

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** Sept. 5, 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  
Grant Newfield  
Muneesh Sharma  
Yijin Wen  
Colette Parsons  
Derek Neale  
Jim Huffman

**REGRETS:**  
Marie-France Venneri  
Leslie Shieh  
Susan Ockwell

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Davin Fung

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### ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

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| 1. | 2102 Keith Drive                         |
| 2. | 4188 Yew Street - Arbutus Centre Block A |

**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Amela Brudar called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. After a brief business meeting the Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 2102 Keith Drive  
Permit No. DP-2018-00502  
Description: To develop an 8-storey Creative Products Manufacturing building; all over three levels of underground parking.  
Zoning: I-3A  
Application Status: Complete Development Application  
Review: First  
Architect: Martin Nielson, DIALOG,  
Matthew Thompson, DIALOG  
Owner: Arran Stephens - Nature's Path  
Delegation: David Roche, Manager DIALOG  
Eric Frederickson - Senior Cultural Planner, COV  
Staff: Jason Olinek

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT with no considerations****Introduction:**

This is the first Urban Design Panel appearance for this application. It is located in the I-3A zone in False Creek Flats regulations. Uses are Creative Products Manufacturing and Commercial Office. The proposal is for 8 Storey Mass Timber construction.

The project is located between Clark Drive and Keith Drive and Great Northern Way (GNW). Keith Drive is closed to vehicular traffic except for maintenance yard access but has significant pedestrian traffic at the VCC Clark Station. The site occupies an important place, located adjacent to the iconic 'East Van Cross'. There are several site constraints including a steep slope (approximately 13-14 meters from east to west), a Translink setback and a MetroVan sewer Right of Way (ROW), diagonally bisecting the eastern half of the site. There is also an additional statutory right of way (SWR) requirement along GNW for a new bike route and more pedestrian friendly path of travel.

The intent of the zoning is to intensify employment opportunities while incentivizing certain uses critical to preserving the City's industrial urban fabric. More traditional active ground floor uses (such as retail and service uses) may be given over to innovate makerspace uses. The intent is to create opportunities for job space to exist and evolve and to enrich the public realm. Some of these urban design objectives are to create unique spaces, allow for flexible and future adaptability, a high degree of architectural merit, and on-site public open space creating inviting, pedestrian amenity and comfortable places for people.

The outright height on this lot is 18.3m, and the maximum conditional height with the proposed uses on this lot is 30.5m for the provided uses. It should be noted that with the provision of 1.0 FSR of approved light industrial uses, the height and density can be further considered up to 45.7m and 5.0 FSR. The applicant is not seeking the permitted height increases based on industrial uses. However, the applicant is seeking DP Board consideration of a height relaxation based on site constraints of approximately 5.2m (17feet). This relaxation must be evaluated based on site constraints, urban design performance and all applicable policies and guidelines such as height, bulk and massing, location and overall design of the building and its effect on the site, surrounding buildings and streets, the provision and quality of public open space, landscape and general amenity of the area, and pedestrian needs. Massing should respect access to daylighting and views on adjacent sites and open space.

**Questions:**

Advice from the Panel is sought on the proposed design in general and specifically on the following:

- 1) **Height and massing** and the impact on the site, open space, streets, and adjacent existing and anticipated development.
- 2) **Open space** and the public realm interface and design including landscaping, pedestrian circulation, entries, and frontages.
- 3) **Building design strategy** including architectural expression and materiality, scale and proportions, roofline, sustainability approach, etc.

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The client and owner of the project, Arran Stephens, spoke to the Panel to provide context to project.

Nature's Path was established in 1985. It is currently headquartered in Richmond, employing 150 people. The number of employees could well be over 300 people by the time the company moves the headquarters to this site.

1967 - Opened Canada's first plant based restaurant.

1971 - Lifestream on 4<sup>th</sup> and Burrard, Canada's first natural foods supermarket

1985 - Nature's Path begins from the back of the restaurant.

1990 - Built North America's first 3<sup>rd</sup> party certified organic breakfast cereal factory in Delta, BC.

2011 - Acquired Que Pasa, an organic tortilla factory.

Arran Stephens is the CEO. His wife, Ratana Stephens is co-CEO and General Manager. Their two children, Arjan Stephens and Jyoti Stephens, are in leadership positions in the company. The company has 700 valued team members, 100% Canadian, independent and family owned.

Nature's Path has been voted top 10 and top 100 green employers in BC and in Canada respectively according to the Financial Post.

There are three state of the art zero waste manufacturing facilities, located in Blaine, WA, Delta, BC, and Sussex, WI.

Nature's Path owns 5500 acres of organic farmland in Saskatchewan and export to 50 countries.

