

NEW WESTMINSTER DESIGN PANEL

**Tuesday, May 22, 2018, 3:00 p.m.
Council Chamber, City Hall**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Meredith Mitchell	- Chair, BC Society of Landscape Architects
Derek Newby	- Architectural Institute of BC Representative
David Roppel	- Development Industry Representative
Sarah Siegel	- BC Society of Landscape Architects
Joey Stevens	- Architectural Institute of BC Representative
Craig West	- Vice-Chair, Architectural Institute of BC Representative

REGRETS:

Chris Block	- Architectural Institute of BC Representative
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GUESTS:

Witmar Abele	- KMBR Architects Planner Inc.
Stefan Aepli	- Francl Architecture
Joe Carreira	- Conwest Developments Inc.
Nicole Howell	- Donald Luxton & Associates Inc.
Peter Kreuk	- Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects
Rod Maruyama	- Maruyama & Associates Landscape Architects

STAFF:

Britney Quail	- Heritage Planner
Bob Sokol	- Planning Consultant
Mike Watson	- Development Planner
Heather Corbett	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

1.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of April 24, 2018

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the April 24, 2018 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

4.1 514 Carnarvon Street (Holy Trinity Cathedral)

HER00510

Mike Watson, Development Planner and Britney Quail, summarized the staff report dated May 22, 2018, regarding the proposal for a 30-storey residential tower at 514 Carnarvon Street, adjacent to the Holy Trinity Cathedral. The application also proposes to conduct interior renovations, seismic upgrades and a restoration of the exterior of the cathedral, as well as legally protect the cathedral and provide new parish space and a publicly accessible plaza.

Mr. Watson reviewed the details of the proposal, including the site context and location, height of the proposed tower, number and breakdown of residential units, parking provision, upgrades to be made to the cathedral and hall, and details of the publicly accessible pedestrian plaza, corridor and elevator. He also noted that the development would comply with several City policies, including the Family-Friendly and Affordable Housing policies.

Britney Quail, Heritage Planner, discussed the proposal within the context of heritage policy, highlighting the variance relaxations that would be considered through the Heritage Revitalization Agreement application (HRA), in exchange for significant heritage restoration work and heritage designation of the cathedral. Ms. Quail also highlighted the questions from staff that the Design Panel was asked to provide comment on.

Joe Carreira, Conwest Developments, introduced the project team and Nicole Howell, Donald Luxton & Associates, who provided a presentation on the rehabilitation portion of the project, covering the following:

- History of the cathedral and the benefits of restoration;
- Details of the proposed seismic and code-related upgrades, to ensure life safety and include gentler interventions on the interior of the building;

- Stained glass restorations; and,
- Details of the community plaza, parish hall and offices, including barrier-free access, lighting and safety.

Stefan Aepli, Francl Architecture, and Peter Kreuk, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects, provided a PowerPoint presentation covering the following information:

- Rendering of the proposed residential tower, including urban context, transit orientation and tower separation;
- Architectural response, including stepping and colouring which is reflective of the historic motif of the church and bell tower;
- Site plan, including the parish hall and public plaza;
- Colours, materials, shadow analysis and view analysis of the towers;
- Floor plans of each level, including amenity spaces, church spaces and affordable and market rental housing;
- Parking plans and sections, with details about exemptions because of proximity to transit;
- Aerial views of buildings in the area;
- Notes on sustainability of the project;
- Proposed landscaping details and planting plans at grade, including:
 - Plaza space, and elevator and handicap access at Carnarvon Street;
 - Proposed memorial garden, to be managed by the Church;
 - Paving patterns, still to be confirmed;
 - Dog relief area;
- Landscape sections; and,
- Roof landscape area, including a children's play area.

