

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: July 15, 2009

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Martin Nielsen, Chair
Mark Ostry
Bruce Haden (Item #1 & 2)
Maurice Pez
Gerry Eckford (Excused Item #2)
Jane Durante (Excused Item #1 & #3)
Douglas Watts
David Godin

REGRETS:
Richard Henry
Oliver Lang
Steve McFarlane
Vladimir Mikler

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	111 Princess Avenue
2.	6708 to 6776 Granville Street
3.	2321 Scotia Street (The Elyse)

BUSINESS MEETING

The Panel met for a short business meeting prior to the presentations. Chair Nielsen called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There being no New Business the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 111 Princess Avenue
DE: 412949
Description: Social and Supportive Housing project.
Zoning: DEOD
Application Status: RZ/DE
Architect: GBL Architects Group Inc.
Owner: City of Vancouver
Review: First
Delegation: Tom Bell, GBL Architects Group Inc.
Amela Brodar, GBL Architects Group Inc.
Pawel Gradowski, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects
Staff: Michelle McGuire/Anita Molaro

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Michelle McGuire, Rezoning Planner, introduced the project for a concurrent rezoning and development permit application. The site is one of the fourteen city-wide supportive housing sites and is currently zoned DEOD. The rezoning application is to add additional height and density beyond what is permitted under the zoning. The zoning will be undergoing a comprehensive review as part of the implementation of the Downtown Eastside Housing Plan. The zoning for the sub-area (sub-area 4), describes a medium density mixed industrial-residential area, appropriate for small scale, light industrial and residential uses.

Anita Molaro, Development Planner, further described the project. The application is for a ten-storey building comprising 139 units of non-market residential housing and associated administrative and amenity space, loading and parking. Ms. Molaro noted that the housing goals for the area are to retain and provide new affordable housing for the area and to increase the proportion of self-contained dwelling units through both rehabilitation and new construction. Commercial goals for the area are to improve the viability of commercial activity by encouraging the upgrading of existing uses and the development of new commercial uses which serve both local residents and the working population in the area.

There are emerging directions for the area that include providing a focus to Princess Avenue through programming and capital improvements to transform the street into a Children's Interpretive Walk. The route has been identified as a place for children and family through art, interactive signage, and improvement to traffic safety and programming based on the culture and history of the area. The direction also includes developing Princess Avenue as a pedestrian-oriented corridor emphasizing neighbourhood connection from north to south.

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

Rezoning Development Application:

- Does the form of development (form, height, density) support taking into consideration the emerging policy directions of the DEOD and Princess Avenue?

Other comments:

- Overall building design/character including resolution of the various massing and elevation components, and responses to their various orientation
- Ground floor interface with street frontages
- Livability of the units
- Design of the open space and street edges
- Sustainability attributes

Ms. McGuire and Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Tom Bell, Architect, further described the project noting the architecture will be a contemporary design. The proposal consists of a seven and ten storey building with parking at grade. There are 139 units planned with 39 units for transitional supportive housing and 100 units of permanent supportive housing. Mr. Bell described the proposed materials and colours planned for the project. As well, he described the proposed sustainable measures noting the shading system, the solar panels and heat exchanger.

Pawel Gradowski, Landscape Architect, further described the landscape plans. There are three existing trees on Alexander Street that will be maintained. Three planters and some smaller trees are proposed for the front of the building. Mr. Gradowski also described the plans for the patio on the third floor noting the benches, plantings and trellis. On the seventh level there is a view to the north and they have created a viewing platform. There are also some planters around the edge and urban agriculture is planned. He also noted that the landscape will be irrigated.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to improve how the building meets the ground;
 - Design development to express and reinforce street character of 'children's walk';
 - Design development to ground floor amenity space to increase transparency and engage public;
 - Consider adding more colour to the façade;
 - Consider a north-south facing orientation to the building.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and commended the Planning Department for combining the rezoning with the development permit application.

The Panel supported the form, height and density noting there was a need for more social housing. They also said they would support a higher, denser project. One Panel member noted that the design was contemporary in context with other buildings in the neighborhood and felt that as long as the building was of a high quality, diversity was a good thing.

