

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** May 13th, 2020

**TIME:** 3:00 pm

**PLACE:** Webex

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

Walter Francl  
Marie-Oedile Marceau  
Brittany Coughlin (Conflict with first project)  
Alan Davies  
Michael Henderson  
Margot Long  
Adrian Rahbar  
Sydney Schwartz  
Muneesh Sharma  
Jennifer Stamp  
Karenn Krangle

**REGRETS:**

Matt Younger  
Angela Enman

**RECORDING**

**SECRETARY:** M.Sem / K.Cermeno

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	7280 Fraser St
2.	3084 W 4th Ave and 2010 Balaclava St

**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Jennifer Stamp called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. The panel then considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 7280 Fraser St  
 Permit No. RZ-2019-00084  
 Description: To develop a 6-storey mixed-use building with 95 secured market rental units and 4 commercial retail units at grade; all over 1.5 levels of underground parking consisting of 71 vehicle spaces and 185 bicycle spaces as well as 18 vehicle spaces and 28 bicycle spaces for a separate, adjacent 724 East 56th Avenue rezoning application proposed by the same applicant. The proposed building height is 20.5 m (67.3 ft.), the gross floor area is 7,865 sq. m (84,661 sq. ft.), and the floor space ratio (FSR) is 3.17. This application is being considered under the Affordable Housing Choices Interim Rezoning Policy.  
 Zoning: C-1 to CD-1  
 Application Status: Rezoning Application  
 Review: First  
 Architect: Cornerstone Architecture  
 Delegation: Simon Richard, Scott Kennedy, Cornerstone.  
 Landscape Architect: Keith Koroluk.  
 Owners: Gwill Symons  
 Staff: Chee Chan & Yuichi Watanabe

**EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (8-1)**

- **Introduction:**

Chee Chan, Rezoning Planner presented this rezoning application for one lot at 7280 Fraser Street, under the Affordable Housing Choices Interim Rezoning Policy. Chee began by providing an overview of the site and surrounding context as follows:

The site is located on the east side of Fraser St, spanning the block between East 56th and East 57th Avenues, and located in the Sunset Community Vision Area. It is located directly on the 8 Fraser Street bus line, part of TransLink's Frequent Transit Network. The site has a frontage of approximately 242 ft. along Fraser St., and a 106 ft. depth along East 56th and 57th Avenues. The site area is approximately 25,398 sq. ft. before dedication.

The site is currently zoned C-1 and developed with a one storey commercial building for office use and a parking lot. Across the street to the west are one to three storey mixed use buildings. The properties to the north and east are developed as single family or duplex housing. The lot directly to the east is also under rezoning application by the same applicant. I will come back to this. Finally, a four storey apartment building is located on the lot to the south.

The Affordable Housing Choices IRP allows for consideration of mid-rise forms of up to 6 storeys at this location, and within 500 m of a local shopping area. This policy does not provide an FSR limit for density, but all projects are subject to urban design performance and meet one of the policy's affordability criteria, which in this case is secured market rental housing.

Chee Chan concluded by noting that the application is proposing to rezone **the site** from C-1 to CD-1 for a six storey Passive House mixed use building with 95 secured rental housing units.

He noted that the same applicant is also proposing another CD-1 rezoning project on the lot directly to the east, at 724 E56th Avenue. This latter CD-1 rezoning is for a 12 unit, 3-storey Passive House townhouse rental project, also under the AHC IRP. While the townhouse project is not the subject of this UDP meeting, its parking is located under this 6 storey building. Townhouse residents must cross the lane to access their bicycle and vehicle parking stalls.

Development Planner, Yuichi Watanabe began by noting the application is for a six storey passive house mixed-use building with 95 secured rental housing units. The proposed FSR is 3.17 and the proposed height is 67 feet. The proposed setbacks are:

- Over 9 feet from Fraser street
- 4 feet from East 56th
- 20 feet for residential, 15 feet for commercial from the lane,
- And 7 feet dedication from East 57th.

Yuichi continued to describe the project's proposed form of development. The site slopes down approximately 9 feet from east 56th down to east 57th, and the proposed massing steps down with the grade. It's mostly five stories facing Fraser Street, including one level of commercial space at grade. The top floor is set back by 7 feet from the edges, minimizing visual massing and shadow impact to the immediate context.

