

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: June 17, 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
Oliver Lang
Gerry Eckford
Jane Durante
Douglas Watts
Vladimir Mikler (excused Item #1)
David Godin (Item #3 only)

REGRETS:
Maurice Pez
Steve McFarlane
Richard Henry

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	3205-3221 West 41 st Avenue & 5590 Balaclava Street
2.	5208 Earles Street
3.	2681 Main Street

BUSINESS MEETING

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: 3205-3221 West 41st Avenue & 5590 Balaclava Street
- DE: N/A
- Description: To rezone this site from RS-5 to CD-1 to allow development of a 4-storey residential building designed for seniors on the south portion of the site. On the north portion, the application proposes to restore the “B” listed Knox Church and replace the church annex building.
- Zoning: RS-5
- Application Status: Rezoning
- Architect: Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture
- Owner: Emaar Canada
- Review: First
- Delegation: Gordon Gill, Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture
Adrian Smith, Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture
Mark Vaughn, Vaughn Landscape
Maurice Ouellette, Emaar Canada
Vladimir Mikler, Cobalt Engineering
- Staff: Michelle McGuire/Sailen Black/James Boldt

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Michelle McGuire, Rezoning Planner, noted that the site for this rezoning application is at the northeast corner of West 41st Avenue and Balaclava Street. The site is made up of four lots fronting on West 41st Avenue that currently have single family homes. There is a City lane to the north and the Knox Church site on Balaclava Street with the heritage ‘B’ listed church and the church annex.

The rezoning application proposes to rezone the site from RS-5 to CD-1 to allow development on the south portion of the site of a 4-storey residential building designed for seniors with services provided by a not-for-profit seniors’ society connected to the development. On the north portion of the site, the Knox church will be designated and restored and the church annex building at the rear of the church would be demolished and replaced

The site is located within the Dunbar Community Vision Area. The Vision contains a direction that supports housing projects committed to seniors for buildings up to four storeys, located near transit and shopping, provided the scale and design fit into the neighbourhood.

There has been significant commentary from the residents for the proposal. Some of the residents concerns include the modern character of the building as they feel it may not fit with the neighbourhood, the scale of the residential building, and the relationship of the church annex to the north neighbour.

Sailen Black, Development Planner, further described the proposal noting that the site is adjacent to the Kerrisdale Elementary School immediately to the east and single-family houses to the north. Across Balaclava Street, to the west are single-family homes with Crofton House School to the south, across West 41st Avenue. The site is situated along an

arterial road, making it more suited for added density than if the site were solely on a residential street. Mr. Black further described the zoning in the surrounding area. He noted that the intent of the RS-5 zoning includes maintaining the existing single-family character of the area with an emphasis on compatibility with the established streetscape.

The proposal includes the designation of the Church as a protected heritage building and demolition of the Fellowship Centre and houses that will be replaced by a new two storey wood frame meeting facility and a four-storey multiple dwelling containing 66 units. Mr. Black described the proposed design for the new residential building, noting that the applicant intends to achieve a LEED™ Gold rating.

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

- Architectural and landscape design;
- Setback along Balaclava Street; and
- How the proposal relates to the design goals for the area.

Ms. McGuire and Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Adrian Smith, Architect, further described the proposal noting that most of the units will have two views to increase the cross ventilation and daylight. All the units will have balconies or terraces. The courtyard or lobby space is the core of the project with access to the five elevator lobbies. There is an extensive roof top garden which includes urban agriculture and leisure space. Mr. Smith described the vehicle circulation and materials. The addition to the church will include a courtyard and will have a modern expression. Sustainability measures include providing sun shades and solar/thermal tubes on the roof that will provide hot water to the units. Mr. Smith they are also considering radiant floors. As well an alternative source of transportation will be provided with the use of shared cars and 100 spaces for bicycles.

Mark Vaughn, Landscape Architect, further described the landscaping plans noting the different treatments with a pedestrian character on Balaclava Street and a more active expression on West 41st Avenue. He added that there will be a lot of space created on the roof top with a green space amenity. Mr. Vaughn described the courtyard landscape plans for both the residential building and the church space.

Vladimir Mikler, Consultant, described the sustainable measures noting the compact form of the building will contribute to lower heating requirements. The building envelope will be beyond the minimum code requirements. Combined with efficient mechanical features will also be a geo-exchange system. The entire development is going to achieve a reduced eco-footprint.

