

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, July 15th, 2015**

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**MINUTES**

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**Present:** B. Allen  
K. Bracewell, RCMP  
J. Boyce  
K. England  
A. Epp  
J. Geluch  
S. Gushe  
A. Larigakis  
P. Maltby  
M. Tasi

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

**Guests:** Dave Laquinta, Cobbestone Homes  
Jordan Kutev, Jordan Kutev Architect Inc.  
Harry Haggard, Landscape Architect

**Absent:** None

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A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 5:33 p.m.

**1. Minutes of Meeting of the Advisory Design Panel held June 17th, 2015**

It was regularly moved and seconded

**THAT** the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Design Panel held June 17th, 2015 be adopted.

**Carried Unanimously**

**2. Business Arising**

**Action:** Link to Pedestrian Plan to be emailed to members.

**3. Staff Update**

D. Johnson reviewed the status of ongoing development projects.

#### 4. 253-255 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street (Rezoning Application)

Staff introduced the project. This is an application to replace an existing duplex with a four-unit townhouse project consisting of two separate duplexes, separated by a small outdoor amenity space on the property.

Staff asked for the Panel's comments on the following: the laneway feature of mixing the pavement materials to help break up the row of garage doors facing the lane, the massing and articulation of the proposed buildings, the colour scheme and the application of façade materials, and the proposed landscaping plan.

Jordan Kutev, Jordan Kutev Architect Inc., described the application to the Panel:

- The units are split with a courtyard in the middle to mirror the existing houses.
- There is an extensive boulevard at the front.
- The cellar spaces have exterior access. The cellars in the rear units have direct access from the garage.
- The lot has a steep front-to-back slope, resulting in the rear unit being lower than the front.
- The materials palette includes Hardie Panel with black vinyl frames around the windows.
- There are lofts with small roof patios.

Harry Haggard, landscape architect, described the landscape plan:

- The plan adds interest with year round colour.
- Rain gardens in the middle courtyard will have stepping stones.
- There are planters at the back to provide screening.

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

- Could there be a communal garden in the middle patio? **A:** The space is tight because the rain garden is required.
- Have you considered more of a heritage look to fit with the heritage look of the street? **A:** We wanted to be slightly different, more modern.
- How are you fastening the Hardie Panel? **A:** With face screws.
- To Staff: Do they have to have closets in halls and guest rooms? **Staff:** There is no planning requirement.
- What about minimum window size? **Staff:** This is covered under the Building Code.
- Is there a minimum/maximum grade for driveways? **Staff:** It cannot be more than 10%.
- Is there a target audience for the project? How do you think they will use the outdoor space? **A:** It is family-oriented; that is why there are large south-facing patios.
- How does the storage and bike storage work in the garages; how much is left for the car? **A:** It is the minimum size for a parking stall: 18 feet. The stall for bicycle storage is the minimum size.
- The two middle cars can access the rear units? **A:** They have that option.
- The two outside garages are for the northern units? **A:** Yes.
- Are the windows operable in the kitchen? **A:** The majority of the windows will be operable to allow for cross ventilation.
- The stairs to the loft have one riser and then a landing; is that allowed under Code? **Staff:** Typically you are allowed that in single family units.

- The elevations do not show how you drain the water. **A:** We try to split it between the units. We propose to run a rainwater leader down the middle of the front.
- Are you having a 'U' shape for the Hardie Panel? **A:** There are two channels; the vertical channels butt against the windows.
- What is the soffit material? **A:** Probably perforated black aluminium.
- What is your heating system; EnerGuide 82 generally requires heat pumps. **A:** We have engaged an energy modelling company and will decide on the approach. There is space in the cellar for mechanical systems.
- Do you have provision for the location of an outside air heat pump if needed? **A:** We can fit it in under the external stairs.
- What material is used for the raised planters? **A:** The middle planters will be concrete retaining walls.
- Do you have a hyper-imposed image of the project on a direct front and rear elevation? **A:** No.
- Did you consider other material for the façade? **A:** Not really.
- What are the design thoughts on including the loft in the units? **A:** There is a little bit of a view due to the grade.
- Did you consider the option of a vaulted ceiling to bring light into the units? **A:** We thought the loft would be more of a benefit.
- Can you explain the storm water management strategy; where is the water coming from for each of your rain gardens? **A:** Mainly from the downspouts. We are considering an underground retention tank.
- You mentioned that the rain garden would be under concrete; there is a 4% slope to the lower building. **A:** The grading would have to be modified.
- There is a lot of lawn and planted areas but no irrigation system; are you planning to use the water in the cistern for irrigation? **A:** Yes; we may even use rain barrels.
- The parking stalls seem very tight; car doors will hit the walls. **Staff:** The Bylaw has recently increased parking stall width to 8.2 feet plus clearances.
- You talked about fitting into the local context with a simple design; what direction took you to a very muted design? **A:** Typically our designs are crisp with flat roofs. We wanted to hide the loft in the roof.
- How are you defining the territoriality from the lane to discourage trespassing? **A:** We will have a fence and gates.
- How will first responders identify the rear units? **A:** There will be lighting along the path and signs on the path.
- Is there a cross section through the site showing the relationship at the property lines? How does the grading relate to the neighbouring lots? **A:** No. We are matching the grades of the neighbours with a difference of one or two feet.
- There is glass in the garage doors? **A:** Yes, at the top.
- You are asking for a relaxation on the recycling facilities? **A:** Yes.
- Why is there trim between the ground and upper levels? **A:** We wanted to make it horizontal and break up the façade..

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

- It is important to clearly identify the rear units for first responders.
- The cellars in the rear units are quite small.
- I do not think the context of the neighbourhood is a good fit to follow.