The building has a total frontage of 231'. The design of the building tries to reduce apparent massing by visually breaking up the building facade, separating the north and south massing with the central break between them.

The common amenity room is located at the rooftop. The applicant has made design improvement to create this contiguous outdoor amenity space facing the south.

The roof deck is co-located with the interior amenity room, with direct elevator and stair access from the south lobby at grade.

The parking and loading access are provided from the lane. The east elevation is mostly six residential stories with ground oriented units with patio facing the lane.

The north half of the building faces a lot directly to the east, where the same applicant is proposing three storey townhouse development. The south half of the building is facing the existing single family houses.

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

- Please comment on overall massing, height and density. In particular, please advise on massing transition to the surrounding context to the west (C-1 zone) and east (RS-1 zone).
- Given the overall building length of 231', has the building frontage been visually broken down enough, separating the north and south massing with the central break between them?
- Please comment on public realm interface, with particular attention to the commercial frontage and the southeast corner of the building.
- Please comments on the architectural expression, composition and materiality of the building to inform the project at Development Permit stage.

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

On Fraser Street, there is a 6 storey building separated into 2 parts with a 5 storey north end and a 6 storey south end, with a single level story commercial frontage on Fraser Street and residential above. There are balconies and juliet balconies, and 1.5 storey parkade underground with access from the lane. The building's program and massing is driven by the slope of the site and the need for a firewall separating the north and south portions of the building. A 4-storey street wall is provided with a setback, single story penthouse at level 5 on the northern portion. A 4-storey street wall is also provided to the south end with setback single story penthouse at level 5. At level 6 is the common amenity room and roof deck with a southern exposure.

The site provides great views to city and Northshore mountains. Street trees have been preserved on East 56th Avenue. New street trees will be provided along Fraser St. and E 56th Avenue. The residential main entrance is on E 56th Avenue includes trees and landscape lighting and plantings. Residential texture and concrete paving is also included to accent the entrance. The lane way provides access to underground parking, and is framed with trees and landscape lighting, evergreens and shrubs. The lane way treatment also includes pedestrian walkway with special concrete pavement. The lane way patios screened with privacy fences, plantings and trees.

The 6th floor garden provides residents with a secured amenity space with great views of city and north shore mountains. The outdoor roof deck provides casual seating and a separate area for children's play. The play area includes a soft surface for children play and safety and separated from the roof deck with a low planter.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

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

- Design development to Fraser St. commercial façade to further break down the building length, with particular attention to the gap.
- Design development to public realm along Fraser St. in terms of different paving, seating, canopy and entrance placement.
- Design development to the lane to provide more pedestrian friendly and safe experience.
- Design development to consider wrapping the CRUs around the corners onto 56th and 57<sup>th</sup>.
- Design development to consider calming the façade, both in terms of materiality and architectural expression, and reconsider the firewall and frame elements.
- Design development to consider enlarging the amenity deck and providing more programming elements.

- **Panel Commentary:**

Massing, Height and Density

- There was general support from panel on the massing, density and height
- The panel felt the building is a good transition to future adjacencies to the east.
- One panel member struggled with the massing, height and density and felt that there needs to be a transition to the single family zone to the east

Breaking Down the Building Length

- The break itself is successful
- The commercial frontage is long and needs to be broken down, or another point of entry, or further recess the current entry location. Also the window heights are the same the entire length.
- Consider further accentuating the gap – set back and make it more dominate with glazing (and decrease the solid wall). Also reconsider the balcony at the top level 6 north
- Okay with lane frontage not being broken up but Fraser needs it given its eccentric architectural character
- The firewall placement reinforces the building where the building is trying to dematerialize – the fire wall sticks out.
- Some panel members suggested that the fire wall on the building move further north.
- Some panel members noted the long continuous commercial frontage and asked whether it can be broken with additional entries along the commercial frontage; Suggest recessing the current entry location to help break up the building volume at that location.