John Scott, Architect, described the transition from the higher density adjacent to West 41st Avenue to the historical residential neighbourhood. Mr. Scott also described the evolution and history of the site. He noted that they are interested in reintegrating the monastic core of the site and bringing it back to its origins. He also described the restoration that is planned for the church and plans for the new fellowship building on the site.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to the courtyard in order to increase privacy and mitigate light spill from adjacent units;
 - Design development to improve traffic circulation on lane and access to parking;

- Design development to clarify character and detailing of church addition;
- Design development to differentiate environmental strategy/response of four facades;
- Consider adding a indoor amenity space with access to the proposed outdoor amenity space;

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal

The Panel expressed strong support for the proposal and thought the level of detail was well beyond most development permit applications (considering it is only a rezoning application). The panel recognized the project as setting a benchmark in terms of design quality and appreciated the win-win scenario of heritage revitalization, seniors housing and additional density on a major transit arterial. They also thought it was important that the application come back to the Panel at the development permit stage.

The Panel supported the use, density and form of development. They thought the landscaping was well done. It was suggested that the trees along the school edge need to be retained. One Panel member was concerned about the planters and thought there needed to be a plan as to who would take care of them.

Several Panel members were convinced that the setback on Balaclava Street was not necessary. They noted that setbacks define the neighbourhood but in this case there is urban, medium density housing adjacent to a public site and the setback to the church is more accentuated because the relation to the housing is more consistent.

The Panel was concerned that the addition to the church would depart from the historical aspect of the church unless the same quality of materials and workmanship were used. A couple of Panel members suggested the addition could look like it was built at the same time as the church while other members of the Panel thought it could be a contemporary addition that would add a further counterpoint to the neighbourhood.

The Panel appreciated the quality of the courtyard space and the increase in livability that it brought to the project. A couple of Panel members suggested that the courtyard could be larger. The Panel thought there was an absence of indoor amenity space considering it was a senior's housing project and that it was necessary to have a place other than the pool for the residents to meet socially. A couple of Panel members suggested the indoor amenity be adjacent to an outdoor amenity space. One panel member was concerned that the lane access beside the school would become a pedestrian short cut and could be a problem. A number of Panel members were concerned with the traffic side on the east side of the building and thought the circulation and access to parking could be reconsidered. One Panel member suggested there be a separate circulation for the church.

Several Panel members suggested the applicant rethink the children's play area on the roof of the day care centre next to the neighbour's yard.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Smith thanked the Panel for their comments. He said they would look at the traffic circulation. He also said he appreciated the comments on replicating the church in the new addition however; the Heritage Commission tends to not want new building looking like they were built at the same time as heritage buildings.

2. Address:	5208 Earles Street
DE:	412830
Description:	To construct a four storey building containing office and retail, with three levels of underground parking on this site.
Zoning:	C-2
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Jordan Kutev Architecture
Owner:	0782633 BC Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Jordan Kutev, Jordan Kutev Architecture Angela Bha, Fred Liu & Associates
Staff:	Sailen Black

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (1-6)

- **Introduction:** Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a building on the south-east corner of Kingsway and Earles Street. Mr. Black described the context for the site and the intent of the C-2 zoning and guidelines. He noted that among other items the guidelines recommend that designs should mitigate privacy and visual impacts on adjacent residential properties. He also described the massing and design for neighbourliness as stated in the guidelines.

The applicant is proposing a four-storey building with retail at grade and healthcare offices above. The proposed design includes a number of sustainable and decorative features including a variety of building forms using horizontal, vertical and diagonal alignments. The material palette combines painted concrete, curtain walls, window walls, storefront glazing, corrugated metal and metal panels with accent colours. Sunshades are proposed on the west and north sides of the building.

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

- reduced setbacks at grade and the fourth storey;
- proposed architectural and landscape design;
- especially as it relates to the design goals for the area; and
- pedestrian amenity.

Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Jordan Kutev, Architect, further described the proposal noting that the project started as a retail mixed-use with residential. After the change in the market, the application was withdrawn and a new one was submitted. He said they realized that there was a lack of medical office space in the area. The ground floor retail was designed to fit a drugstore and the office space can be subdivided into many different size spaces. The colour palette was designed to bring more colour to the neighbourhood. Mr. Kutev described the architectural plans for the building. He noted the loading and parking was accessed from the lane. There will be a lot of outdoor space including balconies on the south façade which have been designed to act as sunshades.

Angela Bha, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans for the proposal. There are currently three street trees on Earles Street and they plan to add another one. Decorative pavement is planned for the boulevard. On the second floor there will be an outdoor courtyard with trees. Hose bibs will be added for irrigation.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to the Kingsway frontage in order to simplify architectural expression;
 - Design development to resolve detailing of envelope and material palette;
 - Design development to improve pedestrian amenity including the resolution of the mast elements where they impede pedestrian movement;
 - Consider transparent window display boxes on the Kingsway retail frontage;
 - Improved sustainability strategy required, including facades which respond to orientation.

- **Related Commentary:** The panel did not support the proposal as they felt that although the building's architecture was exuberant, it was not an improvement or appropriate to the Kingsway area.

