

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: May 4, 2011

TIME: N/A

PLACE: N/A

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Robert Barnes
Helen Besharat
Gregory Borowski
James Cheng
Alan Endall
Jim Huffman
Geoff McDonell
Arno Matis
Scott Romses (Chair)
Norm Shearing
Alan Storey

REGRETS:
Jeff Corbett
Jane Durante

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

| ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. | 2699 Kingsway |
| 2. | 5711 Rhodes Street |
| 3. | 540 West 7th Avenue |
| 4. | 4283 Fraser Street |

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Romses then called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. The Panel discussed the previous UDP meeting regarding Burrard Gateway. Also the Chair gave the Panel an overview of the Development Permit Board Meeting and the application that had previously been reviewed by the Panel. The Chair noted the presence of a quorum and they considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

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| 1. | Address: | 2699 Kingsway |
| | DE: | Rezoning |
| | Use: | To rezone the site to permit a 12-storey, mixed-use commercial and residential project in two buildings separated by a GVRD sewer right-of-way. The proposed height and density is supported by the Council-adopted Norquay Neighbourhood Centre Plan. |
| | Zoning: | C-2 to CD-1 |
| | Application Status: | Rezoning |
| | Architect: | W.T. Leung Architects Inc. |
| | Review: | First |
| | Delegation: | Wing Ting Leung, W.T. Leung Architects Inc. Henning Knoetzele, W.T. Leung Architects Inc. Gerry Eckford, Eckford & Associates |
| | Staff: | Paul Cheng and Alison Higginson |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (10-0)**Introduction:**

Alison Higginson, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a site in the 2600 block of Kingsway immediately north of Norquay Park. The site is currently zoned C-2 which permits a density of 2.5 FSR, with 2.15 being the maximum for residential use. The rezoning proposes a density of 3.80 FSR with approximately 3.5 of that residential use and 0.30 being commercial uses at grade. C-2 permits a maximum height of 45 feet and the requested height for the rezoning is 118 feet in the 12-storey component of the project. Ms. Higginson noted that the uses proposed are either outright or conditional approval uses in C-2.

In terms of policy that would support consideration of a rezoning, the site is located within the Norquay Village Neighbourhood Centre planning area and specifically within the Kingsway Rezoning Area. Council adopted the Neighbourhood Centre Plan in November 2010 and this site was identified as one of several special sites on Kingsway where height and density of 12-storeys and a maximum 3.8 FSR could be considered in order to achieve public benefits. Ms. Higginson noted that the application proposes to achieve those maximums.

In terms of other rezoning policy, the Neighbourhood Centre plan proposes several "area" rezonings to increase housing capacity in Norquay. The blocks across the rear lane from Kingsway are indicated as Transition Zones, where low-rise apartments, being three to four storeys will be permitted to provide a physical transition from the larger buildings expected on Kingsway to the ground-oriented housing in the surrounding blocks.

Paul Cheng, Development Planner, further described the proposal noting that this area of Kingsway is envisioned to be the central, local commercial street for everyday shopping, services and community life. There will be a new variety of ground-oriented housing options off Kingsway as well as new mid-rise housing options. Also planned is better pedestrian comfort with wider sidewalks through setbacks, traffic calming with an increased pedestrian network. This will include

mid-block lighted pedestrian crossings and mid-block pedestrian connections for existing long blocks.

Mr. Cheng noted that the new Kingsway developments will come in primarily through the Rezoning Policy and will have a typical 10-storey pattern with potential mid-block buildings that are at 12-storeys, as well, two gateway sites of 14-storeys and the redevelopment of the 2400 Motel site with sixteen and twelve storey mid-rises.

The application is for a 12-storey building that also incorporates a lower 4-storey and podium element. Mr. Cheng noted that the Norquay Plan calls for a well-articulated sense of place and identity that is achievable through a consistency in material treatment. It should also have a rich public realm and that the buildings convey the unique attributes of the area including Kingsway's unique oblique orientation with the rest of the city's grid.

Mr. Cheng described the framework for the Panel and asked them to consider how the project performs with respect to three general views. The long-view is the building's silhouette within the skyline including its view at night. The mid-view is the building's fenestration patterns, play of natural light on the facades, sense of enclosure to the public realm and the visual composition of the building elements. The short-view includes the expression of the unique site qualities, activation of public spaces, the interface with the sidewalk, materials and craftsmanship.

Mr. Cheng noted that all the properties that are flanking off of Norquay Park will also be zoned into a new district schedule for a 4-storey apartment zoning similar to the transition zone.

