

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF NORTH VANCOUVER

**Meeting of the Advisory Design Panel
Held at City Hall, 141 West 14th Street, North Vancouver, B.C.
in the CAO Conference Room on Wednesday, June 18th, 2014**

MINUTES

- Present:** B. Allen
H. Besharat
B. Harrison (Chair)
A. Larigakis
M. Messer
M. Saii
D. Siegrist
- Staff:** M. Epp, Manager, Development Planning
C. Perry, Supervisor, Development Servicing
H. Reinhold, Manager, Waterfront Project
L. Parker, Landscape Architect, Engineering, Parks and Environment
S. Kimm-Jones, Committee Clerk
- Guests:** **141-147 East 21st Street (Rezoning Application)**
Foad Rafii, Rafii Architects Inc.
Zora Katic, Rafii Architects Inc.
Randy Sharp, Sharp & Diamond Landscape Architecture
Pirooz Pourdad, 21 Holdings Ltd.
Mehran Mohtadi, 21 Holdings Ltd.
- Absent:** K. Bracewell, R.C.M.P
A. Epp
P. Maltby
Councillor Bell
-

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m.

1. Minutes of Meeting of the Advisory Design Panel held April 16th, 2014

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Design Panel held April 16th, 2014 be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

2. Business Arising

None.

3. Spirit Trail Update

H. Reinhold, Manager, Waterfront Project, and L. Parker, Landscape Architect, Engineering, Parks and Environment, gave an update on the progress of the Spirit Trail. The 17 sections should be completed in 2017.

Comments and Questions from the Panel included but were not limited to:

- Have you identified more connections from greenways and bike routes? Have you studied future connections especially east west connections? **A:** The City has a Bike Master Plan and a multitude of pedestrian and cyclist connections; we have identified priority areas to build high demand connections. There is an arterial plan.
- In areas of celebration e.g. the Foot of Lonsdale – is there enough distance between the fixed seating area and the edge of the water? **A:** It is currently a 30 metre pedestrian realm and we will further evaluate it as part of the detailed design.
- Your negotiations with developers happen outside the Design Panel? **A:** Yes, but input from the Panel definitely helps the process. We have a program that flags areas on the greenways which might be developed.
- What is the timeline for the Mosquito Creek connection? **A:** We hope to finish the design this year and construct it in 2015.
- What about other districts? **A:** The District of West Vancouver has built the trail to Park Royal. The District of North Vancouver has completed the connection from Welch Street and is planning the trail in the Lower Lynn area and over to Maplewood.
- What is the ideal formula for the trail? **A:** It should be a minimum of four metres wide. Moving through residential areas is tricky; we are aware of intrusion on private spaces and try to pull away from residential property. The top priority is safety so sightlines are important. Separated trails are preferable with good buffers. We have not chosen a suite of furniture so the trail can respond to the surroundings. It is nearly all asphalt with some sections in saw cut concrete. Where possible it is near commuter bike routes to complement the recreational use of the trail.
- Is there a wayfinding app? **A:** We are working on it.

4. 141-147 East 21st Street (Rezoning Application)

Staff introduced the project which is an application to consolidate and rezone the subject properties from their existing RM-1 Residential Multifamily zoning to a site-specific Comprehensive Development Zone to permit a single six storey market rental building of 108 units. The proposal would require the demolition of two three-storey 50 year old rental apartment buildings with 34 units, resulting in a net increase of 74 rental apartment units.

The City uses a variety of tools to support affordable and rental housing, including density bonusing. The proposed density bonusing policy has not yet been endorsed by Council but it contains policy on rental housing. The proposed policy states that sites with existing rental housing can apply for up to 1.0 FSR over the current density in consideration of rental renewal; the applicant is requesting a bonus of 0.93 FSR. Staff would be interested in the Commission's guidance on the project's benefits to the community, the density bonus and neighbourhood context.

Foad Rafii, Rafii Architects Inc., outlined the project to the Panel:

- The building will have two levels of concrete with wood frame levels on top.
- The design of the building is simple; interest is created with colour and random elevations. It looks like two different buildings.
- Parking access is from the lane. There are 12 unsecured surface visitor parking stalls.
- The project has a mix of units from studio to three-bedrooms.
- The City has allowed a four foot portion of the lane to be landscaped to create a buffer for the units facing the lane.
- There is a residents' indoor amenity space opening to the outside space.

