

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: November 2, 2011

TIME: N/A

PLACE: N/A

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Robert Barnes
Helen Besharat (left after 2nd Item)
Gregory Borowski
Jeff Corbett (left after 2nd Item)
Jane Durante (Excused Item #3)
Alan Endall
Jim Huffman (left after 2nd Item)
Arno Matis
Geoff McDonell (Excused Item #1)
Scott Romses (Chair)

REGRETS:
James Cheng
Alan Storey
Norm Shearing

RECORDING SECRETARY: Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

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| 1. | 1241 Harwood Street |
| 2. | 605 West 41st Avenue |
| 3. | 2215 East Hastings Street |
| 4. | 4892 Clarendon Street |

BUSINESS MEETING

The business meeting was called to order at 4:15 p.m. and the Chair advised the Panel that they will be meeting with the Director of Planning, Jon Stovell from Reliance Holdings and the Public Art Committee to find a solution to reduce the impact of the public art installations on the Pender Place tower.

Chair Romses then called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. The Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

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| 1. | Address: | 1241 Harwood Street |
| | DE: | 415100 |
| | Use: | To develop this site with a 17-storey multiple dwelling (containing 36 dwelling units) over one level of underground parking having vehicular access from Harwood Street and two detached parking garages having access from the rear lane. |
| | Zoning: | RM-5A |
| | Application Status: | Complete |
| | Review: | First |
| | Owner: | Claudia Deng |
| | Delegation: | Michael Heeney, Bing Thom Architects Dan Du, Bing Thom Architects Chris Phillips, Phillips Farevaag Smallerberg |
| | Staff: | Sailen Black |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)**Introduction:**

Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for this site containing a heritage listed house, the Legg Residence, and a large Tulip tree. Mr. Black described the context for the area noting the residential towers and low-rise developments. He also described the details in the policy for the area that included the View Protection Guidelines, allowable height and street character. Mr. Black stated that the preservation of the rare 118 foot Tulip Tree which is in excellent condition had been a central issue regarding the redevelopment of the site. He added that transfer of heritage density off site is not an option and the applicant considered a number of development options which the Panel had reviewed previously. The current application is for a 17-storey tower with small floor plates and a distinctive floor plan with offset rounded ends, and exterior open balconies shrouded by perforated steel screens mounted on curved tracks. As seen from the street, on the east portion of the site, there will be a landscaped terrace rising to the existing garden level. On the west side of the site, a portion has been excavated down to the sidewalk level to create an on-grade access to the underground parking towards the rear of the site. There will also be a reflecting pond at street level from which the tower rises. Mr. Black mentioned that the new proposal meets the guidelines for tower separation at the block face.

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

Panel comments were sought on the architectural and landscape design in general and in particular on:

- The balance of livability, including private views and natural light, afforded to the existing neighbours and future residents by the proposed form and siting of the tower.

- The proposed design of the landscape, including the streetscape edge, the excavation of the west portion of the site, hard surface, and driveway design.
- The character and design of the tower exterior, including the opacity or reflectivity of the movable steel screens, the composition of fixed glass elements, and the wraparound balconies.

Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Michael Heeney, Architect, described the proposal noting the previous schemes they had considered, and explained how they had ended up with the current proposal. In terms of the ground plane, there will be a drive-through courtyard that will open up the site to the street making the tree more visible. On the east side of the site is the original character of the historic garden which will be retained. The tower will have balconies on the west and south side with moveable screen panels made of stainless steel to provide shading. The building will have a geo-exchange system, green roof and other sustainable aspects.

Chris Phillips, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans and indicated that saving the tree had always been the objective for the site. In the tradition of the west end, there will be some parking garages on the lane with a green roof. The street trees will be preserved.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Consider further study of the proposed material for the moveable screens and exterior cladding;
- Design development to the auto-court to differentiate between pedestrians and vehicles.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was an improved scheme from the last review.

