

NEW WESTMINSTER DESIGN PANEL

Tuesday, March 22th, 2016 3:00 p.m.
Committee Room No. 2

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Meredith Mitchell	- Chair, BC Society of Landscape Architects
David Roppel	- Vice Chair, Development Industry Representative (UDI)
Donald Andrew	- AIBC Representative (arrived at 3:05 p.m.)
Maranatha Coulas	- Architectural Institute of BC
Maria Fish	- BC Society of Landscape Architects (arrived at 3:04 p.m.)
Rodney Maas	- Architectural Institute of BC

REGRETS:

Robert Duke	- AIBC Representative
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GUESTS:

Evan Allegretto	-Wesgroup Properties
Cheryle Beaumont	-Head of School, Urban Academy
Derek Lee	-PWL Landscape Architect
Andrew Rozen	-HCMA Architecture + Design
Karen Marler	-HCMA Architecture + Design
Paul Grant	-Grant Architecture Studio

STAFF:

Rupinder Basi	- Senior Development Planner
Debbie Johnstone	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m.

1.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of February 23, 2016

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the February 23, 2016 New Westminster Design Panel be adopted with the following change:

- *PWL Landscape Architects presenter's name changed to "Derek Lee"*

CARRIED.

All members of the Panel present voted in favour of the motion.

3.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

There were no items.

4.0 DESIGN REVIEWS

4.1 100 Braid Street

Rupinder Basi, Senior Development Planner, summarized the report dated March 22, 2016, with regard to the proposed design guidelines for the Official Community Plan Amendment and Rezoning Application for 100 Braid Street.

In response to questions from the Panel, Mr. Basi provided the following information:

- The design guidelines have been submitted for the Panel to provide feedback regarding the preliminary process;
- Representatives from both Urban Academy and Wesgroup would present to the Panel when applying for their development permits;
- The design guidelines are site specific; however, they could also be considered when developing the Official Community Plan for Sapperton;
- The City would be reviewing the frontages in the Sapperton area to reflect on possible changes to encourage a more pedestrian friendly environment; and,
- It is anticipated that traffic work on the intersection from Braid Street and Rousseau Street would be upgraded by the time the school is implemented.

Evan Allegretto, Wesgroup Properties, and Cheryle Beaumont, Urban Academy, provided the following information regarding the proposal:

- Plans for Urban Academy and the Wesgroup building are in the preliminary stages and drawings presented in the rezoning application are conceptual;
- The Panel has been requested to focus on height, density and use for the buildings; and,
- Urban Academy would be built prior to the Wesgroup portion of the project.

Mr. Allegretto, Ms. Beaumont, Derek Lee, PWL Landscape Architect, Karen Marler, HCMA Architecture + Design and Paul Grant, Grant Architectural Studio, summarized the Urban Academy School & Residential Development Rezoning Application.

Following questions from the Panel, the presenters provided the following information:

- Public consultation for the neighboring buildings and homes has already commenced;
- The main entrance for Urban Academy would be off Rousseau Street, rather than Braid Street, due to issues with student safety. Rousseau Street would also be the access point for emergency response teams;
- Braid Street may offer parking, however, drop off and pick up for students would take place off Rousseau Street;
- Urban Academy would offer 23 drop off spaces, together with staff parking and a short term parking lot off Rousseau Street. In the future, the goal would be to implement an underground parking lot for the school;
- Start times for students would be altered to alleviate traffic congestion in the surrounding areas;
- Details regarding the future lane dedication would be evaluated; however, it was expected that the lane would be widened to 10 feet;
- Each level of classrooms would have an outdoor play area;
- The large play space illustrated at the top of the building in the school rendering would be open space for the entire school to use;
- As ground floor space is limited, it could be difficult to implement a children's play area at this level. The City's Zoning Bylaw does not require ground level play space;
- Urban Academy could utilize surrounding parks and greenspaces when possible;
- The courtyard would have an implied sense of security and would be a private space;

- Grade changes would be implemented between the courtyard and the public green mews space. Amenity space for the residential area would also open onto that frontage; and,
- Implementing a single lane of trees with a healthy boulevard on Braid Street could be a better option than planting a double row of trees.

Discussion ensued, and the Panel provided the following comments:

- Parking, traffic issues, and pedestrian safety would likely require additional consideration as Braid Street is an extremely busy location;
- Having an outdoor playground on the ground plane highlights community activity; however, due to the traffic at this location student safety should be the top priority;
- The shadow analysis in the design guidelines could include a rendering in the winter months, as it currently only illustrates spring, summer and fall;
- Connectivity throughout the school could require additional consideration;
- Implementing a cafeteria on the main level of the school was suggested; and,
- Due to the heritage significance of the former BC Distillery Building, it was suggested that appropriate signage or a gesture explaining the history of the building be implemented in the design guidelines.

Following this, the Panel was asked to comment on the following questions:

1) Do the proposed design guidelines articulate the urban design concepts illustrated in the applicant's preliminary project drawings and provide sufficient description to help guide future development applications on the property?

