



NEW WESTMINSTER DESIGN PANEL

Tuesday, July 25, 2017, 3:00p.m.

Council Chambers

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Meredith Mitchell	- Vice Chair, BC Society of Landscape Architects
Maranatha Coulas	- Architectural Institute of BC Representative
Maria Fish	- BC Society of Landscape Architects
David Roppel	- Development Industry Representative
Craig West	- Architectural Institute of BC Representative

REGRETS:

Chris Block	- Chair, Architectural Institute of BC Representative
Rodney Maas	- Architectural Institute of BC Representative

GUESTS:

Mary Chan-Yip	- PMG Landscape Architects
Andrew Emmerson	- GBL Architects
David O'Sheehan	- ABBARCH Architecture Inc.
Bryce Gauthier	- Enns Gauthier Landscape Architects Inc.

STAFF:

Jim Hurst	- Development Planner
Heather Corbett	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m. Meredith Mitchell assumed the Chair.

1.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of June 27th, 2017

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the June 27, 2017 New Westminster Design Panel meeting be approved.

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

4.1 813-823 Carnarvon Street

**REZ00134
SDP00210**

Jim Hurst, Development Planner, summarized the report dated July 25, 2017, regarding a Rezoning and Development Permit Application to allow a mixed use project with commercial at grade and non-market rental and market condominium residential uses above, at 813-823 Carnarvon Street.

Mr. Hurst reviewed the background of the project and the questions that the Design Panel have been asked to address. He also explained the rationale behind the project's 7.75 FSR, and reported that the developers had initially presented to the New Westminster Design Panel in April 2017, and had returned to this meeting with revised drawings and information addressing the panel's previous comments.

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

- The Chinese Benevolence Association Park has not yet been conceptualized, but will likely form part of the project for the building to the north.

Andrew Emmerson, GBL Architecture, and Bryce Gauthier, Enns Gauthier Landscape Architects, provided a presentation summarizing details of the refinements and changes made in response to the comments made by the NWDP in April, as outlined in Appendix B in the agenda package, covering massing, site plans, elevations, building program, exterior treatments, the commercial street front plan, contextual plans, and the landscape plans.

Mr. Gauthier discussed the concept of the proposed Victoria Street mural, explaining that the intent of the content is to be good neighbours to the intended park across the street. The landscape architecture firm spent time looking at Chinese archival images and looked at colours that would be friendly to Chinese culture and would be amenable in all seasons. The mural is not yet confirmed and would go through the public art process.

In response to questions from the Panel, Mr. Emmerson and Mr. Gauthier provided the following information:

- Drawings 8.5 and 8.6 match the landscape drawings, however the transitional elements do not render in 3D very well;
- Although the rendering does not show it very well, in Section 10.8, Section 1, the lane will become flat;
- The arches that extend up and over the building have not changed from the previous drawings;
- On the lane, there would be a step up into a unit at the low end and a step down at the high end, although this will be balanced out in the end;
- On Victoria St, the steep slope into the parking lot will shift in the final plans;
- On levels four and five, the tower will be glass and the consistency of the glazing will be carried through as much as possible;
- The ribbons running up the building and over the roof will be composed of steel frame, and the architect is working with structural engineers to maintain this composition without posts – the largest of these spans is approximately 45 feet;
- The projections on to the building (in the plaza) will come from a lighting element, which can be mounted on a pole or come from a downlight and would be built into the landscaping;
- Sound for the projection element would also be incorporated into the landscaping;
- For the offsite area, the drawings show the correct width from the curb edge to the property line;
- As the underground parking extends to the property line in the plaza, ensuring that trees will have adequate soil depth will be achieved by lifting the plaza up from the surrounding sidewalk;
- Given the amount of amenity space on the upper level, the design rationale in regards to supplying more space to the upper playing area was that it would be more valuable to provide an extra family unit; and,
- The proposed mural would likely be silkscreen printed on to a vinyl graphic wrap, which is a UV and graffiti-resistant material, however this could change.

Discussion ensued and the Panel noted the following comments in relation to each of the questions asked in the July 25, 2017 staff report:

Question 1: Has the applicant addressed the comments provided by the Panel in April?

- The majority of the previous comments have been addressed, apart from:
 - The accessible parking stalls still appear to be sharing space in between spots and should be re-addressed as this is not permitted in the City;

- Steps are still indicated down to the garbage area which may not be reasonable for elderly tenants;
- The renderings of the surrounding area in drawings 8.7 to 8.10 are deceptive and require clarification – for example, the rendering in 8.7 shows continuous grass, which is not accurate;
- With the wide-angle lens perspective that is used in the drawings, it is difficult to see the context of the building in terms of the other buildings, especially from the pedestrian perspective; and,
- A straight elevation with heights of neighbouring buildings would give further context;

Question 2: Does the project conform to the Development Permit Area Guidelines?

