

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, 2019**

MINUTES

Present: K. Bracewell, RCMP
M. Messer
W. Chong
K. Ross
J. Ralph
N. Petrie
B. Jones
C. McLeod
B. Harrison
Councillor A. Girard

Staff: D. Johnson, Development Planner
M. Friesen, Planner 1
G. Reyes, Development Technician
R. Fish, Committee Clerk

Guests: 242 West 4th Street (Rezoning Application)
Darren Huebert, Birmingham & Wood Architects and Planners
Sandra Moore, Birmingham & Wood Architects and Planners
Bill Harrison, Forma Design Inc.
Vitto Decotiis, Owner, Vinno Development & Management
Robin Decotiis, Owner, Vinno Development & Management

Absent: R. McGill

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

1. Minutes of Meetings of the Advisory Design Panel held February 20th, 2019

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Design Panel held February 20th, 2019 be adopted.

Carried Unanimously

2. Business Arising

- Volunteer Appreciation Reception Tuesday, April 2nd at 6:30PM.
- Reminder of special meeting on Wednesday, April 3rd.
- Wednesday, April 17th meeting is cancelled.
- **Action item:** Committee Clerk to e-mail 2019 meeting dates to the Panel.

3. Staff Update

None.

5:39PM – B. Harrison excused himself from the meeting due to a conflict of interest and joined the applicant team.

4. 242 West 4th Street (Rezoning Application)

The City has received a development application to rezone 242 West 4th Street to support a 4 residential unit (plus four lock-off units), three storey, townhome development. Parking for the development is located off of the lane, with two spots being in garages and two being in car ports.

The site is located mid-block on the north side of West 4th Street, between Chesterfield and Mahon. The site is well connected to public transit, active transportation routes, commercial areas, and is in proximity to park space, public services, and amenities. The base zone for the proposal is Ground-Oriented Residential 2 (RG-2).

Staff is seeking the Panel's input regarding the following:

- The proposed massing of the building in relation to neighbours and the street, the appropriateness of setbacks, site access (particularly from the lane), and the delineation of outdoor space between units;
- The proposed architectural style, the street front presence, unit differentiation, accents and lighting, the application of the façade materials, and the proposed colour pallet;
- The effectiveness of vegetation in delineating space and relating to the public realm, the effectiveness of landscape in providing accent to the proposed buildings, reasonable improvements to the outdoor amenity areas (particularly for the lock-off units), and the planting plan; and
- Any potential CPTED concerns.

Darren Huebert, Birmingham & Wood Architects and Planners, described the project to the Panel:

- There is a 40 foot courtyard between the two structures.
- Each has three levels with a basement.
- The basements are below grade with exterior access and sunken patios.
- There are four parking stalls off the lane; two enclosed and two open.
- There are two semi-public paths from the street to the lane that access the courtyard, entries, bike compound and carports.
- The paths provide sightlines through the property.
- There is lighting along the lane of each path and on the building.

- The paths step up to follow the natural grade of the site.
- There are concrete retaining walls.
- New fencing will be added at the property lines.
- The courtyard provides a semi-private outdoor space and is screened with planting and fencing.
- Neighbourhood impacts are minor.
- The front building is similar in scale to the current building.
- We have mitigated shadowing on neighbouring buildings.
- The exterior concept is a stacking of two distinct materials.
- 100% of the parking stalls are provided with electrical charging stations.

Bill Harrison, Forma Design Inc., reviewed the landscape plan:

- The landscape is responding to the context of the site as it steps up.
- There is unit identification for the front and back units for first responders.
- The landscape is contemporary, modern and as livable as possible.
- Materiality includes pavers along the sides with composite or wood decking.
- The planting is straight forward.
- Street trees are reflected onsite.
- There are two more trees in the courtyard and they work well with the bike storage.
- The stormwater management strategy is in the middle of the site.

