

NEW WESTMINSTER DESIGN PANEL

Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.
Meeting held electronically under Ministerial Order No. M192

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- | | |
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| Taichi Azegami | - Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC) Representative |
| Geoff Lawlor | - Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC) Representative |
| Fabian Leitner | - Urban Development Institute (UDI) Representative |
| Sarah Siegel | - BC Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA) Representative |
| Mark Thompson | - Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC) Representative |
| Mary Wong | - BC Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA) Representative |

REGRETS:

- | | |
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| Achim Charisius | - Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC) Representative |
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GUESTS:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Richard Bernstein | - CDA Architects |
| Amela Brudar | - GBL Architects |
| Kristin Defer | - ETA Landscape Architecture |
| David Eddy | - Vancouver Native Housing Society |
| Barbara Ibba | - GBL Architects |
| Dean Johnson | - Wesgroup |
| Pavlo Mikhyeyev | - CDA Architects |
| Meredith Mitchell | - M2 Landscape Architecture |
| Ryan Sekhon | - Wesgroup |
| Daryl Tyacke | - ETA Landscape Architecture |

STAFF:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Rupinder Basi | - Supervisor of Development Planning |
| Lynn Roxburgh | - Senior Policy Planner |
| Heather Corbett | - Committee Clerk |

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m.

1.0 HOUSEKEEPING

1.1 Virtual Meeting Introductions

Heather Corbett, Committee Clerk welcomed Panel members to the meeting and briefly reviewed how to use the online meeting functions.

2.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

2.1 Adoption of the Agenda of September 22, 2020

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the agenda of the September 22, 2020 New Westminster Design Panel (NWDP) meeting be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED.

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

3.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Adoption of the Minutes of June 23, 2020

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the June 23, 2020 New Westminster Design Panel meeting be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED.

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

4.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

There were no items.

5.0 DESIGN REVIEWS

5.1 350-362 Fenton Street: Rezoning and Official Community Plan for Proposed Affordable Housing Project

Lynn Roxburgh, Senior Policy Planner, summarized the staff report dated September 22, 2020, regarding the application for a Rezoning and Official Community Plan Amendment to allow for an affordable housing project proposed by the Vancouver Native Housing Society (VNHS) on City-owned lands. The proposed project is a three storey apartment building, with a total of 51 units. The target population of the project is low- to moderate-income singles and families with a focus on Indigenous singles and families.

Ms. Roxburgh reviewed the site's location, policy context, and City policies and floodplain considerations that affect the application, and asked for the Panel's response to the set of questions in the staff report.

In response to questions from the Panel, Ms. Roxburgh provided the following information:

- The flood construction level established at 3.53 metres is what is applied to the Queensborough area, and all units and habitable space, including the current proposal, would be required to meet this level in future;

- The current use listed in the Official Community Plan (OCP) for the neighbouring land is single family housing. If the City plans a different use in future, there would be an OCP amendment required;
- The process to locate the proposed trail adjacent to the project should be relatively straightforward given that City-owned land is on the other side of the site, and the trail requirements should be addressed through flexibility of setbacks;

Amela Brudar and Barbara Ibba, GBL Architects, and Meredith Mitchell, M2 Landscape Architecture, provided a presentation regarding the application, highlighting the following information:

- The project drivers, including the provision of affordable housing, floodplain requirements and public realm, and adhering to BC Housing Step Code 4 targets;
- Location and neighbourhood context, design rationale and precedents, and project statistics;
- Architectural drawings, including sections and elevations, indicating site plan and setbacks, parking, amenity spaces and material palette; and,
- Landscape plans, including community amenity spaces, seating areas, planting, patio areas, and plans for the boulevard.

In response to a question from the Panel, Ms. Brudar noted that the solid dark metal panel proposed at the entrance is the back of the elevator, and would be used to present public art.

In general, the Panel commended the applicant on the submission, noting a high standard of architectural design and a strong concept.

The Panel noted the following comments in relation to the staff questions asked in the above-noted staff report:

Question 1) Comments from the panel would be appreciated on how successful the proposed massing is at fitting into the neighbourhood context, especially in regards to:

- *overall massing and contextual fit;*
 - *appropriateness of the architectural expression;*
 - *placement of the building on the site; and,*
 - *transitions to the existing neighbouring buildings on the south and east.*
- Given the floodplain requirements, the building would create a podium effect and would stand out from the surrounding neighbourhood; however, the applicant has been successful in dealing with this challenge and, over time, the raised height would be less dramatic as surrounding properties are built to the same level;
 - The height of the podium could be mediated by breaking up, softening or staggering the approaches to the building;

- The building articulation and transitions to the neighbouring buildings are successful; and,
- Shifting the building to the North could help with pedestrian use and could facilitate moving the Pad-Mounted Transformer (PMT) to the side of the building.

