

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, October 19th, 2011**

MINUTES

- Present:** T. Cailes
K. Kallweit Graham
P. Kennedy
Y. Khalighi
K. Kristensen
S. McFarlane
M. Messer
M. Saii
B. Spencer
C. Taylor
- Staff:** F. Ducote, Assistant City Planner, Community Development
C. Perry, Supervisor, Engineering Services
B. Westmacott, Planning Technician, Community Development
S. Kimm-Jones, Committee Clerk
- Guests:** **267 – 269 East 4th Street**
Kevin Butler, Kd.B. Design Studio Ltd.
Denis Accilli, Owner
- Absent:** Councillor Trentadue
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A quorum being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and introduced Peter Kennedy, the new RCMP representative.

1. Minutes of Meeting of the Advisory Design Panel held September 21st, 2011

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Design Panel held September 21st, 2011 be adopted with changes as discussed.

Carried Unanimously

2. Business Arising

None.

3. Staff Update

B. Westmacott gave the staff update.

137 St. David's Avenue: The Public Hearing was on October 17th. Three speakers expressed concern about three units versus two, parking and traffic. Second and Third Readings were adopted 5-2.

721 Chesterfield: The Development Variance Permit was approved at the October 17th Council meeting.

1250 Lonsdale Avenue: The project had Final Adoption on October 3rd.

Memorandum of Understanding re Participation of Vancouver Coastal Health in the OCP: Council voted unanimously to authorize the Director of Community Development to sign the MOU. One of the goals of the MOU is to raise the profile of the link between health and the built environment, partly by creating a "walkable city".

Public Art Grant: A Community Public Art Grant was approved for the North shore Streamkeepers to create a mural in Heywood Park.

615 Mahon Avenue: This project received First Reading at the October 17th Council meeting and was referred to Public Hearing on November 14th.

313 East 8th Street: Received First Reading at the October 17th Council meeting and was referred to Public Hearing on November 14th.

351 East 9th Street: Received First Reading at the October 17th Council meeting and was referred to Public Hearing on November 14th.

It was noted at a Planning Meeting that the large amount of redevelopment activity in the City in 2011 had resulted in \$7.5 million worth of assets to the City as part of the rezoning process; adding the proposed new Operations Centre with a value of \$30 million adds up to nearly \$40 million of assets.

4. Review of Low Density, Duplex and Infill Residential Design Guidelines

F. Ducote presented a draft paper on design guidelines for low density, duplex and infill residential projects and asked members for their feedback. Are the issues raised, the correct ones? Small projects raise more issues at Public Hearings than the bigger projects. People feel passionately about houses. The guidelines address a range of projects with two-three units on a site. Currently, the 25 foot setback is retained no matter the depth of the lot. 45% of the site for the building is "elastic". How precious is the front yard? Only 10 feet is required between rear and front buildings.

Questions from the Panel included but were not limited to:

- You are suggesting a setback to a maximum of 18 feet? A: They can go back as far as they want; we would like to balance the front and back yards.
- Have you considered the side yards; five feet is too small to get around the building? A: More would penalize interior design. If the cellar were to be higher and more like a basement, the light wells that affect the path could be reduced or eliminated.
- Would these guidelines raise the heights everywhere, even in view sensitive areas? A: The guidelines for view sensitive areas would not change.
- Secondary suites are not allowed in the basement in a duplex? A: No.

- Outside access and bathrooms are allowed in basements which can lead to illegal suites. A: Much of the concern over suites was due to the mid-block change to L2. Council now allows access to and bathrooms in, basement suites.
- Parking requirements are not changed. With the population increasing, we might need more parking; is there direction from transportation? A: We would like to see a maximum number of uncovered spaces. The Transportation and Planning Departments work together. The City is encouraging people to get out of cars and is promoting walking, cycling, transit, which is why parking has not changed although density is increasing.
- This will inform zones that are already allowing duplexes? A: It could still be a rezoning or just a building permit. We need to give rich examples to encourage better design.
- Why not go to a 36 foot height? A: We could, or go to hypothetical grades; there are many ways to measure grade and height.
- Are single family homes the same height? A: Yes.
- Staff: If the City decides to issue building grades, it will push all duplexes out of the ground. It will be a shock to the neighbours.

