



**NEW WESTMINSTER DESIGN PANEL
MINUTES**

Tuesday, March 26, 2024, 3:00 p.m.

**Open to public attendance in Council Chamber, City Hall
Committee members may attend electronically**

PRESENT

Christina Chow*	Chair / Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)
Cheryl Bouwmeester*	BC Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA)
Maciej Golaszewski*	BC Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA)
Nathan Stolarz*	Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)

REGRETS

Andrei Filip	Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)
Eric Cheung	Development Industry Representative (UDI)

GUESTS

Robert Salvatella	Reliance Properties
Joanna Kwan	Reliance Properties
Taizo Yamamoto	Yamamoto Architecture
Sara Siegel	Landscape Architect
Allison Tweedie	Landscape Architect

STAFF

Mike Watson	Acting Senior Manager of Development Planning
Carilyn Cook	Committee Clerk

*Denotes virtual attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk, opened the meeting at 3:07 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered 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

The election of a Chair for the meeting was added to the agenda and addressed immediately.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Christina Chow be elected as the Chair of the March 26, 2024 meeting of the New Westminster Design Panel.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Christina Chow assumed the Chair.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1 January 23, 2023

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Minutes of the January 23, 2023 New Westminster Design Panel be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3.2 February 27, 2024

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Minutes of the February 27, 2024 New Westminster Design Panel be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

4.1 811 Carnarvon Street – Rezoning Application and Special Development Permit for 44 Storey Mixed-Use Development

Mike Watson, Acting Senior Manager of Development Planning, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Rezoning and Special Development Permit applications that have been received to develop a 44-storey mixed-use building at 811 Carnarvon Street.

In response to questions from the Panel, Mr. Watson provided the following comments:

- As the proposal is currently at the rezoning and development application stage, work is focused on loading and amenities before consideration of other items; and
- The City of New Westminster defines tower separation by building face, not balcony to balcony.

Joanna Kwan, Reliance Properties, Taizo Yamamoto, Yamamoto Architecture, and Allison Tweedie, Landscape Architect, provided a PowerPoint presentation and shared a short video on the proposed development at 811 Carnarvon Street.

In response to questions from the Panel, Mr. Yamamoto and Sara Siegel, Landscape Architect, provided the following comments:

- Different scenarios were considered previously; however, it was determined that the hotel volume made the most sense both functional and visual aspects. From the Anvil Centre you will be able to see the hotel's prominent location and the tower on the uphill creates better views with a shorter footprint;
- The northern part of the site is quite narrow so the tower itself is much more north / south oriented than what would be done typically. The other challenge is where the core lands in the parkade due to the narrowness of the site;
- The spanning over Blackie Street is an evolution of the first plan of having an "L" shaped site. The current iteration provides open space for the dog park;
- Regarding the façade that faces 813 Carnarvon Street, a good portion of that wall is covered by the adjacent building and we will have discussions with the neighbour about the best way to animate the areas on both sides;
- The horizontal banding does a lot to create the visual appearance therefore the intent is for the privacy screens to be very minimal glass / aluminum elements that seem to disappear so that your eyes are drawn more to the overall shape and banding;
- Balcony drainage will be surface mounted panels on a typical guardrail mount;
- The bike lane will be one direction going downhill;

- Regarding the outdoor patio spaces, we strived to find the right balance and allow enough space to have adequate planting in that strip; however, there may be some room for refinement;
- The street lighting will be done per the City's requirements with the intent of having step and bollard lighting. The location of the standard street poles has not yet been determined;
- The property line is at the back of the sidewalk which is city owned and the parkade is close to the property line as well so there is opportunity for some water retention in the planting beds. A larger scale infiltration is challenging with the parkade;
- Overall, there has been an attempt to maximize planting on all routes including the front and main routes of the hotel and the retail space to help with drainage;
- The reduction in parking is appropriate given the proximity to the SkyTrain;
- Blackie Street will accommodate two-way traffic shared by pedestrians and vehicles given the arterial road on either side of the site and, while narrow, it will have sidewalks;
- Consideration will be made to relocating the transformer that is next to the dog park;
- As this is a small urban dog parklet that will be located in a shady space, the use of synthetic turf or permeable rubber surfacing was recommended for the space over sand or wood chips;
- The dog park will have irrigation for maintenance;
- Blackie Street will remain a public road and the banding, a painted asphalt application, is proposed to carry on throughout Victoria and Blackie Streets from the Agnes Street project to integrate them together and create a precinct;
- A good job has been done to reduce the number of solid walls given the slopes but there are some, around the loading area for example, where significant climbing planting is proposed to help screen the wall;
- Public art on some of the surfaces will be considered;
- There are some limitations around the height of the overpass to the hotel given the radiuses of entering and exiting Blackie and Victoria Streets, so there may be a need to control which side trucks can access the site. This is being worked on with engineering. The clearance provided is over six metres at the low point of this bridge element;

