

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: March 13, 2013

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Ryan Bragg
Daryl Condon
Walter Francl
Joseph Fry
Veronica Gillies
David Grigg
Bruce Hemstock
Joseph Hruda
Phil Mondor (Excused Item #2)
Norm Shearing (Chair)
Peter Wreglesworth

REGRETS:
Vincent Dumoulin
Goran Ostojic

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1265 Howe Street
2.	188 Keefer Street (formerly 611 Main Street)
3.	2001 West 10 th Avenue
4.	150 East Cordova Street

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Shearing called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There was a short business meeting and then the Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 1265 Howe Street
 DE: 416483
 Description: To construct a 41-storey, residential tower with 5-storey, mixed-use podium containing 348 dwelling units of which 20 would be market rental. Also constructing a cultural amenity building containing artist studios over four levels of underground parking.
 Zoning: CD-1 pending
 Application Status: Complete
 Architect: Merrick Architecture
 Owner: Howe Street Developments
 Review: Second
 Delegation: Greg Borowski, Merrick Architecture
 Julian Pattison, Considered Design
 Tracy McRae, Howe Street Developments
 Dan Roberts, Kane Consultants
 Staff: Anita Molaro

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-3)

- **Introduction:** Ms. Molaro, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a residential tower along Howe Street. She described the context for the area noting the recently approved social housing project to the north. She reminded the Panel of the Burrard Gateway proposal at 54-storey and 36-storey which is a current rezoning application and not yet approved that they reviewed last year.

The proposal is for a 41-storey residential tower as well as a 5-storey residential podium with commercial uses and artist production space. Ms. Molaro mentioned that following the rezoning the FSR had been increased to 9.15 and as well the height had been increased to 375 feet. As part of the rezoning a secured cultural amenity space was provided. The artist production space is a 2-storey component located mid-block adjacent to the social housing site. Above the production space is residential use in the form of townhouses. At the corner of the site, is a retail component, wrapping around to Drake Street. Rental units are provided on the second floor with the remainder of the building as market units.

Ms. Molaro mentioned that the proposal needs to meet LEED™ Gold.

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

Has the following design response addressed the design development conditions of rezoning as follows:

- General massing to reduce the apparent scale of the tower and podium components;
- Upper portion of the building to further refine and enhance its architectural contribution to the city skyline and public view cone;
- Provide variety and interest to the architectural expression of the building with high quality durable materials that will contribute to the character and quality of the area;
- Design and finish of the presentation windows fronting on Howe Street for use by the studio artist and to maximize pedestrian amenity;

- LEED™ Gold Strategies (LEED™ Gold and registration with CaGBC required and eligible to certify upon completion);
- Detailed landscape treatments including:
 - Vertical trellis treatments
 - Public realm
 - Private

Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Greg Borowski, Architect, further described the proposal and mentioned that the reason for the shape of the building is to allow for better views to the west. They also wanted to anchor the building in the urban fabric so it was framed on the north and east side. More solid materials have been added on the north and east sides. The building's main entrance is on Howe Street but the main lobby goes through to the porte cochere on the lane side. There are amenity spaces along the street side with retail on the ground floor on Drake and Howe Streets. The reason for providing addition density was to allow for the artist's studios. They are not live in studios they work studios and will have glass garage doors that can be opened. Mr. Borowski said they are in discussion with staff in Cultural Affairs to provide public art on the site. They are hoping to have changing exhibits for the artists who work on site as well. At the fifth level there is both amenity space and a courtyard which will allow people to go through to either end of the building. Mr. Borowski noted that there is solar shading on the south side and the majority of balconies are the west façade.

Mr. Borowski mentioned that they had been asked to make some changes to the design at the rezoning review. One was to distinguish the artist's studios more as a volume or make them more distinct. They opted to use a white brick with black flecks as well as on the street side to use a structural glazing system. The townhouses on the podiums area are either flats or two storeys which will make for some interesting living spaces in the downtown.

Julian Pattison, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans for the proposal. They wanted to have a strong identity to the front of house experience which is the main entrance point to the tower, the artist's studios, the café corner and the porte cochere. They also wanted to combine the internal and external experience to create visual permeability and connection through the various functional aspects of the building for different users. He described the materials noting stone on the front of the building and the boulders in the streetscape that grounds the design. It is meant to express the bedrock that the downtown sits on. He added that the boulders are informal street furniture and stop people cutting through the plaza space. On the fifth floor there are water features and on the Drake Street side there will be an intensive green roof system and as well there are urban agriculture components.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to the top of the tower;
 - Design development to the west façade;
 - Consider ways to improve the colour palette;
 - Design development to the landscaping to improve the pedestrian realm;
 - Consider improving the interior street;
 - Consider improving the sustainability strategy.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the project and thought it was well done.

The Panel supported the general massing and thought there were lots of scaling devices that gave texture and interest to the building. They mentioned that the upper portion was better than at the rezoning review as it was cleaner and simpler. A number of Panel members thought the building didn't add to the skyline and encouraged the applicant to refine its architectural expression. As well they thought the top of the tower was too blunt and needed more design development.