Public Realm Interface

- There were some concerns with the density and what the project gives back to the neighbourhood in the form of public realm improvements.
- Some panel members noted the lane could use more work, some suggestions were setting back patios, putting trees where the walk ways are and encouraged to use examples from other Mount Pleasant laneways.
- The commercial frontage is tall and the CRU entries are not well defined.
- Some Panel members suggested activating the public realm with street furniture, paving pattern and landscape within setback  
Consider an outdoor café at the northwest and southeast corners – they are the flattest spots on the site. This will also provide more activation and wrap the retail along 56<sup>th</sup> and 57<sup>th</sup>.
- Some Panel members suggested lowering of the canopy on the north side to the same height as the south side to mitigate the livability on the 1st floor
- Some Panel members suggested moving the retail lobby on the north end to the northeast corner. Some panel members noted the lane could use more work, setting back the patios to get more trees, add trees to the walkways, and the parkade can be pulled back and more trees added.
- Panel member suggested more design development to encourage the engagement between this development and the adjacent townhomes.
- Some panel members suggesting a different location for the transformer, BC Hydro infrastructure, to better activate the space.
- The south end of the lane is unfriendly – loading, parking ramp and back of house.
- Consider adding bike parking

Architectural Expression, Composition, Materiality

- General support by Panel for the material palette presented. Some panel members suggested wrapping the retail space around E 56<sup>th</sup> instead of E 57<sup>th</sup>.
- Some panel members noted the change from a dark façade to light colour on the north west corner of the building. Balcony recesses are a lighter material than the façade, and suggest design development to enhance the depth, making it darker than the facades on either side.
- Some panel members suggested reconsidering the frames
- Simplify and calm down the architectural expression and consider decreasing the number of materials.
- Concern with dark palette and passive house/overheating

#### Other

- General support from Panel on the Passive House building.
  - Some Panel members noted the townhouse site on E 56th should have more of a townhouse feel and be distinct from the 7280 Fraser site.
  - Some Panel members were supportive of the amenity deck and suggested the applicant review the shaft that comes up to the amenity deck and if it could be re-located. Review the weight of trees and whether they can be achieved on a wood frame building.
  - Some Panel members encouraged further design development of the play area, such as more passive play elements for children under 5 years old.
  - Some panel members also asked for plant types in the children's play area are reconsidered so that they are non-toxic.
  - Some Panel members noted the relationship between this building and the townhouse building on 56th Ave and to improve their connectivity, and whether parking can be accommodated on East 56th Ave site.
  - One panel member did not support the Fraser site being the location of the parking for the E56th Ave townhouse building – it will not be easy getting groceries to ones' front door
  - There was general support from panel on the landscape plan.
  - Some panel members noted the units provided little storage.
  - Some panel members noted units are well designed and livable.
  - There are a good number of family units.
  - Some panel members noted there could be improvements to the size of the amenity space.
  - Some panel members suggested locating the amenity deck to the north to take advantage of the views of the mountains.
  - Some of the balconies are dark and small. So are the 49 sq. ft. enclosed balconies at the 3 bedroom units.
  - Some panel members suggested lowering the rain cover canopy along the façade.
  - Some panel members encouraged the link between this building and the townhomes by providing an access walkway aligned with the court yard of the townhomes.
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- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments.

2. Address:	3084 W 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave & 2010 Balaclava Street
Permit No.	RZ-2020-00001
Description:	To develop a 6-storey residential building with 35 secured rental units over one level of underground parking consisting of 15 vehicle spaces and 54 bicycle spaces. This application is being considered under the Moderate Income Rental Housing Pilot Program.
Application Status:	Rezoning Application
Review:	First
Architect:	Ekistics Architecture – Mark Blackwood, Piyush Sanghadia
Landscape Architect:	Marlene Messer, PMG Landscape Architects
Staff:	Carly Rosenblat & Brenda Clark

## **EVALUATION: Support with Recommendations (10/0)**

- **Introduction:**

Rezoning Planner, Carly Rosenblat, began the presentation by explaining this is a rezoning application for two lots at the south east corner of W 4th Avenue and Balaclava Street in the Kitsilano neighborhood. Both lots are zoned RM-4 and are currently developed with three rental duplexes. The site is approximately 7,500 sq.ft. in size. There are currently 6 tenanted units on site with 13 tenants on site who qualify for Tenant Relocation under the City's policy.

The properties to the north, east, and west are zoned RM-4 which permits multi-family dwellings at a density up to 1.45 FSR and building heights to a maximum of 10.7m (35.1 ft.). These surrounding buildings are 3-4 storeys in height. To the south, are single family homes zoned RS-7.