- The DPA Guidelines have been generally satisfied, although they do ask for articulation in the commercial fronts to differentiate between the units; and,
- The placement of the buildings on the site is the right approach in terms of achieving access to light and views;

Question 3: The proposed building does not achieve the separations identified in the Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines and Master Plan of 88.6 feet (27 metres) between towers. Are the separations proposed sufficient to satisfy the intent of the guidelines?

- Opening the public plaza area and providing the projection screen satisfies the Public Realm Design Guidelines; and,
- The separations proposed are within 10 ft. of meeting requirements, and there does not appear to be overlook between the market and non-market housing;

Question 4: Does the project conform to the remainder of the Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines and Master Plan?

- This project generally achieves what the City would be looking for in terms of the Public Realm Design Guidelines and Master Plan.

Question 5: From an urban design perspective, does this project capitalize on the opportunity to create pedestrian connectivity from Carnarvon Street, along the lane to the future urban park/plaza site on Victoria Street? This includes the treatment of the lane. Does the design of the plaza space off Carnarvon Street feel public and accessible? Are there opportunities to further animate the plaza with activity and/or public art?

- The laneway has been opened up through the use of windows at the back of the project;
- The relationship between the lane and stepping down into single-level units is not ideal;

- The extra foot added in the lane will help in terms of pedestrian connection through to the park;
- Appreciation was given for the continuation of the landscaping and paving down Victoria Street towards the Park in providing connectivity;
- The public art projection will be a dynamic addition to the plaza and it will be beneficial for continuity in the plaza if continually projecting;
- Consider housing the public art projector securely to avoid security issues;
- The seating area for the restaurant will provide excellent flexibility of space; and,
- Ensure that the seating in plaza will be soft and easy to sit on as seniors will be using these.

Question 6: Given that the project will conform to the Family Friendly Housing Policy for the required unit mix, does the project provide suitable on-site amenities for families?

- It is evident that this will be a family friendly project, especially with the use of the future park to the north as well;
- The project has provided a reasonable amount of on-site amenities for families, plus its location in the Downtown adds further access to family friendly amenities;
- The addition of some moveable parts in the playground would be valuable;
- The large private deck areas will provide a sizable amount of play area for families, however they could be costly for the tenants to furnish and could result in bare spaces;
- Consideration of incorporating one or more of the private deck spaces into amenity space could be worthwhile; and,
- The additional buffering and programming to children's play areas is appreciated.

Question 7: To the north of the site, Victoria Street has a width of 33 feet (10.06 metres). Please provide comments on the impact that the podium and parking entrances will have on the pedestrian realm on Victoria Street and the presentation of this elevation to the future park to the north across Victoria Street.

- Victoria Street still needs more resolution in terms of the gradation – consideration for future development to the north should be considered; and,
- The addition of the mural with vibrant colours will provide interest and will enliven the façade of the building;

Question 8: The 800 block of Carnarvon Street is dominated by the New Westminster SkyTrain station development. The project proposed seeks to soften the Carnarvon Street streetscape and provide relief from the development on the south side of the street. Please provide comments on the pedestrian environment on Carnarvon Street proposed in this project.

- The wider boulevard on Carnarvon St. is an excellent element and will be very helpful for the proposed shops;
- The provision of the pocket park, the paving patterning, landscaping, and additional width will be welcome relief to the south side of Carnarvon;
- Appreciation was given for the effort to remove barriers and steps on Carnarvon Street;
- Lighting will be an important consideration for the Carnarvon streetscape; and,
- Consider additional bench seating in the pedestrian environment.

Further general comments were noted by the Design Panel:

- The project was commended for its dynamic, unique and interesting design;
- The project will be an important element in opening up the pedestrian area in the Downtown;
- It would be worth investigating whether there will be enough space between the slats of the building's overhang for the health of the proposed trees;
- The plant selection is very appropriate given the very dark site, however it would be beneficial to look at more seasonal variety, especially on the rooftop;
- The bedrooms on the upper three levels of the non-market housing face into a corridor, which meets code, but would not be very pleasant for the future occupant;
- The restaurant does not appear to have access to the back-of-house areas, including loading and/or garbage;
- The white wraparound boxes that are visible in the podium renderings are lost in the elevation drawings – this should be addressed as it is an attractive design element;
- Further clarification on how the spans at the top of building will be achieved, with or without supports, would be helpful;
- Appreciation was given for the green wall at the east elevation as it is a great strategy in terms of improving separations and the user experience between the towers and smaller buildings;
- On Level 4, the berm works well and will likely provide sufficient growth material for the planting;
- On Level 7 the planned Bing cherry trees may be worth re-evaluating in terms of fruit dropping down below;
- On Level 29, the dining table and mutual seating will likely get substantial use, however it is questionable how much use the hot tub will get; and,
- On Level 29, there is full sun exposure, so it would be worthwhile re-considering the plant selection.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Design Panel support the application and support the tower separation as proposed.