In response to questions from the Panel, Mr. Francl and Mr. Kreuk provided the following information:

- Pre-cast concrete panels, in white with a sand-blasted texture, would be used as the tower's primary envelope material;
- The width of the stairs on Clarkson Street was increased as a result of feedback from the Community Heritage Commission due to a suggestion to make the Cathedral more visible when looking up Church Street;
- The outdoor amenity space at the Northwest of the site, which includes a dog relief area and transitional green space to the neighbouring heritage home, would be accessed through the amenity space inside the building, and would be secured by views from the building's amenity area and lobby;
- The decks would be privately used and any planting would be up to the residents;
- The intention of the flex units on Clarkson Street is to animate the street, but the use is still to be confirmed – there may be opportunity for commercial uses, live/work spaces, etc., however traffic patterns on Clarkson Street may also determine the usage;

- On Carnarvon Street, because the road is above grade, it is necessary that the retaining wall would be located on public property, and the applicant is working with the City to improve the treatment as much as possible;
- The existing condition of the street treatment on Carnarvon is planting, a chain link fence, and some steps down to grade level;
- The intent is for the mechanical systems to be located in service rooms under the plaza, rather than in front of the Cathedral;
- The grade change between the heritage house and the lobby of the tower is very minimal: they are at approximately the same elevation
- The parish hall is currently five feet from the heritage house property line, and this proposal would create a 30 foot distance;
- The response to the proposed tower from neighbouring towers is mostly supportive, however some residents would be impacted by loss of sunshine, which would be somewhat mitigated through the stepping of the tower;
- The design of the tower is meant to pick up on the colouration, materiality, and proportions of the bell tower on the cathedral – the design is meant to be evocative rather than literal;
- Currently, the southerly view from the plaza towards Clarkson Street is of two-storey buildings on Columbia Street and some river views;
- Trees have been excluded from the view up towards the Cathedral in response to comments from the Community Heritage Commission, and in order to preserve the view up Church Street from Downtown;
- Planned upgrades to the Columbia Skytrain Station in the future would likely make improvements to the CPTED and accessibility of the SkyTrain at the end of Clarkson Street, contributing to the streetscape;
- The proposed driveway entrance would be in the same place as the current surface parking for the Cathedral and the applicants intend to work with the City Engineering department on improving traffic movements on Clarkson Street;
- All parking would be provided on-site, including for church, visitor, and residential, all within the five levels of parkade;
- The Cathedral would have 25 stalls allocated underground, which would be shared with residential visitors;
- It is projected that parking demand for the affordable and non-market rental units would be minimal; and,
- Stormwater management of the site would conform to the City’s standards.

Discussion ensued and the Panel noted the following comments in relation to each of the Staff questions asked in the May 22, 2018 report:

Question 1: Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regards to the design and materiality of the proposed tower and how it addresses the draft Iconic Principles and OCP DPA guidelines in order to provide for an elegant design that will contribute positively towards the New Westminster skyline.

- The tower appears appropriate given the surrounding context in the Downtown;

- Appreciation was given for the design of the tower, namely the slender shape, interesting articulation, stepping in relation to the scale of the church, and play of light and dark on the surfaces;
- The design would qualify as iconic and denotes a handsome, restrained and confident building, which will be striking when built;
- Planting on the roof and on decks would help to distinguish the building;
- In terms of materiality, the following comments were noted:
 - The pre-cast concrete panel and treatment is appropriate given the tower's relationship to the cathedral and is a solid material;
 - Consider a similar treatment of patterning or animation of the east elevation glazing as is in the rendering, as it will be a strong tie to the cathedral by referencing the stained glass on that building;
 - Glazing is a good response to the cathedral and fulfills iconic principles;
- Consider further refinement of the balconies on the North and South elevations through stepping or offsetting, as this could help emphasize the slender proportion and verticality of the tower design;
- Consider further stepping on the east side of tower, as it still feels a little tight and over-bearing to the cathedral;
- Further thought could be given to the parking entrance and its relation to the elevator and the amenity space above, and how it transitions up to the tower;
- The North elevation has a requirement for canopies at grade which is not currently present in the design; and,
- Consider how the top of the tower is treated or how the variation goes up – to meet iconic tower guidelines, more layering could be added on.

