

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: August 22, 2018

TIME: 4:00 pm

PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Helen Avini Besharat  
Amela Brudar  
David Jerke  
Yijin Wen  
Colette Parsons  
Marie-France Venneri  
Leslie Shieh  
Derek Neale  
Jim Huffman  
Susan Ockwell

REGRETS:  
Grant Newfield  
Muneesh Sharma

RECORDING  
SECRETARY: Davin Fung

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### ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

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| 1. | 1535 - 1557 Grant Street |
| 2. | 1485 Davie Street        |
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**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Amela Brudar called the meeting to order at 4:11 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. After a brief business meeting the Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 1535 - 1557 Grant Street  
Permit No. RZ-2017-00076  
Description: To develop a 6-storey residential building consisting of 38 secured market rental units. The proposed floor space ratio (FSR) is 2.25. This application is being considered under the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan.  
Zoning: RM-4 to CD-1  
Application Status: Rezoning Application  
Review: First  
Architect: Stuart Howard, Stuart Howard Architects  
W. Neil Robertson, Stuart Howard Architects  
Owner: Gavin McLeod, Avera Properties  
Delegation:  
Staff: Michelle Yip, Rezoning Planner  
Susan Chang, Development Planner

**EVALUATION: RESUBMISSION****Introduction:**

Michelle Yip, Rezoning Planner, introduced the project as a proposal comprised of four parcels on the north side of Grant Street, 1.5 blocks west of Commercial Drive under the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan. The site is located within the Britannia-Woodland sub-area, which is anticipated to have a mixed-scale character that ranges from single-family houses to 10-storey apartment buildings, and will remain a neighbourhood that accommodates existing and new residents in affordable market rental housing. The surrounding area is currently zoned RM-4 and the Plan allows for consideration of 6-storey apartment forms containing rental housing.

In order to manage the initial take up of policies involving the demolition of existing rental housing in areas covered by the Rental Housing Stock ODP (which includes RM zoned areas), the Plan limits redevelopment of existing rental housing to no more than five developments in the first three years of the Plan, or a maximum of 150 existing market rental units. The five developments under this pace of change policy have been received, and there is currently a waitlist. Staff expect to report back to Council in 2020 on the rate of development and the outcome of activity. In short, no rezoning applications on sites containing existing rental housing in the RM zone will be considered until staff receive direction from Council in 2020. The proposal is for a 6-storey residential development containing 38 secured market rental housing units at a density of 2.25 FSR. The Plan allows for consideration of up to 2.4 FSR.

Susan Chang, Development Planner, introduced the site as located in the residential core of the Britannia-Woodland sub-area. The current zoning is RM-4 which permits medium-density residential development. Per the Plan, one of the Urban Design Principles for this area is to allow for a variety of building heights and scales within multi-family residential areas. As you can see on nearby blocks, there are various apartment building forms. However, this block is occupied predominantly by single-family houses with one multiple dwelling at the northwest corner of the block. For 100% secured rental housing, the Plan allows up to 6 storeys and up to 2.4 FSR. Setbacks required are 20 ft. for front and rear yards and 6.9 ft. for side yards, and ground-level access for first floor units. The proposal is seeking 2.25 FSR and a 6-storey stepped form.

The site measures 132 ft. wide x 99 ft. deep with a significant cross fall of 17 ft. to the northwest corner. It should be noted that the lot depth is less than the standard 122 ft. and there is no intervention of a lane. In terms of setbacks, the proposal adheres to the 20 ft. rear yard along with a 10 ft. lane dedication (long-term aspiration). As a comparable, RM-4 requires a 35 ft. rear yard setback if there is no lane. The RM-4 containment angle has been followed as well as side yard setbacks. A front yard relaxation has been considered to 12 ft. as existing front yards of the block range from 8 ft. to 12 ft., bearing in mind balconies and framing elements are exempt. In terms of massing, there is a stepped shoulder setback on all sides of the building to transition to the context. Given the sloped site condition, an additional shoulder setback has been provided at the rear above the third storey and significant stepping of the massing on the west face presenting 30 ft. and 40 ft. side yards at the upper storeys. Comparable shadow studies provided show the proposed stepped 6 storey, as well as 5- and 4-storey options. There is a tree retained in the rear yard. An amenity room is located at the fifth storey with access to a roof deck at the west exposure. Parking access is along Grant Street.

