

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, December 11th, 2013**

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**MINUTES**

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**Present:**

B. Allen  
H. Besharat  
K. Bracewell, R.C.M.P  
D. Siegrist  
A. Epp  
Y. Khalighi  
M. Messer  
M. Saii  
Councillor Bell

**Staff:**

E. Adin, Deputy Director, Community Development  
C. Perry, Supervisor, Engineering Services  
S. Kimm-Jones, Committee Clerk  
F. Ducote, Assistant City Planner, Community Development  
C. Wilkinson, Planner, Community Development

**Guests:**

**1616 Mahon Avenue (Rezoning Application)**  
Behrouz Monadizadeh, Domustix Development Corp.  
Payman Khodarahmi, Owner

**194 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street (Rezoning Application)**  
Karl Wein, Karl Wein & Associates  
Randolph Rigets, Karl Wein & Associates

**Absent:**

B. Harrison  
J. Marshall

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A quorum being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

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

It was regularly moved and seconded

**THAT** the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Design Panel held November 20th, 2013 be adopted as amended.

**Carried Unanimously**

## 2. Duplex Development Permit Guidelines

F. Ducote Assistant City Planner, Community Development and C. Wilkinson, Planner, Community Development reviewed the proposed duplex development permit guidelines.

The guidelines would be used in conjunction with a variation of the existing RT-1 Duplex Zone and would be consulted by those seeking approval for any duplex development in the City, including duplexes within the Mid-block Area.

The core objectives of the guidelines are to improve the contextual sensitivity to context, architectural quality and livability of duplex developments on a lot-by-lot basis,

There are five guiding principles: increase housing choice, enhance neighbourliness, enhance liveability, seek architectural excellence and variety, and exceptional energy performance.

The guidelines also propose a change in the approval process: duplex rezoning applications would no longer have to go to Public Hearing.

The guidelines seek architectural excellence because duplexes have high visibility in the City landscape as they take up the majority of residential land. The City is currently proposing to rezone the remaining "Single Family" One-unit Residential lots in the Mid-block area to a "Duplex" Zone based on the existing RT-1 Zone. The draft Official Community Plan proposes to make all duplex development subject to Development Permit.

The guidelines try to lift the cellar out of the ground a little to improve light, air, access and enhance liveability for those residents.

The guidelines also suggest moving the front setback forward five feet to increase the rear setback to make a more useable back yard.

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

- I really support the guidelines but am concerned that 10% is too small an area for decks. **A:** An applicant may choose to have more than 10% deck space, but it would count against density. The District of North Vancouver has an 8% limit. We are trying to limit large outdoor structures which could be closed at some point. We do not currently have the tools to prevent decks looking over the neighbour's yard.
- Explain the cellar definition. **A:** Currently the average grade defines the point where the cellar is measured. To have it excluded the cellar must be five feet or more below the average grade. The proposal is to bring the cellar out of the ground while still maintaining energy efficiency. The proposal is consistent with City of Vancouver regulations. Basement floor space is included in the Floor Space Ratio, while cellar space is not.
- Will this clarify and streamline the approval process for all duplexes? **A:** At first it will only apply to the mid-block area; following the adoption of the Official Community Plan the guidelines will be applicable to all duplexes. Early introduction for the midblock area will give us a chance to amend the guidelines when they apply to the whole City. We are trying to make things fair for everyone. The guidelines should give us more authority rather than using moral suasion as at present.
- The applications will not go through public hearings? What will replace them? **A:** The proposal is reduce the amount of public consultation given the limited participation of the

public at Public Hearings. There have been over 67 duplexes approved with few questions or comments. The idea is to make the process clearer and more efficient. It may be that we need to work on finding the right balance. The existing process is too onerous. Coach house development permits require consideration of feedback from neighbours; we could look at mandating something similar for duplex development permits.