Question 2: Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regards to how this proposal addresses the streetscape along Carnarvon Street, Clarkson Street, and the terminus of Church Street. Particularly the location of the stairs on Carnarvon Street and the two streetscape conditions proposed (new tower frontage and cathedral frontage).

- The treatment of Carnarvon Street is successful;
- The resolution at the termination of Church Street is a nice gesture with the stairs and the view;
- In relation to the proposed stairs on Clarkson Street, the Panel noted the following:
 - The scale of the stairs may be too large and may not be inviting as a public connection;
 - Appreciation was shown for the diagonality of the stairs, however they should be studied from a visual impairment point of view;
 - There may be an opportunity to consolidate the stairs and elevator into a single entry point on Clarkson Street, and make them appear more grand through the use of a single entry point;

- Recognition that the grade change of the site is difficult, and the steps on Clarkson Street provide a wider space which helps with views and connection of the cathedral to the street;
- Supportive of the stairs as a mid-block connection – consider making them as generous as possible to cement them as a passageway for the community;
- Terracing could be used to improve the frontage and edges and to emphasize the importance of the stairs;
- Consider more usable spaces within the stairs, such as seating areas, to make them more inviting and provide a welcome connection from lower downtown;
- In relation to the flex units on Clarkson Street, the Panel noted the following:
 - Appreciation was shown for the intention of the flex units to activate the street, however it was felt that they remain unresolved and the livability of the units was questioned due to their size and the dead-end nature of the street;
 - Encourage more thinking about these units and their service to/relationship with the public realm on Clarkson Street;
 - If proposed as a live/work space, full glass frontage over two floors may not encourage living space, however, it could be open on the ground floor, and covered above;
 - Consider another use for that part of the street, such as a landscaping element or a service to the public realm;
 - The units could also be turned into one-level spaces, where the upper plaza could be lowered, which would open the views to the cathedral and make a better connection with Clarkson Street; and,
 - Another option for the spaces could be daycare and office space, as providing overlook onto Clarkson would be beneficial.

Question 3: Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regards to the proposed privately-owned, publically accessible plaza space, formalized pedestrian connection between Carnarvon Street and Clarkson Street (connecting to Columbia SkyTrain Station), and the proposed public elevator. Staff also seeks input from the NWDP in regards to the applicant's preliminary CPTED Review.

- The flow through the site and accessibility is well resolved and it is clear how the public is invited to maneuver through the site;
- The addition of the elevator is a welcome addition in terms of accessibility and for relieving the grade of the Downtown;
- The plaza feels like it would be used by the Cathedral but it remains difficult to see how it would be used by the public on an everyday basis – encourage further involvement of the general public through providing activation of the plaza space such as seating;
- Consider the introduction of seating and shady areas for people who live and work downtown to use the stairs and plaza, rather than just for formal events;

- Consider the addition of a playground or activity for children at plaza level in order to acknowledge both the market and non-market units in the building;
- The proposed blending of paving in the plaza area is successful, however consider referencing the surfacing of the church in the plaza area;
- In relation to the amenity area at the northwest of the tower, the Panel noted the following:
 - The amenity area could have the potential to be under-utilized, particularly with the dog relief area, and could have further activation;
 - The greenspace at the west of the property does not seem to vary from the present day circumstance – it will be important to ensure that the area is well maintained and does not become an area for garbage;
- In relation to the CPTED Review, the Panel noted the following:
 - It is important to distinguish between crime and nuisance behaviour, which may still happen, but may be reduced with the introduction of programming within the public spaces; and,
 - Consider replacing the concrete wall at the top of the elevator with a clear guard rail for increased visibility.

Question 4: Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regards to the applicant's view corridor and shadow analysis.

- More information could have been provided on the view corridor and shadow analysis of the project, however what was supplied was well done;
- The proposed slender tower is a reasonable solution for maximizing the views of neighbouring towers;
- More information on shadow analysis would be helpful, however it appears that the effect of shadow is reasonable in terms of the city, particularly given that the downtown is intended to be a high density neighbourhood and the affordability contribution of the proposal; and,
- The tower height seems reasonable given the inherent shadows, view blocking, site constraints and the separations, which exceed City standards.

