

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: October 23, 2013

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Ryan Bragg
Walter Francl
Joseph Fry
Veronica Gillies (left after Item #3)
Bruce Hemstock
Goran Ostojic (Present for Item #4 only)
Norm Shearing (Chair)
Peter Wreglesworth (Excused Item #3)

REGRETS:
Daryl Condon
Vincent Dumoulin
David Grigg
Joseph Hruda
Phil Mondor

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

- | | |
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| 1. | 563-571 West King Edward Avenue |
| 2. | 1551 Quebec Street |
| 3. | 39 Smithe Street |
| 4. | 5155 Dumfries Street (Kensington Community Centre) |

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Shearing called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There being no New Business the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 563-571 West King Edward Avenue
 DE: N/A
 Description: The proposal consists of a 6-storey residential building and four 2-storey townhouses at the rear of the site all over one level of underground parking. The proposal includes a total of 70 dwelling units with a maximum and a FSR of 2.43.
 Zoning: RS-5 to CD-1
 Application Status: Rezoning
 Review: First
 Architect: GBL Architects
 Owner: Regent International
 Delegation: Tom Bell, GBL Architects
 Joey Stevens, GBL Architects
 Peter Kruek, Durante Kruek Landscape Architects
 Staff: Cynthia Lau and Tim Potter

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Cynthia Lau, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a rezoning application that is comprised of three parcels on West King Edward Avenue near Cambie Street. The proposal is being considered under the Cambie Corridor Plan which contemplates residential buildings in this area up to four and six storeys within two lots of Cambie Street. This site is across the lane from the King Edward Canada Line Station where there is a proposed rezoning for an 8-storey mixed-use building. Ms. Lau described the context noting that to the west and south are single-family properties that could be rezoned under Phase 2 of the Cambie Corridor Plan. To the north are single-family properties that will be included in Phase 3 of the Cambie Corridor Plan. The rezoning application proposes to rezone the site from RS-5 to CD-1 to allow development of a 6-storey residential building and townhouses at the rear of the site all over one level of underground parking with a maximum building height of 71 feet. The proposal includes 70 dwelling units, 88 Class A bicycle parking spaces and 50 vehicle parking spaces.

Tim Potter, Development Planner, further described the project and mentioned that the proposal is to rezone from RS-1 to CD-1 under the Cambie Corridor Plan. There are 10 foot setbacks planned on West King Edward and 3.5 feet setbacks at the lane edge. The building and courtyard separations are around 24 feet. Below grade parking is accessed from the lane towards the west property line to a landscape buffer.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

1. Taking into consideration the Cambie Corridor Plan and its design principles, looking at the east elevation of the east building does the proposed massing successfully relate to the neighbouring site across the lane (east) with respect to the following:
 - a. degree of building separation (approximately 28 feet);
 - b. privacy, overlook, and livability of units as it relates to building separation?
2. Taking into consideration the Cambie Corridor Plan and its design principles, does the panel support the proposed urban design in terms of siting (setbacks), massing, density, and height?

3. Please comment on the success of the open space design as shown in the landscape plans and in particular the edge treatment of the level 5 landscape terrace as it relates to the South building elevation.
4. Does the Panel have any preliminary advice on the overall design with regard to:
 - a. Neighbourliness including shadow and view impacts;
 - b. LEED™ Gold strategies and Rezoning Policy for Greener Buildings;
 - c. Indicative materials and composition.

Ms. Lau and Mr. Potter took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Joey Stevens, Architect, further described the proposal and mentioned that it is a transitional building and that they had developed three building forms. There is the low lane form which is two storeys and transitions to the single family homes across the lane. The station form reads as a 4-storey block and is cantilevered six feet over the lane form which supports the relationship to the 6-storey part of the proposed station building. There is also a mid-height form which is along King Edward Avenue. There is a generous setback on the lane that should make for a pleasant walkable lane. There is a communal deck on level 5 and private terraces for the penthouse units. The entry access to the underground parking is from the lane and entrance to the townhouses is from the courtyard.