The Panel thought the architectural character of the building was well handled and very powerful. They also thought the largest issues of siting, neighbourliness, impacts of shadows, liveability both within the project and to its neighbours had been improved. Although the Panel thought it was unfortunate that the heritage house would be lost with the redevelopment, they felt the scheme made better sense on the site in the current proposal. A number of Panel members thought it was an iconic building and would set a new bar for the west end. They said that the power of the proposal was the tree in conjunction with the sculptural tower. They also supported the parking garages on the lane in keeping with the laneway parking common to the west end.

The Panel had some concerns regarding the stainless steel cladding, and thought it needed some careful study to make sure there isn't any glare. A couple of Panel members suggested using zinc for the material as it would be less reflective and would take on its own coloration and weathering over time. Some other Panel members thought something should be done that would help modulate the design especially on the broader surfaces. They also suggested that the applicant make sure the screens were moveable and useable as proposed, so they remain a dynamic part of the design.

A couple of Panel members thought that a different material should be considered for the base of the building and suggested exposing the heavy concrete work as they thought there might be too much metal already on the building.

The Panel thought the auto-court was a bit too austere and might be differentiated more with landscaping between cars and pedestrian zones. One Panel member suggested making the surface permeable to allow for some greenery to grow.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Heeney said that the Panel's comments were helpful and they would take them into consideration as they continue with the design. Regarding the cladding, he mentioned that they will be using an angel hair finish so there won't be any glare off the material. However, he said they were willing to do more due diligent regarding the material. He added that they have used the material successfully on other buildings. Mr. Heeney agreed with the Panel that the auto-court needed some more design development.

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| 2. | Address: | 605 West 41st Avenue |
| | DE: | 415119 |
| | Use: | To develop a 6-storey building with 91 residential units and one level of underground parking to be accessed by the lane. Senior's Assisted Living. |
| | Zoning: | CD-1 |
| | Application Status: | Complete |
| | Review: | First |
| | Owner: | Wertman Development Corp. |
| | Architect: | GBL Architects |
| | Delegation: | Stu Lyon, GBL Architects Senga Lindsay, Senga Landscape Architects |
| | Staff: | Pat St. Michel |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-2)

Introduction:

Pat St. Michel, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a 6-storey Senior's Supportive and Assisted Living building with 91 units on West 41st Avenue, across from Oakridge Centre. The site is also one block from the Oakridge 41st Avenue Canada Line Station, and is one of the Cambie Corridor proposals that began under the Interim Rezoning Policy. The proposal was previously reviewed by the Urban Design Panel as a rezoning in January 2010 and was supported. It was also approved at a Public Hearing in September 2010. Ms. St. Michel described the context for the area noting the Cambie Corridor Policy supports mixed-use developments from six to twelve storeys. Ms. St. Michel indicated that the key principles of the massing are to present a strong urban street edge to West 41st Avenue, and a softer transition to the neighbourhood behind, with a series of building steps that provide good solar access to the homes in this area. The lower storey steps in the massing to address the side streets and provide an intermediary scale. The roof top gardens provide outdoor amenity space and an opportunity for gardening for the residents. The courtyard created in the centre of the proposal provides drop-off, parking access, and outdoor amenity space adjacent to common areas. The central section of the development is setback significantly to break up the massing along West 41st Avenue, and a 1.8m dedication is being provided along West 41st Avenue to enable the creation of a new sidewalk, an off street bike path, and a double row of street trees.

Ms. St. Michel noted that at the previous review by the Panel, the consensus on key aspects needing improvement were for design development to create a more urban response and improved architectural character, and further design development of the landscape treatment to improve public open space. She described some of the landscape changes that have been made, including relocation of the loading from the courtyard to the lane to provide more useable outdoor space for the residents. Roof terraces have been redesigned to provide roof top gardening areas for residents, and an exterior seating area off the main dining lounge has been expanded on the SW corner of the building.

With respect to the architectural expression, Ms. St. Michel explained that the facades have been modified to a more horizontal proportion in the windows and paneling, particularly on the sixth level. Major canopies on the West 41st Avenue frontage now cantilever about six feet from the building face, and sun shades were introduced on the main level common spaces. A light brick colour is proposed on the projecting building faces whereas previously this material was a more traditional red brick colour.