Question 5: Staff seeks input from the NWDP on whether this proposal appropriately addresses the relationship between the proposed tower and the heritage buildings on either side.

- While the tower will overlook the neighbouring heritage buildings, given the preservation and restoration going into the cathedral, it seems a reasonable and worthwhile venture.

Question 6: Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regards to ways (in addition to the already proposed cantilevered step-backs) the design and materiality at the base of the tower could better reflect the character of the cathedral to the east and the heritage house to the west.

- Re-consider the use of round columns at the base of the tower, given that no other features on the site are round.

The Design Panel made other general comments about the project, as follows:

- Appreciation was expressed for the level of detail contained in the package and presentation, however the site plans could benefit from more adjacencies;
- The 3D views provided in the package helped to define the stepping;
- Support was expressed for the proposed parking reductions, due to the proximity of transit;
- Consider planting at the fourth level of the tower in order to provide green screening from the adjacent 4-storey parkade;
- More thought could be given to the layout of the roof amenity in terms of programming – to spill it out further;
- The street trees on Carnarvon may be difficult to fit into the areas provided, further discussion with the City’s Parks and Recreation Department may be required to address this; and,
- Concern was expressed about traffic and the parking entry on Clarkson – continue to work with the City’s Engineering Department to minimize the effects on the one-way street.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the New Westminster Design Panel support the project as presented, with consideration of comments from the panel.

CARRIED.

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

4.2 835 Eighth Street – New Westminster Secondary School

PAR01192

Bob Sokol, Planning Consultant, summarized the report dated May 22, 2018, regarding the project design submission for the New Westminster Secondary School and separate maintenance and IT building. Mr. Sokol reminded the Panel that they had reviewed the project in February and the intention of this second review was for the applicant to explain how they had addressed the NWDP’s comments, and that the project does not require a motion of support or non-support. He also noted that the project was being completed in a phased approach and some of the Panel’s comments in February were outside of the current scope, however they would be reflected in future agreements between the City and School District for Phase 2 and future development on the site.

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

- No building permit has been issued yet; and,
- The package presented for the May 22, 2018 meeting only contains Phase 1 elements.

Witmar Abele, KMBR Architects Planner Inc. and Rod Maruyama, Maruyama & Associates Landscape Architects, provided a presentation in which they reviewed the updates made to the design in response to the Design Panel's February 27, 2018 comments (included in Appendix B of the May 22, 2018 report), including:

- Relocation of large electrical equipment to the west side of the North/South connector road, opening up the intersection and improving visibility;
- Additional efforts to enhance the pedestrian experience of the East/West connector road with additional street trees, seating opportunities and a pedestrian path distinct from car traffic, with marked bike lanes;
- Architect in agreement to shift the IT building north so that it aligns with the school; the feasibility is being investigated and the School District would decide on the location of the building;
- Additional landscape screening around Zamboni end of ice arena;
- Strengthened visual connection from the entrance out to the student plaza and field through flooring material and paving patterns;
- Re-arrangement of landscaping and added trees and benches along interior roads, as well as an added canopy to the north and west façades to add articulation;
- Re-design of Sixth Street entrance to enhance prominence and introduce horizontality
- Enhancements made to the student patio to square it off with the building;
- Changes made to the benches on the student patio and the addition of an accessibility ramp down to track level; and,
- Design of roof areas addressed through landscape aggregates and patterning.

In response to questions from the Panel, Mr. Abele and Mr. Maruyama provided the following information:

- The wood cladding on the soffits has not been changed;
- There is an external door at the PHE classroom with stairs on the inside;
- The vertical surfaces of the building would be longboard siding – there is no real wood siding or mass timber planned;
- The cladding on each side of the main entrance vestibule would be treated with oxidized paint;
- Student drop off has been purposely decreased near the front door in order to encourage students to walk from the official drop offs on Sixth Street and Eighth Street;

- There would be no lay-bys for drop-off or pick-up on Seventh Street;
- Since the last submission, trees have been added along Seventh Street to create a streetscape edge through both re-distributing proposed trees and adding at least two new trees; and,
- Gym windows were on the previous plans, however there was not a rendering of that area in the last submission.