Several Panel members thought there was some ambiguity on how the tower met the ground and that there needed to be a sorting out of the hierarchy especially between the podium and the tower. The Panel thought the west elevation needed some design development but thought the southeast and northeast facades were well handled. As well they thought some better articulation of the southwest façade was needed.

The Panel supported the colour palette but thought the light colored concrete might be a problem as it would likely show stains even with self-cleaning materials. As well they thought there might be too many different materials and thought the applicant might want to simplify them.

With respect to the landscaping plans, the Panel felt there was too much going on at the ground plane and on the podium level. One Panel member noted that the landscaping seemed to separate itself from the building. Regarding the boulders on the corner, the Panel felt it didn't work and could be a hindrance in the sidewalk to pedestrians. As well they thought it was a barrier to the retail units.

There were lots of support for the artist's work space and but felt that how that expression reads on the streetscape and the lane still required some resolution. The interior street also needed to be more inviting but kept as private space.

Some Panel members encouraged the applicant to improve the sustainability strategy and to look at improving solar gain and adding energy reduction to the building.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Borowski thanked the Panel for their comments. He said the notion of simplification particularly of the two facades was something to consider. As well the relationship between the townhouses and the podium. He added that there were lots of things to consider as they move forward.

2. Address:	188 Keefer Street (formerly 611 Main Street)
DE:	416573
Description:	To construct a 17-storey, mixed-use building with retail (1 st floor), office (2 nd floor) and 156 dwelling units (2 nd to 17 th floor) of which 22 are for senior housing, all over three levels of underground parking, having vehicular access from the lane.
Zoning:	CD-1 pending
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	W.T. Leung Architects
Owner:	Westbank Properties Corp.
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Wing Ting Leung, W.T. Leung Architects Christiane Cottin, W.T. Leung Architects Jennifer Stamp, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects Dave Leung, Westbank Properties Corp. Daniel Roberts, Kane Consulting
Staff:	Paul Cheng

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-1)

- Introduction:** Paul Cheng, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a mixed-use building on Keefer Street in Chinatown. He noted that there are two zones in the City's Chinatown district with one being attributed to the more historic area along Pender Street where less building height is permitted. In April 2011, Council approved the final implementation of the Historic Area Height Review relating to the Chinatown Historic Area. Under this review, Council approved policies to consider rezonings of up to 120 feet in the HA-1A district, with key sites along Main Street identified for rezoning up to 150 feet. This project represents the first application to come in under this rezoning policy.

Mr. Cheng indicated that the 150 foot height line also generally informs the placement of view cone G1.2. During the review of this rezoning application, staff determined that the 150 foot height that informs the view cone shall be measured from the front of the site and would permit a slight increase to the 150 foot height line at the rear of the site taking into consideration the sloping topography of the site.

Mr. Cheng described the proposal noting that it is for a 17-storey tower, visually-proceeded by a streetwall of 6-storeys along Main Street, which in turn steps down along Keefer Street to respond to the lower building heights of the existing context on Keefer Street. One of the challenges of these rezoning sites is the reconciliation of a new 150 foot building height in a historic neighbourhood of 50-70 foot tall buildings.

This proposal has introduced a design strategy which uses the streetwall podium to respond to the historical context, while setting back the tower element from the perimeter of the site in order to be visually subservient as seen from the nearby public sidewalks, while still maintaining visual prominence when viewed from a far distance.

There is also a building setback for a large portion of the Keefer Street frontage to achieve enhanced sidewalk activity, as well as a small setback off Main Street in order to permit projecting building elements without encroaching over city property.

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

- 1) Taking into consideration the design elements that staff have identified as critical elements in achieving visual, architectural and experiential compatibility with

Chinatown: Does the proposal achieve general compatibility with the historic context of Vancouver's Chinatown? Are there any other critical elements that staff should consider in the evaluation of this project's success in achieving compatibility?

- 2) In particular, does the proposed treatment of the cornice of the streetwall component successfully achieve the visual richness that is emulated by the historical buildings in the neighbourhood?

Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Wing Ting Leung, Architect, further described the proposal noting that there isn't any real Chinese architecture in Chinatown. The buildings are a result of the early immigrants building the type of structures they thought were significant buildings from the southeastern parts of China. Mr. Leung described the architecture noting the screen to the residential lobby that has a traditional motif but is a more modern version. He said he picked the height because he thought it was the correct height for the street wall. Mr. Leung said that he sees the building as a collection of vertical forms. The varying heights will give different ways to express the top of the building and add richness to the façade. He noted the sun shades on the west side and that there is more glazing on the north façade. Public art is being contemplated on the face of the building.

Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans noting the existing cherry trees in the streetscape will be retained. The concrete and granite cobble from the street is taken up to the storefronts and using a different paver at the lobby entrance. There is a small water feature at the entry. Ms. Stamp mentioned that there are two roof decks. One is associated with the senior's housing and will have some passive space as well as garden plots. On the other deck it will be treated as a series of rooms with an outdoor kitchen and dining area, barbeque, fire pit, garden plots and a children's play area.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to resolve the top of the tower;
 - Design development for more distinction between the podium and the tower;
 - Design development to more strongly express the vertical elements on the building.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it had improved since the last review.

