

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** October 31, 2018

**TIME:** 4:00 pm

**PLACE:** Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

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

Amela Brudar, Chair  
Colette Parsons  
Derek Neale  
Grant Newfield  
Helen Avini Besharat  
Jim Huffman  
Leslie Shieh  
Muneesh Sharma  
Susan Ockwell  
Yijin Wen

**REGRETS:**

David Jerke  
Marie-France Venneri

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Davin Fung

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1555 Robson Street
2.	1394 Robson Street

## BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Brudar called the meeting to order at 4:09 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. After a brief business meeting the panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 1555 Robson Street  
Permit No.: DP-2018-00589  
Description: To develop a 28-storey mixed-use building consisting of residential (market and non-market units), office and retail uses; all over five levels of underground parking accessed from the lane. The proposed floor space ratio (FSR) is 9.63, including 10% additional heritage density, and the building height is approximately 91.44 m (300 ft.).  
Zoning: C-6  
Application Status: Complete Development Application  
Review: First  
Architect: IBI Architects  
Owner: 1135952 BC Ltd.  
Delegation: Vanessa Goldgrub, Landscape Architect, Eta  
Daryl Tyacke, Landscape Architect, Eta  
M. Brinkus  
Clement Pu, IBI Architects  
Staff: Brenda Clark, Development Planner

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## EVALUATION: SUPPORT WITH CONSIDERATION

### Introduction:

Development Planner, Brenda Clark, presented to the panelist. The project currently proposes a 3 storey podium, with retail at grade and office above, and a mix of non-market (24 units) and market housing (153 units) both accessed off Cardero St. One retail unit is proposed north of the entries, to continue the street pattern from the North side of the lane. The office entry is located on Robson St. Street. There are 5 levels of underground parking accessed off the lane, with proposed FSR of 9.63 including 10% additional heritage density transfer.

Lower Robson St. is a very active pedestrian area, further enhanced by a bike route along Cardero St. to the Sea Wall to the north. Total grade change is about 11 ft. (3.4 m), from the low end at the lane and Cardero St., to the high point near the office lobby on Robson St. There are several significant street trees (Catalpa or 'bean tree') along Cardero St. which give a unique character to the site.

The project area occupies 40% of the block, with two C-6 sites on the remainder. Immediately North across the lane is the proposed Kengo Kuma Tower (CD-1), with an approved height of 43 storeys, at 434 ft (132.35 metres) in height, with 14.15 FSR including 25% family housing (2 BR), wcommercial uses at grade along Cardero St. The "Carved" tower is located in Rezoning Area "C", which permits much greater density and height than at the subject site. The remainder of this block is comprised of two C-6 sites. The site is flanked with a number of C-5A sites across Robson St. and to the Northwest across Cardero St., including the Robson St. Public Market on the Southwest, with RM-5C sites to the Northwest.

The proposed tower at 1555 Robson St. generally complies with City requirements and regulations, most importantly the West End Community Plan, with an expected height of 300'

and a three storey podium of 30-40 ft. (9.1-12.2 m). The only non-conforming aspect is tower width, proposed at 88', which is 4' wider than permitted in the West End Tower Form document. This variance has been entertained due site constraints resulting from the location of the Kengo Kuma tower just 2' from its South property line, forcing this building further South as well. To achieve the maximum allowable floor plate, the building is slightly wider, but ameliorated by articulation of the façade into two distinct vertical volumes. This building has been designed to accommodate a similar C-6 tower on the remainder of the block.

Planning has worked with the design team on developing a pedestrian-friendly ground plane, with a corner feature to engage the street, providing a variety of seating opportunities, special paving and lighting. Another key aspect is the location and balance of the market and non-market housing entries, currently proposed as side by side on Cardero St. The project proposes generous indoor and outdoor amenity areas for both market and non-market housing, both South-facing on the roof of the podium level, with a roof deck also proposed at the North for the office component. Some lane animation has been provided, with landscaping and glazing. The tower itself is well articulated and considered well suited to its context. In summary, the project generally meets the majority of planning objectives for the area.

