

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 16th, 2014**

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**MINUTES**

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- Present:** B. Allen  
H. Besharat  
B. Harrison  
A. Larigakis  
P. Maltby  
M. Messer  
M. Saii  
Councillor Bell
- Staff:** M. Epp, Manager, Development Planning  
J. Braithwaite, Development Technician, Engineering,  
Parks and Environment  
S. Kimm-Jones, Committee Clerk
- Guests:** **1549 St. George's Avenue (Rezoning Application)**  
Kerry Kukucha, Signal Investments Ltd.  
David Porte, Porte Development Corp.  
Harvey Hatch, H.R. Hatch Architect Ltd.  
Meredith Mitchell, M2 Landscape Architecture  
Jan Voss, CTS Creative Transportation Solutions
- Absent:** A. Epp  
K. Bracewell, R.C.M.P  
D. Siegrist
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A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m.

**1. Minutes of Meeting of the Advisory Design Panel held June 18th, 2014**

It was regularly moved and seconded

**THAT** the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Design Panel held June 18th, 2014 be adopted.

**Carried Unanimously**

**2. Business Arising**

There was a discussion on the quality of Design Panel packages and the importance of applicants including all the required information e.g. shadow studies, site plan etc.

### **3. 1549 St. George's Avenue (Rezoning Application)**

This application is to rezone the existing property to permit a full renovation and a new third and fourth floor. The number of rental units would increase from 13 units to 29 units (22 one-bedroom units plus seven two-bedroom units).

Staff asked for the Panel's input on exterior finishes, the attention to front and rear entryway designs, the front and rear landscaping design, unit liveability, and the commitment to exceeding EnerGuide 80.

Harvey Hatch, H.R. Hatch Architect Ltd., outlined the project to the Panel:

- The existing 1950's rental building will be brought to current Code and energy requirements and two stories will be added.
- The surrounding buildings are typical of the 1950's.
- The building currently has a split level design; the floors will be leveled so that the building will be completely accessible.
- The new building will have a simple look; it is very close to the property line so the panelling on the building will give differentiation.

Meredith Mitchell, M2 Landscape Architecture, reviewed the landscape plan:

- The design includes a lush green entry to the building.
- There is a bioswale to capture rain water from the roof with stepping stones to the rear for access.
- The existing hedge will be retained and a second layer of hedging added for privacy.
- There is a ramp at the front for access.
- Bike racks are placed at the front for exterior use.

Jan Voss, CTS Creative Transportation Solutions, reviewed the parking plan:

- An assessment of traffic and parking issues was conducted as a parking variance is required. The net increase in traffic will be an additional seven to eight vehicles during the busiest time of the day: one additional car every seven minutes
- Parking at grade on the site cannot be increased. One idea was to convert the front parking to diagonal stalls to increase parking spaces but St. George's Avenue is an arterial roadway; diagonal parking is not permitted.
- Seven of the 13 existing tenants have cars.
- 200 parking spots are available within a two block radius. Peak parking occurs at 2 p.m. and drops in the evening which is inverse to the usual situation. There is more available parking at night. Overflow parking can be accommodated on the street.
- Bicycle parking allows a seven stall parking credit resulting in a shortfall of 10 spaces. The City of Vancouver gives a credit of four parking spaces for providing a car share parking space.

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

- What is new versus what is existing? **A:** Some walls will remain. All exterior walls will remain and will be built up to 2 x 6 and insulated.
- What were the constraints that led to the small roof amenity area? **A:** We had to provide the elevator structure. We wanted to create a more intimate space. It also has to do with

fire egress; there is only one exit so capacity is limited to 60 people which is how we defined the area. We can discuss with the Fire Department to see if it can be increased.

- The elevator is new? **A:** Yes.
- The kitchens on the north side do not have windows. **A:** We did a calculation on the amount of fenestration allowed given that the building is seven feet from the property line. We would have to use space from elsewhere.
- What is the tenant storage? There is lots of storage for bikes. **A:** There are 63 lockers in total, 48 of which meet bike storage requirements. There is the capacity to add more. Each unit will be assigned two lockers.
- What is your design rationale for the vocabulary of the exterior? **A:** We are trying to fit in with the existing buildings which tend to be plain two storey buildings broken up by a band of colour.
- Have you maximized the window opening areas? **A:** Yes.
- The operable windows will have restrictors? **A:** Yes, four inches.
- Was it worth keeping the existing building? What was the rationale not to demolish and build? **A:** If it was a new building underground parking would be required, which would be economically prohibitive.
- What is the heating system? **A:** We will be connecting to LEC. It is baseboard heating so as not to impact the floor to ceiling height.
- What size are the storage lockers? **A:** The size relates to bike storage regulations; they vary, those on the south wall are two feet deep and six feet wide, at the rear they are two feet wide and six feet high. We could put one of the short bike lockers on top of another one but they are four feet high which makes access difficult.
- Will the landscape be irrigated? **A:** Yes.
- Will there be benches on the top deck? **A:** Yes, we will put in furniture.
- Will the landscaping on the sidewalk block east-west traffic? **A:** There are stepping stones from the front to the rear.
- What kind of flooring will you have? **A:** It will probably be carpet to stop noise transmission. We want to avoid impact noise from above. The vast majority of our 700 rentals are carpeted. It is more efficient for upkeep than hardwood floors.
- What is the rationale for doubling the number of the units; does the market ask for smaller units? **A:** The trend seems to be going to smaller units. The existing units have very large bedrooms and an inefficient broken-up layout. The open plan is a more efficient use of space.
- To Staff: Is diagonal parking possible? **A:** There are no plans for it on St. George's Avenue. It is difficult to do it without public consultation so unlikely at this time. We have looked at 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Eastern Avenue for angled parking. We might take a contribution from this project to install the parking on a neighbouring street.
- To Staff: Will the lack of parking affect approval of the project? **A:** We have allowed parking variances on other projects. We would look for traffic demand management measures e.g. a car share program, the provision of bicycles, subsidized bus passes.  
**Applicant:** We would like to do a bike share program for the residents of the building.