Question 2) Comments from the panel would be appreciated on the streetscape, especially in regards to:

- *success of the development in responding to a human scale,*
 - *quality of visual interest at the pedestrian level along Fenton Street,*
 - *quality of visual interest at the pedestrian level along the future Mid-Island Trail,*
 - *how the retaining walls can be designed to mitigate blank walls,*
 - *overall interface with the public realm.*
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- The layering and positioning of the landscaping and amenity areas between the street and around the entirety of the housing is effective;
 - Further consideration to soften or break up the expression of the approaches to the building (stairs and sloped walkway) would be beneficial to achieve a more inviting entrance and take up less space;
 - Suggestions to resolve the building approaches included:
 - Incorporating landscape elements into the sloped walkway features, such as landings, benches or planters; and,
 - Creating an entrance at the parkade level;
 - Ensuring that the maple trees planted in the front boulevard have sufficient space to grow in order would enable the building to further integrate within the neighborhood; and,
 - Consider an opportunity to fit a row of large trees at the rear property line.

Question 3) Comments from the panel would be appreciated on how successful the proposed development is at mitigating privacy impacts on adjacent properties, especially in regards to overlook, balcony placement, balcony design and window locations

- The mitigation of privacy impacts has been met through the design, with few windows facing adjacent properties, and the location of patios.

Question 4) Comments from the panel would be appreciated on the proposed semi-private open spaces, particularly:

- *the quality, program and size of the three proposed outdoor amenity space areas; are these spaces adequately designed to be of a usable size and configuration and to encourage a range of activities and generations?*
- *how successful the proposal is at balancing the objectives of a) using common space to transition from private residential areas to public streets, and b) mitigating privacy concerns between the amenity space and adjacent dwelling units.*

- The proposed ability to see through the building from the front to the rear amenity space is effective; and,
- The proposed outdoor amenity spaces are small but appropriate in scale to the height of the building.

Question 5) Comments from the panel would be appreciated on the appropriateness of the enclosed balconies from a livability perspective, particularly in relation to ventilation and access to daylight.

- The form of the enclosed balconies is interesting and successful, and provides an effective solution to increasing living space.

Question 6) Comments from the panel are appreciated, particularly regarding:

- *how successful the development is in conveying a 'riverfront community character;*
- *overall success of the materials, texture of the materials, material colours, and the material detailing.*

- The treatment and materiality of the proposed building is successful, although some variety in the colour palette could be introduced; and,
- The colour palette as proposed is sophisticated and would allow the public art to stand out on the building.

Other general comments provided by the Panel included:

- Incorporation of the Step Code in the proposed building is successful;
- Further consideration could be given to the parking lot circulation to ensure that vehicles have enough room to maneuver; and,
- It may be important for the City to consider that open space is left between the proposed building and any future building to the North to allow more amenity and space.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the New Westminster Design Panel support the application for 350-362 Fenton Street, taking into account the comments provided by the Panel.

CARRIED.

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

5.2 100 Braid Street: Zoning Bylaw Text Amendment and Development Permit for a 34 Storey Secured Market Rental Residential Building with Art Gallery/Studio Space

Procedural Note: At 4:00 p.m., Fabian Leitner declared a conflict of interest on item 5.2 due to his employment with the developer, and left the meeting. Mark Thompson assumed the Chair.

Rupinder Basi, Supervisor of Development Planning, summarized the staff report dated September 22, 2020, regarding the application for a Zoning Bylaw Text Amendment and Development Permit for a 34 storey building containing 424 secured market residential rental units as well as art gallery/studio space.

Mr. Basi reviewed the site's location, current use, policy context and the City policies that affect the application, and asked for the Panel's response to the set of questions in the staff report.

Richard Bernstein and Pavlo Mikhyeyev, CDA Architects, and Daryl Tyacke and Kristin Defer, ETA Landscape Architecture, provided a presentation regarding the application, highlighting the following information:

- Site location details and background of the site;
- History of the site, neighbourhood context, and proposed sustainability measures and site layout;
- Connectivity and access points with the neighbouring school, incorporating parking spaces;
- Response to the design guidelines and architectural characteristics, including proposed massing, character, and materiality, as demonstrated through elevations and sections;
- Proposed floor plans, materials and colour palette;
- Streetscape and accessibility considerations for laneways, public spaces and residential areas; and,
- Trees and planting reflective of Canadian Landscape standard, including low maintenance and native species.

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

- Future access to the site on the South and East sides would be contingent on approval by the City's Engineering department, and would be subject to review during a future rezoning application; and,
- No specific tenant has been chosen for the on-site art gallery space as yet.

The Panel noted the following comments in relation to the staff questions asked in the above-noted staff report:

Question 1) Comments from the panel would be appreciated on how successful the proposed massing is at fitting into the neighbourhood context, especially in regards to:

- *overall massing and contextual fit;*
- *appropriateness of the architectural expression;*
- *placement of the building on the site;*
- *proposed floor plate, articulation and profile of tower;*
- *location of ground-oriented units and interface with edges of site; and,*
- *transitions to the existing neighbouring buildings to the west (Urban Academy School), south, and east.*

- The architectural expression of the proposed development is attractive;
- The proposed height, massing and density is reasonable when viewed in context of the future plans for the area, and in context of the SkyTrain station;
- Consideration could be given to adjusting the building massing on the Braid Street side to make it more relatable, as the proportion of the two-storey scale seems small when compared to the tower;
- The project could benefit from moving the location of the tower farther back from the street in order to create a more residential feel and to give more room on Braid Street for street treatments;
- Articulating the North and South facades of the tower differently may be more effective in breaking down the mass in horizontal bands; and,
- The 5-storey building at the Southeast corner seems less resolved than other elements on the site and could use further articulation.