Questions from the Panel included but were not limited to:

- How will you identify the street address and unit identification? **A:** It would be on the walls inside the set-in and recessed porches to signal that it is a front entry. There will be a wayfinding element as part of the arbour over each pathway for units to the rear. As you proceed down the path, unit identification is clearly displayed on the wall.
- Is the number visible from the street? **A:** They are visible at the front arbour and down the path on the unit.
- What about the street address? **A:** We are considering having four street numbers or unit numbers.
- Staff: I assume we will have 4 street addresses and 'A' or 'B' for the lock-offs. This is determined at the building permit stage.
- What lighting treatment are you using for the carport? **A:** We are proposing wall mounted or ceiling mounted motion detecting lights.
- Is there access to the side paths from the laneway? **A:** Yes, there is a gate that will delineate that public space from semi-public space.
- What do the neighbours to the east think? **A:** We had developer information session and no one from the neighbouring properties attended.
- Could the double entry doors on the lower units be single? **A:** We like the idea of offering the most generous possibility for those spaces. The owner could choose to not use one of the doors. The lock-off units have an entry off the side path that could be used as a primary entry. We would like them to have that opportunity available.
- Was the location for the PMT decided by BC Hydro? It's unusual. **A:** Our consultant informed us that BC Hydro will allow the PMT to be purchased and owned privately and can locate it anywhere on the site. A PMT on the lane would subtract from the lane and reduce parking by 1 so we went this route.

- The front of the unit for the edible planting seems a bit high, to do gardening would be problematic, is it possible to do that? **A:** Yes. It could go to 2.5 feet no problem.
- The primary entry is conflicting by having access off the street, if someone will break and enter, they will do it there. How will you manage that? **A:** We often spec double French doors at grade level and they are successfully secure.
- How will you manage the exit points for the two rear window wells on the front buildings and reducing deck egress from ending up on them? **A:** There's a precedent in the drawing package that has been successful. In urban sites, we need to think of ways to double the use of space when we can. It allows the rear units to have wide walkout decks and allows light into the back bedrooms and units. Exiting requirements is not dependent or reliant on exiting out of that window. Deck egress falling through could be mitigated by shaded plants and operable windows into the light well.
- Have you explored location options for bike storage? **A:** Yes, we looked at an arrangement in the middle but the access is problematic with walking past semi-private deck spaces. It's easy to get in and out with your bike and creates intensity on the side paths for CPTED reasons.
- What about second floor bathroom water access, do you have to go up to the third floor? **A:** Yes.
- How are you intending on insulating the washrooms at the outside front corner and outside rear corner of the third floor? **A:** We haven't looked into that yet. There is wiggle room for that. We could increase the insulation around the bathroom.
- What is the rain barrier or water retention plan for managing the lack of overhangs? **A:** We haven't got to that level of detail but have an envelope consultant for that. We have overhangs on the roof with a six inch extension shielding and capping the wall.
- Can the lock-off units have an overhang for the doors? **A:** We will look at that. It could be part of the architectural language.
- Do the second and third floor windows open only from the bottom? **A:** The top panels would be casing and the bottom would be an awning, they could open fully. There is a lot of cross ventilation throughout.
- Are you considering air conditioning? **A:** No.
- Is there an access point to get to the PMT if it ever needs to be removed? **A:** It can be accessed easily from either of the sunken patios on either side. The location is staying off of the infiltration tank. If we moved it any further to the south we would be overtop of it and that would be a dangerous situation. This is one of the only places left and keeps it away from pedestrian paths. We still need design development with the electrical consultant.
- If it had to be replaced how would it be done? **A:** Traditionally a truck can lift it. We are assuming the electrical consultant knows what he's doing – we will look into this further.
- The bedrooms on lock-off units 3 and 4 are very tucked in, is there any other alternative to get natural light into those locations? **A:** The only location for a light well is under the parking stalls and we are hesitant to put a light well there if a car is running. The approach is to put two large French glass doors that allow light from the front portion of unit into the bedroom. It isn't ideal as a window but it is a good solution with the constraints.

Comments from the Panel included but were not limited to:

- Have an effective lighting treatment. The back has garbage recycling which is attractive to thieves. Look at securing that.

