



NEW WESTMINSTER DESIGN PANEL

MINUTES

Tuesday, May 24, 2022

Meeting held electronically and open to public attendance

Council Chamber, City Hall

PRESENT

Winston Chong*	Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)
Bryce Gauthier*	BC Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA) <i>(joined the meeting at 4:06 p.m.)</i>
Caroline Inglis*	Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)
Narjes Miri*	Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)
Stanis Smith*	Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)

REGRETS

Brad Howard	Development Industry Representative (UDI)
Micole Wu	BC Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA)

GUESTS

Martin Bruckner	IBI Group
Amir Farbehi	Inspired Architecture
Steve Forrest	PC Urban Properties
Thomas Grimwood	Grimwood Architecture
Jim Hurst	Applicant, 1032 & 1036 St. Andrews Street
Jennifer Liu	ETA Landscape Architecture
Jeff Mok	IBI Group
Ryan Pretto	I4 Property Group
John Reid	PC Urban Properties
Raj Saini	Applicant, 1032 & 1036 St. Andrews Street
Nabil Sallam	IBI Group
Tyler Thomson	Bunt & Associates

STAFF PRESENT

Emilie Adin	Director, Climate Action, Planning and Development
Dilys Huang	Planner
Jacque Killawee	City Clerk
Wendee Lang	Planner

*Denotes electronic attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Winston Chong opened the meeting at 3:00 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. He acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. He recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the agenda of the May 24, 2022 New Westminster Design Panel meeting be adopted with the following addition:

- Presentations from the Applicant / Architect

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1 Minutes of April 26, 2022

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the April 26, 2022 New Westminster Design Panel meeting be adopted.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

4. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

4.1 1032 and 1036 St. Andrews Street – Rezoning Application and Development Permit for 12-unit Infill Townhouse Development

Wendee Lang, Planner, provided an overview of the proposal.

Amir Farbehi, Inspired Architecture, provided a presentation on the proposal, and Steve Wong, Landscape Architect, provided an overview of the landscape aspects of the proposal.

In response to questions from the panel, Mr. Farbehi advised:

- It was not possible to provide accessible access to the walkway in the courtyard, as the slope was above 5%;
- The bedroom windows are misaligned so as not to see directly into the other building. There is a similar offset in the privacy screens;
- There are three planters in front of each unit, and a planter wall on the west side due to the difference in grade from the walkway;
- The applicant has applied for a variance for the missing 0.2 visitor parking stalls; and
- It is possible to allot more space for the interior courtyard—the disadvantage to that would be loss of private outdoor space for the units.

The panel had the following comments on the project:

- The scale is appropriate for the neighbourhood;
- The strategies to reduce overlook are appreciated;
- The central courtyard is a positive space. Recommend reducing the private space to increase the public courtyard;
- The turf area by the children's play space may be used for pet relief, so measures should be taken to discourage that;
- If possible, provide barrier-free access to the courtyard—even a handrail;
- Have the gates push in rather than pull out, for a bit of relief for someone carrying groceries, for example;
- Appreciate the inclusion of an accessible parking space which was not required; and
- Ask that the accessibility of the courtyard be looked at again, as different landscaping and ramping could make it more accessible.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the New Westminster Design Panel support the project at 1032 and 1036 St. Andrews Street and recommends that, to the satisfaction of Planning staff, the applicant:

- Re-examine the central courtyard to address the aspiration of barrier-free access;
- Review the central courtyard entrances setback to allow for more space in the courtyard;
- Consider the north elevation rooflines; and
- Consider having more public realm as opposed to private.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

Procedural Note: Bryce Gauthier joined the meeting at 4:06 p.m.

4.2 802 & 806 Eighth Street and 809 Eighth Avenue: Heritage Revitalization Agreement for Townhouse and Heritage House Development

Dilys Huang, Planner, provided an overview of the proposal.

Thomas Grimwood, Grimwood Architecture, provided a presentation on the project, and Bryce Gauthier, BC Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA), provided an overview of the landscape aspects of the proposal.

Procedural Note: Bryce Gauthier declared a conflict of interest as the landscape architect on this project. He was present to answer questions about the project as the landscape architect, but did not participate in the discussion and vote on this item.

In response to questions from the panel, Mr. Grimwood and Mr. Gauthier advised:

- The heritage house is, in a way, a separate lot from the rest of the development;
- Regarding potential overlook from the rear of the heritage house, there is not a lot of glazing on the north (rear) elevation of the house;
- An enclosure with sliders is proposed for the waste area;
- Sunken patios were introduced on the south side for the accessible studio units;

- There is potential opportunity to make the slabs of the accessible studio units go deeper to help the units feel more open and bring in more light;
- The portions outside the building envelope are mostly related to a corner of the heritage house and the south-east corner of the development;
- The planting on the west side of the development is intended to be more of a shade garden than meadow space;
- Building 4 was not aligned with the heritage house for consideration of overlook and privacy, and to provide more permeability; and
- To screen the neighbouring house to the west of the courtyard, may consider adding a tree at the terminus, similar to the central amenity area.