Discussion ensued on the summary of issues:

- Staff: The underlying theme: is it a good neighbour, is it liveable, does it appear to be beautiful, well-designed, is there a sustainable approach, how is nature approached and dealt with?
- Will these changes apply to single family lots? A: Not yet.
- I think the summary of issues is great, it covers many things the Panel talks about.

Comments and questions of the Panel included but were not limited to:

- One roof is better than multiple roofs; one roof shows as one house. It would be better to have a separate identity for each unit.
- The current proportions of buildings are squat and bulky looking. Vancouver City's width and height proportion is prettier.
- I really do feel five feet side yards are uncomfortable for access.
- In West Vancouver the height envelope is measured to the midpoint of the roof which seems to give more design flexibility.
- This is a tremendous step in the right direction and addresses a lot of the issues we wrestle with. We sometimes see projects three times.
- Things around representation would be good to capture; putting the onus on the applicant to build a physical model would lead them to solve many of their design problems. Software can be alienating and does not capture the form. Use the model to show some of the immediate context so it can be well understood.
- Affordability statements presented by many applicants are really "business plans" and do not really address affordability issues; the rationale is always the same. It creates a mixed message. What is the goal, perhaps the guidelines could speak to it?
- Design merit should be the third category. In the context of rezoning why not take a firm stand on some of the issues e.g. you need to meet this standard of sustainability? A: Energuide 80 is required to exclude the cellar from calculations.
- Staff: Applicants struggle with storm water management because they do not have a professional landscaper designing them. Staff are working on guidelines that they will have to meet. It was noted that Vancouver City requires a landscape architect.
- In the context of the business plan, set the context for raising the bar as far as you can.
- Are you required to have an architect? A: No.

- It is looking good. In the street character recommendations I would also avoid fake heritage design in heritage areas; it could say avoid fake stylistic elements.
- When are wood spindles required? A: On railings for balconies and porches.
- What does 1.5 int. on page 18 mean? A: It should read five feet interior side yards.
- What would be the minimum front setback? A: It will be 15 feet.
- Is the front porch exemption constrained? A: You can protrude seven feet into the 25 foot setback; it can be the full width of the yard. How high off the grade can the front porch be? A: If it is less than three feet above grade it can go to the front property line.
- We have talked about maximum permeability and impervious coverage.
- Is there a retaining wall guideline? A: No, if it is more than four feet you need a structural engineer. It is measured from existing grade.
- It is a good document. I like the comments about providing benchmarks e.g. sustainability; there should be some alternative approaches e.g. the 45 degree line can constrain design excellence; there are alternative ways to provide natural light and views through buildings. A lot of the guidelines encourage only the use of hip roofs and gables. This monotony can create an unfortunate built environment. I like the idea of some protrusions that can penetrate the envelope. The City should look at ways of trying to allow meritorious architecture; craftsman architecture sits well within these guidelines, it is more difficult to create a successful flat roof design within the guidelines. The guidelines should address a variety of roof forms.
- The individual identity of each duplex is important. People try to maintain a single family character but the scale is all wrong and not commensurate with single family volumes.

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Advisory Design Panel has reviewed the Low Density, Duplex and Infill Residential Design Guidelines and supports the direction of the draft and would encourage further consideration of the following:

- The creation of a maximum impermeable surface lot coverage mechanism;
- Qualitative benchmarks for design merit, sustainability and neighbourliness;
- Consideration of the proportions of the buildings to better mimic the character of the neighbourhood;
- Consideration of height variations to permit a better contextual fit and better building proportions;
- Specifics on calculations on height requirements;
- Minimum submission requirements to include the use of physical models, better site analysis and contextual analysis;
- The requirement to employ a registered landscape architect.

The Panel also recommends that the guidelines avoid being too prescriptive.

Carried Unanimously

It was noted that the guidelines will be brought back to the Panel prior to going to Council.

5. 267-269 East 4th Street (Rezoning Application)

This project had previously been reviewed by the Advisory Design Panel. The applicant submitted modified plans with changes to the architectural expression, attempting to reduce the massing of the buildings by altering rooflines and re-positioning roof decks.