There are pre-1940 character houses on this block, however, the Plan does not identify this block as containing key character streetscape clusters and therefore is not exempt from consideration of up to 6 storeys for secured market rental. Although the plexiglass forms are per the Plan, the Pace of Change policy does apply which is intended for development to be incremental in nature.

Advice from the Panel is sought on the following:

1. Noting the mixed context of single-family houses and apartment buildings, and the direction envisioned in the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan with regard to height for rental buildings, is the proposed form an appropriate contextual fit?
2. Considering the immediate context, shadowing and the sloped site, please comment on;
  - a. number of storeys
  - b. density and massing

#### **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Although this block is predominantly single-family owned, it is zoned RM-4, multi-family. The Plan asked for varied height, scales and typology within the neighbourhood to reinforce the eclectic nature of the Commercial Drive area. We are a block and half west of Commercial Drive, well serviced by transit and within two blocks of two major parks. Our approach was to sculpt the project as much as possible on the downhill side. There are significant step backs due to shading concerns and the massing from the pedestrian point of view. We have done several shadow studies analyses. We wanted to utilize high-quality robust materials and also give a sense of grounding of the project. At grade and a portion of the lower floors, we have chosen to clad the building in brick. On the upper floors, we are proposing to use a combination of oko skin Panels and wood Panels. We think this will give it a west coast contemporary response that is appropriate to the eclectic nature of the neighbourhood.

The intent behind the landscape plan is to create an attractive streetscape, serves the privacy needs of the building, surround residents, and supports sustainability goals. The design will be contemporary but also have areas of softer planting, both at grade and at the upper levels, and use perennials and deciduous material to extend the flowering season. Existing trees on adjacent sites are retained, and one on-site tree has been retained in the rear.

The applicant team then took questions from the Panel.

#### **Panel's Consensus:**

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by Ms. Parsons and seconded by Mr. Wen and the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

**THAT the Panel recommends the applicant to review the recommendations and present again to the Panel**

- Design development of grading of the site and how the building fits into the grades to mitigate the impact of massing on adjacent houses.
- Further design development to East and West elevations.
- Further design development to garage entry and the area above.
- Enhancement to amenities space and programming in particular outdoor amenities in consideration of the large number of family units

**Related Commentary:**

The area has been zoned RM-4 which allows for 4-storey buildings. However there has not been an uptake on this zoning. Some Panel members felt the building is competently designed although somewhat aggressive for the site. The number of materials and colour could be more harmonized. All the members are supportive of rental housing and height however there is division on contextual fit. The number of floors was less a concern but how the building sits on the site and the grading of the site is needing further consideration. The PMT location and the parking ramp at the street edge needs to be reviewed. There were some comments on the amenities space being in a good location and there could be more programming and that the outdoor space could be lacking given the number of families units on the site.

**Applicant's Response:**

The applicant team thanked the Panel for their comments.

The applicant agreed on the need for some design development on the East and West elevations. Grading will be revisited especially at the Northwest corner. The building could be a better fit, but it is difficult as this is the first one on this block. The pace of change restricts it to a certain number of rental buildings being demolished. That only controls the removal of rentals and not the addition of 6-storey rentals. This is a challenging site due to shallow depth and slope.