- The vehicle court at the back of the site will serve as access to the parkade and work is being done with engineering to see if there is any ability to accommodate people and / or luggage being dropped off;
- It is felt that the townhouse aspect of the development is a very distinct piece of the project and there is not enough height or width to introduce a pattern that can be more abstract such as what is on the tower. As such, something more grounded to the lane and Blackie Street, as well as to bring in more warmth was created to recognize the residential character from the retail. A different path was taken for this piece as it has the feel of separate, small-scale building;
- The tower is taller than others in the area due to the compressed plate;
- Given the precinct and Douglas College on one side, it makes sense to have more height in this spot as it transitions to more open space in the east; and
- The site could have been two shorter towers but without a hotel.

The Panel provided the following comments on the proposal:

- The travertine stone on the walls along Blackie Street and vines on the large walls in the loading area will enhance the aesthetic quality and vitality of this area;
- Further enhancements could include the addition of art murals to the walls or enhanced screening elements along the edge of the loading area;
- The placement of the public art, particularly at Agnes Street and Eighth Street, will provide an ideal opportunity to engage with the community and enhance its visibility;
- The signage is underwhelming and confusing to understand. It shows differently between elevations and renderings, and it there should be clarity of the design intent between the two;
- Regarding the railing design at street level at the corner of Carnarvon and Eighth Streets, the building interface should be inviting, welcoming, and engaging;
- The townhouses feel stark; however, layered lush landscaping will help to create a welcoming public realm and provide separation between the public and private spaces along Blackie Street;

- The hotel entrance should be better defined so that it stands out from the commercial rental unit;
- Clearer communication and visualization of some of the planned elements such as the railing and planters is needed;
- The transfer slab in the tower could benefit from a material change or being tapered inward as it is overpowering and breaks up the organized balance and rhythm of the tower above it;
- The relation of the columns at the base of the tower to the tower could be improved by having round columns covered in a metal panel similar to what is used in the tower's horizontal bands, or by using the exterior stone material from the retail and townhouses;
- The off-white tower and hotel cladding is appealing; however, it may not be suitable in the long term in inclement weather, particularly rain;
- Drainage will be pivotal in maintaining the tower's composition and clean appearance;
- How the privacy screens integrate into the tower's composition is necessary for a cohesive design narrative;
- Consider incorporating vertical fritting onto the exterior hotel glass at random locations throughout the façade elevations to enhance visual interest while maintaining functionality beyond reliance on the hotel curtains;
- Address the blank wall located at 813 Carnarvon Street, possibly by way of a setback and a continuation of the envelope system so that it integrates with the surrounding environment;
- The top of the tower is a vital element in defining the overall massing;
- Alterations such as stepping back or terracing the top floors would detract from the distinctive simple yet nuanced essence of the building;
- The design of the crown of the tower reinforces the tower's identity, uniqueness and its contribution to the City's skyline;
- Consideration could be given to moving the tower several feet away from Agnes Street to create more of a separation from 808 Royal Avenue;
- As long as the 810 Agnes Street separation is 24m from building face to building face it will align with other downtown cities policies;
- There is not a lot of strategy to address storm water given the complexity of the site and grade. This should be worked on;
- Including seating areas with the step may help break down some of the massing;

- The climbing plants will require a great deal of dirt for growing and these spaces will be difficult for them to survive;
- The walls on Blackie Street would provide great opportunities for public art;
- With the dog park being in a shady area, lighting must be considered to provide comfort and safety, especially during the winter;
- Considering the number of family-friendly units proposed, the play area is small and near the loading area so people may not be comfortable using it; and
- Regarding wayfinding, consideration of streetscape signage visibility on Blackie Street should be included.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the New Westminster Design Panel supports the project at 811 Carnarvon Street with the consideration of the Panel's comments.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

6. **END OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 4:35 p.m.

7. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

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

April 23, 2024
May 28, 2024
June 25, 2024
July 23, 2024
August 27, 2024
September 24, 2024
October 22, 2024
November 26, 2024
December 10, 2024

Certified correct,

Christina Chow, Chair

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk

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