The company supports many charities and nonprofits including food banks, endangered species, children's hospital, gardens for good, giving back \$22M to society. Sustainability is an important value of the company with the goal to be carbon neutral by 2020. We will be moving our headquarters from Richmond to Vancouver, providing quality, well paid jobs. The current plan is to use the first three floors of the building and lease out the remaining space to select tenants that are compatible to the unique zoning. Our goal is to take over the entire building as the company grows. We hope you see Nature's Path as a strong fit to create sustainable jobs, boost the green economy and further establish Vancouver's global reputation as an innovative, healthy and livable city.

Martin Nielson, architect, stressed the values of the client, including being carbon neutral by 2020. Having worked with the client for 2.5 years to know how they work, starting with site selection, visioning and programming, Mr. Nielson felt that has transformed how his company now works.

Three themes came from their discussion.

1. The project should mirror the patterns of nature using natural materials, responding to natural elements like the sun, wind, and rain and using that as the design ethos.
2. A building can emerge and grow from this site.
3. The idea of providing outdoor space as respite and to be able to grow food on site and be part of the bigger ecology.

There are a lot of constraints with the major one being the statutory right of way from Metrovancouver for their sewer line which is 8ft in diameter and located 5m from the lobby entrance. Metrovancouver has the right to dig at any time and drive an excavator on site.

The right of way in the back has an opportunity. It's now a shared right of way using it as a loading access dock for the project. Vehicles will enter to three levels of below grade parking while the loading dock will be at grade.

Advantage of the right of way is that it pushes the building back on the site. It preserves the views to downtown, including the view of the iconic East Van cross.

Multiple companies are building in the area. This will be a catalytic project at one of the gateways to the False Creek Flats.

The cellular structure was a response to the mandates about open space, outdoor space, gardens, weather and rain protection, the opportunity to provide prospect and refuge for every occupant of the building.

The building is designed to work on three scales. On the neighbourhood scale, it is an iconic binding singular element, with memorable quality, and references nature. On the street scale, it reads as a 4 storey building with the cellular pieces diminishing the scale of the building for someone passing by. On the individual scale, it works as a place you can occupy and take ownership and create a home within the cellular pieces.

Mr. Stephens has several criteria, including a wood building, supporting the BC economy, renewable, carbon sequestration, and to support local jobs. Mr. Paul Fast introduced the structural idea and suggested using a perimeter timber brace frame and connecting the dots. This would free up the core and provide transparency. The exit stairs can be glazed. It becomes more efficient and is part of the expression of the building.

The balconies are thermally isolated. They are pinned to the building but are self-supporting.

Rain water is being channeled in with runnels where you can see the water coming in and then back to landscape to the entrance of the building.

The project will be an entirely wood structure above the floor of the second level. There will be a concrete base anchoring itself on the ground and board formed concrete on the back. The wood structure will have metal Alucabon cladding and glazing spandrel. The applicant chose a muted, white washed wood for the exposed interior which will be a 9 layer CLT Panel as part of the expression and the same material will be used for the balcony as part of the honeycomb.

Matthew Thompson, Landscape Architect, introduced the landscape as a wild, gritty site. Working closely with family, they chose a plant palette which creates a green oasis or reservoir. They wanted to make sure the plant selection augments and improves the site and included biodiversity, pollinators, and plants providing food and foraging for wildlife. The landscape is a looser, more natural feel, not overly cultivated. It's a way to absorb the steep grades. There are a series of retaining walls made by repurposing the site material retaining walls and taking them and putting them in the new project. Storm water will be captured and run down through the building and collected in a cistern in the parkade that will be used for site irrigation. It will convey and celebrate the storm water as a passively charged feature.

The applicant team then took questions from the Panel.

#### **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

Having reviewed the project it was moved by Ms. Besharat and seconded by Mr. Sharma and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **SUPPORTS** the project with no considerations.

#### **Related Commentary:**

All the Panel members expressed strong support for the scheme noting that additional height should be supported on this site. The Panel members didn't have any issues with bulk and massing. The majority of members felt that the building grew out from the site, taking advantage of the grade and that the site was appropriately used.

One Panel member suggested that more height beyond being proposed on the West end of the site may help with the grading on the East end of the site.

One Panel member commented that the North elevation can benefit from more variation in the strong skeletal structure.

Several members referred to the exoskeleton not quite fitting the building. There was suggestion to look at the size and proportions of the honeycomb in relation to the building and to look at how it can meet the ground in a logical way.

The Panel members felt that the open space provided generous and appropriate space. Several members felt that there was opportunity for further development for public social interaction spaces including additional public art and oriented benches to give different views.

The majority of reviews show strong support for the architectural expression. The Panel commended the applicant on the use of local materials, the wood, and the elements on the façade being structural. The Panel also noted that the use of the exoskeleton as a framework was well handled.