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1. Address:	1485 Davie Street
Permit No.	DP-2017-01183
Description:	To develop the site with a residential development consisting of a 21-storey building with 128 multi-family market dwelling units, and a 6-storey building with 51 affordable rental dwelling units; all over four levels of underground parking with 211 vehicle stalls. The proposed floor space ratio (FSR) is 6.45 with a permitted maximum of 7.0.
Zoning:	RM-5D
Application Status:	Complete Development Application
Review:	Second (Second as DP)
Architect:	Wing Ting Leung, W.T.Leung Architects Inc.
Owner:	
Delegation:	Daryl Tyacke, Landscape Architect, ETA Vanessa Goldgrub, Landscape Designer, ETA
Staff:	Marie Linehan, Development Planner

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## EVALUATION: RESUBMISSION

### Introduction:

This is a development permit application under the RM-5D zoning and it is the second visit to the Panel. This site is located in the Nelson Slopes neighbourhood which is a primarily residential neighbourhood along Davie between Davie Village to the east and Denman Village to the west.

The zoning permits residential tower development to a maximum height of 58 m and density up to 7.0 FSR. 20% of the residential floor area is required to be social housing. The social housing component is required to provide 51 replacement units for the existing building on the site.

The previous scheme more closely followed the form of development direction in the WEP with a 21-storey tower and a continuous 3-storey podium along Davie Street. A smaller central courtyard was provided and the social housing units were located to the rear of the site adjacent the lane. The applicant has worked with staff and considered the previous commentary of the Panel and feedback from current residents in revising the design. The podium has been deleted and the social housing units are proposed to be located in a standalone 6-storey building facing Davie Street and the market units in a 21-storey tower at the corner. The revised design addresses concerns raised about the livability of the social housing component and the quality of the outdoor amenity space, particularly its size and sunlight access. Shared common outdoor amenity space will be provided between the buildings. The amenity space is 42 feet wide with direct sunlight access from the southern exposure along Davie.

The proposal complies with the expectations of the zoning to provide 51 rental replacement units (social housing) which represent 22% of the floor area. The height is compliant at 58 m and the density is 6.45 FSR.

At the previous review with the Urban Design Panel, a resubmission was recommended. The current design proposal shows a wholly revised form of development, where the livability of the affordable housing component and the outdoor amenity spaces are improved upon.

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

1. Please provide commentary on the concerns stated by the Urban Design Panel from the previous review:

- Provide adequate information on context, sustainability and public realm
  - Explore further design development of the architectural expression
  - Improve the public interface of the building with the street so that interaction with the street is improved
  - Improve the shadowing of the amenity space at courtyard level
  - Improve the materiality of the podium so that it is clearly differentiated from the rest of the tower
  - Improve lane and street activation
2. Under the West End Plan, a 3-storey podium is typically expected for new development against Davie Street. This application proposes typology that differs from the typical tower-podium strategy. Taking into consideration that an at-grade courtyard with direct sun access has been proposed instead of a continuous podium, please provide comments on this proposed typology.
  3. Please provide commentary on the building's interface with the public realm (Davie Street, Nicola Street and the Laneway), taking into consideration the steep sloping nature of the site.

#### Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Mr. Wing Ting Leung, architect for the project, presented. Revisions were made after the last design Panel review. Noting the existing Knights of Columbus building to the East and Gabriola Mansion to the West as both "towers in a park", we felt that our scheme is valid as a tower in a park rather than a tower and a podium. We made the social housing building under 60ft height in accordance with the tower separation limits for West End buildings. Referring to the sunlight study diagrams, this area along with the front courtyard will get significant sunlight for a good part of the year. We located a children's play area here. We felt it was appropriate to have a shared amenity space between rental and market housing.

We redefined our envelope and the window to wall ratios. Reconfiguration has allowed us to control solar gains in the morning. We created fairly large decks to help with the sun shading from 10am to 2pm and incorporated both horizontal and vertical shading on the Southwest façade. HRV is provided for both buildings.

Materials used on both the midrise and the high rise building are "Swiss pearl" panels. We used masonry on the podium and triple glazing on the market tower and double glazing on the midrise.

#### Landscaping

Mr. Daryl Tyake and Ms. Vanessa Goldgrub, landscape architects, presented. All the existing street trees on Davie are being retained with the addition of 3 trees on Nicola. We also want to explore the possibility of replacing all the trees on Davie with broader canopy trees that would enhance the pedestrian experience all year round rather than a few weeks in the spring. This would be done in coordination with the city along with the building of the new sidewalk.

