

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 Conference Room A on Wednesday, March 20th, 2013

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**MINUTES**

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**Present:** B. Allen  
H. Besharat  
K. Bracewell, R.C.M.P  
A. Epp  
B. Harrison  
J. Marshall  
M. Messer  
D. Siegrist  
Councillor Bell

**Staff:** C. Purvis, Development Planner  
C. Perry, Supervisor, Engineering Services  
S. Kimm-Jones, Committee Clerk

**Guests:** **657 West 14<sup>th</sup> Street (Rezoning Application)**  
Marcela Garcia Zunino, Garcia Zunino Architects Inc  
Cameron Murray, Topographics Landscape Architecture  
Vilma Pilar, Owner  
Luis Zunino, Garcia Zunino Architects Inc.  
**234-236 East 18<sup>th</sup> Street (Rezoning Application)**  
Karl Wein, Karl Wein and Associates  
Randal Bridges, Karl Wein and Associates  
Harry Lee Haggard, Landscape Architect  
**103-113 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street (Rezoning Application)**  
Farzin Yadegari, Farzin Yadegari Architect Inc.  
Gloria Venczel, Cityscape Design Inc.  
David Rose, PD Group Landscape Architecture Ltd.  
Morez Adilipour, Farzin Yadegari Architect Inc.  
Brian Saadatmandi, owner representative

**Absent:** Y. Khalighi  
M. Saii

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A quorum being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

**1. Minutes of Meeting of the Advisory Design Panel held February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

It was regularly moved and seconded

**THAT** the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Design Panel held February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013 be adopted.

**Carried Unanimously**

## 2. Business Arising

There was a discussion on the need for better contextual information in submissions and whether 3D digital models or physical models should be mandatory. Plans should also be legible.

It was regularly moved and seconded

**THAT**, at the discretion of staff, applicants with commercial or residential projects of a significant size submit a 3D digital or physical model;

**AND THAT** all submissions to the Advisory Design Panel be legible with well-documented contextual information.

**Carried Unanimously**

*J. Marshall joined the meeting at 5:45 p.m.*

*A. Epp and K. Bracewell joined the meeting at 5:50 p.m.*

## 3. Staff Update

C. Purvis gave an overview of the projects and policies reviewed and approved at the February 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and March 4<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> Council meetings, as well as the March 11<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing for 1308 Lonsdale Avenue, and answered questions from Panel members.

*Councillor Bell joined the meeting at 6:00 p.m.*

## 4. 657 West 14<sup>th</sup> Street (Rezoning Application)

Staff provided background on the project which is an application to rezone the existing One Unit Residential zoned lot to a specific Comprehensive Development Zone with two two-unit buildings separated by a central courtyard. 0.75 FSR is proposed; the Low Density Attached Form Housing guidelines recommend 0.6 FSR to 0.75 FSR with 4-6 units on a similarly sized lot. There are other developments of a similar size in the neighbourhood.

Staff asked for the Panel's input on the visibility of the rear units from the street, treatment of the lanescape, storm water management, and the type and quality of exterior finishings.

Marcela Garcia Zunino, Garcia Zunino Architects Inc., presented the proposed project to the Panel:

- The site is 600 feet x 140 feet and has a seven foot drop north to south. It is located half a block from West Keith and one block from Marine Drive within walking distance of retail and transit.
- There will be just one single family home remaining in the cul de sac, the rest are multi-family dwellings.
- It is a simple project with two identical attached units at the front, and two identical attached units at the rear, and four parking stalls in the lane.
- All units have an open plan ground floor, a cellar with office, family and laundry rooms, and three bedrooms on the top floor. The units at the front are 1600 sq. ft.; those at the rear at 1500 sq. ft. All units have elevated decks facing south.
- There is individual access to the units at the north property line.
- The design allows as much daylight as possible into the cellars on the west façade.



- The design is a traditional residential look, with a simple palette of colours and materials: a warm grey exterior with light grey trim and stone accents with elements of exposed wood in columns and brackets. It is a.

Cameron Murray, Topographics Landscape Architecture, described the landscaping plan:

- There is a 12 foot diagonal slope so paths with stairs are used in the circulation plan.
- Each unit has a north “shade” garden and a south garden. There is not a lot of green space so the design incorporates vertical elements and columnar trees.
- Gates at the front are numbered for the four units, including units 3 and 4 at the rear.
- Pin oaks have been picked by the City for the street trees.
- Units 3 and 4 have sunken gardens with curved walls at the front and a roof garden to the south with edible plants, columnar cherry trees and Japanese maples.
- Water will be captured in an underground cistern in the central courtyard.