- Overall, the guidelines are able to articulate the design concepts;
- Sidewalks on the east end of the building could require additional attention due to safety issues;
- Increased traffic issues on Braid Street could be thoroughly evaluated to ensure success for the site;
- The intersection of Braid Street and Rousseau Street could require further information included in the guidelines;
- It was suggested that further consideration be taken when reviewing the proposed five point intersection for the student drop-off area;
- Hard surfacing could be used to define vehicular and pedestrian space;
- Creating solar access is a good idea and a strong solution for the site;
- Providing detailed precedents regarding below grade gyms was suggested;

- The mews area with the staircase and open interface is visually appealing; however, it was suggested that there be an understanding that the space would be used by children; and,
- The residential lobby space would require additional activation.

2) Are the precedent images and conceptual sketches provided throughout the design guideline document sufficient for illustrating the points outlined within the guideline text for each respective section?

- The precedent images and conceptual sketches provided are sufficient;
- The images regarding the school spaces and character of the landscape are well illustrated;
- Images and illustrations with regard to the entryways of the school could be more specific;
- It was noted that there were inconsistencies regarding the trees on Braid Street;
- Widening the sidewalk into the green mews could help ensure children's safety; and,
- The awning designed for the front entrance on Rousseau Street is a good feature for the site. It was suggested that a similar overhang be considered for the green mews area and the outdoor play areas.

3) Each side of this development has a different interface: north side interfaces with Braid Street, south side with the lane, east side with the existing industrial and west side with Rousseau Street. How well resolved are the relationships with each face along the property line?

- Relationships along the property line seem somewhat resolved; however, a more developed architectural plan could indicate this better;
- The interfaces are well organized;
- Special consideration of the articulation of the massing on Rousseau Street would be important due to the adjacent single dwelling housing;
- The relationship between residential buildings and the school could be further clarified with regard to massing;
- Congested areas would require further consideration;
- The different interfaces have been made clear; however, a further review of these relationships could be provided;
- Issues were expressed regarding accessibility for greenways and park space for students, as there is currently only one pedestrian crosswalk at Braid Street and Rousseau Street;

- The location for both Urban Academy and the Wesgroup tower requires interfacing with four very different ‘neighbours’; therefore, a further explanation regarding these relationships may be required;
- The building design looks urban; however, it still requires the relationship to the single family homes. Transition on this may need to be addressed; and,
- Issues were raised regarding the interface with the mini storage space.

4) Does the proponents design respond to the current and future development context?

- Implementing the tower in its chosen location seems appropriate;
- Plans to widen sidewalks and lane extensions would provide for maximum use for the site;
- The design guidelines provide potential for development and future connectivity on Rousseau Street;
- If the future development is high-density the interfacing between Urban Academy and the Wesgroup building could be complicated; and,
- Because Urban Academy would be built before the Wesgroup tower, its design would likely affect the other areas for development; therefore, a lot of attention is required for the design of Urban Academy.

5) The proposal includes a number of rooftop amenity areas both within the school portion and future residential portions of the site in addition to privately-owned publically-accessible spaces throughout the site. What are the Panels comments’ in regards to design considerations for making these spaces accessible, safe, inviting, and attractive for site users and the public?

- Multiple types of seating options, practical and attractive lighting, and the pairing of activity programs to the location of the active amenity space were all suggested to promote an accessible and attractive rooftop site;
- School play areas on the rooftop would require additional attention regarding safety;
- Implementing some sort of cover for rain and to provide appropriate shading from the sun was suggested;
- Consideration regarding the size of the rooftop play area, and other play areas through the site was suggested. The spaces would need to be an adequate size in order to promote play;
- The edge of top playground could require further activation;
- Adequate soil levels should be considered if looking to implement greenspaces on the roof top areas; and,

- The development permit should include additional interest and clarification regarding the upper level rooftop amenities.

6) The applicant’s proposal includes the provision of a 4,360 sq. ft. gallery space within the future residential tower. Does the panel have any preliminary design considerations that the applicant should think about for this space?

- Wrapping the gallery towards Braid Street could promote visual activation and attention;
- Maintaining art studio space could be important to the community;
- It was suggested that the gallery could also function as a studio space;
- The gallery space could animate the green mews;
- A café could be implemented to attract additional attention to the gallery;
- Having a multi-use building that encourages live/work space was encouraged;
- Providing access from the gallery to the tower building could provide an interesting amenity space; and,
- Implementing clear guidelines for usable gallery space that is semi-public and semi-private was suggested.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the New Westminster Design Panel receives the guidelines for information and encourages the applicant to incorporate these comments into the next draft of the guidelines.

CARRIED.

All members of the Panel present voted in favour of the motion.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

There were no items.

6.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There were no items.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items.

8.0 NEXT MEETING

April 26, 2016 (in Committee Room No. 2)

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting was adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

Certified Correct,

Meredith Mitchell
Chair

Debbie Johnstone
Committee Clerk