Peter Kruek, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans and mentioned that the main entrance to the building is from King Edward Avenue. The common amenity space has a kid's play and some urban agriculture. There are private accessible roof decks on top of the main building and on top of the townhouses. There is some planting along the lane as a buffer to the single family homes.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider making the laneway walkable for pedestrians.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was nicely presented and well thought out in terms to the building forms.

The Panel thought there was simplicity to the forms and they had no issue in supporting the setback. They also supported the moves the proposal is making towards the Cambie Corridor Guidelines. The Panel thought the separation to the adjacent building was supportable. As well they thought the overall height and the manner in which the building steps away from the station was well handled. One Panel member thought a perimeter 2-storey form rather than townhouses on the lane might be a better response.

Several Panel members questioned the reason why the additional FSR was granted and wanted to know what the project will benefit from having this as a result of this increase in FSR. They said that they didn't get the impression right now that it has been earned. The Panel supported the landscape plans with one Panel member noting that the landscaping creates nice spaces that people will use. Most of the Panel wanted to see the laneway expressed better and a place that allows for pedestrians to walk along the edge. One Panel member wondered if the 24 foot separation could be reduced in favor of landscaping to the townhouses on the lane to make more of a buffer.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Stevens said the Panel had some great comments that would help them to make the project better.

2. Address:	1551 Quebec Street
DE:	N/A
Description:	The application proposes the development of five residential buildings including one non-market building to be transferred to the City as follows: 48272 square meters market residential in four buildings up to 18-storeys in height, 9748 square meters non-market residential in one 15-storey building.
Zoning:	M-2 to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning
Review:	First
Architect:	Rafii Architects
Owner:	Concert Properties
Delegation:	Foad Rafii, Rafii Architects Richard Henry, Richard Henry Architect Jennifer Stamp, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects Craig Waters, Concert Properties
Staff:	Grant Miller and Paul Cheng

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-1)

- Introduction:** Grant Miller, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for an application to rezone 1551 Quebec Street, 1600 Ontario Street and 95 East 1st Avenue from M-2 to CD-1 to allow for the development of a new residential neighbourhood including five residential buildings and a water front park. The proposal is a revisioning of area 3A and 3B of the Southeast False Creek Official Development Plan. The residential towers range from 12 to 18-storeys in height and include a total of 624,522 square feet. Mr. Miller noted that the increased residential density provides the opportunity to deliver a freestanding turnkey social housing building at the corner of East 1st Avenue and Quebec Street which will be built by the proponent and transferred to the City as a public benefit. The Southeast False Creek Development Plan will be amended to allow heights above 44.35 m to support the northern most building which is 18-stories tall.

Paul Cheng, Development Planner, further described the proposal for a site in Southeast False Creek in what is considered the Eastern Railyard Neighbourhood. The major focus for this area is a large waterfront park that is to extend from the False Creek seawall south to West 1st Avenue. The buildings that edge this park are to provide a strong definition of open space.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

- Please provide commentary on the overall site planning of the area including the circulation, building separation, the reconfiguration of the park and the other public spaces;
- Taking into consideration the context of built and approved neighbouring buildings and the site's relationship to the Seawall and False Creek are the proposed building heights supportable?
- Building "5" is sited in a prominent location and should therefore emulate an exceptional architectural character. Please provide comments/suggestions on the proposed design criteria for this building.
- An extensive set of urban design principles has been developed as part of this rezoning application. Please provide commentary taking special consideration of:
 - The proposed interfaces between buildings and public spaces, and;
 - The character and historic defining elements of the southeast False Creek area.

Mr. Miller and Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Richard Henry, Architect, further described the proposal and mentioned that it was an opportunity for two major stakeholders with a fairly large piece of property to come together and develop this site as a single neighbourhood. They embarked on a long workshop process with the City as well as the Parks Board and identified a number of short comings in the original ODP. They tried to rationalize the structure of the plan as there was not a lot of logic originally and they thought there was an opportunity to develop the forms as the emerging buildings on the east side of Quebec Street were being built. They felt as well there was an opportunity to develop more intimate relationships between buildings and the public realm. Mr. Henry said they saw an opportunity to relocate the taller buildings along Quebec Street to improve views through and from the site. As well they felt there was an opportunity to increase the amount of park space from what was seen in the original ODP. As well there was an opportunity to make the greenway connection (Central Valley Greenway). They also wanted to introduce a hierarchy of streets and an opportunity to improve the public realm.