Randy Sharp, Sharp & Diamond Landscape Architects, reviewed the landscape plan:

- The design builds a sense of community with a series of rooms including an amenity space with a south-facing outdoor patio with large tables.
- The design provides privacy for the ground level units which overlook the play area.
- The outdoor amenity space receives lots of sunlight allowing for urban agriculture
- Colourful, resilient tile is used on the play area for tots. There are lots of play areas for older children across the street.
- Trees will be used to screen the parking court with 50% shading within five years.
- There will be a filigree along the side with climbers for colour, shade and fragrance.
- A series of flow-through planters will act as cascading rain gardens.

Questions from the Panel included but were not limited to:

- To staff: Is the draft density bonusing policy being adopted now? **Staff:** The current OCP provides a 1.6 FSR plus bonus for amenities e.g. rental housing. The new draft policy will allow projects which replace existing rental an increase from 1.6 FSR to a maximum of 2.6 FSR.
- This development is on the green necklace trail; does that affect this project? **A:** This remains to be resolved. The applicant has been made aware that East 21st Street and heading north on Eastern Avenue is part of the proposed green necklace. It is likely that it will be aligned on the south side of the road. The sidewalk will be part of the trail, the bike lanes will probably be on the road.
- To staff: Are the requested density increases and setbacks justified? **Staff:** Staff are generally comfortable with the setbacks requested. We are talking about a new category of development; the City evaluates requests for reduced setbacks on a case-by-case basis. This site is in an urban context which is the reason for the reduced setbacks requested.
- The setback along 21st Street has been reduced, will it be an issue? **A:** It has yet to be resolved though the development review process.
- What about the mature trees? **A:** They have to be removed due to the footprint of the proposed development.
- Why did you choose a tot lot? It is a large part of the amenity area. **A:** The client wants to attract young families and it complements Harry Jerome Recreation Centre. It is a safe area for children to play.
- Where are the grassy knolls? **A:** They have been replaced by the urban agriculture. We decided not to have grass. It is an opportunity to have lounge type furniture instead.
- What is the wave pattern on the roof? **A:** It is a pattern of three different colours of gravel to make it interesting. The light coloured gravel will create reflectance to help energy performance.

- What are the passive or non-passive energy measures? The ratio of glazing is very low which is promising. **A:** The ratio of windows to wall is 30%. The living room windows are usually on the balconies giving six feet of shade. Our clients are interested in reducing energy use as they will be operating the building long term. We are investigating better solar protection for the window covering. We are committed to the equivalent of LEED Silver and will link to LEC.
- We will be using high canopy, deciduous trees on the west and south side to give summer shade.
- Did you do a study of shadows in December; the playground will be very shaded? **A:** In the winter the sun will be due south at 1 p.m. so it will be bright until about 3 p.m.
- Are there gates on the play area? **A:** We will have to put security, probably a permeable type fence to keep balls off the parking lot.
- Deciduous trees are not good for parking lots. **A:** We will be selecting very clean leafed trees that do not create problems.
- What is the rationale for the choice of colours? **A:** We wanted to create some interest within budget limitations. Every floor is different. We looked at lots of colours and chose yellow and grey, and green and grey. At the back of the balconies we put accent colours to create differentiation and interest.
- Is there justification for the building being so close to the sidewalk? **A:** The compromise is to transition as it gets closer to Lonsdale Avenue.
- Is it trying to transition to a more urban environment? **A:** Yes, the site in front of the proposal will be an urban development and 21st Street is a very wide street. There are three levels of setback.
- **To staff:** What will happen on the London Drugs site? **A:** It is too early to tell but it is in the commercial centre and is expected to redevelop as a mixed-use building in the long term.
- Is it possible to put solar panels on the roof? **A:** We can explore it. There is very limited availability in western Canada.
- The surface parking is for visitors only? **A:** Yes, and for accessible parking.
- Is the surface parking multifunctional? **A:** It could be set up for special events.
- Could the applicant plant more trees along the western side? **A:** The building will be maintaining whatever is planted there; it is a possibility.
- Are the panels fixed? **A:** Yes, but they give the impression of movement.
- What about the edges? **A:** It is one piece top to bottom; there are no horizontal joints just vertical.

Comments of the Panel included but were not limited to:

- The project needs a good lane interface as it is tight to the property line and will need further design development.
- It is tight at the north elevation; the design needs to be done very well.
- I understand the justification for colours; understand the expression and see the simplicity of the facades. It needs a bit of calming, subduing. It reads as a heavy dark building. It can be tamed and calmed by introducing subtle elements to bring the scale down e.g. with the introduction of an overhang. The east façade is quite brutal; it could be lightened up perhaps with windows.
- Is there another way to deal with the wrapping of the building, e.g. something like a window to make it more meaningful since it will be visible from Lonsdale Avenue?
- The building is playful with the colours but the front entrance has a big overhang and is dark and unappealing in stark contrast to the rest of the building.
- I would like to see treatment of trees along the west side if possible but it is very narrow.