Several Panel members thought the higher block should be rotated to the south. They also thought that some type of use that engages the community would be better suited to the ground floor and that it should have some transparency. A couple of Panel members noted that the south elevation lacked some articulation as there are no windows on the vertical form. Also, they felt that more resolution was required on how the building meets the ground as there is an awkward transition between the streetscape and the building.

Several Panel members thought the livability could be improved if the units faced north and south. They thought the units were well designed considering their size and they thought the handicapped units were also well handled.

Several Panel members said they supported the strong colour on the building but were concerned with the amount of grey being used. They suggested adding more colour to the facade. The Panel agreed that the use of the amenity spaces were well handled. A couple of Panel members didn't think the children's area was being expressed enough on Princess Avenue. Another Panel member thought the use of metal on the laneway might not be durable.

Regarding sustainability, most of the Panel thought the orientation should be north and south. They also agreed that the terminology of carbon neutral was misleading and suggested that the applicant not use that description and that the applicant should describe the sustainable measures being implemented in the application.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bell said they will be involved in having workshops with the neighbourhood regarding the idea of the Children's Walk as there is a lot of interest. He added that they will be looking at ways to enhance the building and that are intending to achieve LEED™ Gold.

2. Address:	6708 to 6776 Granville Street
DE:	RZ
Description:	To develop 3-storey row-houses with underground parking.
Zoning:	RS-1 to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	Formwerks Architectural
Review:	First
Delegation:	Jim Bussey, Gerry Eckford
Staff:	Nicky Hood/Ann McLean

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-0)

- **Introduction:** Nicky Hood, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a site on the east side of Granville Street near West 52nd Avenue. The site is currently rezoned RS-1 and is comprised of three large lots. To the north-south and the east of the site the zoning is RS-1 and to the west on the other side of Granville Street, the zoning is RS-6. The application is requesting a rezoning from RS-1 to CD-1 to allow for the development of 36 row houses.

The site is located within the Arbutus Ridge/Kerrisdale/Shaugnessy Vision (ARKS) area. The ARKS Vision, adopted by Council in 2005, gives clear direction to locate new housing types on or near arterial streets and on large lots. This application conforms to both of those directions. The Vision gives some support for allowing row houses as a new housing type. As well, the rezoning policy provides the opportunity for Housing Demonstration Projects to be considered in advance of area wide rezoning of existing districts, in order to demonstrate new housing types that were either approved or received “uncertain support”, prior to implementing district wide zoning changes.

Ms. Hood noted that the application meets the Vision directions and policies for allowing a rezoning to demonstrate a new housing form, namely row houses, which is desired and tentatively supported by ARKS residents at a location approved by the community in the Vision document. Ms. Hood added that EcoDensity Action Item A-1 applies to the site. The applicant has submitted a BuiltGreen BC checklist which indicates the required Gold level will be achieved.

Ann McLean, Development Planner, further described the proposal noting that the design is for six row house forms and one duplex. The four buildings closest to Granville Street will have six suites while the rear buildings will have a traditional townhouse form. There will be a 24' wide courtyard between the townhouses with a 16' setback along Granville Street. Community gardens are planned for the courtyard and as well there will be a children's play area.

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

- Location and height of the proposed buildings with respect to the relationship to adjacent properties;
- Proposed form, particularly of the east buildings, 5 and 6, and their contribution to the courtyard experience;
- Design quality and quantity of open space provided on the site;
- Comments on retaining the existing stone wall; and
- Relationship to Granville Street.

Ms. Hood and Ms. McLean took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments: Jim Bussey, Architect, noted that they are providing choices for people that are in the surrounding neighbourhood. The area is comprised of

large homes and large lots and there is a real need for smaller accommodations that will allow for people to continue living in the area. Mr. Bussey said they had talked to neighbours who are looking to downsize but stay in the neighbourhood. As part of the neighbourhood demonstration they are providing nine ground oriented units. Regarding sustainability, they will be achieving Gold BuiltGreen with an EnerGuide 80 which fits the criteria for a neighbourhood demonstration project under the Arbutus Ridge, Kerrisdale, Shaughnessy (ARKS) Vision. Mr. Bussey noted that they are providing solar roof panels that will provide electricity but if they find that isn't workable they will at least be providing solar hot water from the roof panels. As well they are looking at providing a co-op car and will be roughing in the electricals in the car stalls for future electric cars. Documentation will be provided on the working drawings. Mr. Bussey described the urban design for the project noting their intention to provide a micro neighbourhood with a children's playground and a plaza. There will also be a tool shed and greenhouse for the community garden.