- The side walkways need to have substantially robust bike lockers as they will attract people if they are flimsy.
- Ensure there is a lighting treatment along the side.
- Lighting in the basement units is a soft point in the design. Include a lighting treatment that is not invasive to people living there.
- The double doors on the units need to open outwards.
- Unit identification will be confusing, the plan at the arbour is okay for people visiting, but it needs to be obvious for first responders at night in the rain. Especially for the rear units, they should be visible from the street.
- Explore a clear cedar window frame to add colour and richness to the overall architecture and to bring life to the design of building.
- The picket guard rails look a bit much on the building. Look at glass guardrails or something lighter.
- Code interpretation on the window well is critical.
- Not working through the overhangs with the envelope will result in a change in the architecture and a different overall design.
- The PMT is an issue with the homeowners having to sort out how to get it replaced. Consider the future homeowners.
- There are privacy concerns around the unit layouts with the patio of unit above looking straight into the bedroom of the lower units.
- Having the only bathroom through the bedroom is not ideal for visitors.
- I want to know what grades were around the existing tree. It looks like the tree is not big enough but it's hard to tell without grades on the east side.
- There should be softer plant material on the front to give it a bit more life.
- The colour of the building seems a bit dark and presses the whole building down. Would like to see something lighter up top.
- Some space could be taken out from the patios on the upper units to create access to storage for lower units.
- Look at reversing the orientation of the units so the front porches and rear porches are actually swapped. The rear patios on both buildings will have little light coming in – if reversed it would provide a more enjoyable deck.
- Consider a solid deck with a railing above the window wells.
- Consider moving the bike storage to the center for easier lines of sight.
- Overhangs need to be considered on this project
- Encouraged to use a drain system through the unit in a way that it doesn't muck up the outer walls.
- The upper floor front building bathrooms could be swapped with the center wall 2 inches thicker. This would allow for insulation in the winter.
- The south facing windows could have a retractable awning or shading system if they are not going to have overhangs.
- There are challenges with the wayfinding.
- The landscape is very good but don't put anymore trees on the site. It is a bit shady.
- I don't see a problem getting the PMT serviced.
- The bike lockers are most prone to theft, those should be robust and secure.
- I appreciate the simplicity of the infill.
- I don't mind the dark façade.
- The layout of the building is great. A 40ft wide courtyard allows for light to come in and allows for access to the lock-off units.

- Consider allowing natural light in the stairwells. Think about the two lock-offs in the rear having windows appropriated for light to penetrate in and allow light to flow through.
- The light plan needs to be more robust and allow for identification and path travel.
- Not fond of the PMT being centered like that but you could get a crane over. It needs to be developed further on how to access it.
- Consider that the bike storage doesn't have to be a complete solid box but transparent in some way keeping CPTED in mind.

Presenter's comments:

- Security is very important for the bike storage and doors.
- The light plan can be beefed up more.
- We will design the addressing so it is large, bold and visible from the street.
- The bike storage location is a fantastic community building opportunity for the residents.
- We have confidence in our electrical consultant with regards to the location of the PMT.
- We routinely do buildings without overhangs like this and don't see any issues. An overhang over the French doors would be a good idea and have minimal effect on the overall design.
- Glass guardrails end up not being just glass and needs to be protected with metal edges and fasteners. Glass is reflective so is not transparent. It is an object that has presence.
- We are happy to add windows into the stairwells for the rear units.
- Will look at building code regarding egress for window wells.

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Advisory Design Panel has reviewed the Rezoning Application for 242 West 4th Street and recommends approval subject to addressing the following issues to the satisfaction of the Development Planner:

- Resolve the location of the PMT and discuss issues of future access and replacement with City staff and BC Hydro;
- Consider the use of overhangs for the windows;
- Consider the use of retractable awnings on the south facing windows;
- Consider reversing the units to allow for more adequate lighting on the decks;
- Explore the possibility of glass guardrails to avoid darkening of the façade;
- Consider using a lighter colour on the top half of the façade;
- Encouraged to have robust bike lockers to address CPTED concerns;
- Develop an effective lighting plan on the sides of the project and at the lock-off units;
- Ensure the double doors of the lock-off units have a center frame for added secure support;
- Ensure unit identification is robust and clear for first responders;
- Resolve egress concerns for the windows in the window wells as per Building Code requirements of bedroom window egress;
- Consider the use of cedar window frames to provide variety in the massing;
- Further design development of the room layouts to address livability issues;
- Explore the possibility for more room in the lower units by revising some of the upper layouts;

- Explore the possibility of relocating the upper floor washrooms 'inboard' to avoid exterior walls;
- Consider a solid deck over the window well above the washroom to avoid overlook;
- Determine the difference of the original grade to the current grade for tree plantings; and
- Incorporate the use of natural light within the stairways.

AND THAT the Panel wishes to thank the applicant for their presentation.

Carried Unanimously

The Panel discussed Roberts Rules of Order and forming a cohesive resolution.

Action Item: Include a discussion item on the May agenda for forming resolutions.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Advisory Design Panel will be held on Wednesday, April 3rd, 2019.

Chair