Mr. Henry said one of the important changes they wanted to make was to improve the sense of place by creating a smaller community within the larger community. The affordable housing component was an important part of the plan and has been moved to the corner of Quebec Street and East 1st Avenue. Mr. Henry mentioned that they have a set of guiding principles and a guiding plan to follow as they develop the site. He then described the architectural expression noting that there was an opportunity to create a landmark building that has a view out over False Creek. He added that there is a proposed light rail system that is going through some modifications.

Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans and mentioned that they took the history into consideration when designing the landscape. First there is the rail yard with a rail spur that goes from across the street through into their site. They have shown that with a patterning treatment that is distinctive from the rest of the public realm. They are also exploring a reference to a rail trestle that was on the property previously. Ms. Stamp noted that there are two shorelines that go across the site so they have had some fun patterning and materiality in the landscape to pick up on some of the historical references.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to improve the architectural expression;
 - Design development to improve the landmark quality of Building #5;
 - Consider removing the townhouse expression;
 - Consider improving the design principles;
 - Design development to improve how the project relates to the urban scale;
 - Consider a more subtle interpretation of the rail yard context.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was an interesting and challenging project.

The Panel thought the proposal was better than the original ODP layout as there is a cleaner approach to the public realm. As well this proposal achieves the intent of opening up the park to the foreshore. However a couple of Panel members noted that what is achieved at the ground plan is at odds with the architecture. They felt that the ground plane is legible but not the buildings. They also thought the way the buildings relate to the

park was strong but the blocky nature of the Quebec Street elevations does not work. As well they thought that Building #5 was lacking in clarity.

The Panel thought the heights of the buildings were acceptable but felt there was a sameness to the buildings and that there could be more of a differentiation in the expression. They also noted that there were a lot of details to work out in the actual building placements and how they meet the street edges. They thought the movement through the public spaces and the smaller courtyard spaces was successful. A couple of Panel members mentioned that the townhouses seemed a little forlorn and would like to see them present themselves differently or removed all together.

Some Panel members stated that that the urban design principles were confusing. One Panel member noted that each parcel could come back at separate development permit applications with different architects and it would be important that the principles were clear. One Panel member thought that the four buildings should probably be done by the same architect while the landmark building could be done by another design team.

Most of the Panel thought the landmark building (Building #5) with an 8,000 square foot floor plate was not tall enough and the height of the podium seems to shorten the tower. They also thought the different podium heights were not working particularly when combined with the plan offsets. One Panel member suggested having a pair of linked tall buildings.

Regarding the metaphor, the Panel did not supported the use of "broken shards of glass" and thought the entire project should be looked at in a broader manner on how it relates to the urban scale and how it is viewed from the opposite side of the Creek as part of the False Creek context.

Most of the Panel thought the rail yard had been identified across the proposal but that it had become too literal and they wanted to see a more subtle interpretation. As for having commercial on the site, they thought there were two places that could be considered; the corner of Quebec Street and East 1st Avenue and at the foreshore perhaps at the base of the landmark building.

The Panel said they appreciated all the studies regarding movement through the site but wanted to see people moving around the space as well as through it.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Henry said he appreciates the Panel's comments. He said they would go back to the drawing board and fine tune the design. He said he liked the idea of having one architect design the four buildings with another firm for Building #5.

Mr. Rafii said there were lots of good comments from the Panel. He added that if they were all for adding height to Building #5. As well it is their intention to go with the shape of what is happening across the street.

