

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: January 25, 2012

TIME: N/A

PLACE: N/A

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Robert Barnes
Helen Besharat
Gregory Borowski
Alan Endall
Jim Huffman
Arno Matis
Scott Romses
Norm Shearing

REGRETS:
James Cheng
Jeff Corbett
Jane Durante
Geoff McDonell
Alan Storey

RECORDING SECRETARY: Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	5761-5775 St. George Street
2.	6361 Cambie Street
3.	4176 Alexandra Street

BUSINESS MEETING

The business meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. and the Chair gave an overview of the Development Permit Board meeting on January 23rd where 1616 West 7th Avenue and 100 Jackson Avenue were presented to the Board and were approved. Chair Romses then called the meeting to order at 4:20 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. The Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. **Address:** 5761-5775 St. George Street
DE: Rezoning
Use: Proposal to rezone from RS-1 to CD-1 for residential use to permit construction of 16 traditional row homes over an underground parkade. Project to comprise 21,872 square feet (10.7m), 2.5 floors.
Zoning: RS-1 to CD-1
Application Status: Rezoning
Review: First
Architect: Stuart Howard Architecture
Owner: Silk Properties Ltd.
Delegation: Stuart Howard, Stuart Howard Architecture
Damon Oriente, Damon Oriente Landscape Architects
James Evans, Silk Properties Ltd.
Chris Bardon, Silk Properties Ltd.
Staff: Paul Cheng and Farhad Mawani

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-1)**Introduction:**

Farhad Mawani, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a rezoning application. The proposal is a Housing Demonstration Project in the Sunset Neighbourhood. Mr. Mawani noted that it is not a typical single family location as the site is bounded by a High School to the east and a cemetery to the west. A row of single family homes are to the north and south and there is no lane access.

Mr. Mawani explained that this is a demonstration project for the City, and that a successful housing demonstration project must demonstrate three things from a policy point of view:

- a new housing form in the neighbourhood
- improved affordability and
- a degree of neighbourhood support.

Mr. Mawani described the context for the site noting that it is located in a neighbourhood that, besides the Cemetery and High School, is a mix of single family homes and three and four storey apartment buildings. From this perspective, the rowhouse form presents a new option to the area, which is likely to be more affordable than single family homes. There have been two community open house events, which have generated a general level of support for the project. Neighbours have raised specific concerns around adjacencies, landscape buffers, number of units, noise created by the garage door, and the traffic impacts that will be created on a street that is already busy due to the adjacent High School.

Mr. Cheng, Development Planner, further described the proposal noting that it is a very large lot. The project site is composed of two lots and has 100 feet of frontage and is 218 feet deep. This gives an opportunity to design something interesting on the site. It is similar to a

rowhouse courtyard development, but what is different with this proposal is that there is enough space to have a semi-private communal space. Mr. Cheng noted neighbourhood support is required and the applicant has been in consultation with the neighbours.

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

- Does the site planning work well with respect to on-site circulation, the usability of outdoor communal space, and the relationship between the buildings and the provided private and semi-private open spaces?
- Does the project propose an acceptable neighbourly interface with the immediately adjacent properties, with respect to shadow, overlook and privacy?
- Is the proposal visually compatible with the existing streetscape context of single-family homes?

Mr. Mawani and Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Stuart Howard, Architect, further described the proposal noting that the majority of the units face into the communal open space. The entrances to the back units are along the north property line. He noted that a number of meetings had been held with the neighbours and as result the parking garage entrance has been located to reduce the impact on the neighbours. Mr. Howard described the architecture and indicated that the massing and design will have a relatively steep pitched roof with a fair bit of the habitable area located in the roof. They are family oriented townhouses, with a bedroom in the roof, and two bedrooms on the mid level. The units are fairly small to keep them affordable. Parking is underground with 22 parking spaces and a large number of bike spaces. Mr. Howard explained that they are trying to retain the existing street trees that are on the north property line.

Damon Oriente, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans. The setback gives the street front units an entry patio, as well as useable space on the back of the units. The internal space has been made as large and open as possible. The parking overhead structure will have a green screen.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Consider making the design more contemporary;
- Consider having some units with higher floor to ceiling heights;
- Consider ways to improve the sustainability strategy.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the use, density and form of development.

The Panel commended the applicant for the approach and thought it was a worthy demonstration project for the neighbourhood. Although a couple of Panel members thought there should be a higher level of uniqueness since it is a 'demonstration project'. They thought it could be more innovative or contemporary, which would appeal to younger buyers. A couple of Panel members thought the colour scheme could be improved.

