the planters and habitat. The façade expression of the new building consists of large glazed elements with fin extrusions developed as a device to add texture and solar control to the building. As you move to the southeast, the fins decrease to create more alignment with the heritage building. The material used is a warm metal in order to reference the relationship to the warm rich material pallet in the neighborhood.

The site follows the green buildings policy for rezoning, which includes LEED gold certification. The intent is to use triple pane glazing with thermal bridging mitigation details for an energy efficient building envelope. There will be operable windows for some individual control of ventilation and high efficiency central air source heat pump with a low carbon strategy in place.

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. ENMAN** 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:

- Review strategies to ensure no sun shading on Victory Square;
- Continue design development of the Cambie Street elevation relative to the heritage building;
- Continue design development of the building envelope particularly the parapets relationship relative to the sun shading elements and how it transitions to these elements.

Related Commentary:

There was overall support for the project in terms of its height, massing, and density.

Most panel members noted that it was an elegant and thoughtful project fitting well contextually with a strong façade expression. The quality of the material execution of the building was excellent.

Most panel members noted that further resolution of the parapet line in the lower and higher volumes and a more effective transition from the parapet to the 'fin' shading elements below was required. They also noted that the terraced diagonal form was quite attractive but the 'buzz cut' at the top of the building needs further consideration.

Most panel members noted that the relationship to Victory Square was well considered with minimal impact at the equinox. They noted the importance of shadow mitigation on public spaces to preserve the limited public realm downtown with the vision maintained and reinforced.

Some panelists noted the potential overlook into the neighboring buildings dwelling units was concerning but understood that the required minimum tower separation had been achieved.

Most panel member's noted their appreciation for the efforts taken to revitalize a historic building.

Most panelists noted they would like to see the relationship to the Cleland Kent building improved, as presently the office building cantilevers and covers the heritage building. The relationship of scale with the historic building should be explored further for opportunities for refinement.

Some panelists noted setback transition between the new and Cleland Kent building or 'waistband' is necessary but could be emphasized stronger particularly on the Cambie Street elevation.

One panelist noted the vestigial separation could be improved particularly on the lane side and suggested exploring one additional bay further spacing on the separation. At grade the setback is more effective.

Some panelists noted the historic buildings spatial relationship was very co-planar. It would be more interesting to pull back on the corner to emphasize the Cleland Kent buildings importance.

Most panel members noted the need to conscribe the setback line reinforcing the relationship with cornice of the Cleland Kent building while delineating the two volumes.

Some panelists noted that some elements at the lobby should be solid to reinforce the relationship to the Cleland Kent building.

Some panelists noted the use of brick at grade would be welcome to reference the historic area further.

Most panel members noted that public realm should include consideration of the lanes use. The laneway along the Cleland Kent building in particular needs activation.

Most panel members encouraged further dialogue with engineering on the lane use and expansion of the public realm to reinvigorate the laneways.

Most panel members noted and applauded the great energy performance of the proposal.

Some panelists noted the solar control fins needed different scales to enhance the expression of the façade and relationship of the volumes. The sun shading 'fins' are technically very simple but should be optimized to the greatest extent.

One panelist noted that the renders do not capture the canopy details effectively. The bronze brackets in the canopy create a stronger relationship between the 'fins' and the Cleland Kent building material cladding.

Most panel members noted supported the terracing and landscape plans however some panelists noted they would like to see more planting on top of the Cleland Kent building.

There was overall support that the view cone be preserved in all aspects and they trust the City will protect it to the fullest extent possible.

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