Discussion ensued and the Panel noted the following comments in relation to each of the questions asked in the May 22, 2018 Staff report:

Question 1: Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regard to the connections between the school and the adjacent uses in light of the school's mid-block location.

- Context renderings of the building within its environment, including road and parking against the building edge of the senior's home would be helpful; and,
- Concern in terms of existing arena and screening – 8 pines with no plantings, shrubs and then all perennial along 1.2 metre fence which only provide screening in spring/summer – therefore no plantings would exist between the corner and the seniors facility wall, and no context drawings have been provided to know for sure.

Question 2: Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regard to the design and function of the outdoor spaces, principally the Main Entry Plaza, the Student Patio (and its connection to Mercer Field) and the Art Patio.

- Appreciation was noted for connecting the student commons down to Mercer Stadium via the ramp and the stairs – it adds interest, function and will be a great space for students to view the field;
- Consider incorporating the ramp through the bleachers or flipping its direction;
- Appreciation was shown for the addition of the rain garden and the new configuration of the planting squares and bench seating on both plazas; and,
- Consider the long rectangular grass area in the front of the school within the main plaza for a rain garden, as it could include boulders and be a feature.

Question 3: Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regard to the expanses of the walls, primarily those of the theater and the gymnasium, and particularly those facing to the west, which will ultimately face towards the park/memorial.

- In reference to 'Seventh Street':
 - The provision of the street rendering helps to clarify the vision for the street;
 - Appreciation was shown for the additional street trees and their spacing;

- In reference to the gymnasium:
 - The gym remains a large expanse with big blank walls and not a high degree of overlook once the park is complete – consider lighting and CPTED aspects;
 - The gymnasium façade could benefit from increased variation and larger windows for street level fenestration to break up the long wall and provide engagement with the street, and a view to the phase two greenspace and public realm;
- In reference to the front entrance and theatre:
 - Renderings of the front entrance are appreciated and are more successful than the last review;
 - Appreciation was shown for the additional street trees;
 - Consider making the corner at the school entrance more of a prominent common space or a ‘mini plaza’ to anticipate what will become a civic intersection;
 - The theatre wall is the most prominent wall of building and could have more articulation, and more interest as it will be a prominent corner;
 - An example to examine for the corner could be Centennial Theatre in North Vancouver, which was activated with colour; and,
 - The separation of the bike lanes from the pedestrian area works well.

Question 4: Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regard to the Sixth Street entrance and its significance as the only part of the building fronting on a public roadway.

- There is more opportunity for articulation at the Sixth Street entrance, perhaps with more horizontal sun shades, similar to the south elevation;
- As the Sixth Street entrance provides a public view of the building and may have higher usage, more detail and texture could be added to help the public presence;
- The Sixth Street entrance does not have the same character of the south elevation – consider more articulation at the roofline, and an additional material, such as glazing, giving a view into the stairwell; and,
- The Sixth Street landscape appears more de-activated than from the previous review – as it is a visible façade from the street, the public will be more likely to walk by this entrance and it may benefit from an additional focal point.

Question 5: Staff seeks input from the NWDP in regards to the interaction between the service lane at the back of the school and the adjacent outdoor spaces.

No particular comments were noted re Question 5

Further general comments were noted by the Design Panel as follows:

- Overall, the Panel recognizes the limitations of the site and programming and appreciates the efforts to respond to previous comments;
- Positive changes have been made to the site, however the Panel's previous comments concerning the cohesive nature of the site still stand and hopefully will be considered for Phase Two;
- Review the use of longboard on the building; and,
- The potential shift of the IT building and electrical equipment will be helpful for creating a better approach to the building, the creation of a public realm, and a connection to Phase Two.

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, June 26, 2018, in Council Chambers.

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting was adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

Certified Correct,

ORIGINAL SIGNED
Meredith Mitchell
Chair

ORIGINAL SIGNED
Heather Corbett
Committee Clerk