The Chair read the motion from the September 21st ADP meeting.

Kevin Butler, Kd.Butler Design Studio outlined the changes made in response to the motion passed at the September 21st ADP meeting:

- The vernacular design approach was modified to better suit site constraints.
- In response to ADP's comments about the development being "shoehorned" into the site, they elected to go outside the building envelope. The centre portion of the gable roof on Building 1 was raised three feet into the height envelope allowing integration of the roof deck and simplifying the roof form. This keeps the streetscape rhythm and echoes the neighbour to the east.
- The design for Building 2 has been refined to reduce the mass of the gable roof by moving the upper decks to the outside corners allowing them to step the building further back and simplify the roof forms. The gable intrudes into the envelope.
- The solid form on the side elevation has been retained.
- The front of building 2 has a dormer with a hip roof which relates it back to building 1.

Questions from the Panel included but were not limited to:

- Why is there no overhang from the gable ends on the facade facing the lane? A: There is an overhang of at least 18 inches.
- Is there a roof deck on Building 1? A: Yes.
- Have the colours changed from last time? A: No.

Comments of the Panel included but were not limited to:

- It has more integrity than the prior designs. There are issues with the height but I do not think we need to revisit it.
- It fits largely within the envelope except for the specific encroachments.
- I liked it before and like it now.
- With each scheme the corners at the front have always seemed bulky. A lot of the clutter has been taken away; it has merit just on that.
- The floor plans seem generally functional. One bedroom in the corner needs more light.
- It has improved a lot. It has definitely been distilled from where you started. There is room for more distillation, the biggest strides have been from finding simplicity and there is more room for that.
- I suggest revisiting the number of, and placement of, the saddlebags: the bay window protrusion elements on the flanking sides of the main building. Eliminating some of the appendages would help. Unfortunate that you are locked into the height envelope.
- It is more challenging to endorse the design of the rear building. The singular gable form disappears into a sea of balcony extensions and feels like it is part of an extrusion. There is no differentiation in the way that the form meets the edges e.g. the way the balcony meets the gable form and the garages; it would be better if they met at a right angle juncture. It has to be treated with the same care you brought to the main building.
- I have problems reading your plans; we need to see a roof plan and see how it works. Think how a panel looks at these drawings.

- Question to staff: Can they project seven feet into the front yard? A: The bylaw would be written to make it work; this is only 15 feet off the property line.
- The scheme is gradually pulling the form together to make it more coherent. I think you are still pushing the vernacular scheme where it does not want to go. I still have a problem with the roof deck, it does not sit comfortably. The roof form does not feel great. I agree with earlier comments about the extrusion nature of the rear building. The way the deck sits on the garages there is no delineation of what the individual elements that make up that building are. By delineating each of those things: balcony, gable form, garage, it would provide more clarity. The proportions are good. You should improve the south east corner where the balconies overhang the garage; it is an awkward junction and could be delineated a bit more.

Presenter's comments:

- No comments.

It was regularly moved and seconded Bob/Steve

THAT the Advisory Design Panel has reviewed the Rezoning Application for 267- 269 East 4th Street and recommends approval. The Panel commends the applicant for the presentation and manner in which previous concerns have been addressed.

**Not Carried
4 - in favour
4 - opposed**

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Advisory Design Panel has reviewed the Rezoning Application for 267- 269 East 4th Street and recommends approval subject to the approval, by the Development Planner, of the following:

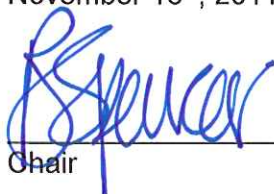
- Consideration of further simplification of the design of both buildings;
- Reconsideration of the projecting elements on the side elevations of the main building;
- Further design development to improve the hierarchy of elements on the garage with the intention of eliminating the "extruded" nature of the design;
- Exploration of the potential for projections into the front yard in an attempt to alleviate pressure on the building envelope.

Carried Unanimously

6. Other Business

None. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Advisory Design Panel will be held on Wednesday, November 16th, 2011.


Chair