- Have you asked the public about changes to the approval process? **A:** This was presented on October 22<sup>nd</sup> at an open house; the feedback was generally encouraging.
- Did you consider some kind of guideline mandating that the people in the cellar have access to outdoor amenity space? **A:** It might be good to have a number. Decks have almost always intruded on the access to the cellar and overlooked them.
- What is the policy of using the roof of the garage as an amenity space or green initiative? **A:** Garages are generally not connected to the main building. The Zoning Bylaw regulates the height; it is difficult to get a usable space on top of the garage.
- I like the smaller setbacks at the front; it brings connectivity to semi-private and personal space.
- Will the changes make a difference to the amount of permeable space? **A:** It should not because we have increased the back yard by ten feet and limiting deck space will help.
- Are the guidelines going to be more specific about using permeable materials? **A:** We will encourage them to use permeable materials.
- The guidelines do not address landscape issues at all; you should promote design by a professional. **A:** It is hard to regulate because of different lot sizes. We can ask the landscape architects on staff.
- Do not show grates to introduce light into cellars. **A:** Our language should show that these are not encouraged at all.
- I assume there are regulations for exits from the cellar. **A:** Yes.

*D. Siegrist entered the meeting at 6:30 pm.*

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

- The existing rezoning process is a waste of Council's time; as a good neighbour every applicant should contact immediate neighbours to inform them.
- I like the streamlined approach to development approvals.
- A lot of the current duplexes look like a houses with two entrances which enhances the character of the neighbourhood.
- I think the reduced approval process will be very positive as long as there is respect for the immediate neighbours. Increasing the ridge height to 33 feet will be positive; I would prefer 35 feet. Increasing the distance at the rear will have a positive impact.
- I think EnerGuide 80 should be mandatory.
- The document is a draft. I would encourage you to use creative, innovative images and not show bad architecture in it. The middle image on page 10 should be more legible. Also review the images on pages 11 and 12 (do not discourage covered cantilevered balconies).
- I am supportive of it. I am just concerned about smaller roof deck area.
- I am supportive of the change. I recommend revisiting the landscaping and amenity areas in more detail with stronger guidelines.
- How you communicate what you want to happen is very important.
- I support it; there could be a stronger emphasis on where the front door could be placed. Sometimes developers put them in in a very symmetrical way. They could be at the front

and side. There is an opportunity to have a design element at the property line. Guidelines on how to treat the perimeters would enrich the neighbourhood.

**Presenters' comments:**

We appreciate the comments; it was a good discussion.

**Chair's summary:**

- There is general support for the guidelines.
- Neighbour consultation by applicant is recommended.
- There is strong encouragement to promote landscape design by qualified designers.
- Garage roofs should be used as amenity or green space (not unanimously supported).
- There should be emphasis on the placement of front doors.
- There should be the introduction of design elements to perimeter and property line elements.
- There should be general encouragement of excellence in architecture.
- There should be enhanced images in the document itself.
- Revisit the inclusion of landscaping guidelines.

It was regularly moved and seconded

**THAT** the Advisory Design Panel has reviewed the proposed Duplex Development Permit Guidelines and generally supports the proposal to rezone the RS-1 lots to a new Duplex Zone in the "Mid-Block Area" and proposed approval process, and has provided the following comments for the Planning Department's consideration:

- Neighbour consultation by applicant needs to occur;
- Assistance from qualified building and landscape designers, and excellence in architecture, needs to be strongly encouraged and promoted;
- Use of the roof and garage as amenity or green space needs to be further considered in balance with privacy and overlook issues;
- Greater emphasis on placement of front doors is encouraged;
- Introduction of design elements to perimeter and property line elements is encouraged in guidelines;
- Images in guidelines need to be enhanced and replaced, especially on the cover;
- Guidelines with respect to landscaping are encouraged to be revisited.

**Carried Unanimously**

**3. 1616 Mahon Avenue (Rezoning Application)**

Staff introduced the project which is an application to rezone the property from One-Unit Residential to a Comprehensive Development Zone to permit the development of a two unit residential building with accessory suites in the cellar.

Behrouz Monadizadeh, Domustix Development Corp., presented the proposal to the Panel:

- The property is zoned Level 3 Low Density; 0.6 FSR is proposed.
- Most of the lots around the site are developed except the one to the north.
- There is a six to seven foot slope from the lane to the street.

- The property to the south has a large footprint with a deck at the rear. The owner of the deck is concerned about the view impact.
- The proposed height is the same as the development to the south. Staff support the height as it will improve the liveability of the secondary suites with more natural light.
- The design proposes side-by-side duplexes staggered by four feet with larger garages at the rear to provide recycling facilities. The applicant is requesting a variance in the size of garage space.
- There is a fourth bedroom on the third floor with a deck at the front with good views.
- The secondary suites have large living rooms, with open kitchens, one bathroom and bedroom.