- I encourage the addition of trees on the south side of the parking.
- It would be nice if the parking could be a grass paved system; it would give more green to south side of the building.
- I like the project. I appreciate the playfulness and that you are trying to do something different. I like the shifting and movement created by the architecture. There is a complexity and something delightful about the project.
- Simplification would benefit the building. I think the building looks better than the renderings. In reality it will be more successful than the 3D renderings.
- If the City wants more rental projects you need to relax height and density.
- The location of the entry to the parking on the lower part of the site is correct and well done.
- I am a proponent of passive energy measures; you should make sure the windows are operable and there is cross ventilation. Install solar panels when the technology has caught up.
- Light coloured roofing will not be beneficial for energy conservation; a medium tone would be better. Light roofs also get dirty.
- Additional comments for your consideration: the amenity room would be more successful if the niche was not adjacent to the private patio and open space, consider natural light into the stair cases, it would make the stairs a better experience and they would be used more often, you need to look at adaptable design units and go through the bylaw. I like the architecture; do you really like the red behind the balconies? The main entry needs design development to be as successful and as playful as the rest of the building. Sometimes people store a lot of junk on balconies – consider fritted glass for a clean look.
- The yellow building is the more urban side; I would have put the taller building on the western side to make the transition easier and be more respectful to the neighbouring building.
- I am tired of seeing the same thing and this is a departure; I support it.
- I agree that a washroom should be included in the amenity area.
- Consider making the tot play area more of a natural play area integrated into the landscape, then the entire area could be used by more people. There are lots of great examples of integrated, more natural play areas safe for tots. At the moment an older person will only sit around the edges. The urban agriculture could be integrated more into the landscape. The space is hemmed by the raised boxes; if it was a linear design, it would give more space to the area.
- On the roof you could create a habitat area with logs, etc.
- I really support this project and the creation of the rental units.
- I very much like the project. I like the L-shaped building; it works well on the site. There is good daylight to the units. I like the modern vocabulary, the colour, the playfulness.
- Some items could be refined. My primary concern is with the setback to the west; if there is development on the London Drugs site, it will create a narrow canyon. Light from the west will be blocked. Setting the building back a little farther you would have better transition to the lane which is almost used as a street.
- I like the verticality of the panels however the roof puts a big lid on the vertical elements, but you do need the overhang; maybe cut back the roof over the vertical elements.
- The base on the west is a challenge. It seems to be half in and half out of the ground.
- In terms of the massing I would not raise the western block. I think there is something unsatisfactory about the two volumes because they are on the same plane; move something back.
- I like the idea of the “habitat river” on the roof.

- I find the site plan hard to read and would like a clearer one if you come back to ADP.
- Space is given to the residents at the expense of the public.
- There needs to be more design development on the rear courtyard and how it might integrate.

Presenter's comments:

We have heard lots of good comments and suggestions, and will try to incorporate what we can.

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Advisory Design Panel has reviewed the Rezoning Application for 141-147 East 21st Street and commends the applicant for the architectural expression. The Panel supports the site development concept and massing. The Panel makes the following additional comments to be considered at the next ADP presentation:

- Provide an architecture and landscape design to respond to how the building meets the ground plane considering setbacks at the north and west sides of the building;
- Provision of exterior panels proposed detailing by a building envelope specialist;
- Consideration of additional passive design measures to include operable windows;
- Reconsideration of the treatment of the upper west façade and east facade to add fenestration, as they will be visible;
- Improvement of the entry to make it brighter; and
- Consideration of alternative programming and design for the amenity courtyard to improve integration of activities.

Carried Unanimously

5. Staff Update

There was a discussion on what format the staff update should take.

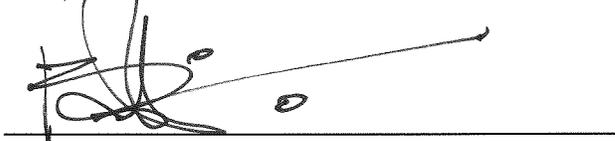
6. Other Business

None.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

The next regular meeting of the Advisory Design Panel will be held on Wednesday, July 16th, 2014.



Chair