The site is located on an active transit network. Within a two block radius, there are five bus routes serving the site.

### **MIRHPP**

The enabling rezoning policy is the Moderate Income Rental Housing Pilot Program (MIRHPP), which is a limited pilot program that enables up to 20 rezoning 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 with incomes between \$30,000-\$80,000 per year. If approved by Council, the rental units will be secured through a Housing Agreement which will be registered on title and in effect for 60 years or the life of the building, whichever is longer.

As part of the MIRPP selection process, staff vetted projects for eligibility and ranked based on a number of performance criteria established on key policy objectives.

3084 W 4th Avenue proposes to deliver a number of new moderate income and market rental units in a location that is well-served by rapid transit and would replace all rental units and provide more housing than what currently exists. This project was also chosen for MIRHPP as it meets the policy parameters that limit consideration of sites in RM districts to highly underutilized sites with a low number of existing tenants.

Under the MIRHPP policy, additional height up to 6 storeys may be considered for RM zones on arterials, with higher forms at arterial intersections. Additional considerations for rezoning include neighbourhood context.

## **Proposal**

This proposal is to rezone from RM-4 to CD-1 to permit a 6 storey residential building with 35 secured rental units. The proposed density is 2.95 FSR which is equivalent to approximately 2,027 sq.m (or 21,824 sq.ft.) in floor area and a height of 20.23 m (or 66.37 ft.). It includes underground parking that contains the equivalent of 15 vehicle parking stalls and 54 parking spaces. To note, 15 parking spaces are provided but only 13 physical spaces. Under section 4.1.15 of the Vancouver Parking Bylaw, accessible Parking Spaces count as two parking spaces.

The applicant is retaining the boulevard trees on-site.

Development Planner, Brenda Clark, summarized the project as generally supportable for rental housing, with good access to public transit, shopping and community services. The Kitsilano neighbourhood is very walkable. West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a primary arterial, featuring a mix of commercial nodes and a variety of apartment buildings of various scales. There are commercial nodes two blocks to the east on Bayswater, and two blocks to the west on Blenheim.

The frontage is approximately 72 ft. along West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and 105 ft. long Balaclava. The building is proposed as 6-storeys with a shoulder setback (at level 6) on the north, west and south sides, with a maximum height of 20.12 m (66'-0"). It interfaces with the Santa Barbara Apartment complex adjacent to the east, single family homes (RT-8) to the south across the lane, with three and four storey apartments to the north along West 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Proposed setbacks are as follows:

North: 4.6 m (15'-0"), increased to retain trees at NE corner. (Required: 6.1 m (20'-0"))  
West: 3.05 m (10'-0"). Required 7.62 (25'-0")  
South: 6.7 m (22'-0") Required 7.62m (25'-0")  
East: 1.0 m (3'-3") to the parkade, 2.1 m (6'-11") to building face. Required 1.5 m (5'-0").

The public realm and level one include the following features:

- Main residential entry on Balaclava;
- Outdoor amenity located at NW corner, co-located with adjacent indoor amenity at the ground floor;
- Parkade set back at the NE corner to retain 3 significant conifers, and soften the transition to adjacent apartment building;
- Ground-oriented units ( with patios) along the street frontages;
- Garbage-recycling located at the south fronting the lane
- The parkade ramp is located at the SE corner of the site

Form of Development issues include:

- Kitsilano character, including high quality materials, architectural detail and texture, as well as lush landscaping (RM-4 Design Guidelines).
- Lane interface to single family neighbours to south (2 storeys), including 6 to 2 storey massing transition, as well as location of garbage/recycling;
- East interface to Santa Barbara apartments, including open ramp; and
- Provision of common outdoor space such as children's' play area;



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

1. **Please comment on overall proposed form, massing, height and density, within the existing built form context**, with consideration of three key factors:
  - a. West 4th is a primary arterial;
  - b. the RM-4 and RT-7/8 zoning context; and,
  - c. the City's current need to accommodate future growth.
2. **Does the proposal successfully transition to the surrounding area and buildings?** Please comment on interface to adjacent residential properties to the east and south, with suggestions for improvement, if necessary.
3. **Please comment on architectural and landscape response to neighbourhood character.** Please advise on proposed form and materiality, perimeter treatment, outdoor amenity and children's play.