CARRIED.

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

4.2 1050 Boyd Street

DPQ00125

Jim Hurst, Development Planner, summarized the report dated July 25, 2017, regarding a Development Permit Application to construct a new Toyota car dealership building at 1050 Boyd Street. Mr. Hurst further discussed the access routes, the floodplain requirements for this project, and the considerations that the City requested the Design Panel to evaluate.

David O'Sheehan, Abbarch Architecture provided a presentation summarizing details of the street-facing activities, site plans, elevations, planned materials, signage plans, perspectives, and aerial views of the proposed building, as outlined in Appendix B in the agenda package. Mary Chan-Yip, PMG Landscape Architects, summarized the landscaping, which will be designed in masses around the site, and discussed the species, including the advantages of planting for pollination and aesthetics.

Mr. Hurst also discussed the City's general ideas for the plaza area, which may include an opportunity for public art, a pathway, benches, a bike stand, and a possible seating area. He welcomed ideas for this area from the Design Panel.

In response to questions from the Panel, Mr. O'Sheehan and Ms. Chan-Yip provided the following information:

- An open space for employees of the dealership would potentially be located in the open area at southwest of site or in the green space provided by the lifting of the Riparian Areas Regulations (RAR);
- Heat island effect on the roof will be addressed through the roof surface, which will have good reflectivity and will therefore keep heat down;
- Solar heat gain in the showrooms will be addressed through the use of low E glazing which meets ASHRAE compliance and a blind system on the inside;
- The roof will be used for car storage only, with no public access, and kept secure with a roller gate on the ramp;
- When on the highway, motorists will be looking down or across the roof;
- Picea Omorika is an evergreen conifer being used because it doesn't drop needles and provides year-round green;

Discussion ensued, and the Panel noted the following comments:

- Understanding was noted for the necessity of complying to corporate branding in the design of the project;
- The design guidelines have not been addressed in the following ways:
 - There is a blank wall at Howes Street, which is highly visible when exiting the highway, and which does not present a pedestrian friendly edge;
 - There are a lack of building openings on the northeast aspect; and,
 - There is very little variation along the southeast façade;
- The design guidelines have been addressed in the following ways:
 - The building entry is clearly expressed;
 - Both frontages have been addressed;
 - The showroom provides an effective sense of arrival;
 - The landscaping proposed (ornamental grasses and variation of colour) addresses the guidelines;
- The former RAR area may be addressed via one or more of the following:
 - An opportunity for public art to provide a sense of arrival;
 - A large enough space to provide a seating area and/or a rest area for employees; and,
 - A rain garden;
- An employee retreat area is needed on the property, but it may be best not to locate it near the entry ramp, given the traffic and parked cars;
- The roof could be a high visibility area and a decision should be made on whether to show the cars entirely or not at all, and thus how high the screening on the roof should be before dropping down to the glazing;
- External shading could be an option for reducing solar heat gain inside the building;
- Comments on landscaping included:
 - Consider using clumping grasses for better weeding and colour variation;
 - Evaluate grass selections in terms of hardiness to winter conditions;
 - Picea Omorika is a good tree choice for this application, however some other evergreen selections may also provide added variety;
 - A maintenance strategy for the planting should be considered carefully; and,
 - The concrete lock block walls will likely be hidden by planting.

David O'Sheehan thanked the Design Panel for their comments and indicated that they would address them in the following ways:

- Evaluate the south-east façade to introduce more glazing;
- Explore a new solution for the Howes Street wall;
- Explore the idea of a study from the highway to clarify what can be viewed;
- Consider the RAR alongside the City, given that it is a new aspect of the project

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Project return to Design Panel for further consideration.

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

8.1 The next meeting of the New Westminster Design Panel will take place on Tuesday August 22nd, 2017, in Council Chambers.

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting was adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

Certified Correct,

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Meredith Mitchell
Vice-Chair

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Heather Corbett
Committee Clerk