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

1. Please comment on the visibility and sequential experience of the two residential entries.
2. Please comment on the overall architectural expression of the four elevations.
3. Is the public realm sufficiently developed, especially along the streets and at the Southwest corner?

#### **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The massing on the site is driven by what was approved from the adjacent project. We have worked with Staff to accommodate all the design requirements to create a tower and podium.

There is a 3 storey podium with ground floor commercial facing Robson St. and Cardero St. and the 2nd and 3rd floor for office use. There is a 300 ft tower with the top two floors set back.

The project has 20 % non-market housing with the residential entrances on Cardero St. while the entrances on Robson St. will be commercial in character. We designed two entrances for market and non-market housing based on proportionality. There are two market elevators and one market elevator.

The design of the project is inspired by the surrounding environment of Stanley Park and the waterfront while set in the busy commercial part of Robson St. The tower has a darker element inspired by the trees and bark of the Western Red Cedar. The other building is a lighter element with different flowers. Both buildings are set on a heavier base podium which uses composite panels. Regarding sustainability, passive energy methods are being used as well as all units have heat recovery units in place. For the residential component, we are using triple glazed glass. The balconies and fins and molding projections are all sustainability features. The tower is 45% glass with the overall building is about 40% vision glass.

On Robson St., there is a two-toned light and dark paving pattern to complements the tower's tree bark design. At the corner of Cardero St. and Robson St., the plaza takes advantage of change in grade with planters and benches allowing people to look within and without.

The residential entrances for market and non-market housing are both located on Cardero St. and defined by the paving pattern.

To soften the lane, bike racks, planters and 3 benches are installed to create a social space.

On Level 2 is the amenity deck for the offices featuring a large metal arbor and tables and chairs and trees and view to the North.

There are private residential patios along North edge.

On Level 4 is the non-market outdoor amenities space with a large sheltered outdoor play area for children along with urban agriculture and seating that takes advantage of the sun.

On Level 5 is a large outdoor amenities space for market housing designed with flexibility for a multitude of programming, featuring two large arbors, two barbecues and movable tables and chairs as well as catenary lighting for all hours. There is a large children's play area with various play elements including a play wall, play poles, play structures and a small mounded hill. The patterning is created using an abstracted forest effect.

The top level are private terraces with planters.

All the plants are native and non-invasive for minimal maintenance. Everything is bird friendly. Planting is grouped in natural layers of trees, shrubs, and ground covers mimicking the ideal environment for birds.

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. Avini-Besharat and seconded by Mr. Sharma and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

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

- Further design development to the office portion of the building, with the cubic form to be further expressed and celebrated, rather than understated.

#### **Related Commentary:**

The Chair summarized that all the panel members expressed strong support for the project which complies with current zoning as well as the West End Community Plan. The design has achieved a strong architectural expression and a clearly expressed 'parti', with two contrasting volumes each having its own expression, one a curtain wall and the other with strong horizontal balconies enhanced by a contrasting colour scheme. Materials and colours are generally well handled.

There was a suggestion to consider adding weather protection on the lane side and on the upper level units without detracting from the architecture.

One panel member commended the incorporation of storage and washrooms on the top floors.

Another member commented that darker colour is exquisitely detailed, and the design direction to create the tree bark was successful, with the curtain wall and metal panels providing a very subtle but effective colour scheme.

Development of two residential entries was supported, with further design development recommended to unify them with a shared “porch” and a forecourt paving treatment. One panel member commented the separation of the affordable housing and condos entries should be left to the operators to determine.

There was strong support of the uses of the building, being a complex mixed use with clear expressions of the uses.

There was some discussion of office portion of the tower, with several comments regarding design development to the architectural expression to distinguish it. Several panel members commented that they would like to see more development of the office portion.

A number of panel members recommended further study of how the building meets grade, due to the significant slope along Robson, and that durable materials be used. One suggested the tower should continue with the same language all the way down to the ground which would simplify the design and make the tower stronger.

One panel member noted to consider a maintenance strategy for deep planting beds. The panel member also commented on the importance of detailing of trellis structures.

**Applicant’s Response:**

The Applicant thanked the panel members for their comments.