**Questions from the Panel included but were not limited to:**

- Have you calculated the amount of unprotected openings? **A:** Yes, it meets the BC Code. The limited distance has been calculated so small windows are at the top with larger at the bottom. The proportion is higher because the building is sprinklered.
- How big is the cistern; tree roots can cause problems in 15 years? **A:** It will be split in the middle with one area for tree roots.
- Have you engaged a civil engineer for the building grades? **A:** Not yet.
- The drop on the lane side is four feet; are you intending to drop the garage? **A:** We hope to drop the garages as low as possible because of the deck on top.
- Will the water in the cistern be used for watering? **A:** Yes.
- Will there be exterior lighting at the rear of the property? **A:** There will be lighting throughout the site for the stairs, bicycle storage and recycling area.
- The basement does not allow for secondary suites? **A:** It is not designed for them; the units at the back do not have exterior stairs although the front ones do. The location of the interior stairs does not allow for secondary suites. There is no parking for suites.
- What is the impact on the neighbourhood? **A:** This project is in conformance as described in the OCP.
- There is a construction challenge and maintenance issues for gardens on wood frame buildings like the garages. **A:** It will be easy to access and maintain. There is nowhere else to put planting along the lane area.
- Are you planning to collect the cistern water from the roofs and decks? There are lots of permeable walkways which will infiltrate rainwater. Because of the grade changes how are you going to irrigate the front yard? Will you be pumping it up? **A:** That is a good point; we will probably have to do that.
- What is the depth of the planter on the roof deck? **A:** Two to two and a half feet.
- What material is the stone accent? **A:** It is grey cultured stone with yellows and reds.
- Have you designed the details at the street? **A:** Not yet. The intention is to have four similar gates matching the wooden elements and the shape of the brackets.

**Comments of the Panel included but were not limited to:**

- The Engineering Department will not support dropping the garage.
- It would be interesting to see a section showing the neighbours’ perspective of the proposed retaining walls.
- Overall the design is very careful; I am concerned about the liveability of the courtyard; at the edge of the deck you are 15 feet away from the windows of the rear unit.
- I suggest planters on the deck that are removable.



- It is awkward to go up stairs to reach the roof deck.
- Really look at the elevations; the vertical stone elements are very stripping. Do some careful editing; there is a little too much busyness.
- It is handsomely massed.
- The choice of materials is good and the right scale, but it is almost doing too much.
- The floor plans are very responsive to the open spaces.
- You should study the proportions of materiality including the percentage of openings.
- You need sensitivity re the overlook of the rear decks.
- It needs to be clear how to get from the walkway to visit the rear units; how do I know that there is a building in the back?
- You have made some compromises with trying to create affordable housing. I like the orientation of the rear units to the side. My compliments on trying to achieve affordability.
- My biggest concern is the deck over the garage; it is six feet higher than the living room and just lower than the bedroom. It would make more sense to come off the bedroom. It will obscure views from the kitchen dining room area.
- For the emergency respondents there needs to be good definition of the rear buildings and good lighting with movement predictors on either side of the property at night.
- I suggest some cross grading for the paved areas into adjacent planted areas.
- Consider a small cistern at the front of the property; it could serve the front gardens.
- Have another look at how the grading affects the neighbouring properties and vice versa.
- I do not have an issue with privacy from the north to the south because of the elevation.
- I would rather have the deck if children could go up and play in a safe space. It puts eyes on the lane. The design can be improved but they would be good for the residents.
- In terms of expression and materiality, the massing of the north and south buildings does not need to be the same. You need to revisit the colour and materiality; use stone in one building, for instance. Revisit the amount and distribution of materials. You are mixing a hip roof with a gable roof with brackets; it is too busy and does not serve anything. Simplify the ornate roof and use the brackets in one building and redistribute the material. There is a proportion issue with the size of the wood elements, the very shallow hips and stone bases.
- There is so much going on that putting four more gates with overhead detail will be too busy; keep it simple.

**Presenter's comments:**

- We looked at the decks quite carefully; the building next door raises the decks to the second floor and looks massive.
- The skylight in the south will bring light into the kitchen.

It was regularly moved and seconded

**THAT** the Advisory Design Panel has reviewed the Rezoning Application for 657 West 14<sup>th</sup> and commends the applicant for a thorough presentation. The Panel recommends approval subject to the approval, by the Development Planner, of the following:

- Improvements to the liveability of the courtyard by screening the overlook from the rear terrace of the front (street) unit to the entry side of the rear (lane) unit, softening the walls at the entry of the rear unit;
- Improvements to the relationship between front unit's rear deck and the front unit's main floor living space;
- Simplification of the roof elements;
- Further development of calculations on the capacity of the rain cistern and the size thereof;
- Further strengthening of unit identity from the street, especially with regard to indicating the location of the rear units;

**FURTHER**, the Panel advises the applicant to study the proportion of fenestration to wall area's materials and to revisit the distribution of wood and stone in order to simplify the appearance of the buildings.

**Carried Unanimously**

#### **5. 234-236 East 18<sup>th</sup> Street (Rezoning Application)**

Staff provided background on the project which proposes to subdivide the existing RT-1 (Two Unit Residential) zoned lot to create two site specific Comprehensive Development zoned lots with a two-unit development on each site.

There is a proposed FSR of 0.50; the maximum FSR permitted in Level 2: Low Density Attached Form is 0.50.

Staff asked for the Panel's input on unit identification with particular regard to the visibility of the rear units from the street, pedestrian circulation on site, especially to the rear of the lot, liveability of the units, and type, quality and colours of exterior finishings.

Karl Wein, Karl Wein and Associates, presented the project to the Panel:

- There are three entrances on 18<sup>th</sup> Street: two outside entrances for the front units and a central entrance leading to the rear units.
- Bicycle storage and recycling areas are adjacent to the parking area.
- The cellar units have a rec room, bedroom and washroom.
- The buildings are u-shaped with decks in the middle facing the central path.
- The back units are visible from the street

Harry Haggard, described the landscape plan:

- Space for landscaping is limited.
- The plan allows for colour throughout the year.



**Questions from the Panel included but were not limited to:**

- Question to staff: Could we be looking at eight living units on this site if it is subdivided?  
**A:** If it was not subdivided it would be a four-plex and would require rezoning for an eight-plex.
- How do you get from the units to the garages? **A:** You use the central pathway; you have to go all the way around for the front units.
- Is it the intention to have suites in the basements? **A:** The basements are totally underground; there is no light at all.
- Question to staff: How will the shared path be administered? **A:** There would be a shared access agreement.
- Have you considered an entrance from the central pathway for the front units? **Staff:** the design of the access points has evolved over time.
- What is the dimension of the light wells? **A:** The light wells have grids on top of them so that you can walk over them; they have to be lifted in case of a fire.
- What is the grading at the garages? **A:** It slopes, there has to be a retaining wall.
- Where is the water coming from for the rain garden? **A:** The downspouts etc.
- Will it be impermeable along the edge so that the rain does not go into the neighbouring properties? **A:** It is swaled.
- What about the neighbours' grade? **A:** The neighbours are higher
- What is the depth of the swale at the side as there is only five feet? **A:** It varies: 6 to 12 inches.
- Are there fences at the rear to prevent access? **A:** Yes.
- Is there external lighting at the rear and throughout? **A:** Yes.
- There is no context provided; what is next door and across the street? **A:** Single family homes and four-plexes.

**Comments of the Panel included but were not limited to:**

- There are strategic reasons for the subdivision. There is missing context: it would be useful to have site sections and a real rationale for the front to back design.
- The choice of building form complicates the design. You have three feet in height you could use to bring the building up out of the ground and help liveability.
- You are presenting a simple form; it needs to be strong simple and cannot be out of scale or proportion. Form and simplicity needs to be emphasized; there is busyness based on the entry pergolas
- There is extremely poor liveability because of the courtyard spaces; it is not a positive amenity space: all four spaces face each other; the space is set up for conflict. There are serious problems with the layout of the amenity spaces.
- There is poor access to light.
- The site circulation does not work and compromises the liveability.
- I am concerned about the tanked back yard.
- There is no context to see what is going on in the neighbouring yards, in terms of grading, the windows, retaining walls; it seems like an island.
- I do not support the project at all.
- There are six different window sizes and a "Home Depot" type of entry door.
- Stop the relentless long roof and allow more sunlight in the interior walkway enclosure.
- The challenge is to create affordable housing in infill lots. There is simplicity about the design. There need to be some compromises to allow affordable housing.
- I have concerns about the privacy elements.
- The landscape plan could create four individual private spaces.



