



Attachment 7
Extract of June 27, 2023 NWDP Minutes

NEW WESTMINSTER DESIGN PANEL

MINUTES - Extract

Tuesday, June 27, 2023

Meeting held electronically and open to public attendance

Council Chamber, City Hall

5. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

Procedural Note: Cheryl Bouwmeester declared a conflict of interest and was not part of the discussion on this item. As quorum was lost, the meeting proceeded for information only.

5.1 808 Royal Avenue (Douglas College)

Douglas College has submitted Rezoning and Special Development Permit applications to develop a 20-storey academic and student housing building at 808 Royal Avenue. A total of 244 student housing units are proposed. The development would provide 53 off-street parking stalls and 105 long-term and 18 short-term bicycle parking spaces. The project is proposed to meet Step 4 of the BC Energy Step Code, and achieve LEED Gold certification and Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Gold. The purpose of this report is to provide information to the New Westminster Design Panel (NWDP) in regards to the overall project design, and to receive comments from the Panel, with special consideration given to items noted in the Design Considerations section of this report.

Wendee Lang, Development Planner, provided a presentation titled “808 Royal Avenue.”

Darren Burns and Simon VanGrootheest, Stantec, and Margot Long, PWL Partnership, provided a presentation titled “808 Royal Avenue – Douglas College.”

In response to questions from the Panel, Mr. VanGrootheest, Ms. Long, and Joelle Sept, PWL Partnership, advised:

- There was discussion about a plaza on the corner of Royal Avenue and Eighth Street, but wanted to put the focus on the lower plaza at Eighth and Agnes Street to green the corner more so it had stronger connections to the future park on Agnes Street;
- The lower plaza is closer to pedestrian traffic, as opposed to Royal which experiences heavy car and truck traffic;
- There are limitations to how much vegetation can be grown in the keyhole feature of the building, however there may be an opportunity to position vegetation closer to the edge of the keyhole, facing Eighth Street;
- Mid-block crossing between Royal Avenue and Eighth Street has not been explored, in order to direct students to use the signalized crossing at Royal Avenue and Eighth Street and Eighth and Agnes Street; and
- The power lines on site will be relocated underground.

The Panel had the following comments on the project:

- The overall scale and massing seems a bit larger than the context, but panelists acknowledged this fits with the goal of responding to a need for ample student housing;
- The Panel was divided on the exterior expression of the building, with some feeling that the vertical pattern was an interesting design and others feeling that it was repetitive;
- The project has a good, contemporary expression and a consistent migration of the Douglas College image;
- Concern about the traffic and pedestrian movement across Eighth Street. Panelists indicated they would appreciate if the City could work with the proponent more on how to discourage people from crossing mid-block;
- Need to be careful about planting selections for plants that will not encroach on the drive aisle;
- Recommend an opening in the plantings for bikes to have quick access from the bike lane to bike parking along Eighth Street so there is minimal conflict between pedestrians and cyclists getting to their destinations;
- There could be more variety of tree species for seasonal interest throughout the year; and
- Some of the paths should have more lighting.

There was no quorum for this item, but the panelists present were generally supportive of the project with revisions based on the above feedback.

DRAFT