



**NEW WESTMINSTER DESIGN PANEL  
MINUTES**

**Tuesday, January 23, 2024, 3:00 p.m.**

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

**PRESENT**

Winston Chong*	Chair, Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)
Cheryl Bouwmeester*	BC Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA)
Eric Cheung*	Development Industry Representative (UDI)
Andrei Filip*	Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)
Micole Wu*	BC Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA)

**REGRETS**

Stanis Smith	Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)
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**GUESTS**

Witmar Abele	KMBR Architects, Planners Inc.
Maryam Tashakor	KMBR Architects, Planners Inc.
Rob Maruyama	Maruyama & Associates
Dave Crowe	New Westminister School District
Nasir Kurji	New Westminister School District

**STAFF**

Wendee Lang	Development Planner
Carilyn Cook	Committee Clerk

\*Denotes virtual attendance

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**1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Winston Chong opened the meeting at 3:00 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminister is on the unceded and unsundered 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**

None.

## **3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

### **3.1 Minutes of September 26, 2023**

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Minutes of the September 26, 2023 New Westminster Design Panel be adopted.

**Carried.**

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

## **4. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

### **4.1 921 Salter Street (Queen Elizabeth Elementary School): Design Review of Proposed New Elementary School Addition**

Wendee Lang, Development Planner, provided a presentation titled, "Queen Elizabeth Elementary School Addition: 921 Salter Street" to provide an overview of the proposal.

Witmar Abele, KMBR Architects, Planners Inc., provided a presentation titled, "Queen Elizabeth Elementary Addition: 921 Salter Street."

In response to questions from the Panel, Mr. Abele and Maryam Tashakor of KMBR Architects, Planners Inc., and Rob Maruyama of Maruyama & Associates advised:

- Work was done with the City and a traffic consultant who conducted an on-site study and determined that the on-site pick-up and drop-off requirements would be met with the four parking stalls, as well as the proposed Transportation Demand Management measures;
- The large existing paved area on the northwest corner is an additional play area that could be used for all types of activities;
- There will be several access routes to the school and the entrance near the administration office will be the main entrance; however, students will enter the building where is it most convenient for them;
- There are no plans to demolish the existing school to build a new one but it is conceivable that may happen at some point. A high level discussion about this did take place;

- The school is an institutional building and, as such, the design purposely does not have a residential feel and is not made to look like something other than a school. The design is an expression of the function contained within, and the material is clean, modern, durable and easy to maintain;
- Regarding the large wall that can be seen from Salter Street, code issues as well as budget constraints prohibit glazing on this wall;
- The pathway between the school is being enhanced by a rock feature instead of plants;
- A civil engineer will work on the on-site storm water management aspect of the project through the Building Permit process;
- Irrigation systems are not provided on most school sites; however, hose bibs will be available as the assumption is that irrigation on the site will be manual;
- There will be a fence between the basketball court and the building, and the basketball court will be fenced as well;
- Approximately one and a half metres of soil will be used for the planting of each tree near the long ramp. If needed, additional soil can be added and there will be an opportunity to add a structural soil zone once the detailed design is addressed;
- There was a request and opportunity to provide gardening plots that could be integrated into the curriculum;
- On the south side of the existing building, there are blocks; however, it is proposed that new bollards be added;
- Parking, including accessible parking is in compliance with the Zoning Bylaw;
- The emergency access area by Ryall Park will strictly be for the use of emergency vehicles;
- Some improvements have been made on Salter and Howes Streets including raised walkways;
- There is a very good pedestrian connection to the Ryall Park site; however, the Roma hall site is privately owned so we have no say in how that is used;
- The new addition will only be classrooms;
- Students will be able to get from one building to the next through an existing corridor or by using the elevator;
- Trees, including the existing trees, and the considerable setback of the building will help to maintain privacy to the adjacent homes; and,

- Regarding the before and after school care area, moving it closer or swapping it out to the existing building, which may be more convenient versus walking through the whole school, has not been considered.

The Panel had the following comments on the project:

- There does not seem to be a sufficient drop off area for efficiency or safety and consideration should be given to increasing it;
- The anticipated traffic is concerning. There is one-way travel with the exit going onto the usually congested Howe Street which will prove to be very challenging for drop off and pick up. An alternate option should be considered;
- The new building seems isolated and consideration should be given to connecting it to the outside building;
- Ease of access to the before- and after-school care is a functional issue that needs to be considered;
- With space being limited, the overall scale and massing is okay;
- It is not convincing that the outside materials will ensure that the school looks like a school;
- Regarding the main entrance, we can guide people to where we want them to go but it should be noted that there is a disconnect with how the main access to the building works with the design. There are two very elaborate entrances that will not be used a lot and the main entrance does not feel functional. The access from Salter Street, where there is a new sidewalk, should be made more prominent.
- School access from the drop-off point should be revisited;
- For the landscape, consideration should be given to tree species that will provide some shade and layered planting should be implemented wherever possible;
- Wayfinding for the elevator in the new addition must be included so that people know where to go;
- Ensure there is enough lighting throughout the site;
- Trees should be added to the 3D site rendering as they will completely change the feeling of the building;
- The irrigation system needs to be taken out of the drawings since there will be no irrigation;
- The number of trees on the south side should be reduced as there are too many and they make the space look too busy. Slender trees could be used in some locations;

- A variety of plant species should be considered for the various locations;
- It looks like the lighting could be improved in some areas although the plan contains so much information that it is difficult to determine where the lighting is on the drawings;
- The team should be congratulated for doing a good job on a very challenging area and site;
- The School District is encouraged to how to direct traffic away from Howes Street;
- The design does a good job in providing ample indoor and outdoor spaces;
- Work still needs to be done to address the challenging drop off and pick up area;
- It is difficult to get enough balance between hard and soft landscaping but it is well done here;
- The project could use another round of reviews on a number of aspects;
- The scale of the project works; however, the massing could be refined more;
- The colour palette is uninspired and the key elements should be emphasized as has been done in other projects;
- There needs to be clarity with respect to the entrance;
- The corridor between the old and the new buildings is too narrow. The wing could be moved further north;
- There should be more of a connection to the Queensborough Community Centre;
- The site design has a lot of challenges and a new rationalization could be done, for example, the existing modular classrooms could move further back to create more space between the existing building and modular classrooms; and
- The outdoor space should be integrated so that it is all one campus.

Ms. Lang advised that the project is on a tight funding deadline so it has not been incorporated into the timeline to come back to the Panel for further review.

Mr. Abele thanked everyone for their comments and stated that they will all be taken under advisement with the New Westminster School District to see what can be done.

Mr. Crowe shared that it is a challenging site and that they are excited to bring this project to fruition in the Queensborough neighbourhood.

MOVED AND SECONDED

**THAT** the New Westminster Design Panel supports the project at 921 Salter Street (Queen Elizabeth Elementary School) with the consideration of the Panel's comments.

**Carried.**

All Panelists present voted in favour of the motion.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

6. **END OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 4:50 p.m.

7. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Remaining scheduled meetings for 2024, which take place at 3:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted:

February 27

March 26

April 23

May 28

June 25

July 23

August 27

September 24

October 22

November 26

December 10

Certified correct,

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Winston Chong, Chair

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Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk