

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** Wednesday, July 27, 2016

**TIME:** 3:00 pm

**PLACE:** Town Hall Meeting Room, Vancouver City Hall

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Russell Acton  
Roger Hughes  
Ken Larsson  
David Jerke  
Neal Lamontagne  
Muneesh Sharma  
Meghan Cree-Smith  
Kim Smith  
Stefan Aepli  
James Cheng  
Veronica Gillies  
Karen Spoelstra

**REGRETS:** Meredith Anderson

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Camilla Lade

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### ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1.	4066 Macdonald Street & 2785 Alamein Avenue
2.	3175 Riverwalk Avenue (EFL Parcel 8A)
3.	3198 SE Marine Drive (EFL Parcel 3)
4.	3198 SE Marine Drive (EFL Parcel 5A)
5.	701 W Georgia Street

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5. Address:	701 W Georgia Street
DE:	DP-2016-00107
Description:	To replace the existing rotunda with a three-storey retail building at Pacific Centre Mall.
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete Development Application
Review:	First
Architect:	Perkins + Will (David Dove & Peter Busby)
Owner:	Cadillac Fairview Corp. Ltd.
Delegation:	David Dove, Perkins + Will Peter Busby, Perkins + Will
Staff:	Patrick O'Sullivan

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-1)**

- **Introduction:** Development Planner Patrick O'Sullivan introduced the project as a development permit application under the existing CD-1 zoning. The site is located at the corner of West Georgia and Howe Streets. Technically, though the site is the entire block from West Georgia to Dunsmuir and Howe to Granville, the proposed development is an addition limited to the westerly corner of the site that currently contains the rotunda and the concrete plaza. The proposal is to demolish the rotunda and concrete deck area, and develop a three storey commercial building containing retail uses on levels one and two and a restaurant use on level 3. The proposed height is 63 feet, approximately 10 feet higher than the exiting adjacent "podium" height of the Four Seasons Hotel. The proposed square footage is a total net addition of approximately 25,000 square feet, representing a change in density from 9.3 to 9.37 FSR. The zoning CD-1 (455) permits 9.47 FSR. The surrounding buildings include: the Four Seasons, Hotel Georgia, and the Pacific Centre Tower, an 18-floor, Class A office building.

A new double-height entry to the shopping mall entry is proposed mid-block along Georgia Street that aligns with the spine of the existing mall. There is also a Howe St. entry to the third storey. A broad metal canopy weather protection with wood soffits is proposed along the W Georgia and Howe streets frontages. The proposal also includes:

- The proposed public realm width from curb to building face is 18 feet on both West Georgia Street and Howe Street. To accomplish this, the building is proposed to be set back 10 feet at grade from the West Georgia Street property line and 5 feet from the Howe Street property line.
- Passenger and service elevators and a relocated exhaust shaft from the parking levels are accommodated along the Howe St frontage;
- Roof planter boxes;
- A new glass canopy is also proposed over the stairs down to the lower mall level along Howe St.

The Georgia Street public realm treatment is proposed on the public sidewalk and stone pavers within the property line. The proposed building materials include SSG curtain wall glazing and areas of charcoal coloured honed stone at grade level, a three-storey area of charcoal coloured honed stone on Howe St., metal clad "box walls" and translucent glass fins on the west elevation.

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

1. Considering the prominence of the site, and the existing visual connection to the rotunda entry and its clear passage, please comment on the success of the proposed entry location and identification in terms of wayfinding to the shopping mall.
  2. Please comment on the overall design approach of the Public Realm, as it relates to the frontages along W. Georgia St. and Howe St., in terms of sidewalk width, street trees/ planting, paving surfaces, canopy design, and solid-to-glazing ratio of the elevations.
  3. Please comment on the relationship of the proposal to the Four Seasons Hotel building to the east in terms of performance of the space between the two buildings.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant stated they had been studying more radical forms and some 'stronger' three dimensional "object" architectural solutions, from the outset, but ultimately felt that a more modest massing was appropriate due to the context of the existing area. The entrance to the mall was played down but simplified as a two storey 'direct line' into the mall. There is a requirement to accommodate exterior exiting, vents and air circulation along the Howe Street frontage. Regarding the deep interstitial space between the proposal and the Four Seasons hotel, the applicant suggested that safety and security may be improved by the introduction of a gate or other interventions.

The applicant explained that providing planted street trees was not an option due to the inability to dig down into existing retail spaces below grade. At the ground level, there is a possibly of one to three tenants, so three entrances are provided from Georgia. The finishes at level two are wood lined boxes with white porcelain metal, expressed as 'jewel boxes'. There is basalt stone around the entries on Georgia. The cladding is white porcelain enamel. The lower canopy is similar in materiality to the upper canopy. The restaurant patio would receive light from 11:30am-2:30 pm, and 4:30pm on. The mechanical equipment is concealed and lowered into a sunken well into the roof and is not visible either from above or from nearby buildings or public spaces.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - More open space at grade would be welcomed in the design, for example, seating could be added;
  - There should be more accommodation of the public realm in the design;
  - Design development of the Howe street Elevation to strengthen the way the building turns the corner and addresses the public realm and in particular the Art Gallery plaza;
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel strongly supported the wayfinding and the connection to the existing mall entrance in the proposal. Generally the connection is considered improved because it is more legible and direct. With respect to the public realm design and approach, the loss of seating and the perception of the loss of public open space is a concern. Stronger reference and accommodation in the design of the public realm would make the design more 'iconic'. There was partial support for the single 'directionality' of the building's primary expression, giving rise to concerns by some panel members that the way the building turns the corner should be improved.

The Panel supported the solid canopy and the details, such as the wood soffit and lighting, which they thought helped to create the sense of space between the sidewalk and the canopy.

The Panel accepted the leftover upper level space between the proposal and the Four Seasons as an inevitability of the development and had no CPTED concerns.

The Panel felt that the expression of the building is skillfully handled. A few Panel members felt the basalt wall material was too 'stark' although at least one Panel member appreciated the material. Some Panel members felt that the Howe Street wall elevation was successful, but others felt it was an opportunity to create a green wall or an expression of the public realm or landscape. There was a suggestion that the entry to the restaurant and its vertical circulation could be better expressed. There was concern about the non-alignment of elements at the base of the building on Georgia Street, but it might not be a critical concern. Generally, the Panel thought the role of the building at this corner is to "hold" the corner and be a critical counterpoint to the open space of the Vancouver Art Gallery north plaza. The public space does not have to occur at grade and could happen at another level, according to one Panel member.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant appreciated the comments. The wall area will be considered for development, although it could look too 'busy'. The lobby and restaurant entry could be developed more design wise.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.