Along Davie and the first half of Nicola, the sidewalk will extend out to the property line to create a more open pedestrian experience. The planting along the residential side along Nicola will wrap around to soften the lane.

The main entrance to social housing is defined by a broad stairway and ramp and a gateway of 2 trees, creating a welcoming forecourt. There is a public node proposed in the middle of the development and

it is meant as a place to rest and as a community gathering spot and acts as a forecourt for the central amenity space.

Our water feature starts here and works its way down to Nicola and it features seating and bird houses and ends with a waterfall and a pool. At Nicola, we have a large plaza for the entrance of this building and we have the 3 townhouses entrances with arbours which complement the architecture.

In between the 2 buildings is the courtyard and it can be accessed from the Davie St. forecourt as well as the residential patios facing the two amenity spaces. The courtyard acts as an urban oasis with lush play of trees. There's a series of arbours and benches and different levels to create more interesting space.

The amenity areas have tables, agriculture plots, and a children's play area placed to maximize sunlight hours. Special attention was given to make sure courtyard fully accessible. There's a large trellis on the East stairwell with vines to soften the edge. This will provide food for birds, great fall colour and will be multi-seasonal with root tendrils so it will always be interesting year round. Both buildings have green roofs. The social housing building features more agricultural plots. This space will be further designed as the project develops.

Overall, the planting scheme uses native and non-invasive planting for lower maintenance. Bird friendly habitat configuration has been provided which uses different layers of trees, shrubs, ground cover and it mimics the ideal environment for birds to be covered and forage.

The applicant team then took questions from the Panel.

#### Panel's Consensus:

Having reviewed the project, it was moved by Ms. Shieh and seconded by Mr. Neale and the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

**THAT the Panel recommends the applicant to review the recommendations and review with City Staff and present again to the Panel**

- Further design development to the architectural expression to provide more clarity to the parti of the building
- Further review of the entry to the tower
- Further design development to the water features particularly along Davie street to consider reducing the extent of the water feature and to provide better connection of the building to the street along Davie
- Further design development to the Lane public realm

#### Related Commentary:

- There's a very strong consensus Panel in support of the change in typology of the project and departure from the podium tower expression. The proposed scheme seems to be more fitting in the immediate context of lower Davie St.
- Panel members felt that the podium is quite strong, but could possibly be made stronger especially as it turns the corner.
- It was felt that the entry to the main tower and ground floor along Davie was quite compressed. The entry and Davie interface would benefit from further consideration to open it up to make it more welcoming. Right now, there's a very strong canopy that's low and subduing and compressing this whole area.

- Much of the discussion revolved around the landscaping. There's was a strong consensus Panel that the water feature be deleted or reduced, and additional pocket gardens or usable spaces or a hierarchy or series of gardens be provided, which would also reinforce the tower in the park typology.
- There's was strong support for the courtyard especially since it's more usable now with sun exposure.
- Some Panel members felt that the tower itself is responding better to its solar orientation.
- A number of Panel members expressed concern about the architectural expression of the tower and that the clarity of the architectural expression from the original scheme has been somewhat lost. It may be that the tower itself needs another level of scrutiny and design to bring more discipline to the architectural expression.
- A number of Panel members expressed concern about discrepancies between the model and the drawing package. Moving forward, the Panel would like the planning department to ensure that the information is coordinated. The Panel reiterated that there should be adequate levels of information provided regarding context, sustainability and public realm.
- On the public realm, it was felt the lane not given same level of consideration as the resolution on Davie and Nicola. It was strongly encouraged the lane interface gets looked at again especially the corner where the emergency generator is located right now. The concern is that corner is not well resolved at this point and further landscaping of that corner will benefit the entire project. It was noted that the landscaping shown on the model may not be achievable with required generator etc. which would be unfortunate.

**Applicant's Response:**

The applicant team thanked the Panel for their comments.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.