- From a CPTED point of view the project needs definition of front territoriality and no misconceptions re the three pathways. The residences in the rear need to be identified for emergency responders.
- The project lacks individual outdoor spaces for the occupants of the units. Grading could work to your advantage to create the spaces e.g. sliding doors going directly on to the grass. There could be more usable liveable outdoor areas that have more privacy.
- I would like to see front doors from the streetscape, not just doors to the cellar.
- There needs to be better access from the back to the front units.
- There is a real problem with the clarity of the plans in relationship to what is being presented.
- I cannot read the landscape plan at all so it is hard to comment on it.
- If it became eight units there would be real privacy issues.

**Presenter's comments:**

- No comments.

It was regularly moved and seconded

**THAT** the Advisory Design Panel has reviewed the Rezoning Application for 234-236 East 18<sup>th</sup> Street and recommends rejection based on the design as presented. The Panel identifies the following as being its major concerns:

- The site circulation is unclear and compromises the liveability of the units;
- The massing and layout of the project has contributed to poor liveability in the units and poor access to light at the centre of the project;
- Poor access to the outdoor green spaces from the units;
- A lack of contextual material has resulted in an unresolved or an unreadable relationship in the landscape areas and to the adjacent properties.

The Panel encourages affordability through the development of strong, simple forms.

**Carried Unanimously**

**6. 103-113 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street (Rezoning Application)**

Staff provided background on the project which is a proposal to build a five storey commercial building containing retail uses at grade with four stories of office development above.

Staff would like the Panel's input on the size and massing in light of the surrounding context, elements of sustainable design and the finishing materials.

Farzin Yadegari, Farzin Yadegari Architect Inc., presented the proposal to the Panel:

- There are contemporary buildings in the surrounding area with glass and aluminium facades.
- The proposed project has a strongly-defined retail store front.
- The corner of the building at 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Lonsdale Avenue has a 45 degree angle cut into it which enlarges the public space and creates a unique identity on a prominent corner.
- The building mass on the lane is stepped back to give more space to the residential building across the lane.

- Site coverage is 79% rather than 70%; a variance will be requested.
- Residential land values have eclipsed commercial land values; the project needs 1 FSR added to make it feasible.
- Small shops are carefully integrated into the streetscape.
- The façade materials are simple elements.
- The building will be built to ASHRAE 90.1 2007 standards.

David Rose , PD Group Landscape Architecture Ltd., presented the landscape plans:

- Major influences are the Lonsdale Design Guidelines and the existing streetscape on the west side of Lonsdale Avenue.
- Two existing trees on Lonsdale will be retained; there will be new trees on 12<sup>th</sup> Street supported by the use of a structural matrix.
- The corner picks up on the canopy detail in brick paving.
- There will be planters at the cross walk absorbing storm water from the street and paved area.
- On the third floor deck the plan creates a series of small spaces with some fixed seating and freestanding furniture, screened with small trees and larger shrubs.

*Councillor Bell left the meeting at 8:30 p.m.*

**Questions from the Panel included but were not limited to:**

- Question to staff: What are the streetscape guidelines? **A:** The plan replicates the old guidelines not the new ones
- Are there sustainability guidelines? **A:** ASHRAE 90.1 2007. Documentation will be required with a 1% energy bond.
- Does glazing cover the netting? **A:** It is an angled and rotated curtain wall.
- What is on the roof? **A:** It is a flat roof with mechanical systems.
- Is there any public art contribution? **A:** We should do that.
- Explain the design rationale. **A:** The tilting of something standard provides interesting architecture without increasing the cost. Using the same material for the façade and awning but turning it 45% and peeling it off is an interesting concept instead of having two separate elements. It makes it interesting and unique.
- Is the parking access secured? **A:** Yes.
- Is there insulation on the roof? **A:** It is concrete; it will have insulation which may be on top of the roof; there may be enough height.
- Is the structure freestanding? **A:** Yes.
- Is seven feet the maximum for awnings? **A:** If they project further, they need to be removed.
- Is the deck only for the third floor? **A:** At the moment, but the corridor could be extended.
- Did you consider extending the skin over part of the courtyard? **A:** it looked too heavy.
- Are parking ramps over 15% acceptable? **Staff:** The Zoning Bylaw allows deeper as long as it transitions; 20% is steep.
- The stairwell to the parking is uncovered? **A:** Yes, it because it is in the setback.

There was a short break at 8:40 p.m. while the Panel looked at the model.  
The meeting reconvened at 8:55 p.m.