The Panel liked the way the project addresses the street as it is pulled forward and then steps back providing the necessary space within the development to make the units more liveable. The Panel did not have any issues with shadow impacts or overlook on adjacent properties. Also, they supported the circulation, and thought there was good access for pedestrians. The Panel thought the choice of architectural expression was in keeping with the area, and the choice of materials reflected affordability. One Panel member suggested lowering the scale of

the middle five units noting that they could perhaps have a flat roof expression with private outdoor decks. They could then become an extension of the green space on the south to provide some relief between the street and the units. Another Panel member thought the setbacks could be reduced in order to benefit the site. Also due to the narrowness of the units, the project would benefit if some units had a higher floor to ceiling heights.

The Panel supported the landscape plans and thought the south courtyard would be a nice public space but needed some programming. One Panel member thought the pedestrian and vehicle access was unfortunate and might be improved.

Most of the Panel felt that the project was lacking in a sustainability strategy and suggested the applicant explore more visible or more innovative approaches.

A number of Panel members encouraged the City to have a clearer direction when it comes to demonstration projects. The Panel requested the project come back for a review at the development permit stage.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Howard apologized to the Panel for not addressing sustainability. He noted that a big part of the demo project is the affordability. As a result the choices of material and building form are related to affordability as they have a restricted budget and innovation and green design sometimes costs a bit more. He added that he appreciated the Panel's comments and would take them into consideration as they work through the project.

Mr. Evans said they wanted to introduce a demonstration project into an existing neighbourhood that would match the character of the neighbourhood which is a traditional expression. He added that a contemporary design would have been a harder sell to the neighbours.

2.	Address:	6361 Cambie Street
	DE:	Rezoning
	Use:	To provide a residential (strata apartment and townhouses) consisting of 70 units and commercial (retain) building of 5171.4 m ² with a gross floor residential commercial are of 365 m ² - 3.56 FSR and underground parking for over 80 stalls with eight storeys facing Cambie Street and two storeys facing the lane to an approximate height of 29m.
	Zoning:	RT-1 to CD-1
	Application Status:	Rezoning
	Review:	First
	Architect:	Integra Architecture
	Owner:	Wanson Development Duane Siegrist, Integra Architecture Ken McKillop, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects
	Delegation:	Tom Morton, Wanson Development Rosie Cindrach, Wanson Development Troy Glasner, E3ECO Group
	Staff:	Sailen Black and Ian Cooper

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (2-5)

Introduction:

Ian Cooper, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a mixed-use building at West 48th Avenue and Cambie Street. The proposal is for an 8-storey building, ground floor retail and office space with 2-storey townhouses massing base on the lane. The proposal will also provide six STIR units. Mr. Cooper described the applicable policy for the area noting that the site falls under the Cambie Corridor Plan. The Policy allows for six storeys rising to eight at West 48th Avenue. The Policy also requires that new buildings have 50% of the units for families with children and the proposal has 44 units of the 70 in total as 2-3 bedrooms units. This includes fifteen three bedroom units. Public benefits and affordable housing is offered under the STIR program in the proposal. Mr. Cooper noted that the Green Building Policy for rezonings required the applicant to meet LEED™ Gold with a minimum of 63 points, six points optimized for energy performance, one for water efficiency, one for stormwater management.

Sailen Black, Development Planner, noted that the proposal is generally consistent with the Cambie Corridor Plan on height and density. He reviewed other goals of the Plan that apply to the site, including the advice to step upper floors back from Cambie Street above the fifth storey, the opportunity for a pedestrian link from Cambie to the west, and the requirement for the building to be connectable to a district heating system.

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

- Does the walkway and building design read as a inviting and open for free public access?
 - Is the public realm interface sufficiently developed with inviting and attractive features?
 - Are the interfaces to existing (south) and approved (north) buildings sufficiently resolved, as shown?
 - How does the proposed streetwall and shoulder line respond to the intent of the area plan and the unusual context of this site?
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- Is the proposed palette of materials and façade expression, including the relatively glassy base and panel systems above, an appropriate response to this location?