The Panel supported the reduced setback except for one member who did not support the reduced setback at the corner of the building. They appreciated the idea of creating some sort of animation on the sidewalk. The Kingsway frontage needs the most attention. One Panel member noted that there wasn't a signage package for the project and thought that should be addressed at this stage and not as an after thought. The Panel liked the window display boxes along the retail frontage as they will add animation to the street but they thought the display boxes also needed to be transparent.

Most of the Panel liked the exuberance in the design but were concerned with how it was being expressed. They felt the resolution hadn't gone far enough with one Panel member noting that there were too many design moves that were not integrated with each other. One Panel member suggested coordinating all the metal paneling to one type of colour and product to simplify the building. They Panel were concerned that the balconies may be removed from the design and they thought this might have a negative impact on the building. They thought people working in the building would appreciate being able to access the outdoors from their office space.

Although most of the Panel didn't have a problem with celebrating the corner, they felt the masts should be designed with some sort of intent with one Panel member suggesting they could be light posts. Several Panel members were concerned that the supporting element at the corner might be a bit of an impediment to pedestrians walking around the corner. Several Panel members suggested introducing colour to the party wall to make it dramatic and visible along Kingsway.

The Panel commended the applicant on the addition of trees on the building and in the streetscape along Earles Street however. They noted that trees on the west side would provide shading. One Panel member suggested softening the façade closer to the residential neighbourhood and to simplify some of the planting. A couple of Panel members suggested street trees could be added as well as benches and bike racks to the Kingsway streetscape.

Some of the Panel was concerned with the sustainability aspects as there was no target set for the project. The panel noted that the façade treatment was inconsistent with building orientation. There was also some concerned with the amount of glazing on the building as it could result in very high energy requirements and difficulties for the mechanical system.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Kutev thanked the Panel for all the comments noting that they would try to take them into consideration and simplify the design of the building.

3. Address:	2681 Main Street
DE:	412917
Description:	To construct a four storey mixed-use building with commercial at grade and 3 storeys of residential above.
Zoning:	C-3A
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Ankenman Marchand Architects
Owner:	Chi Hung Lee
Review:	First
Delegation:	Tim Ankenman, Ankenman Marchand Architects Julien Leger, Ankenman Marchand Architects Mary Chan Yip, DMG Landscape Architects
Staff:	Bob Adair

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-1)

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner, introduced the proposal to construct a four-storey mixed-use building, consisting of one level of commercial space and three levels of residential above, with one level of underground parking accessed from East 11th Avenue. The developer's intent at present is to retain ownership of the residential units as rental stock. Mr. Adair described the context for the area noting that as part of the ongoing Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Community Planning process the Legion building next door has been identified as having potential Heritage interest. As part of the enquiry process, the applicant hired a heritage consultant, Donald Luxton, and a Heritage 'Statement of Significance' was prepared. As a result the Legion building has now been accepted by the City's Heritage Group as worthy of being added to the Heritage Register.

With the Legion building therefore likely to remain in place, development of the corner site is challenging, and access to any parking and loading must come from the street. At the same time, Planning has been anxious to see a fairly substantial development on the site, one that can make a positive contribution to the character of Main Street, provide viable retail space at grade, as well as additional housing.

The proposal provides retail along the Main Street frontage, with access to one level of underground parking and a single Class A loading space from a 12 foot wide crossing off East 11th Avenue. The three storeys of residential development above are accessed by entries off Main Street and East 11th Avenue. The 12 dwelling units are arranged around an internal courtyard, and consist of flats on the second floor and mostly 2-storey townhouse-type units on the third and fourth floors. Because of the tightness of the site, and the decision to provide rental units, no elevator is being proposed. A vent stack to service the commercial units runs up through the southern portion of the courtyard.

Given the C-3A zoning, this project must be referred to the Development Permit Board for approval. Because of the challenges of the site, a number of relaxations are somewhat more numerous than usual:

1. FSR: The proposed FSR is 2.81, which exceeds the Outright 1.0 FSR permitted in C-3A, but is less than the maximum 3.0 approvable.
2. A reduction in the required rear yard and setback requirements from 10 feet on the main floor and 25 feet on the upper floors to zero. This regulation was written for standard sites where the rear of the site generally abuts a lane. In this case, the blank wall of the Legion building abuts the rear property line. A setback is not seen as necessary by staff, and provision of one would have a negative impact on the East 11th Avenue streetscape. However, because the Development Permit Board does not have

authority to relax these items, a Board of Variance appeal will be necessary, should the overall design receive support from the Board.