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

**• Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The applicant noted the design of the site is related to the eclectic mix of traditional and west coast contemporary architecture in this area.

The applicant noted the site is located at the south east corner of 4th and Balaclava. West 4th Avenue is an arterial road with lots of access to beaches, parks, with a variety of commercial nodes.

There are prominent commercial nodes to the east at 4th and McDonald, and to the west around 4th and Alma. There are 5 bus stops nearby including one in front of the development, making this project's site and density ideally located, and an ideal candidate for a rental housing program.

The applicant noted the project started with a 6 story block, the intent is to keep the design minimal and its articulation simple, with massing changes at a few locations to help reduce the scale of the building. The top floor of the building has been set back. The entrance lobby on Balaclava is glazed, near the indoor-outdoor amenity at the north west corner.

Balcony projections follow the pattern of the side the building is facing. The applicant noted use of low maintenance materials such as prefinished fiber cement panels. The windows and guardrails are glass. There are dark grey trims in combination with light color panel elements. The applicant noted they tried not to present a continuous material across West 4th Avenue. The darker cladding continues behind the retention of existing trees. The landscape is a simple palette.

The underground parking slab is raised above grade and softened by shrubs and landscaping in planters. The applicant noted they tried to open up the corners to allow for more sunlight. The applicant intends to keep the existing City trees at the north east corner, as they are large and add scale to the street.

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. HENDERSON** and seconded by **MR. SHARMA** and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

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

- Consider relocating the garbage and recycling below grade;
- Design Development to present a greener, more gardeny edge to the project, especially to the neighbours to the east and the south; reconsider the raised planters.
- Pursue architectural and landscape excellence in light of the current context.
- Ensure retention of the existing trees at the northeast corner;

- **Panel Commentary**

Form, Massing, Height and Density in relation to the context

There was general support from the panel regarding the massing, form, height and density.

The panel recognized this project as a new typology in the neighborhood, requiring architectural excellence to successfully blend into the area.

A panelist noted the increase in density is important for housing affordability, but the project should be further developed to better integrate into Kitsilano.

The panel liked the step back for the trees however it may compromise other aspects of the building

Strong parti and volumes. Consider decreasing the column of the white top at the parapet.

The project is a workable fit but it is challenging to the single family zone to the south. It needs to go further to reduce the height and bulk.

The lane setback relaxation is not supportable.

The vertical dark strip and wall panel needs to read stronger.

The proposal is appropriately scaled and is a handsome building.

The dark top makes the building look taller

Transition to the surrounding context

The building is an appropriate transition to either side and across 4<sup>th</sup> avenue.

The building is not well transitioned to the south and the lanes along the single family zone that have a lot of green and amenity on neighbouring sites along the lane. Landscape can help make this transition.

To transition to the surrounding area and especially lower buildings to the south, the panel noted the garbage and recycling are too visually prominent, and the setback along the lane

would be better used for more outdoor amenity or urban agriculture, if garbage/recycling were relocated underground.

To be more neighbourly to the project to the east, a green roof could be installed at the second floor above the parkade ramp roof, the ramp should be enclosed, and more landscape buffering provided.

Rethink the proposed colours to make the project more neighbourly.

#### Architectural and Landscape Response to neighbourhood character

From an overall perspective, this project should pursue architectural and landscape excellence to ensure the new typology provides an appropriate response to its current context.

The panel members recommended improvements to the character of the landscaping, and to reconsider the raised walls along the property edges to create a friendlier green frontage in keeping with Kitsilano. Dropping the suspended slab esp. over the bike parking would assist.

The panel commented on the architectural expression, resolution of the staggered windows and balconies, and asked whether the offset as proposed is sufficient to appear playful.

The windows on the east should be offset from windows on the existing building.

The panel commended the applicants for mature trees proposed to be retained, as they are effective in providing scale, enhancing the public realm, and providing greenery to the adjacent street. However, a good tree retention strategy is necessary to ensure their long-term survival.

Struggle with the ground plane and the rigidity of the landscape. The landscape needs a more unique character. Also there is little space for storm water and trees.

#### Other

The panel suggested to consider accommodating the amenity on the rooftop.

In terms of open space, one panel member suggested the unit at north east corner could have a balcony treatment at the ground plane.

Consider including some 3 bedroom units.

The entry is well announced and the adjacent amenity placement is appropriate.

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