

NEW WESTMINSTER DESIGN PANEL
MINUTES

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Meeting held electronically and open to public attendance
Council Chamber, City Hall

PRESENT

Narjes Miri*	Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC), Alternate Chair
Bryce Gauthier	BC Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA)
Caroline Inglis*	Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)
Stanis Smith*	Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)
Micole Wu*	BC Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA)

REGRETS

Winston Chong	Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC), Chair
Brad Howard	Development Industry Representative (UDI)

GUESTS

Mark Koropecy	Surf Architecture
Jeffrey Mok	IBI Group
Father Mykhailo Ozorovych	Holy Eucharist Cathedral
Sarah Siegel	Hapa Collaborative
Stephen Vincent	Durante Kreuk Ltd.

STAFF PRESENT

Amanda Mackaay	Planner
Judith Mosley	Senior Heritage Planner
Mike Watson	Acting Supervisor, Development Planning
Katie Stobbart	Committee Clerk

*Denotes electronic attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Narjes Miri opened the meeting at 3:05 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsundered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. She acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. She recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1 Minutes of May 24, 2022

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Minutes of the May 24, 2022 New Westminster Design Panel meeting be adopted.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

4. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Rezoning and Development Permit Applications: 810 Agnes St

Mike Watson, Acting Supervisor, Development Planning, provided an overview of the proposal, noting the following:

- Ownership has recently changed on the rezoning and development permit applications for 810 Agnes Street;
- The proposal now includes a 32-storey building with 327 secured market rental housing units, including four townhouse units along Agnes Street;
- The site is located Downtown in the tower district of the Downtown Community Plan, and is situated on a steep slope among other towers (either proposed or complete);

- 824 Agnes Street is adjacent to the site, and is currently being used as a temporary off-leash dog park. 824 Agnes Street was gifted to the City in 1979 by the Chinese Benevolent Society, and has been included in the list of top ten most endangered New Westminster heritage sites by the Heritage Preservation Society—it used to be home to a Chinese Community Centre;
- The site at 824 Agnes Street was identified for use as a commemorative park location, as well as a location which would provide needed green space in the Downtown area. The master plan for this park space was endorsed by Council in 2020;
- Much of the building design has remained the same as when it was presented to the NWDP in 2018, however there have been some key revisions:
 - The building height has increased from 29 to 32 storeys;
 - The floor plate has increased in size to 7,600 square feet;
 - Overall density has increased from 7.2 FSR to 8.8 FSR;
 - The building materiality has changed; and
 - The Victoria street interface at grade level has been revised.
- The applicant is still required to construct the park space at 824 Agnes Street, and the proposal includes an interior amenity space (approx. 3,500 square feet) which integrates into the park and is intended to be City-owned and programmed.

Jeffrey Mok, IBI Group, provided a presentation on the project, and Sarah Siegel, Hapa Collaborative, provided an overview of the landscape aspects of the proposal.

In response to questions from the panel, Mr. Mok, Ms. Siegel, and Mr. Watson advised:

- Many City departments have expressed interest in the public amenity space, including Parks and Recreation and Museum and Archives;
- The park space includes elements that draw upon the heritage of the area, with Chinese features including a wisdom tree, water on the site, a bamboo garden, etc.;
- The screens in the park vary in height, from short on the interior of the park to taller around the edge (approx. six feet). The highest wall interfacing with the street would be five feet high, with the planter wall about 18 inches above that. There is a feature wall built into the park as well;

- There is limited access to the transfer slab, so it is currently decorative and does not include a garden or amenity space;
- Currently looking at a window walls system, which would be a mixture of metal and glass panels for the tower, with one mass in a light colour and one mass in a dark colour, like a yin yang; and
- The City has the option to close the park at night if desired.