The panel had the following comments on the project:

- In terms of scale and massing, the proposal fits well with the existing fabric of the neighbourhood, especially considering the uptown central area is just to the south;
- Appreciate how the proposal acknowledges both Eighth Avenue and Eighth Street;
- The colours harken back to the style of the rest of the neighbourhood, and it was a good decision to colour the heritage house differently;
- The boxy dormer window introduces a playful element;
- There were reservations about the basement accessible units, but satisfied that the design team has looked at all the options; and
- No problems with the variance on the building height given the site's corner location.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the New Westminster Design Panel support the project at 802 & 806 Eighth Street and 809 Eighth Avenue.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

4.3 Rezoning and Development Permit Applications: 616 and 640 Sixth Street – New Westminster Design Panel Review

Emilie Adin, Director, Climate Action, Planning and Development, provided an overview of the proposal, noting the following:

- This project site dates back to 2015;
- There are 1,150 square metres of commercial space at grade, so a gross building area of about 220,000 square feet;
- The property has new owners and an application has have been received for a rezoning. The new owners are also looking for an approval of the development permit application that was already under review;
- The building will be 29 storeys, the same as what was approved in 2019;
- All residential units will be secured rental housing now, as opposed to a mix of strata and market housing. There are 338 residential units total, and 970 square metres of commercial retail at grade.

Jeffrey Mok, IBI Group, provided a presentation on the project, and Jennifer Liu, ETA Landscape Architecture, provided an overview of the landscape aspects of the proposal.

In response to questions from the panel, Mr. Mok, Mr. Bruckner, and Ms. Liu advised:

- The original proposal had its amenity space on the roof, but not the entire rooftop. Have increased indoor amenity space;
- The reduction in parking is related to encouraging other modes of transportation. There are also bike rooms;
- There is a substantial public space at the north end of this proposal, where the entrance to the tower is located, which provides opportunities for people in the neighbourhood to enjoy the space;
- The tower design focuses on simplicity, with the height of the podium giving a sense of the proportion of tower height;
- Public art is planned to go in the plaza on the corner of Sixth and Seventh;
- The intention is for the retail space to be a café which will have moveable seating;
- The landscaping in the northwest corner will be a dog run area that residents can use;
- A minimum of 40% of the units are adaptable so there is flexibility with the rest of the layouts;
- The gym is planned further back so that the front room is more of a lounge or multi-purpose space;

- The structures on the roof deck are covered with glass;
- There is a proposed children's play house for small children's creative play; and
- There are two main types of pavers: one to emphasize the walkway and a secondary type on a diagonal to give more interest to the paving.

The panel had the following comments on the project:

- Supportive of the overall increase in density and adding the fourth level to the podium;
- Appreciative of the entrance plaza and that the entrance has some breathing room from the corner;
- Potentially add more of a public amenity on the corner;
- Supportive of both the size of the podium and the floor plate;
- It seems to be a fairly conventional response to the design guidelines for an iconic tower;
- Would like to see more generosity towards the public realm, particularly on Sixth;
- There is an opportunity for the public art to be integral to the concept of the hard landscaping, seating, etc.;
- Would like to see more outdoor space incorporated for the restaurants and corner units;
- The rhythm of the balconies throughout the building is consistent and strong;
- Would like to see more activation of the rooftop amenity;
- While the panel appreciates the expanded streetscape and plaza, it seems poorly defined;
- The angular paving might not work on the podium, and there does not seem to be a rationale for it;
- Would like to see more detail and effort on the plaza design;
- Would like to see elements of the amenity deck come together in a more coherent design, including the playground;
- Advise revisiting the landscape areas so they better support the architecture;
- Make the floor plate appear as thin as possible. One half of the building could be dark panel and the other part could have a lighter panel;
- Rather than the glazed corners, could leave the balconies set back a little so the corner is emphasized on the dark panel; and

- Could use another transition layer to the roof or an element that creates a cap and ties the tower into the podium element.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the New Westminster Design Panel support the proposal for 616 and 640 Sixth Street, inclusive of the four-storey podium and the size of the tower floor plate, with the recommendation that the applicant address the following issue to the satisfaction of Planning staff:

- That the rooftop amenity space be further explored: how this and other public spaces are used and materials are allocated.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

5. **STANDING REPORTS AND UPDATES**

There were no items.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

6.1 **Presentations from the Applicant / Architect**

Winston Chong, Architectural Institute of BC, requested that staff comment on the necessity of having a presentation from the proponent of a proposal.

Jacque Killawee, City Clerk, advised that the only reason an applicant would not present their submission is if the New Westminster Design Panel members allow them not to.

The panel agreed that it hurts the proponent of a project not to present their submission, and noted a desire to have every proponent present moving forward, if possible.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the panel asks that staff let all applicants know the importance of the architect presenting before the panel, and that the panel may defer hearing the submission until the applicant, architect, and landscape architect appear before them and present.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

7. END OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 6:35 p.m.

8. UPCOMING MEETINGS

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

- June 28
- July 26
- August 23
- September 13
- October 25
- November 23
- December 13