3. Address:	39 Smithe Street
DE:	417276
Description:	Preliminary application to develop the site with two towers and joint podium with an overall proposed height of 298 feet. Uses include hotel, restaurant, casino, gym and spa. The Edgewater Casino is to be relocated to the 2 nd and 3 rd floors.
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Preliminary Development Permit on a CD-1
Review:	Second (first as Development Application)
Architect:	IBI/HB Architects
Owner:	BC Pavilion Corporation
Delegation:	Martin Bruckner, IBI/HB Architects Maxime-Alexis Frappier, ACDF Chris Phillips, PFS Studio, Landscape Architects John Cahill, Paragon Gaming Peter Joyce, Bunt & Associates
Staff:	Paul Cheng

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-1)

- **Introduction:** Paul Cheng, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a preliminary development permit application that will be followed by a complete development permit application. It is following a rezoning application which was approved by Council. Mr. Cheng noted that the application is a lot more refined than the original rezoning with some large changes in the form of development. The site is flanked by the stadium, Smithe Street, Pacific Boulevard and Expo Boulevard in the Entertainment District. The site is a proposal for the Vancouver Urban Resort which will include hotel space, restaurants, a casino, gym, spa, conference and ballroom areas. During the rezoning the applicant applied for an expansion to the casino functions with respect to what is currently at the Edgewater Casino and was turned down by Council. The casino function will remain the same with respect to the number of gaming tables and slot machines.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

1. The proposed form of development makes a departure from the design approved in the CD-1 with a reconfiguration of the tower element along Pacific Boulevard and a refinement of the second tower along Expo Boulevard. Is this new design response supportable?
2. Please provide commentary on the proposal with respect to:
 - Pedestrian circulation around and through the building;
 - The proposed interfaces with the public realm along Smithe Street, Expo Boulevard, Pacific Boulevard and the BC Place concourse;
 - Architectural expression and materiality;
 - The location and nature of the proposed signage.

Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Martin Bruckner, Architect, further described the proposal noting that there was a change in the programming of the building with the casino moving into the project. There is less focus on the casino use and more about the resort like qualities of the project and how the hotel will function. There is a podium with a significant conference facility. He said the design response helps complete the new evolving entertainment district and a good response to what is now finished in the stadium.

John Cahill mentioned that when they came to the Panel in 2010 it was a destination casino project and with Council's enactment of the By-law it became clear that there wasn't going to be an expansion of gaming. As a result they had to rethink the whole project. They took on some partners that helped design the project in its current form.

Maxime-Alexis Frappier, Architect, further described the proposal. He said the project is a unique opportunity to create a landmark project that will contribute to the identity of the entertainment district and that the main challenge was to create a transition between the site and the surrounding buildings. Mr. Frappier then presented a video for the project. In describing the architecture, Mr. Frappier explained that the proposed massing includes two contrasting materials to catch the eye and blend in with the stadium. All the fluid lines are trying to establish a dialogue with the stadium. He added that they wanted to create a pattern that will catch the light throughout the day.

Chris Phillips, Landscape Architects, described the landscape plans for the project. He said that the site is at the cross roads of an incredible amount of pedestrian and cyclist's movement that needed to be improved. He said they have set up a whole new bike way system and as well they are treating Smithe Street as a special street. They have been working with Engineering to have a different streetscape using concrete paving with banding to give a courtyard expression to Smithe Street. As well they plan to put the public art money into the street end. On the sixth floor there is a large open space that will have restaurants and a large garden making for a nice amenity for the hotel guests. There are a series of other amenities on the other roofs including a swimming pool on level 15.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to improve the edges around the site and to improve the public realm;
 - Design development to improve the solar response to the facades;
 - Consider developing a way for people to walk through the building without having to walk through the casino;
 - Design development to improve the overall architectural expression;
 - Design development to improve the concourse level;
 - Design development to improve the air garden.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought the building was well-handled.

The Panel agreed that there had been improvement in the design over the initial application for the general massing and the plan form. As well they thought the resolution of movement around and through the building was supportable. The western block has a much more satisfactory massing and the disposition of the hotel rooms is better in terms of their orientation.

However, most of the Panel thought there still needed to be some work around the edges of the site. Given the building's size and use it needs to do more with regard to the public realm interface. One Panel member noted that the building seemed to alienate itself from the urban setting. The Panel also agreed that the building was successful in its massing against the backdrop of the large piece of architecture that is the stadium and responds in a robust and energetic manner. Most Panel members had some concerns with the skin of the building noting that it has the same expression on all four sides.

Several Panel members suggested that there should be away for people to go through the building without having to be confronted by the casino operation. Currently it doesn't feel very public. The Panel supported the proposed signage for the building.

