



Corporation of the City of NEW WESTMINSTER

A vibrant, compassionate, resilient city where everyone can thrive.

NEW WESTMINSTER DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

Tuesday, December 10, 2024, 3:00 p.m.
Open to public attendance in Council Chamber, City Hall
Committee members may attend electronically

PRESENT: Eric Cheung, Chair, Development Industry Representative (UDI)*
Cheryl Bouwmeester, BC Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA)*
Christina Chow, Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)*
Maciej Golaszewski, BC Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA)*
Nathan Stolarz, Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)*

Marius Mikleu – Assistant Corporate Officer

ABSENT: Andrei Filip, Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)

**Attendance by electronic means*

1. CALL TO ORDER & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:04 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 December 10, 2024 New Westminster Design Panel meeting agenda be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1 March 26, 2024

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Minutes of the New Westminster Design Panel meeting held on March 26, 2024 be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

4.1 65 First Street – Rezoning Application and Special Development Permit for Multi-Tower Residential Development

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Wendee Lang, Senior Development Planner, presented on the proposed project for 65 First Street.

Located in the eastern end of the City's downtown neighbourhood (Albert Crescent Precinct), this is a largely residential and family-oriented neighbourhood.

The project is approximately 600m from the Columbia SkyTrain Station, and is located within the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area; current low-rise residential use is not consistent with TOD.

Two residential towers are proposed, connected by lower podium and upper level amenity bridge; Tower A to be 35 storeys; Tower B to be 30 storeys. There will be a total of 633 units; 299 market rental, 30 below-market rental and 304 stratified condo.

With the aid of a presentation, Gwyn Vose, Arcadis, presented on the proposed project for 65 First Street.

The proposal takes into consideration the City's guidelines and specifically focuses on enhancing the public realm. The design takes inspiration from the Fraser River, with its ripples and sinuous curves.

Upon first review of the site, the extreme slope was noted. Urban townhomes will line the perimeter to help mitigate the grade change.

This is an area in transition due to the new bridge being built; these two towers will be adjacent to that new infrastructure, along with the park.

Parking is all below grade; 401 spaces total, with over 1,200 spaces for bicycles.

Jill Roberston, landscape architect with DIALOG, presented on the public realm aspect of the landscape design.

The project will include shared pathways, an active zone with a play space, a barbeque zone, passive spaces, and planters for urban agriculture, gardening.

Planting will respond to what's appropriate for the local context; something that tapers into the neighborhood and compliments the park in a meaningful way.

Lighting is an important piece of the design; the urban design is kept in mind, and security is balanced with the desire for warm and welcoming lighting.

In response to questions from the Panel, members of the application team advised:

- the soil volume plan is to maximize depth and volume and structural support;
- vehicles are separated from the fountain feature and won't be in direct conflict; when the site has been activated for play, the site will be closed to vehicular access;
- there is ample real estate for plant material; trees provide separation from play/residential private patio spaces; active amenities are located where they are to provide a buffer;
- the multi-use path in the middle of the development provides greater accessibility as it is a more shallow path of travel;
- due to the aggressive slope, a substantial amount of water will pass through the site; there is storm water capture in the form of a cistern on the bottom of the site; the amount of planking will further allow transference to be the principle way water is dealt with;
- consultation with the Engineering Department has been in progress for over two years to mitigate traffic impact. There has been a large focus on alternative transportation initiatives, like the increase in bike parking, a proposed facility for bike maintenance, and EV charging stations;
- the 30 below-market rental units will have the same access to amenities and balconies as other units; and
- the design currently features no way to get from the circular plaza directly to the park due to grading challenges.

In response to questions from the Panel, staff advised:

- with the provincial Minimum Density Framework (MDF), we might see additional density in that area; we are updating the Official Community Plan (OCP) in 2025 to be cohesive with MDF;
- the lighting plan allows for individual lights for the townhouses which front Albert Crescent Park and bollard-height lighting along the park path; and
- there will be two pet relief areas and dog-friendly facilities.

Additional discussion took place and included comments from the Panel that:

- dog relief areas can be unpleasant long term without proper maintenance;
- potential traffic contamination in the water feature when it becomes a play feature;

- consideration could be given to the human scale and community, with an opportunity to connect the space with the park more; consideration given to a connecting staircase between the plaza and the park instead of being accessible only by elevator;
- potential for tools to help negotiate the slope with regards to accessibility;
- consideration that the access to Tower A entails walking past both loading and parking entry;
- current façade of townhomes is very similar to the towers themselves; potentially explore different material to highlight the juxtaposition of the two shapes;
- extra light along the park path itself, since there is no dog walking area provided;
- the Fraser River shape inspiration not consistent;
- consideration of the impact of volume of traffic being added to Agnes Street; and
- the inability to see the top of the North tower due to balcony waves blocking line of sight.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the New Westminster Design Panel review the design submission and provide comments for applicant and staff consideration; and

THAT the New Westminster Design Panel support the proposed 65 First Street Rezoning Application and Special Development Permit for Multi-Tower Residential Development.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the December 10, 2024, New Westminster Design Panel meeting be adjourned (4:17 p.m.).

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Certified a true and correct copy of
the Minutes of the New Westminster
Design Panel meeting held on
December 10, 2024.

Eric Cheung
CHAIR

Kristin Unger
COMMITTEE CLERK