

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, February 18th, 2015**

MINUTES

- Present:** B. Allen
J. Boyce
K. Bracewell, R.C.M.P
K. England
A. Epp
J. Geluch
S. Gushe
A. Larigakis
P. Maltby
- Staff:** D. Johnson, Development Planner
Colleen Perry, Supervisor, Development Servicing
S. Kimm-Jones, Committee Clerk
- Guests:** **212-214 West 5th Street (Rezoning Application)**
Mehrddad Rahbar, Vernacular Design Inc.
Roya Changizi, Vernacular Design Inc.
David Rose, PD Group Landscape Architecture Ltd.
Ali and Sonia Ostadsaraie, Clients
- Absent:** M. Tasi
Council Liaison (unappointed at this time)
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A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m.

1. Commission Orientation and Welcome to New Members

D. Johnson took the chair and welcomed the new members to the Panel. The members introduced themselves.

D. Johnson gave members a presentation on the advisory body process and introduction to the mandate of the Advisory Design Panel.

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair for the period February 2015 to January 2016

It was agreed to elect the Chair and Vice Chair by show of hands.

D. Johnson asked for nominations for the position of Chair; Andrew Larigakis and Alvin Epp volunteered. There being no further nominations, Andrew Larigakis was elected Chair.

D. Johnson asked for nominations for the position of Vice Chair. Alvin Epp was nominated and accepted the nomination. There being no further nominations, Alvin Epp was elected Vice Chair by acclamation.

Andrew Larigakis took the Chair at 5:50 p.m.

3. Minutes of Meeting of the Advisory Design Panel held January 28th, 2015

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Design Panel held January 28th, 2015 be adopted

Carried Unanimously

4. Business Arising

The Panel was reminded that the 2015 Design Awards would be presented at the March 2nd Council meeting; members were invited to attend. There was a discussion on the award process.

5. Staff Update

D.Johnson reviewed the status of ongoing development projects, and the Official Community Plan which will be the subject of a Public Hearing scheduled for March 3rd, 2015. If the Official Community Plan is approved, the next steps will be an implementation report for Council to set priorities; one of them being the possible drafting of Development Permit Area Guidelines for areas of the City affected by substantial change.

6. 212 – 214 West 5th Street (Rezoning Application)

The project is an application to rezone the lot from Two-Unit Residential to a Comprehensive Development Zone to permit a three-unit, single detached development with two buildings on West 5th Street and an infill building with attached parking in the rear yard.

Staff asked for the Panel's input on the proposed density, building separation, setbacks as related to neighbouring buildings, the modification of the ground plane and the proposed finished grades relative to the boulevard and neighbouring lots, the building articulation, and the area, location and design of private open space.

Mehrdad Rahbar, Vernacular Design Inc., outlined the project to the Panel:

- His company has designed a similar triplex on the same street. The clients want a similar typology.
- There are a variety of triplex types in the City, but this is only the second time this design has been produced. It is a very liveable design. The residents of the first triplex have lived there since 2009 and are very happy.
- A neighbourhood consultation meeting was held with no opposition to the project and 9-10 people in support.
- It is an active and sustainable site located in a dense part of the City, surrounded by amenities.
- The existing duplex dates back to the late 70's, early 80's and has no architectural merit.

- West 5th Street has a combination of new projects, heritage houses, single family houses, and triplexes.
- The design animates the lane and echoes the theme of the laneway house to the west.
- Having three detached units is the best solution for a triplex project as all units have natural light on all sides.
- Each unit is treated equally in terms of outdoor space and semi-private outdoor space.
- The rear unit has a large balcony and small back yard.
- A reduction in the front setback and distance between the two units is requested.
- The sidewalk is flat to the property line; the front yard is four feet above the sidewalk with a nine foot difference in height from the front to rear.
- The Ottawa heritage guidelines were used as a reference for the design.
- There is no major shadow impact.
- There is no conflict between the project's windows and the windows of the neighbours.