There was mixed comments on the roof as a solid form compared to the rest of the building but agreement that the roof top terra space and garden was welcomed.

One Panel member noted that the pedestrian entry is underwhelming compared the more celebrated parkade entry.

A Panel member suggested considering the Septic issue in planning and building for the future.

Several members commented that the landscaping should consider the winter landscape which could be quite barren and to include ornamental shrubs to give more structure.

One member felt that western façade is going to be a real solar issue even with triple glazing.

Concerns for CPTED at the northeast corner adjacent to the Clark overpass were noted.

**Applicant's Response:**

The applicant thanked the Panel and Staff for their comments and consideration.

Regarding the Panel comment about views from the Skytrain, the applicant assured that the view has not been diminished. You can still see the East Van Cross as you ride the Skytrain eastbound.

Regarding the Panel comment about having a relief on the North façade, the applicant pointed out that there is a 12 inch relief frame.

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2. Address:	4188 Yew Street - Arbutus Centre Block A (formerly 2133 Nanton Avenue)
Permit No.	DP-2018-00665
Description:	To amend the previously approved development application for Block A of the Arbutus Center Mall. The amendment consists of two additional storeys (levels 7 and 8) on the east side of Block A, increased residential floor area and total dwelling unit count from 215 to 236 units.
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Amendment to previous Development Application
Review:	Fourth (second as DP)
Architect:	DIALOG
Owner:	
Delegation:	Vance Harris DIALOG Cheryl Bouwmeester PWL
Staff:	Grace Jiang

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT with no considerations****Introduction:**

The subject site is the first phase of Arbutus Center redevelopment - Block A. The overall site is zoned CD-1 and includes 4 Blocks - A, B, C, & D. Council approved the rezoning in 2011 to transfer the original Arbutus shopping mall to a mixed use development with substantial commercial and residential uses. Council also approved a rezoning text amendment in July this year to allow more density and height to the overall site. Block A and B has gone through DP process before the rezoning amendment. The application is Block A DP amendment sequent to the approved rezoning text amendment.

The rezoning text amendment allows an increase of approx. 86,000 s.f. floor area for the overall site. Primarily, the approved additional density and height are added onto Block C and D, and possibly could be distributed to Block A subject to DP amendment permit process.

Block A is on the north east sector, fronting Arbutus Street, Arbutus mew, and Yew St Extension. It is currently under construction. The original DP of Block A approves a courtyard built form surrounded by 4 wings with building height ranging from 4 to 9 storeys.

Three major changes are proposed in this amendment. First is to add two additional floors on the top of the eastern wing, which increases the height from 6 storeys to 8 storeys. The proposed overall floor area and height are within the terms of the approved rezoning amendment. These two additional floors provide considerable setback from north and south edge. However, the extra building height casts incremental shadows onto the courtyard in the morning.

Another change is the streetwall expression. The east wing fronts the Arbutus Street with approx. 230 ft frontage. The proposal extends the exterior frame one storey higher to create a strong 6 storey streetwall expression. It generally matches the building height of Block B.

The third change is housing mix. The two additional floors include 18 secured market rental units. The interior layout of level 2 to 6 are re-configured to accommodate additional 25 social housing units as per CD-1 amendment requires.

Advice from the Panel is sought on the following:

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1. Please comments on the success of the additions to the Block A in terms of the height and massing;
2. Please comments on the courtyard performance in particular the impact by the additions; and
3. Please comments on the architectural expression as it contributes to the streetscape.

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Vance Harris, Architect, commended Grace Jiang, Development Planner, for her description of the 10000ft view of what's happening on the site. Her introduction gives an understanding of the reason behind the amendment request.

This was an exercise in proportion and scale and taking the existing developed expression and adding one floor and adding two levels of units. The lightness of upper floor is similar to expression of the treatment on the west arm.

This amendment is within the allowable heights determined during the rezoning in 2011/2012.

This proposal allows the project to carve back some density in the other quadrants and reintroduce on quadrant A.

The applicant team then took questions from the Panel.

**Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

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

THAT the Panel **SUPPORTS** the project.

**Related Commentary:**

All of the Panel members agree that the addition of the 2 storeys to the project does not have a negative impact on the block. They also agree that the increased shadowing will not have a significant impact.

One Panel member commented that the scheme is well proportioned and the vertical brick element becomes stronger with the increased height.

One Panel member commented that Vancouver does not have a lot of buildings with fully contained courtyards and there should be a balance between private space and public space. The additional floors with balconies can overlook common sitting areas. Overall architecture composition consists of various aspects and done in a very careful way.

A couple of Panel member commented that the architectural expression of the frame on Southeast corner should be grounded somehow rather than floating.

**Applicant's Response:**

The applicant thanked the Panel for their comments and complimented the development planner for her summary of a very complex zoning and approvals process since 2011.