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

- The architectural expression with regard to achieving a more urban response and contemporary character than at rezoning
- The amenity and usability of the common outdoor spaces and landscape.

Ms. St. Michel took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Stu Lyon, Architect, further described the proposal and mentioned that it predates the Cambie Corridor Plan and Guidelines. However it does come close to complying with the Guidelines with respect to the height and the stepping of the profile on the back of the building. He noted that it remains a straight forward project over five city lots. Mr. Lyon described the architecture noting the front formal entrance in the middle of the building, with a drop off in the back that is aligned axially with the intersecting lane. The amenity spaces are on the ground floor with dining rooms, kitchen and support spaces. Mr. Lyon explained that the units are slight larger with full kitchens. He added that there have been some changes, including the addition of another elevator (three in total), and the concrete elements in the back will be faced in brick. Also the colour of the brick has been lightened, and they will be using spandrel glass as a design element around the front. He also noted that yard space is somewhat restricted on the site and so they moved the loading space and set the building back making for more garden space.

Senga Lindsay, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans noting the changes since the previous review, including the addition of an amenity area where the loading bay was previously located. It will be a woodland garden with white flowering plantings. There will also be a sitting area adjacent to the eating area which is wheelchair assessable. There are common amenity spaces planned on the two levels at each end of the building that are adjacent to two residential units. In order to separate the private from the communal spaces there will be some urban agriculture using modular beds. As well bench seating storage is planned on each level for gardening equipment. Ms. Lindsay described the proposed plantings for the project.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Design development to the architecture expression;
- Consider adding more southern exposed outdoor space;
- Consider adding/increasing outdoor sitting areas around the entry and lounge areas;
- Design development to improve the scooter route.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal

The Panel thought there had been some serious improvements in the overall expression since the review at rezoning. However, there was a number of the Panel members who thought the building needed to be more contemporary. As well they thought the architecture would be better without the window-wall expression, as it is an old technology. It was noted by a couple of Panel members that the window-walls wouldn't meet the energy requirements in new buildings. As well several Panel members suggested editing the architecture to bring a simplicity and consistency to the overall expression.

Some of the Panel members thought the colours were a little muted, and thought there was an opportunity to be bolder with the spandrel colours to lift the spirit of the building.

Several Panel members thought it was a shame that there wasn't any outdoor space planned between West 41st Avenue and the building as they thought it would create a more urban space. One Panel member wanted to know where the future sidewalk would be located and suggested adding street trees between the old sidewalk and the future one. Several Panel members suggested moving some of the patios to the south side of the building for more sunlight. Also a couple of Panel members would like to see the lounge patio moved closer to the lane in order to get more sunlight.

Most of the Panel thought the amenity space was an improvement over the previous scheme. They also liked the layout and design of the lobby area and main entrance, but suggested adding some seating around the entrance. One Panel member thought there should be some weather protection on the roof top terraces. A couple of Panel members thought the scooter route could be improved so they didn't have to go into the laneway because of the loading bay obstruction.

Most of the Panel thought the applicant had addressed any possible shadow impacts on the neighbouring properties. One Panel member would like to see more parking for scooters, noting that seniors often stop driving when they move into these types of facilities and transition from car to scooter use. A couple of Panel members suggested adding green roofs to the lower canopy/roof portions of the building.

Applicant's Response:

Stu Lyon thanked the Panel for their comments and said they were looking forward to improving the project further.