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

- Is there a soffit indicated on the materials palette? **A:** No, it will be exposed wood stain at the front, the sides and back will be aluminium.
- **To staff:** Is it in excess of the height envelope? **A:** No, due to the slope of the site.
- Is the parking enough? **A:** The parking is what is required.
- **Staff:** I do not see a survey showing the elevations out to the street. Are you designing the public realm? **A:** We are providing two new street trees and renewing the boulevard.
- How are you going to deal with the two foot drop? **A:** We will have to put a steep ramp.
- What about the setbacks at the front? It does not include the bay window, or the balcony? **A:** They meet guidelines but are permitted projections into the setback.
- Is this why the neighbour is complaining about loss of views? **A:** You have to design a building that respects the streetscape and find a balance. Buildings built under previous guidelines are sometimes a little odd.
- What is the property to the south? **A:** It is a triplex.
- Is there a reason why the north is staggered more than the south? **A:** The City asked us to create a stepped façade to align with the neighbours.
- **To staff:** If the front setback was increased to 25 feet, does it create a conflict? **Staff:** No, the minimum setback for single family homes is 25 feet but we are moving towards reducing front setbacks for duplexes.
- What level of energy efficiency are you achieving? **A:** We need to meet EnerGuide 80 but are being asked to meet EnerGuide 84 without a heat pump.
- Did you have a landscape designer? **A:** No.
- Was there consideration of different colours? **A:** Yes, for the main façade.
- What is the window configuration of the neighbours to the south? **A:** Mostly washroom windows.
- What is the grade difference between the sunken patio and the top of the stairs? **A:** Nine feet.
- Do you think a lot of light will get into the front entrance of the patio? **A:** Yes, the other two sides are open and the deck is 10 feet higher.
- Who gets what parking space? **A:** The homeowner will decide. A lot of tenants do not own vehicles.
- What kind of plant materials are you proposing? **A:** We have not decided yet. The homeowner should have the choice of choosing what they would like. We have a list for the front yard. We might put some plants in the planter by the garage.
- Is it a solid fence? **A:** We have not made a decision yet; it is usually solid.
- Are there lights on the pathway? **A:** Yes.
- How are the basement suites indicated? **A:** There will be a sign by the stairs.

- What was your design theme; how are you contributing to the neighbourhood? **A:** The starting point for the interior is functionality and access to natural light. The exterior is trying to blend into the neighbourhood.
- The east elevation is under the building envelope? **A:** It is far below the building envelope, the west elevation is the critical one.
- Have you given consideration to operable windows? **A:** Yes.

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

- Your material is very thorough but is missing some things. There is a lot of work on the floor plans. We need to see how the building fits into the site and context. We need more clarification around the windows. Some materiality needs to be confirmed.
- The massing model is great but we need the dimensional relationships to neighbours.
- The project is doing too much; the roof is forced, it does not need more height.
- If you are trying to blend into the neighbourhood, the project really needs to blend with a style in forms of proportion, height, width and materiality.
- The function in the units is good, the liveability is good.
- I encourage attaining EnerGuide 84.
- There is usually more information on the landscaping provided.
- It is very difficult to evaluate the landscape design when there is not one. The survey is missing so we cannot evaluate how you work with or not with the landscape. Doing nothing and leaving landscaping up to the homeowners is not good. You need a landscape design; it will help with marketing. Take the word plantation out of the landscape plan.
- The doorway from the secondary suite swings inward; is that intentional?
- I am struggling with the heavy roofline; other colours might soften it.
- The colour palette strikes me as drab.
- I strongly recommend that a landscape plan be reviewed by the City before approval. There are grading issues that need to be resolved which a landscape architect could do, especially on the streetscape.
- The project would benefit from an increased front setback.
- The floor plans are handled really well; but they are not furnished so are not as convincing.
- There should be an entry closet in the secondary suite.
- The second bedroom is small and will not function well.
- The elevations are quite confusing. The west elevation is ruined by the roof top.
- Take a careful look at the operable windows.
- There is a confusion of architectural vocabulary on all the sides.
- The top floor vertical wall and two overhangs over the deck areas ruin the roof.
- Massing and elevations need to be improved and revisited.
- You do not need a fake gable on the east elevation of the car port. Treat the building as a utilitarian subordinate element. Make it simpler and use better materials.
- Revisit where the colours start and finish. There is confusion with the balcony over the bay windows.
- The exterior needs to be as thoughtful as your floor plans.
- I like the daylight sensitive lighting treatment in the carports and the way the motion sensors are carried through the site.
- Signage needs to be very clear.

**ADP Architect's summary:**

- Provide clarification on windows operation and sizes.
- Confirm materiality and proportions – a vocabulary of architecture needs to be defined.
- The project is doing too much and needs more design development in roof design.
- You need a steady style form for building form and materiality.
- Provide more than EnerGuide 80.
- Provide landscape information and plant material information that is lacking.
- Provide survey and grading information.
- Improve the colour scheme and streetscape appearance.
- Consider an increase in the front setback
- The landscape design cannot be supported as presented.
- The importance relative to security, lighting and signage for the project
- Improve the appearance of the top level of the roof; it needs to be articulated.
- In general floor plans are well-considered.
- Provide detailed fencing information.
- The Panel recommends consideration of the use of a qualified landscape professional.

**Presenter's comments:**

- Good suggestions and will try to incorporate them into the design. For the elevations perhaps changing the fascia boards to make the building look lighter.
- The bay window might be better as a boxed window. I thought it might give identity to the secondary suite.
- The vertical walls on the top floor will not show much from the street; they are higher at the rear.
- Some of these changes have come after meeting with the City staff; we were encouraged to move it forward. I am concerned about the timeline for coming back.
- I do not know how to incorporate the changes into the design without changing everything.

It was regularly moved and seconded

**THAT** the Advisory Design Panel has reviewed the Rezoning Application for 1616 Mahon Avenue and, although supporting the site development concept feels the following have not been adequately resolved:

- Clarification on window operation and sizes;
- Confirmation of materiality and proportions;
- The vocabulary of architecture needs to be defined with a consistent style for building form and materiality;
- The project is doing too much and needs more design development and articulation in the roof design to improve the appearance of the top level of the roof;
- The provision of survey and grading information;
- Improvements in the colour scheme and streetscape appearance;
- Achieving a higher than EnerGuide 80 energy efficiency;
- A focus on security, lighting and signage for the project;
- The provision of detailed fencing information; and
- Consideration of an increased front yard setback.

**FURTHER**, due to the lack of landscape information and plant material information, the Panel does not support the landscape design as presented and recommends consideration of the use of a qualified landscape professional.

The Panel notes that, in general, the floor plans are well-considered.

**Carried Unanimously**

*H. Besharat left the meeting at 8:10 p.m.*

*E. Adin left the meeting at 8:15 p.m.*

#### **4. 194 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street (Rezoning Application)**

Staff introduced the project which is an application to rezone the One-Unit Residential site to a Comprehensive Development zone to permit a Two Unit dwelling with one suite.

Karl Wein, Karl Wein & Associates, presented the proposal to the Panel:

- This is a prominent corner property. The application proposes two garden units with a suite below Unit 1. Both units enter from Chesterfield Avenue; the suite enters from the corner of West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and Chesterfield Avenue.
- There was a positive response from neighbours at the open house.
- The unit on West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street has a different shape and is set back from the unit on Chesterfield Avenue.
- There is a patio on West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and one on the lane for the rear unit.
- The property drops from the lane towards West 23<sup>rd</sup>. The northern unit is higher than that to the south.  
The neighbour to the east is five to six feet higher than the proposed building.
- The garage on the lane has covered bike storage and recycling area.

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

- What is the design rationale for the corner? The corner could have been pulled forward?  
**A:** We wanted to break up the building otherwise it would be very long. We wanted to step back from the main street and give it the same importance as the façade on Chesterfield Avenue.
- What is the setback from the lane **A:** The minimum of four feet.
- Is there a design for the public realm? **A:** We show landscaping to the property line.
- Is there a relaxation requested for the parking? **A:** There is no space for a third garage.
- What EnerGuide level will you achieve? **A:** EnerGuide 84.
- Do you have an arborist for the street tree? **A:** The City arborist says it is healthy and we should keep it.
- Do you have a landscape with proposed grades and some dimensions? **A:** Yes.
- Why did you choose bollards for lighting? It is an industrial approach. **A:** We wanted to have free-standing lights to enhance the landscape.
- Did you consider giving each unit a different personality? **A:** It is a duplex; by shifting the building we have made a differentiation. The two units will have different colours.
- Do you have outdoor amenity space for the basement unit? **A:** No, just at the front.
- There is a four foot retaining wall between the building and the neighbour. Is there a grade change? **A:** It steps down about six feet.
- What is the height of the retaining wall between the garage and unit? **A:** Three feet.
- Is the outdoor lighting resident controlled? **A:** Yes



- What is the height of the fence in the back yard? **A:** It is a five foot trellis.