**Comments of the Panel included but were not limited to:**

- I like the front entry and the creative angling; it creates a signature building. I like the back deck.



- Given that you cannot cover the stairwell to the parking, the access doors should be sturdy and the scalability of the entrance around the stairwell should be reduced.
- I support the modern vocabulary of the building; it is right for the neighbourhood and an office building. It is a welcome innovation in design. However, it is very disappointing that concrete block is not shown as concrete block, the columns inside the suites are not shown etc.
- I would like to understand the increase in FSR; I am not opposed to the height or density; however what is the excellence in design that would justify it?
- The project is not respectful to solar gain on four facades. There is no solar shading; the retail and office space will be very demanding on air conditioning. You are not using any passive measures to deal with solar gain; there are no operable windows.
- Public art should be a big part of the project.
- There should be an awning above the roof garden.
- The elevations seem like a graphic exercise; once you add insulation it is going to change the dimensions, they need development. It seems to be at the early stages of schematic design. There are unresolved qualities. You need to take the idea and go further with it.
- I feel that the net is an applique just draped over the building. I question the ability to do a curtain wall and have it drain.
- I am very concerned about the height and the context, jumping in scale on that corner; should it be five stories? It will dwarf the heritage building next door.
- The liveability of the office space needs to be improved with fresh air and access to the exterior amenity space.
- The architectural palette of the building could be more reflected in the landscape e.g. the rain garden is very organic and does not relate to the building form; it could be bolder. The patio needs something bolder than wooden benches. Could the curtain wall be a drape that becomes a green skin, planted in some areas? It would shade the building.
- I like the application and the material. The model is good.
- The building reads as a schematic exercise; I like the concept but wanted to hear the story; why it has this appearance and why you have made the choices you have? It does not look like a North Vancouver building; I want to have some good examples or precedents. The expression is very beautiful and articulate. Has it been proven and checked by a building envelope specialist?
- I would like to see more green in the streetscape per the new streetscape guidelines, more planters and more rain gardens, metal street furnishings rather than wood.
- Is it an iconic building, is it contextual?
- Excellence in design comes in the detailing.
- The design team needs to take the design to the next level of excellence. You are wasting energy on the facades, the concrete block must be shown as concrete block. You should have the freedom to come back with another design if you wish; it needs to be stronger.
- The roof scape is a missed opportunity.

*Councillor Bell rejoined the meeting at 9:00 p.m.*

**Presenter's comments:**

- Solar panels are not encouraged because of the LEC requirements.
- Energy gain is mostly through the south which is concrete block not curtain wall. The north side will not get much sun so there is no need to worry about solar gain.
- The cleaning and feasibility of the curtain wall have been discussed with the manufacturer: it is a simple procedure; the awning can be cleaned from street level.



- The building will meet ASHRAE 90.1 2007.
- The issue of the roof is well taken, but a roof garden may be problematic.
- One of the reasons the project is five stories; the city is very much in need of local employment; one of the allowable items for a density bonus is to provide job space.
- The building directly across does have a very similar architectural style and is higher.
- Part of the thinking around the meshing is to create tension between the solid concrete elements and the glass drapes over it. The mesh continues around the corner with no wall behind it.
- The back is different because there is no public presence; we can take a look at it.

*Colleen Perry left the meeting at 9:15 p.m.*

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Advisory Design Panel has reviewed the Rezoning Application for 103-113 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street and although supporting the site development concept, feels the following have not be adequately resolved:

- Justification of the increase in FSR;
- Verification of the materials and their appropriate uses on all facades;
- Provision of a shadow analysis;
- Exploration of sustainability measures including passive design and energy efficiency measures responding to façade orientation;
- Access to the outdoor amenity space for all workers and the exploration of options for it to be partially covered so that it can be used year round;
- Resolution of street level signage and materials at the ground plane;
- That the landscape plan refers to the current Lonsdale Streetscape guidelines;
- Resolution of the public art strategy;
- Exploration of the roofscape;
- Liveability of the workspaces;
- Review security measures (target hardening) for the stairwell access on the lane side of the property.

The Panel appreciates the creativity and bold appearance of the modern design and encourages the applicant to go further in this approach ensuring the details do not impede the function and appearance of the building.

**Carried Unanimously**

## **7. Other Business**

S. Kimm-Jones reminded Panel members about the volunteer appreciation reception on April 25th

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Advisory Design Panel will be held on Wednesday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013.



Chair