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

- How comfortable is the public realm in terms of patio café type of activities;
- How the project fulfills good place making (unique attributes of the area);
- How the project performs with respect to the views.

Ms. Higginson and Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Henning Knoetzele, Architect, further described the proposal noting the massing of the building was informed by the right-of-way splitting the site in half. He noted that it is a shallow site. The 4-storey portions are expressed as a second building which is a more playful design than the brick building. Mr. Knoetzele described the shadow impacts on the site next door which currently houses a daycare. Wing Ting Leung, Architect, noted that they had made the courtyard wider and wrapped it around to the back of the site. As well the residential entry will be located off the courtyard.

Gerry Eckford, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans noting that any views from Norquay Park are filtered through trees up towards the site. There is a strong axis along the pedestrian edge that goes into the courtyard. They are also going to provide a new streetlight system for a pedestrian activated crosswalk across Kingsway. A double row of trees will be placed along Kingsway. He noted that the courtyard will get a lot of sun and will have lots of room for seating. On the lane there is a green screen element running along the walls to bring a stronger landscape to the rear of the project. Urban agriculture is planned with a green house on the roof of the 4-storey building.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Consider moving the garbage room from the courtyard area;
- Design development to have the project better address the unique confluence of two street grids;
- Consider moving the amenity room to the roof of the 4-storey building and adding a deck;
- Design development to expressive a passive sustainable strategy in the façade.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the application and thought the massing had a simple, confident approach.

The Panel supported the use, height and density and thought that in terms of wayfinding, there would be a great view from Norquay Park to the site. The Panel thought the height of the 12-storey brick building would make for a focal point on the park and they liked the way it, and the low-rise building, had been defined. They also liked the courtyard and supported the public realm treatment and appreciated the widening of the sidewalks. The Panel thought it was unfortunate that the garbage room fronted the courtyard and suggested it be relocated. One Panel member suggested that moving these rooms could give more space for retail or it could be a residential unit.

The Panel thought the project didn't acknowledge the unique Kingsway grid very strongly and suggested some improvements to the courtyard to make it more fluid. They appreciated the bold simplicity of the design, but emphasized that how the brick and glazing was handled could make for a powerful expression.

A couple of Panel members had some concerns with the lower building to the east as there might be an overlook issue from the adjacent tower. One Panel member suggested adding some landscaping on the roof. A couple of Panel members thought the 4-storey building could be higher to improve the orientation noting that 4-storey massing was an architectural response that is seen often.

The Panel thought the residential entry on the plaza helped make it successful. A couple of Panel members would like to see more roof top space for outdoor amenities, with one Panel member suggesting the interior amenity space could be relocated to the roof level of the 4-storey building adjacent to an outdoor deck. One Panel member thought the way-finding through the courtyard could be improved as people walk through it to indicate as to where it will lead as there is no indication of the future walkway. They also thought the concrete bench and signage was an unfortunate way to handle the arrival and visual impact to the courtyard, with one Panel member suggesting adding more greenery. The Panel thought the double row of trees on Kingsway would enrich the public realm.

Regarding sustainability, a number of Panel members thought the buildings didn't respond to their orientation as they were all treated the same, and there wasn't any evidence of a passive strategy expressed in the design. They were not confident that the applicant would be able to score enough energy points for a LEED™ Gold building.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Leung thanked the Panel for their refreshing comments and that they had addressed some of the concerns. He added that he thought the suggestions were helpful in developing the design.

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| 2. | Address: | 5711 Rhodes Street |
| | DE: | Rezoning |
| | Use: | To construct a 4-storey mixed-use building with commercial uses on the ground floor and three levels of residential above all over one level of underground parking. This application is under the STIR program. |
| | Zoning: | C-1 to CD-1 |
| | Application Status: | Rezoning |
| | Review: | First |
| | Architect: | W.G. Architecture |
| | Owner: | West Fraser Collingwood Development |
| | Delegation: | Wojciech Grzybowicz, W.G. Architecture Yuri Afanasiev, W.G. Architecture Jenny Liu, JHL Design Group Inc. |
| | Staff: | Navjot Sandhu, West Fraser Collingwood Development Sailen Black and Grant Miller |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-4)

Introduction:

Grant Miller, Rezoning Planner, introduced a concurrent rezoning and development permit application for a C-1 site at the corner of East 41st Avenue and Rhodes Street. The rezoning is to allow the development of a 4-storey mixed-use building with commercial at grade and guaranteed market rental residential units above. Mr. Miller described the Policy Context noting that the site falls within the Victoria Frasersview Killarney Vision Area and the application was made under STIR (Short Term Incentives for Rental Program). The STIR program was adopted by Council in June 2009 and provides incentives for the private development of guaranteed rental units. These incentives include: DCL waiver for rental units; parking requirement reductions, and additional density granted when consistent with policy and demonstrated attention to urban design.