- There was a lot of effort put into the design rationale in the written report but the design does not stand up to it. I like simple clean lines but appreciate the effort to fit in. I would like to see the design rethought by taking a departure from the existing context. There is an opportunity in the site to raise the bar in terms of doing something simple for affordable housing; taking as a precedent the work you usually do. There is an opportunity to stand out. Look at other materials.
- In terms of the parking you have to make sure it really functions; minimums can constrain the use.
- The landscape design is hard to read; it is hard to tell what are trees and what are not, and how big they are going to grow. It would be good to know how the trees will affect the residents.
- It would be helpful to have sections through the property by Units 3 and 4 with the planters and stairs to see the context and how the design works.
- The little patches of grass at the entry are not too useable; consider planting them with drought tolerant plants. There would be less maintenance.
- The planting looks very sparse with large spaces between the shrubs except for the double planters up to the patio. It is a small site and is very busy; it might be nice to soften the courtyard with more planting to make it more of a sanctuary.
- The façade does not do anything for me; the entry ways are not very deep which is not good when it is raining. What can be done differently for curb appeal? It has a very flat look. It needs something including more overhang.
- It needs an imposed image; it would be nice to see the rear building in context with the neighbours.
- The colour scheme does not feel that it fits into the context of the neighbourhood.
- You need to make provision for heat pumps if you are going for EnerGuide 82.
- It looks tight to meet Code on the egress from the cellars.
- The grass grid is interesting but will turn into a mud pit in the winter.
- You should add another window to the master bedroom for cross ventilation. The bedroom closets in bedrooms two and three look very small.
- The black windows and soffits look busy.
- The fenestration looks very complicated; a simpler expression would help the siding line up.
- The drawings should show where the water drainage etc. is going.
- It would be helpful to have the following information clarified: the landscape plan should show grading more clearly e.g. the tops and bottoms of walls, tops and bottoms of stairs, show where guard rails are needed, the exit doors at the back of the garage are a foot and half lower than the grade but there is no step shown.
- There are lights at the front of the building which are hidden behind the six to eight foot shrubs.
- There are trees which are going to be 15 to 30 feet tall next to each other. One will have to be removed in a few years.
- The lawn space between the two buildings will not work with the rain garden and large slabs; it is a small landscape space and has to be well-thought out for everyone to use.
- It is an economical design which is important in terms of affordability. Hardie Panel is durable and economical; it is not ideal in terms of cladding material but there may be ways to work with it to give more interest. I do not think there is a solid heritage aspect to the street. A more modern vocabulary would help with Hardie Panel; you can get more out of it. The panel is not aligned with the windows, doors etc.; you could reverse the horizontal banding; make the banding solid, e.g. flat panels below the windows.

- The colour is bland. A stronger use of colour could help the context. The overhangs are too minimal; the banding over the front door is not generous enough. Residents are going to get wet walking along the side to the back.
- The four concrete walkways at the front divide up the grassy area; take out the two middle paths for a contiguous lawn area.
- How do you give the rear units presence from the street?
- The second rear unit looking forward from the front room is looking at a 13 foot barrier of concrete wall and opaque glass. Is there any way to consider the six foot sheet of opaque glass? You need planting to create a green wall against the concrete wall; are two foot planters big enough?
- Is it possible to push the rear units to the property line thereby increasing the size of the middle courtyard?
- You could introduce art into the plexiglass to make it more interesting.
- In such a small space why not create a sanctuary rather than a large lawn.
- The strip of pavers at the back does not do much for the design. It is too mean a gesture; perhaps treat the concrete in the garages and take the pavers out.
- There are a lot of small gestures in the massing and design; it needs bigger gestures. The trim roofs between the levels do not do anything; there should be better ways of breaking down the scale. Perhaps have a deeper porch at the front instead going across the whole front of the house.

#### **Chair's Summary:**

There is a general sense that the design does not need to relate to the existing context as it is not particularly appealing. There is a lot of interest in the front yards and planting. Showing the rainwater use and drainage is important. Grading coordination will be important; it is a sloping site with a lot happening. There is a fairly clear site plan but more grades would be beneficial. There is concern that the planters are big enough. There is concern re treatment of the Hardie Panel; it does not often look good panelized with a metal trim. There needs to be more flare with the project as a whole.

#### **Presenter's comments:**

These are all good comments. We had the direction to try to blend with the existing streetscape but have probably done a little bit too much. We like more contemporary design and will have to sit with Planning and talk to them. It is the last piece of the whole block to be developed.

It was regularly moved and seconded

**THAT** the Advisory Design Panel has reviewed the Rezoning Application for 253-255 East 6th Street and although supporting the site development concept, feels the following details have not been adequately resolved and would like to see the project return for further review:

- Improving curb appeal with more articulation to the overall massing, the appearance of the street entry including the narrow roof element, simplification of the fenestration expression and a review of the materials treatment and colour palette;
- The planting plan, clearer resolution of the rain garden and the lawn in the central courtyard, better development of the front yards with more planting and a contiguous lawn area;
- The pavers along the lane do not contribute to the overall design;
- Drainage to be more clearly depicted, including the rain water leaders handled;
- The site grading to be more clearly shown;
- The Hardie Panel design to be better developed;
- A review of the parking garage in terms of function, bike storage and layout; and
- The rear unit entries to be clearly identified from the street.

**FINALLY** the Panel does not believe that the design needs to blend as strongly with the existing context.

**Carried Unanimously**

*C. Perry left the meeting at 7:12 p.m.*

**5. Other Business**

None.

**6. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Advisory Design Panel will be held on Wednesday, August 19th, 2015.

Chair