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

- I have talked to the Fire Department; they need ladder access to the side of a building with a minimum opening of three feet plus three feet for each additional storey.
- What happens when the elevator is being serviced? It will be hard for seniors.
- There does not seem to be much in the way of closets in some suites.
- I am interested in where people will store snow tires, Christmas trees, and luggage etc.
- If you moved the door of the elevator; it would be easier to manage a stretcher.

- Other buildings will demand angle parking and it would change the form and shape of the street.
- I would like to see a larger amenity space on the roof with it programmed to make it usable; seating will be important. You are providing adaptable units and elevator access to the roof. Program the space for wheelchairs so that it works with furniture and planters. It would be great if you could double the space; it is a fantastic amenity for people with mobility issues.
- I like the approach, the project. It is hard to evaluate without Code advice; I would not want it to undermine the functionality of the design as well as the seismic measures.
- With reference to your approach to the exterior façade: accentuate and emphasize vertical and horizontal elements; windows should reflect that. You need more contrast in the project. You have the ability to become something characteristic and an asset to the street. You may want to focus on the entry as it reads as muted. Do not be afraid of adding colour to it.
- The roof space is an awkward but the size may make sense. What are you doing from an environmental perspective? Think about sustainability, exterior proportions and materiality, not a green roof.
- You are handling a major addition and renovation really well. I support the number of vehicle and bike stalls. Every unit does not need a bike stall. It contributes to the affordability. Transit is available. Anything to help the developer to make units more affordable is good.
- The unit layouts are handled well with respect to liveability. The kitchens are generous, even oversized in some units.
- If you relocate the elevator, the entry experience could be improved.
- It would be nice for tenants to be able to sit out on a bench at the front entry.
- The design character of the building looks a little bit dated when you are going through a lot of effort. On the exterior consider a bold base using materiality or colour at the base with the top three floors different. Maybe the cornices at the top of the building could be more interesting. The exterior has a bit of a checker board look at the moment. The palette is a little bland. I endorse more contrast.
- There may be an opportunity to introduce skylights or clerestory windows in the top units to improve liveability.
- There may be a possibility to allow for solar panels on the roof in the future.
- I would not do a green roof on a wood frame building.
- You should look at the windows and window proportions and provide cross ventilation for the corner units.
- The east exit door should swing the other way.
- I like the fact that you are trying to deal with all the storm water on site.
- Angle parking is a violation of the streetscape. You could investigate rearranging the parking at the back. If you came back to the Panel I would expect drawings showing what is new and what is old, shadow analysis etc.

*D. Siegrist left the meeting at 6:45 p.m.*

**Chair's summary:**

- I sense that most of the Panel are supportive. With regard to the parking issues, we are in a new era and have to look at relaxation of parking requirements; especially when the project is needed.
- There are comments around façade treatment suggesting it can be improved.
- The façade on St. George's is important. A seating area would be good.

- Explore the fire regulations.
- The roof deck could be explored further. Accessibility and programming is very important. It is a good feature for a rental building.

**Presenter's comments:**

These are good comments. We will contact the Code consultant regarding the roof. Sixty people is more than the number of residents. The size of the deck is deliberate; it has to be bulletproof because it is a rental building. There is a nearby caretaker; but he does not live onsite. Solar connectivity is a simple thing to do now.

Thanks for the comments on parking. Diagonal parking is the only way to increase parking for the building. We cannot change the direction of the rear parking because of the depth and there needs to be a ramp into the building. The ground floor has been pushed in three feet to allow for the ramp from the handicapped parking stall.

Following the Panel's discussion, it was regularly moved and seconded:

**THAT** the Advisory Design Panel has reviewed the Rezoning Application for 1549 St. George's Avenue and recommends approval subject to addressing the following issues to the satisfaction of the Manager of Development Planning:

- A Code review with the Fire Department;
- Considering seating at the front of the building;
- Considering the programming and accessibility of the roof deck;
- Ensuring the planting is drought tolerant if there is no irrigation system;
- Considering improving the vocabulary of the entry experience including access to the elevator;
- Considering improvements to the vocabulary of the building, colour and materials, including fenestration;
- Emphasizing the façade on St. George's including the entry canopy;
- Revisiting the window proportions and ensuring windows are operable;
- Considering rough-ins for future solar panels for the roof top;
- Considering the introduction of skylights for the top units to improve liveability; and
- Considering increasing the amount of storage in the building.

The Panel supports the proposed parking variance and appreciates the developer's proposal for car and bike shares.

The Panel recommends including electrical outlets for charging electric bikes.

**Carried Unanimously**

*A. Larigakis left the meeting at 7:15 p.m.*

**4. Staff Update**

M. Epp reviewed recently adopted policies and development projects such as the Roger Brooks waterfront project, the Foot of Lonsdale, Bodwell School, 725 Marine Drive and the Kia Dealership, and the draft Official Community Plan.

**5. Other Business**

None.

**6. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Advisory Design Panel will be held on Wednesday, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 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