David Rose, PD Group Landscape Architecture Ltd., described the landscape plan:

- The main landscaping issue is the difference in grade at the front. The project is graded down to the sidewalk with two retaining walls with an 18 inch drop from the upper wall to the lower. Hedging backing the upper wall is proposed.
- There are permeable pavers on the patios and sumps for infiltration.
- Shade tolerant planting is planned for the side of the project.
- Significant hedges provide privacy at the ground level screening the rear unit from the front units.

Questions from the Panel included but were not limited to:

- **To Staff:** How will the setbacks be permitted? **A:** Through the rezoning process; it will be at Council's discretion.
- The design assumes that the neighbouring houses will be coming forward on their lots? **A:** Two of the neighbours to the west have mentioned redeveloping. We have tried to design the project as though the current buildings will be staying. Council is in favour of reducing setbacks and moving buildings forward to have a larger interior courtyard space.
- How will the 25% slope at the front be maintained; it will be difficult to use a lawn mower? **A:** A one in four slope is considered an acceptable grade. Stairs are not allowed on the City boulevard.
- **Staff:** You need building grades from staff and will need to hire a civil engineer; it will impact your design. **A:** We have a civil engineer.
- Will there be a fence to deal with the drop to the neighbour? **A:** Yes.
- Can you explain the function of the front patios on the front units? They are isolated from the living space; how will they be used? **A:** We felt it was close enough for people to use; you would be down in the area with plants around you.
- The back patios connect to the kitchen so will be busy and active. It looks like there is quite a big overlook from the living area of the laneway house as it is on the second floor? **A:** There is a cedar hedge; we have a curved edge to pull the hedge closer to the lower patio.
- You have lawn areas for the laneway house but no connection to the living area of the unit? How do you see the lawns being integrated in the liveability of the rear unit? **A:** It is somewhere to be outside; we expect the veranda to be used more often.

- The A&B units have a five foot setback with light wells facing the property line. Can they encroach? **Staff:** It is at the discretion of Council. **Applicant:** Two feet of light well with a grate are permitted.
- How does the circulation work? The hallway is private for Unit C? **A:** Yes. A&B have to walk around the units to access the garages.
- The garbage is on the east side; where do they put it out for pick up? **A:** It is tucked away so it does not show; the residents will have to put out. There is a five foot six inch setback on that side.
- How will the residents access the garbage? **A:** There will be stepping stones; the lawn will be shared.
- The bedroom in Unit C does not have a window? **A:** It is missing a light well; there is garbage above. It will have to be rearranged.
- Are you required to have a diagram showing the window relationships between the rear units and the front units? Are the windows looking into each other? **A:** The floor plans of the front units are different. We tried to minimize the overlook. There is a four foot difference in the elevation.
- Is there an opportunity to have more density; to make it more affordable? **Staff:** The current OCP allows for 0.75 FSR; they have 0.70 FSR so there is not much flexibility.
- Did you look at grading the project for different types of homeowners to access from the lane so there would be no steps? **A:** The grade is difficult. The rear unit works well for accessibility. It would difficult to create ramps.
- Was there an opportunity to bring the rear unit patio facing the lane to the front of the unit to face south? **A:** It was discussed but we had to mitigate between the front and rear units because of privacy issues. We moved it to the west to get the afternoon sun, and animate the lane.
- **Staff:** Do you have room in your height envelope? You will have to lift the garage to drain to the lane.
- Is there any other kind of storm water management except for permeable pavers? **A:** Not at the moment; we have discussed with our civil engineers.
- How will you achieve EnerGuide 80? **A:** We are working with an EnerGuide consultant who will give us options e.g. ready hot water, upgrading insulation, triple pane windows, three inch board insulation in the foundation wall.
- What kind of windows is used? **A:** Vinyl, triple glazed with ample operable sections.

Comments of the Panel included but were not limited to:

- It is nice to see a comprehensive CPTED package. It is imperative that the units are easily identifiable from the street, at night, by emergency responders; access to the coach house will need to be identified. Use appropriate lighting.
- The package is well constructed. It addresses housing in North Vancouver and is the best use of the lots. It is a nice creative design. I like the front entryway; it is attractive from the curb. The lawns at the back are hard to manage. The eight foot walkway can be very dark; it needs lighting for the homeowner at the rear. Consider redesigning the yard for the unit rather than having someone walk across it. It is important to look at garbage facilities and find a way to reconfigure the garbage; someone is going to have to manage the bins for pickup; it will be hard if people are coming or going.
- The entryway to the coach house seems closed and exposed at night. It will be dark; the lanes are not well lit. Can it be shifted to create an access that is part of the patio?
- What about using ground cover instead of lawn?