Mr. Cooper and Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Duane Siegrist, Architect, provided a Power Point presentation for the proposal. He described the context for the area noting the Canada Line Station at West 49th Avenue and Cambie Street. He said they had the opportunity to provide a mid-block connection to the lane and as well laneway housing on the site. The entry is located on the corner and off the greenway, and the parking entry is on the north end of the site. Mr. Siegrist described the pedestrian walkway noting that it is an outdoor amenity and will be the location of a piece of art. The building expression has been pulled out towards the street so it is visible from the Canada Line Station. He also described the materials which will consist of metal panels and spandrel panels/glass. Rental housing is planned for the development.

Troy Glasner described the sustainability strategy for the project noting they are seeking a LEED™ Gold rating.

Ken McKillop, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans noting the entry lobby is accessible to the walkway to the south and they are looking to add a water element on the walkway. They are planning to extend the paving into the lane. The plans for the courtyard include a semi-private walkway and small trees at the entrances to the townhouses.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Revisit the shoulder line, proportions and composition of the Cambie Street façade;
- Design development to simplify the building expression, especially materials and colours;
- Design development to the area around the pedestrian connection;
- Design development to improve the relationship with the new building to the north

Related Commentary:

The Panel did not support the proposal.

The Panel supported the proposed height and density in general as appropriate for this site near to the transit station.

The Panel thought the relationship with the approved development to the north end was awkward. One Panel member thought the zero lot line condition was not the right approach as a setback would be more appropriate and suggested the density be relocated to a partial floor to increase the height slightly and help with the transition to the south.

The Panel felt that the townhouses were the most successful example in the project in terms of form and expression. Some Panel members felt that the units could be somewhat taller, but others felt that increased height would compromise the units to the east. Several members recommended changes to the orientation and layout of the units on both sides of the courtyard to improve privacy and views, and to allow more daylight. One panel member suggested that they could be broken apart to allow light to penetrate the courtyard. Another Panel member thought there should be some common space in the courtyard such as a seating area. One member thought the townhouses could be three stories if the mass of the Cambie building was sculpted back.

The Panel thought the proportions and composition of the main building needed to be simplified significantly. They felt that the project was too small to have so many things being expressed on the façade. Members noted the staggered white wall on the south and the stepping balconies as examples that weren't working compositionally. One member noted that there is a strong horizontal line along the floor of level 5 and also strong vertical components which seem to be in conflict. One member thought the project looked top heavy, and suggested dropping the 'waistline' to meet the new building to the north. One member felt the shoulder was in an awkward location that cut the building compositionally in half.

The Panel also thought there were too many materials and colours, and the overall palette needed to have less variety and be toned down. Some members felt the proposal was too autonomous and should be less of a standalone building. One member felt the level of detail was distracting from the basic principles.

A number of Panel members had some concerns for the retail units at grade, and wondered if they would be successful. One Panel member suggested they be used as office or flex space instead of retail.

The Panel supported the landscape plans and felt the public realm was generally well resolved. One Panel member thought there was some clutter at the entry lobby and that it should be made more accessible, and that wayfinding was needed to link to other connectors. One member felt the canopy over the pedestrian walkway worked, but others felt it was heavy and imposing. One Panel member thought the canopy had been imported from another area and might not be the right expression for this site and area.

Several Panel members thought it was a lost opportunity that the roof has such a small landscaped area. One Panel member thought the roof deck could be used for the penthouse units as well as a common roof deck.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Siegrist thanked the Panel for their comments. He explained that they would work with planning to make the transition to the site to the north work better.

3.	Address:	4176 Alexandra Street
	DE:	DE415373
	Use:	To construct a 3-storey secondary school building of approximately 3,345 square meters, with connections to existing buildings on the west portion of the York House site.
	Zoning:	CD-1
	Application Status:	Complete
	Review:	Second
	Architect:	Acton Ostry Architects
	Owner:	York House School
	Delegation:	Mark Ostry, Acton Ostry Architects Nathaniel Straathof, Acton Ostry Architects Susan Ockwell, Acton Ostry Architects Margot Long PWL Landscape Architects
	Staff:	Sailen Black

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)**Introduction:**

Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a new senior building on the existing private school campus. He described the context for the surrounding area noting the adjacent single family homes. Mr. Black explained the Policy for the area, noting that in 1992 Council rezoned the subject site from RS-1 to CD-1 (288) which permitted expansion of York House School beyond the density permitted under RS-1, and introduced limits on the school's enrolment, and approved in principle a master plan for the School's phased redevelopment.