Gerry Eckford, Landscape Architect, noted the wall on Granville Street and asked the Panel for their comments on the alignment. He said they plan to emphasize the community courtyard and tighten up the arrival courtyard with a smaller gazebo at each end. There will be a space on the lane for a car share, and bicycle storage and garbage is just off the lane. The fire lane has a combination of permeable paving and grass paving. Mr. Eckford described the slope on the site noting that there is a three foot grade change. He also noted that they are planning to ramp some of the stairs for the units.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Encourage greater diversity of architectural expression and less repetition to break down the scale of the development;
 - Encourage greater innovation as a demonstration project;
 - Consider redesign of building 7 in relationship to the adjacent open space.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel was in support of the application and thought it was important to add diversified housing in all neighbourhoods. They thought the proposal was going to be a precedent setting project in the neighbourhood.

The Panel was in favour of the approach noting that it would be a demonstration project for the location. They liked the program and the diversity of housing types. They also thought it was a distinct design that would appeal to different demographics from families to seniors and would offer affordable housing.

In terms of the buildings and their relationship to the surrounding context, the Panel thought the height and massing was in scale with the neighbourhood and as well supported the form of development. Several Panel members suggested flipping the narrow row houses as they seem more urban and thought they should be facing Granville Street. One Panel member noted that heavier sound proofing might need to be added to those townhouses. The also noted that the third floor massing looked more like a manor house and should be further inside the site. This would set up more of a single family neighbourhood with different shapes and slightly different expressions to the homes. Another Panel member suggested cantilevering some of the townhouse over the parking garage to take some of the volume out of the public space.

The Panel felt it was a well designed development with lots of promise and a tremendous amount of open space. They felt that a well planned courtyard would be an important

focus of the project. One Panel member suggested rotating the buildings to increase the size and scale of the central courtyard.

The Panel liked the development strategy noting that underground parking had enormous amenity value. They liked the ground floor units and thought that given the type of people already living in the neighbourhood they would be the first to sell. One Panel member suggested adding more of this type of unit to the project.

Several Panel members thought the applicant planting a community garden for the owners to take care of was a great idea and would be important for the residents. The Panel supported retaining the wall along Granville Street and hoped the City would let the applicant leave it on the city property as they felt it was important to the neighbourhood.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bussey said he appreciated the comments especially regarding diversity of architectural expression. He noted that it was a rezoning application at this point and since the Vision document doesn't allow for this type of development, it will have to be a demonstration project.

3. Address:	2321 Scotia Street (The Elyse)
DE:	413025
Description:	To add to and alter the existing approved development permit DE410347.
Zoning:	C3-A
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Omni Group
Review:	First
Delegation:	Jim Hancock, IBI-HB Architects Brian Beresford, Durante Kruek Landscape Architects Beau Jarvis, Omni Group
Staff:	Dale Morgan

EVALUATION: NON SUPPORT (0-5)

- **Introduction:** Dale Morgan, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a residential development located on Scotia Street between East 7th and 8th Avenues in the C3-A Central Broadway District, sub-area of the Main Street and Kingsway neighbourhood. The proposal includes nine floors, townhouses at grade and 2 ½ levels of underground parking. The proposal is seeking a conditional density of 3.0 FSR and a height relaxation up to 96.8 feet.

In 2006 the Development Permit Board (DPB) approved a similar application for the site. The revised proposal maintains the same density, building height, materiality and enhancements to the public realm but with some changes to the building massing. Because of the similarity of the revised scheme to the previous Form of Development, staff has agreed in-principle to a shortened Director of Planning process rather than a full DPB review, subject to neighbourhood response, with the possibility of elevating the application to the DPB.

The previous Form of Development was reviewed twice by the UDP, with significant redesign for the 2nd submission. The previous applicant had hosted three open houses with the following primary concerns expressed by the neighbourhood:

- private view impact primarily from the Metro Vista Residents to the south, and
- shadowing, height and scale of the Form of Development relative to the adjacent low-rise RM-4 development.