- People buying the units need to understand that you will share the outdoor space. Take advantage of the views. It cannot offer the same privacy as a single family home.
- I think you are challenged with the density on the site. The outdoor areas are limited. However, it seems most of the neighbours have very little rear space. There might be an overlook issue, but development will probably happen to the west. There will be overlook into the back rooms. The laneway house is cut off from the lawn space. I would have the veranda look over the courtyard which would give them a connection.
- Re building articulation, the laneway house has a bigger scale but does not overpower; probably due to the grade. If it is raised it will dominate even more.
- The design resonates more with houses on the other side of the street. Look at the neighbouring houses which have less height with a more modern approach.
- The bright colours do not seem to work with the heritage design; I like the idea of colour but not so bright.
- I am curious about using cement board siding rather than wood.
- If you used stain instead of paint on the cedar trim, you would see more of the wood.
- I do like the front balconies and patios transitioning down to the sidewalk.
- The roofs are complicated; how will the water collect?
- If the upstairs bathroom could be separate; it might be better.
- It is a nice use of the land. The area is a good spot for development. I like the creativity of detached triplexes.
- I wonder about the maintenance and durability of the lawns. Cutting across the lawn to access the garbage will affect the durability.
- It can be a challenge to reach EnerGuide 80 without the use of a heat pump. You might have to increase insulation values.
- I think you could reconsider the design and functionality of the lawn and front patios and their relationship to the living spaces. It would be a tremendous asset.
- It is a much more interesting building than the adjacent lots and will increase the character of the block.
- Your plans should show the fence at the property line.
- I appreciate a new typology for the site. I am not sure about the setback at the front; it is out of character with the neighbourhood but necessary to provide useful back yards and duplexes. I would be curious to know if there were other houses on the block with that setback. I like the separate houses but you would have more room for the houses if put together as well as more room in the yard and more energy efficiency, as there is a lot of outside surface area. 25 feet is not an unreasonable width for a single house.
- I disagree about moving the patio; I would rather see it on the lane for more privacy and so that the lane does not become a wall of garage doors.
- Regarding the expression of the building: I am not keen to see a replica of a heritage building and would like to see a more modern expression.
- Air tightness will improve your energy performance considerably.

Presenter's comments:

- Re the privacy, we have to look at it closely. It is an issue.
- I am writing a book on laneway revival and trying to use a lane as a pilot project so am stubborn about using lanes as living lanes; it is safer and brighter.
- The three detached units is unique; I may have done the first one in the Lower Mainland. We had a lot of challenges with the first one but the residents are still living there and came to the public meeting to thank us. There is noise transition between duplexes. The units have windows and air circulation on all sides. Residents treat them as an alternative to a single family home. Other residents want to do the same thing.

- I totally agree with the comments about the garbage; we can move garbage for one unit to the west so that they can go directly to the garbage and not cross the other unit.
- The City gave us the direction for the architectural expression.

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Advisory Design Panel has reviewed the Rezoning Application for 212-214 West 5th Street and recommends approval subject to addressing the following issues to the satisfaction of the Development Planner:

- Maintaining the privacy of the yards with respect to the garbage enclosures;
- Providing daylight to the basement bedroom of the laneway house;
- Addressing the need to raise the level of the laneway house to drain towards the lane;
- Ensuring that the access to the rear house is well lit;
- Ensuring correct lighting at the street highlighting the address for the rear property for emergency responders at night;
- Addressing the concerns about the maintenance of the front lawn; and
- Further development of the storm water management plan.

The Panel thanks the applicant for a thorough presentation.

Carried Unanimously

7. Other Business

Staff reminded the Panel that the Volunteer Appreciation Reception will be held on April 30th, 2015 at City Hall.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Advisory Design Panel will be held on Wednesday, March 18th, 2015.

Chair