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| 3. | Address: | 2215 East Hastings |
| | DE: | 415144 |
| | Use: | Proposal for a 4-storey residential/commercial building on this 98 x 122 ft site. STIR project. |
| | Zoning: | C-2C1 |
| | Application Status: | Complete |
| | Review: | First |
| | Owner: | 0807862 BC LTD |
| | Architect: | Jordan Kutev Architects |
| | Delegation: | Jordan Kutev, Jordan Kutev Architects |
| | Staff: | Garry Papers |

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (0-5)

Introduction:

Garry Papers, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a STIR housing on East Hastings Street. The site is near Pandora Park with a nice view northward to the mountains. It is currently a parking lot. The project proposes 37 units of STIR housing on three floors above a commercial ground level. There will also be 27 parking spaces below grade. It is located in the Hastings-Sunrise Vision area which supports housing above retail. It promotes “small scale commercial” along with activating the Hastings Street commercial character. As well it should be pedestrian friendly with connections to the sidewalk. The Engineering Department has implemented a street widening along Hastings Street, as a result, the project shows an additional six foot dedication. Engineering Services will allow the cantilever above the ground floor to get some of the floor area back while maintaining the more generous sidewalk experience. The lane elevation is packed with required services including parking access, loading space, transformer, garbage and shared car space. Staff feels that some of the stepping on the west façade is helpful in breaking up the planer features. The trellis along the lane helps to provide some scale and privacy layering to the units.

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

- Ground Floor Treatment to the west: consider dropping commercial floor slab to sidewalk grade at corner to promote streetscape and pedestrian activation.
- Massing and façade modulation: corner bay expression, compared with other bays; improved transition to lane; advice for composition along lane.
- Materiality and expression: more variation in material texture and/or type; added parapet height and/or shaping to bays to the enhance building profile.

Mr. Papers took questions from the Panel.

Applicant’s Introductory Comments:

Jordan Kutev, Architect, further described the proposal noting that they have added more colour to the design. The owner would like to have the opportunity to have one single slab rather than a stepped floor on the ground level.

Mr. Kutev took questions from the Panel.

Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Design development to improve the level of resolution in both colour and materiality
 - Consider dropping the retail floor level at corner and along side street
 - Consider moving the residential entry to Templeton Street
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Related Commentary:

The Panel thought the proposal was not at the level of a Development Permit application in terms of documentation and working out the details. They thought it was still at a concept level particularly the exterior expression of the project.

The Panel thought there was too much variation on the building with too many colors and no hierarchy in the expression. One Panel member noted that there was no real logic on how the color was used and where it was used. Another Panel member suggested adding wood or corrugated metal to offer some texture to the pre-dominant painted Hardi panels.

The Panel thought the grade change on the site could be improved by stepping the slab along Templeton Street to improve the retail connection to the sidewalk grades. One Panel member noted that the grade separation didn't work and seemed to be driven by the parking. It was noted the building will need to respond to a variety of tenants. Another Panel member suggested bringing the glazing up as high as possible on the retail to make the CRUs appear larger. Also the Panel thought the signage strategy needed to be revisited in order to get a better appearance on the building.

Most of the Panel thought the residential entry could be moved to Templeton Street to give it a greater sense of welcoming. One Panel member suggested adding another tree on Templeton Street and more on Hastings Street.

Applicant's Response:

None.

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| 4. | Address: | 4892 Clarendon Street |
| | DE: | 414880 |
| | Use: | To construct a new 5-storey mixed use building over two levels of underground parking with retail on the ground floor and 4 levels of residential multiple dwelling units above. |
| | Zoning: | C-2 |
| | Application Status: | Complete |
| | Review: | First |
| | Owner: | Jenkins Island Consultant Ltd. |
| | Architect: | Andrew Cheung Architects |
| | Delegation: | Andrew Cheung, Andrew Cheung Architects Francis Yau, Andrew Cheung Architects Mary Chan-Yip, DMG Landscape Architects |
| | Staff: | Marie Linehan |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

Introduction:

Marie Linehan, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a development permit application for a new mixed-use building. The proposal is for a corner site on Kingsway and Clarendon Street, one block east of Nanaimo Street in the Norquay Village neighbourhood. Ms. Linehan stated that the Norquay Village Neighbourhood Centre Plan was approved by Council on November 4, 2010. The Plan provides a policy framework for a revitalized Kingsway and for new housing choices in the surrounding neighbourhoods. Higher-density housing options are planned for Kingsway and for a transition area located directly behind (across the lane). On Kingsway, the Plan would allow for rezoning consideration for mid-rise, mixed-use buildings between four and eight storeys. The transition zone would allow for three to four storey low-rise apartment buildings to provide a physical transition from the taller buildings along Kingsway to the low-scale of the ground-oriented housing zones beyond.