View retention and height and scale relationships were critical factors in the shaping of the building massing. Staff will be requesting the view analysis be updated following notification and that an open house for the neighbourhood may be required.

Mr. Morgan described the zoning for the site noting that the outright height is 30 feet with no limits on discretionary increases in height. The site is bounded by East 7th and East 8th Avenue with Scotia Street to the west and a lane to the east. The existing buildings on the site have been demolished and the site has been prepped for construction. Mr. Morgan described the historic buildings in the area noting the Lee Building at the corner of East Broadway and Main Street. The site is in the historic Brewery Creek area and the Wellness Walkway extends along East 8th Avenue at the site's southern end.

Mr. Morgan noted that the proposal does not contain any specific sustainability measures and the previous 2006 application did not pursue LEED™ accreditation.

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

1. **Massing:** Does the revised massing fit well within its mixed context and successfully mediate issues of scale and height with its low rise neighbours?
2. **Architectural Expression & Earnings:** Is the architectural expression of sufficiently high quality to earn the requested increases of density and height?
3. **Livability:** Comments requested on the general quality of livability with specific comments on the inside corner units.

Mr. Morgan took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Jim Hancock, Architects, further introduced the proposal noting he was new to the project. The design has been changed to accommodate better floor plans with the building getting squared up into an "L" shape. Mr. Hancock noted some inaccuracies on the model which include the lack of slab extensions and the choice of colour. In general the foot print of the building is smaller with more open landscaped areas. The massing has been reduced and will have less of an impact on the neighbours and as well the scale of the 4-storey base helps to transition with the housing across the street.

Brian Beresford, Landscape Architect, noted that there wasn't much of a change to the landscaping. An amenity patio has been added on the back of the building and there are now private patios on the roof top. The streetscape, the Wellness Walkway and the parkette will remain the same.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to eliminate the privacy issues associated with the inside corner units of the building;
 - Reconsider the amenity space looking into the driveway;
 - Design development to give a more dominant expression of brick and horizontal datum;
 - Improved sustainable strategy is required;
 - Consider adding a green roof;
 - Design development to give the building the unique Mount Pleasant, Brewery Creek expression.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the proposal and in fact preferred the earlier submission for its stronger architectural expression and relationship to the surrounding neighbourhood.

The Panel thought the differences between the previous version and the new proposal was subtle in terms of how the building relates to the neighbourhood. They noted that the Mount Pleasant, Brewery Creek neighbourhood is a unique part of the city and they thought the proposal did not look like it belonged. In fact, they thought the building was better suited to the downtown south area of the city. They again stressed that the previous proposal looked more like it belonged in the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood with the horizontal parapet, more solid to window ratio and a higher perceived datum. They suggested the building should have a stronger brick expression to fit the heritage character of the neighbourhood. The Panel noted that the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood is distinctive with many artistic people and businesses.

The Panel felt the massing strategy on the first proposal worked better. They thought the massing didn't have the same strength in the current proposal and had lost some of the edge and energy. They suggested the building have less verticality and more horizontality

in its design. One Panel member stated that the overall massing although similar to the previous proposal had an attitude of playing too safe and not giving enough credit to the emerging market in Mount Pleasant. They also thought the massing should better reflect the lower scale massing across the street. They supported the townhouse space as well as the entry being on the corner of the building.

The Panel felt the livability of the inside corner units was problematic in terms of privacy and access to daylight. They agreed that the rest of the units had a variety of layouts and would work well in this current real estate market. The Panel also thought the amenity space looking onto the driveway was unfortunate and suggested it should face the south courtyard.

The Panel thought the landscape remained supportable with the parkette at the corner. The podium seemed to have lost some energy and was less exuberant. One Panel member suggested having roof top access and the rest of the Panel agreed that they would like to see a green roof rather than tar and gravel.

The Panel was very disappointed that there wasn't a sustainable strategy. They felt there was a higher expectation today and felt that the City wouldn't agree to the standards of three years ago just because the proposal was started that long ago.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Hancock thanked the Panel for their comments. He noted that he hadn't seen the previous model until that evening as he had just recently joined the design team and didn't disagree with the Panel that it was a better design. Mr. Beresford thanked the Panel for the comments regarding the landscaping. Mr. Jarvis said that his company is looking at having marketable units and will look at including more sustainable measures in the proposal.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.