## Urban Design Panel Minutes

Date: October 31, 2018

2. Address:	1394 Robson Street
Permit No.	DP-2018-00780
Description:	To develop a 5-storey commercial building; all over one level of underground parking accessed from a car elevator. The proposed floor space ratio (FSR) is 2.86, including additional 10% heritage density purchase.
Zoning:	C-6
Application Status:	Complete Development Application
Review:	First
Architect:	MCM Partners
Owner:	1388 Robson Nominee Ltd.
Delegation:	Mark Thompson, MCM Andy Tam, Asia Standard Americas Jeffrey Stades, PFS Studio
Staff:	Susan Chang, Development Planner

### EVALUATION: SUPPORT WITH CONSIDERATION

#### Introduction:

Development Planner, Susan Chang introduced the application as located in lower Robson St. neighbourhood also known as Sub-area 3 that provides a transition from the West end to downtown.

It's a corner site located at the Southeast corner of Robson St. St. and Broughton St. Across Broughton St. will be a 31 and 32 storey mixed use building (Landmark on Robson St.) and across the lane is an RM-5, 12 storey residential building. There is a neighbouring hotel to the East. Although not listed on the Heritage Register, is a mid-1930 building. Heritage staff view it to have heritage value.

The site measures 66'x131' with a drop of about 4.6' (along Robson St.) and a crossfall of 7.5' from the Southeast to the Northwest corner. There is a 7' building line along Robson St. which is intended to improve public realm for a diversity of pedestrian activities at street level. The zone is C-6 which encourages external building design, the scale and function to be oriented towards pedestrians. Uses and treatment of the elevations at ground floor level should provide pedestrian interest, as well as continuous weather protection.

The proposal is approximately 65' tall commercial building seeking 2.86 FSR. 2.5 per zone and additional 10% heritage density transfer. Proposed use is retail at the lower floors and office use at the upper 2 levels. There is 1 level of parking using a vehicle elevator. The stepped form follows the building height envelope intended to maximize sunlight on sidewalks. Setbacks at the East face respond to guidelines for new development adjacent to hotels to ensure daylight and ventilation of existing hotels is maintained by a vertical angle of daylight calculation. Retail entry is located at the corner for the double height commercial space. Weather protection is proposed at 20' - 25' above grade with a 10' canopy depth. Materials are comprised of curtain wall system, architectural concrete and metal detailing. Electro chromatic glass is incorporated on the Southwest façade facing Broughton St. which electronically tints the windows to control amount of light/glare and heat coming in.

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

- 1) Comments on massing and expression at Robson St. and Broughton St. elevations in terms of contributing to pedestrian scale and interest?
- 2) Please comment on the quality of the public realm interface for pedestrian activities along Robson St.

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The proposed building generally conforms to the volumetric envelope and allowable building height prescribed in the C-6 zoning. The massing is composed of two elements; two-storey ground oriented retail, and 3-storey terraced office form. The terraced patios allow sun exposure and views of the North Shore and mountains as well as to minimize shadowing impacts along Robson St.. The public realm is enhanced with ground floor setbacks and multilevel patios to the street. The development will be designed to achieve a high level of sustainability, integrating water use reduction and energy efficiency measures, zero waste planning, and more.

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

Having reviewed the project it was moved by Mr. Sharma and seconded by Mr. Neale and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

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

- Consideration for further design development of the public realm on Broughton St. to allow for more pedestrian interface and to develop commercial signage strategy.

**Related Commentary:**

The Panel members expressed strong support of the design using the words elegant and beautiful to describe it. There was a lot of discussion on public realm with some divided opinions. There are some excellent ideas of porosity of the ground floor to make it more inviting and engaging to the public. There was some discussion regarding the Broughton St. frontage and whether the planting along building is appropriate. A panel member strongly suggested not to have the long strip of landscaping and to allow the interior to spill out onto Broughton St. By doing so, it would allow the public to penetrate the building. There were suggestions regarding the corner of Broughton St. to pull back the landscaping and take the canopy the corner to increase public interface.

**Applicant's Response:**

The Applicant thanked the panel for the great comments and discussion.