The Panel had mixed feelings regarding the architecture with one Panel member stating that the building had a Las Vegas expression and was not a typical Vancouver classical building. As well it was mentioned that the building is monolithic in its façade although the program and how the building functions was well done. Another Panel member thought the colour and reflectivity of the glass wouldn't work in Vancouver. The building requires further design development to address the northern façade adjacent to the stadium.

The Panel thought there could be some improvement in terms of the concourse level and the public realm around the area. Most of the Panel liked the terrace on level six and thought it would become a much sought after place. One Panel member thought the landscaping on the upper level was interesting but seemed to create a sandwich expression as you exit out of BC Place. They thought the air garden looked interesting as well with some Panel member supporting the columns while other did not. As well they thought the corner could be more open to improve the expression.

Regarding sustainability, the Panel found the building was undifferentiated in its solar response. Panel noted their disappointment that it was going to only be a LEED Gold equivalent.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bruckner thanked the Panel for their comments. He added that they will help to guide them as they move forward with the project.

4. Address:	5155 Dumfries Street (Kensington Community Centre)
DE:	417130
Description:	The proposal is to replace the existing Community Hall at the Kensington Community Centre with a new 2-storey building accommodating a 69-space Childcare Centre and a new Hall.
Zoning:	RS-1
Application Status:	Complete
Review:	First
Architect:	Shape Architects
Owner:	City of Vancouver – Park Board
Delegation:	Alec Smith, Shape Architects Loretta Kong, Shape Architects Alison Maddaugh, S2P Per Palm, Park Board
Staff:	Agatha Malczyk

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Agatha Malczyk, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a new 2-storey high building at Kensington Park to replace the existing hall/multipurpose room with new space and a large childcare facility. The park was developed and is owned by the City. There are currently 67 parking spaces with 85 being provided through this proposal. Ms. Malczyk described the context for the area noting that the area surrounding the park is mostly low density residential.

The hall was built in 1960 and the Community Centre was built around 1987 and has had some minor additions. Replacement of the building will be considered in the future as it is not in the current budgets or plans.

Ms. Malczyk described the proposal noting the height is under the maximum discretionary height allowed. A green roof is planned for the lower roof of the building.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

1. Does the project provide a good response with its massing, form and detail, to the site context including site topography, urban park, existing older community center, school and low density residential neighbourhood.
2. Is the project successful in creating a “Kensington Campus” with an open public space, and potentially supporting further long-term development/redevelopment of the complex?

Ms. Malczyk took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant’s Introductory Comments:** Alec Smith, Architect, gave a power point presentation. He described the architecture and gave an overview of the background and the history of the project. He described the urban context and highlighted the nature of the facilities’ program and as well outlined the public process they went through for the proposal. The City undertook a childcare needs assessment that determined that the area had a deficit in terms of childcare spaces. As a result they have designed a new Community Hall and Childcare Centre. There is a second floor community space that is accessed from the grand staircase from the plaza space. The childcare zones are access through an external covered walkway. As well there is a generous outdoor play space. Mr. Smith mentioned that the building will be passively cooled using natural ventilation and is a LEED™ Gold project.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - The Panel had no substantial aspects needing improvement.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a well thought out design.

The Panel thought the proposal was a good response to its massing, form and detail and to the site context. As will they thought it was successful in creating a campus and supported further development of the site.

The Panel thought the proposal was a sensitive improvement to an existing context with a couple of Panel members suggesting incorporating something for the southern exposure and weather protection along the external covered walkway.

One Panel member wondered if the parking could be moved away from the childcare play area. The Panel supported the landscape plans and thought the public realm was well handled.

Regarding sustainability, the Panel liked that the building didn't have mechanical ventilation and was pursuing LEED™ Gold. One Panel member suggested the applicant use the sustainability strategy as a way to educate people who will be using the facility. One member suggested addition of vestibules or similar measures to help with the daily maintenance and control of drafts in the play spaces.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Smith noted that regarding the proximity of the parking to the childcare it is protected with a berm that separates the parking area from the play space. He added that they will look at some attempt to address that situation further. As for the south and west elevation, he said that the second level has glazing with a frit pattern along the top edge that is based on the crow migration that happens at the end of each afternoon.

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.