Ms. Linehan described the context for the area and noted that the 2400 Motel site is across the street. The proposal is for a 5-storey building with commercial at grade and 4-storeys of residential above with a mixture of one and two bedroom units. Two townhouse units are proposed along with the residential entry on Clarendon Street. Ms. Linehan described the architecture noting the brick façade to the fourth storey which is intended to read as a substantial brick “screen” with the exterior wall of the building held back from the screen. Large rectangular openings are asymmetrically placed in the screen with open balconies in the interstitial space.

Ms. Linehan noted that there is a height relaxation being sought to allow for the fifth storey. The rationale for the height relaxation is related to the front setback. The typical C-2 front yard setback is two feet however Planning has encouraged the applicant to provide a larger front yard setback to allow for a wider public realm as a buffer from vehicular traffic impacts from Kingsway. This would also allow for an enhanced public realm with room for commercial patios and a double row of trees. The Director of Planning is considering the height relaxation as a result of the larger setback and will transfer floor area to a fifth storey. The fifth storey will be setback six feet from the storey below at the corner elevation and twenty feet from the rear property line to mitigate impacts on the existing residential development across the lane.

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

- the proposed height relaxation;
- the overall design, architectural expression and material palette as this is a conditional application.

Ms. Linehan took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Andrew Cheung, Architect, further described the proposal noting that the building will be setback twelve feet along Kingsway to make for a total width of twenty-one feet. The massing steps down from 5-storeys to the 2-storey townhouses and then to one storey. In terms of the exterior materials, they will be using brick and hardy panels.

Mary Chan-Yip, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans and stated that the street trees will reflect the new Norquay Village Design Guidelines. As well decorative paving is planned which will consist of a special banding of concrete paving and exposed aggregate. The old streetcar tracks will be symbolized in the sidewalk inside of the property line. Ms. Yip described the planting material and noted that a corner plaza seating area is proposed. The entries in front of the townhouses have been reinforced with planting and the back wall on the north side of the lane will have some vines to allow for greenery on the wall. The upper storey planters will help provide separation between the units.

The applicant team questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Design development to make for a more contemporary expression to the building;
- Consider making use of the roofs of the townhouses;
- Consider pulling back the fire wall exposed "wings";
- Consider taking advantage of and expressing the flat iron geometry at the corner from Clarendon Street to the lane;
- Include a strategy for signage;
- Consider adding more street trees.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a very nice building.

The Panel supported the height relaxation and thought the fifth storey was well deserved. They liked the way the building was setback on top and they also liked the way the applicant had dealt with the heavy brick screen. Most of the Panel supported the choice of materials and colour palette with one Panel member suggesting more brick could be added to the back of the building. Some of the Panel thought the building should have a more contemporary expression. The Panel also thought the suite layout was well handled.

Most of the Panel thought the firewall could be pulled back and as well they thought the roofs of the townhouses could be utilized either by raising them or making them simple green roofs. Several Panel members thought it was a shame that when the building turned the corner from Clarendon Street to the lane, that there wasn't a chance to take more advantage of the flat iron corner.

A couple of Panel members noted that the building had a nice transparent corner and then was interrupted by the flying brick spandrel which wasn't needed. However, they liked the expressed brick panels on the Clarendon Street facade. Several Panel members noted that the applicant didn't seem to have a signage strategy and thought that should be handled early on in the design stage so it was well incorporated into the façade.

Several Panel members suggested adding another street tree on Clarendon Street and as well to push the Engineering Department for an extra row of trees on Kingsway.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Cheung thanked the Panel for their comments. He said that he thought they could set back the fire wall. He added that they were looking for a robust approach to the design and that is why they choose a brick expression.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.