Mr. Miller noted that the application was received in January of this year and at the date of application, the City's Green Buildings Policy requires LEED™ Gold equivalency with a minimum of sixty-three points, including six energy points, one water efficiency point, one stormwater management point, and registration of the development.

Sailen Black, Development Planner, further described the project, noting that the site is immediately south of the Norquay community boundary and one block west of Earles Park, on the southwest corner. There is a lane dedication along the south edge with an open lane to the west.

Mr. Black noted that it is a complete application for a 4-storey building with retail on the ground floor and three floors of multi-family residential above. The existing zoning is intended to support small-scale convenience shopping for the local neighbourhood. Mr. Black described the context for the area noting that there aren't any plans to change the zoning on the south side of East 41st Avenue.

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

- Interface with the public realm and private properties nearby;
- Transition along the Rhodes side to the single family house neighborhood; and
- Architectural expression such as articulation, details, colour, and materials.

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

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Wojciech Grzybowicz, Architect, further described the proposal noting the building steps down towards the single family homes across the lane. They have proposed some screening along the ramp to the parkade as well vines on top of the ramp screening elements. The commercial uses are facing East 41st Avenue. Mr. Grzybowicz described the materials and the colour palette. He noted that they are using horizontal elements to break down the scale of the building. The proposal consists of three storeys of apartments for a total of 33 units.

Jenny Liu, Landscape Architect, described the proposed plant selection for the project including the landscape treatment on the trellis element alongside of the ramp to the parkade.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Design development to the architectural expression to improve the transition of the other three facades onto the west façade, such as making the west facade less two-dimensional;
- Consider replacing a CRU space for an indoor amenity space at grade;
- Consider making the undeveloped laneway part of the project through cleaning up and re-landscaping with urban agricultural or planting with native plants;
- Consider adding street trees along East 41st Avenue and perhaps in the dedicated laneway as well; and
- Consider higher quality materials at grade to improve the public realm.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thought the density and height was well handled.

The Panel had some concerns regarding the viability of the retail noting that the use and expression on the street implies that it would be small scale retail and the Panel didn't see that working very well. They felt the applicant needed to clarify how the retail informs the public realm along the street. One Panel member suggested turning one of the spaces into an amenity space for the residents, especially given the retail viability concerns. They liked the simplicity of the plan but felt there was an abrupt two-dimensional transition to the west and suggested having the residential qualities on the south continue around to the west. Several Panel members thought the architectural expression seemed heavy and thought it could be less commercial looking.

The Panel liked that the building stepped down to the single family residential neighborhood and thought the transition was successful. Some of the Panel liked the elevation on Rhodes Street but thought some trees should be added in the boulevard.

There was some concern regarding the livability of the residential units along the lane as they thought they might be dark. One Panel member suggested some more attention to the outdoor space was needed. Another Panel member supported the residential unit on the main floor but suggested the bedroom should face south. The Panel thought the ramp was reasonably well handled but there were some concerns regarding access to the loading. One Panel member noted that it was a small spot and might be hard to have vehicles move in and out of the area.

The Panel thought the landscaping was working well with the buffer to the residential on the lane although there was some concern regarding the undeveloped lane becoming a “no man’s land”. One Panel member noted that considering the amount of density being asked for, whether there could be some way of landscaping or handling the lane to improve it, and to see that it was maintained. Another Panel member suggested using the undeveloped lane for urban agriculture as a community benefit. Also, the transition planting on the south needed to be native plants or plants that could support a bird habitat. A couple of Panel members suggested additional vertical landscaping on East 41st Avenue and thought some street trees would be appropriate. One Panel member thought the separated sidewalk was a mistake and would reduce the viability of the retail. Also, landscaping on the decks needed work as the planters on level two should be completely filled in to make for a privacy screen between the units.

Some of the Panel liked the red colour palette but a couple of Panel members thought the blues were too dark and could be lightened up a bit. However, there was some concern with the materials especially the Hardi panels with most of the Panel stating that the aluminum transition was a poor way to detail the panels. It was suggested that higher quality materials be used at grade to help with the public realm.

The Panel was disappointed with the sustainability strategy and suggested additional shading devices on the south and west facades as the solar heat gain had not been addressed.