3. A relaxation of commercial parking from 3 spaces to zero. The proposed single level of underground parking provides the 12 spaces required for the dwelling units. Rather than going down another level the applicant is requesting a parking relaxation for the three commercial spaces. Staff also note that under upcoming proposed changes to the Parking Bylaw, the required number of spaces for the commercial units will be 2. An alternate solution might be to allow some sharing of the 12 spaces by residential and commercial users. Normally a handicap parking stall would also be required. Because an elevator is not required under the Vancouver Building By-Law however, and the applicant has chosen not to provide one, staff have agreed to consider relaxing the requirement for the handicap stall.
4. A relaxation of loading from one Class B space (typically 12 feet by 28 feet), to one Class A space, located behind the commercial space on the ground floor level. The City's Engineering Department is concerned about the reduction in loading capability, and would like to see two Class A spaces provided in lieu of the single Class B. Planning staff recognize the importance of loading, but are concerned about the further reduction of the size of the retail spaces. There is also an on-street shared loading space across East 11th Avenue.

Mr. Adair noted that planning staff are generally supportive of the application, as it provides desirable street level retail and residential rental units in the heart of the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood. The massing and materials chosen seem appropriate for the context and the applicant has dealt creatively with the challenges presented by a constrained site.

As this is a Development Permit Board application, Mr. Adair asked for the Panel's comments on the proposal's earning of the discretionary FSR, as well as general commentary on the other significant relaxations.

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

- Reduction of the commercial parking from three spaces to zero;
- Provision of a single Class A loading space (instead of 1 Class B or 2 Class A's);
- Provision of a 'zero' rear yard (instead of the 10 to 25 foot requirement); and
- From a design perspective, staff have some concern regarding the amount of light available to the ground floor units on the courtyard side and Mr. Adair said he would like the Panel's advice on whether some reduction in massing of the westerly units, and possible relocation of the proposed commercial vent stack, was advisable.

Mr. Adair took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Tim Ankenman, Architect, further described the proposal noting that he would be adding glass to the exit stair well. He noted that staff encouraged him to add the two units at the back of the courtyard but has decided that reducing those units would allow more sunlight into the courtyard. He noted that there are three retail units proposed for the ground floor and the current tenants in the existing building will be moving into the new space. Mr. Ankenman noted that an elevator is not planned for the building which will save a considerable amount of space as well as make for a more economic building.

Mary Chan Yip, Landscape Architect, noted that the area was updated with new paving along Main Street. They will maintain the look and will be adding a couple of new street trees along Main Street and East 11th Avenue. As well, Ms. Yip stated that a bike rack and

bench will be added along the front. The courtyard will contain greenery and a large feature tree.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Relax the commercial parking to zero;
 - Relax the Class A loading to one space;
 - Relax the rear yard setback to zero;
 - Consider reducing the size of the suites at the back to allow for a larger courtyard;
 - Consider reducing the number of residential parking spaces;
 - Design development to resolve conflicting design expressions on street facing facades; and
 - Design development to better integrate the commercial vent stack.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the application and acknowledged the design team for putting a lot of building on a tight and challenging site. The panel also commented that City policy needs to acknowledge and support the kind of incremental growth and infill that this project represents.

The Panel supported the relaxations regarding the commercial parking, reducing the Class A loading space and allowing for a reduction in the required rear yard setback. The Panel thought the loading space was not necessary as they thought it would be a burden on the building to ask for two single Class A parking spaces. However they Panel did feel that garbage pickup would need to be sorted out as there isn't a lane.

Several Panel members suggested maximizing the FSR and that the building should be slightly higher to address the height of the neighbouring building. The Panel suggested reducing the depth of the south-facing dwelling units at the back in order to open up the courtyard, as this would improve the liveability by providing more sunlight into the courtyard and the other dwelling units.

The Panel also supported reducing the parking for the tenants noting that a number of people use transit or walk to nearby shops. They felt that the number of people owning cars in the neighbourhood was low as people don't expect to drive to the grocery store. One Panel member suggested that the bike storage should be moved closer to the parking entrance noting that a lot of people use bikes in the neighbourhood. Also the Panel member suggested adding bike racks on the street. Several other Panel members suggested putting in more bike stalls and fewer car stalls.

The Panel thought the vent stack for the commercial units could be reworked so that it is better integrated into the building. The Panel hoped that the mechanical equipment would not end up on the roof.

A number of Panel members thought the vertical expression of the south building façade was in conflict with the more traditional and appropriate, horizontal expression of the Main Street façade. One Panel member suggested adding brick detailing to add some interest to the façade.

Regarding the landscape, the Panel thought it was essential that the south-facing dwelling units be reduced in depth to allow for more light in the courtyard. One Panel member suggested reducing the landscape material and using a smaller and more transparent tree species. Another Panel member suggested the courtyard space could be a social area with an outdoor fireplace and barbeque.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Ankenman noted that the mechanical and garbage situations had been worked out with staff and are shown on the plan. He said they would look at reducing the size of the two units at the back to improve the courtyard. Mr. Ankenman said they weren't looking at adding any more FSR to the project.

ADJOURNMENT

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