

MINUTES
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL

Held via MS Teams
770 Vernon Avenue
April 16, 2025 at 1:02 PM

ROLL CALL

In Attendance: Greg Gillespie (Chair), Chris Gower, Matthew Jarvis, Jacy Lee (1:13 p.m.), Xeniya Vins, Brian Fraser, Sean Partlow (1:06 p.m.)

Guests: Justin Bennett, Principal, Urban West Architecture, Brendan Casidy, Architect, Urban West Architecture, Melissa Lim, Landscape Architect, MDI Landscape Architects

Regrets: Kimberly Simpson

Staff: Christine Rickards, Planner, Current Planning; Colton Whittaker, Committee Clerk; Preet Chaggar, Committee Clerk Assistant

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by B. Fraser and Seconded by C. Gower: “That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on April 2, 2025, be adopted as circulated.”

RESULT: Carried 5 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Gower, Jarvis, Gillespie, Vins, Fraser

OPPOSED: None

COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS

804, 812, 820 MCKENZIE AVENUE AND 4007 RAINBOW STREET

Applicant: Justin Bennett, Urban West Architecture Inc.

Project Description: Rezone the site from RS-10 (Single Family Dwelling) Zone to RA-11 (Apartment) Zone to construct a 6 storey 113-unit apartment building (market strata) with two levels of underground parking. Variances are requested.

Planning File: DPR01059; REZ00764

Planner: Christine Rickards

Planning provided an overview of the proposal, followed by a presentation from the applicants.

The applicant noted the following in response to questions from the Panel:

- Driveway access is off Rainbow Street with garbage and recycling bins stored just inside the parkade.
- The project does not include a designated amenity room for residents, however, there is an oversized lobby, and a covered outdoor area intended to function as a social gathering space.
- The existing lane is off Rainbow Street and provides access to the parkade. It is designed with two lanes and allows for vehicles to turn around at the end of Rainbow Street.
- A separate lane adjacent to the Garry Oak (Natural State) area will serve as the primary pedestrian and vehicle access for the two adjacent residential towers.
- The Garry Oak area is intended primarily as a restoration zone, with very limited opportunities for seating or programming for use by residents. Planning staff noted the need to consult with Environmental staff at the District before considering this use.
- The laneway has been designed to minimize impact on the Garry Oak area.
- The sidewalk at the end of the laneway requires further consideration to ensure proper connectivity with the broader pedestrian network.
- Of the 22 trees to be removed, the majority are Garry Oaks.

- Storage is provided at a 1:1 ratio, with one storage unit per suite. Storage rooms are located on each residential level.
- Junior one-bedroom suites have in-board bedrooms but include sliding glass doors to the bedroom to enhance spatial openness and maximize natural light.
- The garden area at the rear of the site will include up to three feet of soil depth, with some mounding to increase planting depth and support tree growth.
- All trees located at the front of the building are planted directly in-ground, none are situated above the parkade.
- The majority of residential units are one-bedroom units.
- The site slopes significantly, dropping approximately one full storey from the rear laneway down to McKenzie Avenue.
- Ground-floor units at the main level will have direct access to patios.
- Units located at the lower level facing McKenzie will also have outdoor access despite the grade change.
- The MODO car share parking stall is located outside the parkade to ensure accessibility for both residents and members of the surrounding neighbourhood. Due to spatial constraints, the MODO stall is positioned further from the building and located off the new laneway.
- The bike room includes approximately 12 cargo bike stalls.
- All bicycle storage is located on the upper parkade level.

The following was noted during Panel discussion:

- This project is supportable.
- The response to the site's slope is effective, integrating suites at the lower level along McKenzie is well executed.
- Introducing more two-bedroom or larger units could strengthen the project, particularly given the proximity to surrounding parks and schools.
- The massing is successful, particularly with the upper-level setback.
- Efforts to preserve mature trees are commendable.
- The architecture gives the building a light and refined presence.
- An interior amenity space would enhance livability, especially given the number of smaller units.
- A dedicated amenity space that could act as a workspace could be valuable due to the high number of one-bedroom and junior one-bedroom suites.
- Amenity space is important for a building of this scale and positioning it adjacent to the lobby could be beneficial.
- If a separate amenity room isn't feasible, thoughtful programming of the lobby space would be beneficial.
- The building fits well within the site.
- The articulation and breaks in the façade successfully reduce the perceived scale.
- The material choices and their application are well considered and appreciated.
- Wood insets and soffits contribute a sense of warmth.
- The larger class street trees along McKenzie with appropriate soil volumes are a strong landscape feature.
- The main entrance feels understated, additional lighting could enhance visibility and the overall sense of arrival.
- Closet sizes vary significantly with some units lacking adequate in-suite storage.
- A passive walkway through the Garry Oak area would be a welcome addition and could enhance the overall experience of the site.
- The design aligns well with the 3-30-300 principle, offering visual access to trees, generous canopy coverage, and park proximity.
- Materiality throughout the project is thoughtful and well executed.
- Landscaping in the southwest corner supports pedestrian connectivity.
- Storage rooms and grade-level bicycle access are well integrated into the site layout.

- Visitor and accessible parking stall locations may require further review to optimize convenience and functionality.
- Natural lighting conditions for the north-facing units should be evaluated to ensure adequate interior daylighting.

*** P. Chaggar left the meeting at 2:38 p.m.***

MOVED by B. Fraser and Seconded by J. Lee: “That it be recommended that the design to construct a 6 storey 113-unit apartment building (market strata) with two levels of underground parking at 804, 812, 820 McKenzie Avenue and 4007 Rainbow Street be approved subject to considerations of:

- Potential use of the Garry Oak natural area with seating and pathways;
- Providing an indoor amenity space;
- Increase in the number of two bedrooms units.”

The following discussion ensued:

- The project is commendable.
- Increasing the number of two-bedroom units would require reducing the number of units overall.

RESULT: Carried 7 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Gower, Jarvis, Gillespie, Lee, Vins, Fraser, Partlow

OPPOSED: None

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by B. Fraser and Seconded by C. Gower: “That the meeting be adjourned.”

RESULT: Carried 7 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Gower, Jarvis, Gillespie, Lee, Vins, Fraser, Partlow

OPPOSED: None

The meeting adjourned at 2:52 p.m.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE CLERK