Applicant’s Response:

Mr. Grzybowicz thanked the Panel for their comments and said he agreed with them regarding the approach to colour. He noted that there are a number of commercial buildings across the street and thought the retail would be viable in the proposal.

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| 3. | Address: | 540 West 7th Avenue |
| | DE: | 414388 |
| | Use: | To construct a 10-storey building with two levels of underground parking with retail at grade and 49 dwelling units on the 2nd to 10th floors and three townhouse units off West 7th Avenue. |
| | Zoning: | C-3A |
| | Application Status: | Complete |
| | Review: | First |
| | Architect: | W.T. Leung Architects Inc. |
| | Owner: | Yuanheng West 7th Dev. Ltd. |
| | Delegation: | Wing Ting Leung, W.T. Leung Architects Inc. Larissa Luko, W.T. Leung Architects Inc. Darren Swift, Durante Kreuk Ltd. |
| | Staff: | Dale Morgan |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-1)

Introduction:

Dale Morgan, Development Planner, introduced the proposal in the Fairview Slopes area to construct a 10-storey building with two levels of underground parking on West 7th Avenue between Cambie and Ash Streets. Retail/commercial space is planned at grade with 51 dwelling units. He noted that the applicant is seeking a discretionary increase in height from and outright of 30 feet to 100 feet with a 10% heritage density transfer. Mr. Morgan described the context noting that the area has a mix of social housing, residential, office and commercial uses. He also noted that there were a number of concerns including some proximity issues and respect for the light well in the social housing project so it is not shadowed. Mr. Morgan described the key aspects of C-3A as they related to the application. Originally the applicant had proposed residential at grade however any residential use in conjunction with commercial uses requires a 35 foot setback in C-3A precluding the possibility of having ground oriented residential at grade (townhouses). The applicant is proposing two commercial/retail units that are largely shaped by the location of the residential entry and the parking ramp. Mr. Morgan noted that there are no sustainable targets required in C-3A at present. Mr. Morgan stated that there are a number of issues that need to be addressed by the applicant including the height of the commercial space relative to grade, the floor to floor of 11 feet in the commercial, lack of weather protection along the street frontage, greater transparency on the commercial frontage and the colour palette for the exterior of the building.

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

- Density & Massing:** The application proposes a density of 3.0 FSR plus an additional 10% transfer of density from the heritage bank for a total density of 3.29 FSR. In addition there is a height limit to protect views of City Hall. Can this site absorb this extra density and is the massing well handled?
- Livability:** General comments of livability with particular regard to privacy impacts related to the shared garden space. Additional comments are requested on the proposed height of the small commercial/office space with a floor to floor height of 11 feet.
- Public Realm Treatment:** Commercial uses have been proposed for the ground level, although the context is varied with office, commercial and residential uses that transitions from the commercial precinct of Cambie Street to the residential enclave

west of Ash along West 7th Avenue. The applicant has chosen commercial uses, set back from the street with the residential entry in the centre, dividing the commercial uses into two smaller units. Comments are requested on the public realm treatment interface between the commercial/retail uses and the street.

•**Material Expression:** Is the dark brick a good fit for the proposed massing relative to the surrounding context?

Mr. Morgan took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Wing Ting Leung, Architect, further described the proposal noting the office building to the west basically has no street access and is about a foot above the sidewalk. He said his preference would be to have townhouses but understands that the zoning doesn't allow for commercial on one side with townhouses. The light well on the neighbouring building is unusual so they have tried to pull the building as far away as possible to get some separation.

Darren Swift, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans noting the fairly narrow garden with screening so that the community can enjoy the space. He agreed that they would work on improving the planters along the sidewalk to get more direct access into the building.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Design development to the east commercial unit;
- Design development to improve the overall expression of the buildings;
- Consider the addition of outdoor amenity spaces on the tower roof;
- Consider demonstrating energy reduction intentions more clearly.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thought the density, height and massing was appropriate for the site although some of Panel members thought the density could be reduced to improve the building's expression, and that the density proposed was what seemed to be the limit that the site could support. Their concern was related to both the perceived bulk of the tower mass as well as what was considered an abrupt resolution to the tower's top. The applicant was urged to look at measures to lighten the tower bulk at its top floors to improve how it meets the sky.

Several Panel members had some concerns regarding the retail at the eastern end of the project. It was suggested that the external expression seemed more like a townhouse expression and thought the applicant should take another look at the design. One Panel member noted that there didn't seem to be any place for signage. Also, a couple of Panel members thought the floor to floor height on the ground floor needs to go higher.