Question 2) Comments from the panel would be appreciated on the streetscape, especially in regards to:

- *success of the development in responding to the pedestrian scale;*
- *quality of visual interest at the pedestrian level along Braid Street;*
- *quality of visual interest at the pedestrian level along the portions of the site where the art gallery/studio space will be located;*
- *quality of visual interest at the pedestrian level for portions of the site that interface with the pedestrian spine (between Urban Academy and the subject site); and,*
- *quality of visual interest at the pedestrian level along the portions of the site that will contain ground-level residential units as well as the entrance into the residential tower.*

- The streetscape at the five storey building is appropriate;
- Further definition of the South and East edges of the site would be beneficial to ensure improved articulation, and safety and accessibility to the Townhouses;
- It would be beneficial to give further consideration to the location of the townhouses, and how they relate to the street and neighbouring area; and,
- Achieving a successful streetscape on the North side could be challenging due to the busy nature of Braid Street.

Question 3) Comments from the panel would be appreciated on the proposed open spaces, particularly:

- the quality, program and size of the outdoor amenity space areas; are these spaces adequately designed to be of a usable size and configuration and to encourage a range of activities and generations?*
 - how successful the proposal is at balancing the objectives of a) using common space to transition from private residential areas to public streets, and b) mitigating privacy concerns between the various open spaces and adjacent dwelling units;*
 - Do the publically accessible spaces (pedestrian spine area and plaza next to art gallery/studio) feel public and welcoming?*
 - Are there sufficient opportunities provide to access and move through open spaces (to encourage permeability through site)?*
 - Are the proposed open spaces and seating options located in a manner that will capture sun and create an inviting gathering place with suitable overhangs, canopies and trees for shade and rain protection, when required?*
 - Proposed patio areas for the ground-oriented residential units; are these of a sufficient width and depth for their intended use?; and,*
 - The selection of hard and soft landscaping materials, including input on the planting species selected.*
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- The placement of the courtyard within the interior of the project is appropriate, given the site's proximity to busy streets in the area;
 - Incorporation of the art gallery and courtyard within the public space is effective and well-oriented, as the courtyard will benefit from the sunny aspect;
 - It makes sense for the courtyard to face the art gallery and the school in order to encourage its use by the public; however, its form seems to be conceptual and informal, and could be improved through further definition of its potential uses;
 - Consider re-orienting the public seating to the other side of the courtyard in order to capture the sun;
 - Further definition of the art gallery tenancy could be useful in order for them to be part of the conversation going forward;
 - The proposed rooftop amenities are generally successful as proposed, although further consideration could be given to the dog run amenity, as the space may be more effective for agriculture or resident use;
 - The use of the rubberized surfacing area may need more definition, as it may be more successful in a different condition, such as a garden or lawn;
 - The on-site trees currently in place appear healthy and it would be unfortunate to lose them;
 - If it is necessary to remove the existing trees, it would be strongly recommended to install the necessary infrastructure, such as soil volumes, to ensure that the new trees grow as successfully as the existing trees; and,
 - The tulip trees indicated may be too big as a secondary row of trees.

Question 4) Comments from the panel would be appreciated, particularly in terms of:

- *location and screening of mechanical and service equipment so that it appears integrated with the building; and,*
- *finish and surface of roofs with a material that is visually attractive.*

- No specific comments were received

Question 5) Comments are appreciated from the panel in regards to the comparative view corridor analysis and the building shadow impacts on the public realm.

- The shadow impacts are minimal on the public realm and benefit the public open spaces; therefore, the tower appears oriented the correct way; and,
- No view corridor has been established yet in the area, and the building of density in proximity to the SkyTrain should take priority over views.

Question 6) Comments from the panel regarding the proposed materials, texture of the materials, material colours, and the material detailing would be appreciated.

- Appreciation was given for the colour scheme; and,
- Exploring darker colours along with the whiskey colour could be further considered to give contrast and break up the massing at the top of the tower.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Design Panel support the application, taking into account the feedback provided by the Panel, with special consideration to be given to the South and East building edges, and the project's relationship to future developments.

CARRIED.

(Fabian Leitner absent for the vote due to Conflict of Interest)

6.0 NEW BUSINESS

There were no items.

7.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There were no items.

8.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items.

9.0 NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, October 27, 2020, via electronic meeting.

10.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Certified Correct,

Original Signed
Fabian Leitner
Chair

Original Signed
Mark Thompson
Chair for Item 5.2

Original Signed
Heather Corbett
Committee Clerk