The panel had the following comments on the project:

- More could be done to accentuate the theme and importance of the Chinese history reflected in the park, perhaps an overhead structure that provides shade;
- With such a significant grade change, it is important to do a very detailed grading study to understand the impact on the pedestrian and the streetscape;
- On the landscape plan, recommend directly showing all the doors at different levels to help understand the circulation at those levels;
- Reconsider the spacing between the bike racks— the interior bike rack will be less usable as it is so tight;
- There is a ramp connecting to the public parking area but limited opening for cars to turn in and out. The paving pattern should be better defined for clearer circulation between pedestrians and cars;
- Plantings could protect the corners of the building;
- Having some green on the third-level roof would benefit people looking down on the space;
- It does not appear that a person could access the bike level from the elevator—people do take their bikes in and out of their apartments and that should be accessible;
- The tower-street interface is very successful;
- Simplifying the floor plate is better for energy performance;
- The balconies and projections have a playful sense of articulation;
- The massing is more interesting than the generic tower-podium approach;
- Various points of entry are well-resolved considering the complexity of the topography;
- The industrial approach to the building's textural materials is appropriate and interesting;
- Recommend having a significant public artwork or place-maker—a mural that references the heritage of the neighbourhood,

interpretive signage, or similar, to tell a story that goes beyond just a few details;

- The exterior elevator might be challenging in terms of long-term maintenance but there is not a better solution given the grades;
- Supportive of the overall switch to the market rental; and
- Putting up fences around the park will create poor sightlines and make it an unsafe space, rather than an open public space.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the New Westminster Design Panel support the project at 810 Agnes Street, with the recommendation that the applicant address the above matters to the satisfaction of Planning staff.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

4.2 Official Community Plan Amendment and Heritage Revitalization Agreement: 501 Fourth Avenue and 408 Fifth Street (Holy Eucharist Cathedral)

Amanda Mackaay, Development Planner, provided an overview of the proposal.

Father Mykhailo Ozorovych, Holy Eucharist Cathedral, and Mark Koropecy, SURF Architecture provided a presentation on the project, and Stephen Vincent, Durante Kreuk Ltd., provided an overview of the landscape aspects of the proposal.

In response to questions from the panel, Father Ozorovych and Mr. Koropecy advised:

- A license officer has been appointed by the Health Authority to approve, in principle, the design for the childcare space;
- A smaller footprint with a taller form was considered for the manor building, but it was starting to loom over the residential to the north and competing with the cathedral massing itself;
- The structure of the overall west wing building is cast-in-place concrete, so there is a lot of load capacity to accommodate localized loads for the trees; and

- The glazed blades with coloured interlayers do not have a direct reference to the original cathedral, but there is usually a blue and yellow flag hanging from the cathedral entrance.

The panel had the following comments on the project:

- The solar studies are done in 3D and it is difficult to assess the impact of the development on the outdoor spaces; these should be done in Plan, not in 3D;
- Continue to work with the license officer to ensure it is appropriate for the child play space to be on the roof and so separate from the childcare space;
- Explore an urban agriculture space between the west wing and the manor—a community garden, for example;
- If possible, explore enhancing the privacy between the daycare and the other programs within the building;
- Maintenance for the magnolia tree in the kids' play area could be a challenge as it is a deciduous tree. Provide other sitting benches or opportunities for the kids instead of a flowering tree. Might consider moving the planter to the south end;
- It is nice to see sacred spaces like this being rejuvenated and used for a wider range of amenities that servethe public and improve the neighbourhood;
- Overall scale and massing is good, in the context of what the site needs to accomplish;
- One member of the panel suggested the buildings need to borrow more from the architecture of the cathedral for a unifying effect. The iconic windows, the concrete form, the copper dome, are the right elements to carry through;
- Another panel member disagreed about borrowing more from the cathedral's architecture;
- The roof deck is good but needs much more planting;
- There could be some gates for those two private units;
- The verticality of the cathedral and the west wing building are compatible;
- Appreciate the efforts made to enhance the accessibility of the cathedral for people with disabilities; and
- Not pleased with the scale of the manor building and design of the roof, and would like it to fit better with the rest of the development.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the New Westminster Design Panel support the project with the recommendation that the applicant address the above matters to the satisfaction of Planning staff.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

5. STANDING REPORTS AND UPDATES

There were no items.

6. NEW BUSINESS

There were no items.

7. END OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 5:23 p.m.

8. UPCOMING MEETINGS

Remaining scheduled meetings for 2022, which take place at 3:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted:

- July 26
- August 23
- September 13
- October 25
- November 23
- December 13

Certified Correct,

Original Signed
Narjes Miri
Alternate Chair

Original Signed
Katie Stobbart
Committee Clerk