Mr. Black mentioned that in 2005, CJP Architects obtained an amendment to the CD-1 By-law to permit replacement of, and addition to, existing student facilities, including a new Senior School building, below-grade parking and a performance arts centre. The current CD-1 includes maximum heights, floor area and other regulatory parameters, which this proposal follows. The 2005 approval also established a form of development, which the proposal generally follows. However, there are two areas that have been changed, including the use of a flat roof form instead of the original low-pitched form, and the projecting lip on the top floor the proposed building.

Mr. Black indicated that the Vancouver Green Building Strategy forms part of the proposal, and the applicant is required to develop sustainable design to minimize the impacts of buildings on the local environment, as well as a commitment to improving energy, water, wastewater, stormwater and material conservation.

Mr. Black also mentioned that the landscape approach has been reconsidered from a structural expression with vertical elements towards Alexandra Street, to a more subtle approach. As well, there is a general desire to avoid repeating the low-pitch hip roof forms in the original application, in favour of an architectural language drawn from post-war modernism.

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

- Considering the intent at rezoning to transition to the nearby single-family context, and form of the existing buildings, are the projecting fins and walls at the corners the appropriate resolution?
- Looking at the grading, architectural expression and landscape approach of the Alexandra entry, its function as the main entry from the west, and the previous design, does the Panel have any comments on new proposal for the entryway?
- Considering the projection of the roof deck overhang relative to the form at rezoning and the range of solutions to solar gain, such as lower level screens, would the projecting lip shown on the model benefit from further development?
- Given the intent for a durable, owner occupied building, and broader civic goals for more sustainable development, is there an opportunity for more sustainable design at the roof level?

Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Mark Ostry, Architect, described the proposal and reminded them that the Panel had reviewed a similar proposal in 2004. He explained that the Panel thought the infill should not mimic the expression of the existing forms and recommended a simple form, with flat roof and a well proportioned structure. They also recommended a covered connection between the buildings, and more use of natural light. Mr. Ostry noted that the overall form of development is very similar to the previous design but the design is now contemporary in character and more reflective of west coast modernism. The forms have been simplified, and there is a flat roof, and as well, the porte-cochere has been removed that was in the previous proposal. He noted that they have integrated interior connections to the rest of the campus, and as well have integrated a central skylight atrium into the new Senior School. They will be using the Green Building Strategies as educational elements in the design. The main idea for the new building is that it is the gateway to the campus. Mr. Ostry noted that the existing Senior School will be demolished to make way for the new building, and the intent is that there is a new identity for the school. The lower level at the entry has been designed for outdoor social spaces and weather protection. In order to reduce the apparent scale of the building, they have recessed the top floor. Mr. Ostry described the material palette noting the use of textured concrete combined with wood, glass and basalt stone.

Susan Ockwell, Architect, described the sustainability strategy. In terms of passive solar control, there will be vertical sun shades on the east and west elevations. As well, the west façade will have some deeper overhangs. The building will use heat recovery along with daylight harvesting. A rain garden is proposed for the front of the building that will lesson the amount of water going into the stormwater systems. Mr. Ostry noted that they had originally planned for a green roof but the school doesn't want the children to have access to the roof and it was also a budget consideration.

Margot Long, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans. She noted that the landscape is compact and similar to the rest of the campus. There is a running track incorporated at the front of the building. There is a large existing laurel hedge that will be cut back in one small location. A custom made harvest table is planned for the front entrance for a social gathering space. A green wall provides a backdrop for art work, and provides screening to the loading and garbage area. A small native shade garden is planned at the back, with an overlook from some of the classrooms and the staff room.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- The Panel had no substantial aspects needing improvement.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a simple and elegant project.

The Panel agreed that the applicant had found a simple resolution to a complex site. One Panel member noted that the existing campus wasn't well organized and that the new addition will help resolve the plan layout. The Panel didn't think there was a problem with the transition from the school to the single family houses across the street. One Panel member noted that the Alexandra Street entry was muted and could be punched up a bit. A couple of Panel members suggested stepping back the corner wall on the second level to soften the transition to the gable roof forms.

One Panel members suggested the applicant revisit the sunlight and glare impact on the open space and also suggested adding more skylights in some of the rooms.

The Panel supported the landscape plans but several Panel members thought it was regretful that there wouldn't be a green roof, noting that over time, the roofs could be useable outdoor space, and suggested they be designed to handle being used in the future. They also thought the amphitheatre was a great idea, although one Panel member was concerned that the slope might not accommodate wheelchairs.

The Panel supported the sustainability strategy and thought it was well done.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Ostry thanked the Panel for their comments which he said he very much appreciated.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.