

## **DRAFT 10.30.2013**

## **Memorandum**

**Planning and Urban Development Department**

**Planning Division**

**To:** Planning Board

**From:** Alex Jaegerman, Caitlin Cameron, Jean Fraser

**Date:** November X, 2013

**Re: Design Review 133 York Street**

**R6 Design Standards**

**BACKGROUND**

1. Staff reviewed the submitted black and white elevations in early September and considered the proposals generally met the principles and standards of the R6 Design guidelines except regarding C-1 and F-6 (main entrance), where it was recommended that the central entrance at ground level be more strongly emphasized through the introduction of features such as transome windows, wider door, more robust canopy articulation. Staff also asked for information as to why one half of the building is higher than the other, and confirmed at the Workshop that the comments were preliminary as staff had not seen color renderings nor samples of materials.
2. At the Workshop color renderings were shown which staff had not previously seen which showed large areas of blue metal cladding on the rear and side elevations. These were discussed at a meeting on September 23, 2013 with Bob Howe the applicants architect. Staff were given to understand that the applicant was committed to the proposed materials (including colors) but open to some redesign. The discussion also reiterated staff concerns regarding the weak entrance area at the front.
3. The proposed cladding needs to be “harmonious with those in buildings within a 2-block radius of the site that contribute to and are compatible with the predominant character-defining architectural features of the neighborhood” and address the Principle F re “Articulation”. In view of the mixed cladding materials of surrounding buildings, the proposed materials in and of themselves appeared to meet the standard- but the choice of specific colors, trim and the scale and location of contrasting materials were questioned. In particular, the rear elevation did not have any depth or articulation and the scale and composition of the metal cladding was problematic.
4. The architects submitted revised elevation treatments as part of the October 1, 2013 submission. Staff welcomed the improvements to the front door area but considered that the rear elevation was still unresolved, with little articulation and no obvious design aesthetic. The roof cornice at the rear was suggested as an aspect that could be improved and more/larger windows would also be helpful. A revised elevation was submitted on October 4, 2013 and this remains as the final submission for consideration at the hearing.

**COMMENTS ON FINAL PROPOSALS**

1. We remain disappointed in the rear elevation treatment. It is more balanced with the addition of windows and benefits from the larger cornice treatment. However, it still lacks in articulation and interest. The applicant has explored relatively minor cladding revisions and these do not fully address the Principle F regarding “Articulation” (Extract attached).
2. It should be noted that the first standard under “Multifamily” Design Standards also applies to the project.

***EXTRACT from R6 Design Principles & Standards***

***PRINCIPLE F Articulation***

*The design of the building is articulated to create a visually interesting and well composed residential façade.*

Explanatory Note: Articulation refers to the manner in which the shapes, volumes, architectural elements and materials of a building’s surface are differentiated yet work together. A well-composed building articulation adds visual interest and individual identity to a home while maintaining an overall composition.

STANDARD F-1 **Articulation** Buildings shall provide surface articulation by employing such features such as dimensional trim, window reveals, or similar elements appropriate to the style of the building. Trim and details shall be designed and detailed consistently on the facades visible from the public right of way.

STANDARD F-2 **Window Types** Window patterns shall be composed of no more than two window types and sizes except where there is a design justification for alternate window forms..

STANDARD F-3 **Visual Cohesion** Excessive variations in siding material shall not be allowed if such changes disrupt the visual cohesion of the façade. Materials shall be arranged so that the visually heavier material, such as masonry or material resembling masonry, is installed below lighter material, such as wood cladding.

STANDARD F-4 **Delineation between Floors** Buildings shall delineate the boundary between each floor of the structure through such features as belt courses, cornice lines, porch roofs, window head trim or similar architectural features.

STANDARD F-5: **Porches, etc.**  Porches, decks, balconies, stoops and entryways shall be architecturally integrated into the overall design of the building in a manner that compliments its massing, material, and details. Multilevel porches and balconies on front facades shall not obscure the architectural features of the façade. Use of rail/baluster systems with appropriate openings between rails, stepping back balconies from the front plane of the building face, or other appropriate design features shall be employed to achieve this standard.

STANDARD F-6: **Main Entries** Main entries shall be emphasized and shall be integrated architecturally into the design of the building, using such features as porch or stoop forms, porticos, recessed entries, trim or a combination of such features, so that the entry is oriented to the street.

STANDARD F-8: **Articulation** Provide articulation to the building by incorporating the following architectural elements. Such features shall be on all façades facing and adjacent to the street.

1. Eaves and rakes shall have a minimum projection of 6 inches.

2. All exterior façade trim such as that used for windows, doors, corner boards and other trim, shall have a minimum width of 4 inches except for buildings with masonry exteriors.

3. If there are off sets in building faces or roof forms, the off sets shall be a minimum of 12 inches.

4. Pronounced and decorative cornices.