The Panel agreed that there wasn't any liveability issues considering it was an urban context. They thought there was enough amenity space that was useable. The Panel thought the public realm was a bit weak with the lack of weather protection although one Panel member thought the weather protection would be at the expense of the landscaping.

The Panel supported the dark coloured brick and thought it was a nice contrast within the frames, and the overall problematic neutral colour of the Vancouver skyline. One Panel member thought more "sparkle" and a less-predictable vocabulary could be added to the design to make a stronger contribution to the neighbourhood.

The Panel thought the planters seemed like a barrier in the public realm and should be moved to mask the ramp. One panel member suggested the applicant look at the size of the trees and the species as some of the trees might get too large for the space. The west deck seemed chopped up and other ways should be sought to improve privacy. A Panel member suggested opening up the amenity deck to the urban agriculture and another Panel member suggested greening the roof deck. As well a number of Panel members thought the tower roof could be made useable with the addition of an outdoor amenity or other uses.

Regarding sustainability, a couple of Panel members suggested in order to earn the density and height, the applicant could demonstrate energy performance strategies better in the building expression.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Leung thanked the Panel for their comments.

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| 4. | Address: | 4283 Fraser Street |
| | DE: | 414342 |
| | Use: | Proposal to construct a new mixed-use, 5-storey residential building with retail and office uses at the ground floor level, as permitted under C-2 zoning. |
| | Zoning: | C-2 |
| | Application Status: | Complete |
| | Review: | First |
| | Architect: | Cornerstone Architecture |
| | Owner: | 8th Avenue Development Group |
| | Delegation: | Scott Kennedy, Cornerstone Architecture Andres Vargas, Cornerstone Architecture |
| | Staff: | Ed Kolic, 8th Avenue Development Group Paul Cheng |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (10-0)

Introduction:

Paul Cheng, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a C-2 site with a four-storey ground floor retail space and three floors of residential above. He noted that there is a steep slope of about 20 feet across the property. Mr. Cheng also noted that C-2 is a classic zone that responds to an interface behind which is often a single family zone. As a result there are 20 foot rear setbacks required above the ground floor and another 15 feet for the floor above that. This project generally splits that setback requirement except for the proportion the applicant is seeking a relaxation on which is the north-west corner on the fourth level. He noted that privacy wouldn't be an issue as the residential unit behind doesn't have any windows on that side. The applicant has proposed three different uses: residential on the top three floors, retail at the front and a small office component above the garage.

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

- Issues of neighbourliness with respect to the relaxation being sought on the 4th floor.

Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Mr. Kennedy, Architect, noted that it was a challenging site with a huge grade change. However, they were able to take advantage of the slope with a 6-storey concrete and wood frame building. He noted that there will be a commercial stall off the lane and as well as a stall for a shared-use car. He said they wanted a different expression from that typically seen on a C-2 project, and came up with unifying the middle two floors with a light perforated metal screen. They plan on adding solar controls with overhangs on the south side. They had wanted to take the elevator to the roof and put a deck there but City staff turned them down. Mr. Kennedy described the colour palette and materials for the project. A coffee shop is planned for the corner of East 27th Avenue and Fraser Street with an outdoor patio area.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- The Panel had no substantial concerns with this proposal.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a creative and interesting design.

The Panel commended the applicant for their design and thought it was unique and an appropriate fit for this youthful neighbourhood. They noted that the rigidity of the screens would be important as well as the gauge. The Panel also wanted to make sure the applicant choose a metal that wouldn't rust or deteriorate over time. One Panel member suggested the screen could also take on other functions, such as wrapping horizontally into a canopy element or could become vertical solar fins on the west façade. They felt that the screen gave the building its identity and would like to see it be more powerful.

The Panel strongly encouraged staff to allow for the elevator up to the roof as they felt it would be a good place for an outdoor amenity space and as well suggested there be an FSR exemption for the space required to bring the elevator and exit stair to the roof deck. The Panel would also like to see staff exempt the bike room from the FSR as well.

The Panel commended the applicant for attention to the different faces of the building. They also supported the colour palette and materials. One Panel member was concerned with the coloured glass panels regarding how they would be cleaned and encouraged the applicant to make sure they were of a good quality.

One of the Panel members suggested making the top floor more of a penthouse expression with more glazing. Also there was some concern regarding the blank wall with one Panel member suggesting fast growing vines from the planters that would cascade down and reduce the appearance of the blank wall.

There was some concern regarding the big tree in the front and how it would be protected during construction. One Panel members suggested two trees could be planted if it was lost. The Panel would like to see roof gardens in order to contribute to community living.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Kennedy thanked Panel for their comments noting it had been a fun project to work on.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.