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

- The building form is strong. You have a simplified approach which will serve you well. You should keep simplifying the building and strengthening the design. The design relates successfully to the grade; you should be congratulated on your approach.
- I think you have made the right decision to step the corner back but rethink the corner element. Make a bold simple statement on the corner; it would be simpler without the roof deck.
- I like the front, the front wall and the approach to the secondary suite.
- Perhaps you should use using thicker columns at the front doors.
- I have an issue with the use of proportion on the lower windows; the proportions are fine on the upper windows.
- The design lends itself to having a really nice soffit in a wood rather than aluminium.
- I like the strong colours in your colour palette; I would like the tan to be a little darker.
- The floor plan is very good. The bedrooms in the basement are very small.
- I am very supportive, I really like it.
- I am not sure about the liveability and access to light for the basement suite; the window well is next to the high wall. You should provide outdoor amenity space for the suite.
- I have concerns about how well the patio next to the garage will feel and function. It is facing north with a fence next to it. I think you should reconsider the vegetation next to it.
- You should reconsider the use of bollards for lighting.
- Look at the fence detail; have a nicely designed fence more in keeping with the care that has gone into the architecture.
- The landscape architect should add the proposed grade.
- I like the cottage concept; you should create more identity between the two units.
- The deck is hidden in the dark.
- I wonder whether the suite entrance is dividing up the space to the unit above.
- I am concerned about the height of the fence on top of the retaining wall at the lane.
- I am concerned about the sightlines at the street and lane corners with respect to the landscaping. The landscaping at the lane will make it difficult to see.
- Given the configuration, it is important that the identity of the suites is clearly defined.
- Give consideration to something other than resident-controlled lighting on the east side.

**ADP Architect's summary:**

- Implement simpler and bolder forms.
- Introduce decorative soffits.
- Consider proportion on the lower windows.
- There should be design resolution of the lower bedrooms in the basement suite.
- Implement a stronger corner treatment with a two-storey element
- Increase lighting to, and outdoor amenity space for, the basement suite
- Reconsider the exterior lighting type instead of bollards and resident-controlled.
- Improve the fence detailing.
- Landscape grading needs to be developed.
- Reconsider the screen between the garage and the residential unit.
- Consider sightline improvement at the laneway and street corner with regard to landscaping material.
- The importance of signage and another form of lighting control rather than residential.

**Presenter's comments:**

- I understand the issue of breaking up the yard with the entrance to the suite. It will be hard to move the entrance.
- Maybe we can eliminate the trellis next to the garage.
- We will put lights on motion sensor.
- Maybe we can reconfigure the balcony, wrap the roof around.

It was regularly moved and seconded

**THAT** the Advisory Design Panel has reviewed the Rezoning Application for 194 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and recommends approval subject to the approval, by the Development Planner of the following:

- The implementation of simpler and bolder forms;
- The introduction of decorative soffits;
- Consideration of the proportion on the lower windows;
- Design resolution of the lower bedrooms in the basement suite;
- Implementation of a stronger corner treatment with a two-storey element;
- Increased access to natural light to the basement suite;
- The provision of outdoor amenity space for the basement suite;
- Reconsideration of the outdoor lighting type instead of bollards and another form of outdoor lighting control rather than residential e.g. daylight activated;
- Improvement of the fence detailing;
- Development of the landscape grading;
- Reconsideration of the screen between the garage and the residential unit;
- Consideration of sightline improvement at the laneway and street corner with regard to landscaping material; and
- Clear unit identification.

**Carried Unanimously**

**5. Business Arising**

The Panel was asked to ensure no-one was left on their own to tidy up the meeting room after the meeting, and to look out for each other when leaving the building.

**6. Staff Update – end of the meeting**

C. Wilkinson reviewed relevant planning development, project and policy items from the November 25<sup>th</sup> and December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Council meetings.

**7. Other Business**

The Chair encouraged members to visit the sites suggested for the design tour.

**8. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

The next regular meeting of the Advisory Design Panel will be held on Wednesday, January 15th, 2014.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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Chair