The Panel thought the massing and modulation had improved since the review at rezoning. Several Panel members felt that the cornice treatment of the streetwall component needed to be more pronounced and more substantial. One Panel member noted that most buildings in Chinatown have strong parapets. The Panel wanted to see a robust expression on the tower that incorporates protruding balcony elements and as well they wanted to see the building terminate better into the skyline. Some Panel members thought the podium element could be simpler as there didn't seem to be enough distinction between the podium and the tower.

The Panel liked the materials and the colour palette and thought they expressed the general feeling of Chinatown. However some Panel members thought the bay window element on Main Street was too strong an expression. Some Panel members thought the

vertical elements could be more strongly expressed and more colour could be added to the void spaces.

Several Panel members thought the public art piece looked more like signage but thought it could be spectacular if done correctly.

Some Panel members noted that the detailing of the entrances was successful but thought that should be pulled further into the landscaping.

Some of the Panel felt the proposal was lacking in a sustainability strategy.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Leung thanked the Panel for their comments.

3. Address:	2001 West 10 th Avenue
DE:	416498
Description:	To construct a new 7-storey residential building over two and a half levels of underground parking accessed from the lane. A child daycare will also be included.
Zoning:	M-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Bingham Hill Architects
Owner:	Pinnacle Properties
Review:	First
Delegation:	John Bingham, Bingham Hill Architects Peter Kreuk, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects Vito DeCottis, Pinnacle Properties
Staff:	Paul Cheng

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (0-10)

- **Introduction:** Paul Cheng, Development Planner introduced the proposal for a project that was originally a rezoning. The zoning was M-1 which is actually an industrial zone that would allow one hundred feet of building height but no residential use. Since then it has been rezoned to CD-1 which allows for a residential building. Mr. Cheng described the context for the area. This project is proposing a seven and six storey building and a daycare on the ground floor as one of the major public benefits that is being derived from the rezoning. Mr. Cheng mentioned the concerns from the previous review by the Panel which were included in his questions.

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

1. Has the design achieved a high level of transparency between the public realm and the daycare play area?
2. Given the exceptionally long street frontage of the site and further, that the general form, height and density has been approved by staff and Council: Has the proposal successfully mitigated the overall form and length of the building with building articulation, material treatment and other architectural strategies?
3. Are there any design considerations that can improve the compatibility between the daycare play area and the residential use located overhead?

Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** John Bingham, Architect, further described the proposal. He mentioned the project followed the fundamental relationships that were built up in the rezoning application. He described the changes from the rezoning noting that they have lowered the fence area around the daycare to make it more transparent. He added that there is a public art component on the project. They have maintained the street level for the townhouses and have added brick to tie the project to other buildings on the block. There is a CPR right-of-way and easement at the back of the site. As well there is the potential for a new subway system going along 10th Avenue or Broadway and they have allowed for access to that system for entry or exits. Roof access has been incorporated into the building with an internal walkway and as well there are private patios.

Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans. There are some extensive green roofs associated with the private patios on the roof. The CPR right-of-way

area is proposed for urban agriculture and is an area that has been highlighted for public art.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to improve the building's scale with respect to its long frontage;
 - Consider improving the architectural expression of the main body of the building;
 - Consider improving the colour palette;
 - Improve the Sustainability strategy.
- **Related Commentary:** The proposal did not get support from the Panel as they thought it didn't have a coherent strategy.

The Panel felt there had been little design development and improvement from the rezoning submission with a number of Panel members commenting that the present design had in fact not incorporated design components that had made the rezoning supportable. The Panel recognized that the long street frontage was a challenging aspect of this project and needed a much stronger design approach.

Most Panel members thought the townhouse expression was working and established a rhythm but the same level of design resolution needed to be achieved in other areas of the building. In support of these comments a number of Panel members thought the upper portion of the building could use further design development to relieve the monotony and repetition of the building's expression. Further the design did not appear to respond to the different exposures.

A couple of Panel members thought the height did not relate to other neighbouring buildings that have a height of four and five storeys. The Chair noted that the height and form had already been approved under the rezoning. They suggested stepping down the building to better integrate it into the neighbourhood. A couple of Panel members questioned the colour palette with one Panel member asking for more playfulness in the expression. Regarding the daycare, some Panel members thought there should be some sound reduction for the units next to the daycare while other members thought it wasn't an issue. One Panel member noted that generally people are home when the children aren't in the daycare.

Most of the Panel thought the landscaping had been well handled. They agreed that the applicant had achieved transparency between the public realm and the daycare play area. One Panel member commented that the public realm interface of the daycare landscape design seemed to push the public away rather than visually connecting the space with a more integrated design approach.

Most of the Panel members were not convinced that the sustainability strategy was sufficient. One Panel member noted that the south façade required future proofing considered the street trees would not last forever and adding solar shading now would be prudent. Another Panel member expressed concern regarding the cold-bridging caused by the extensive use of slab extensions.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bingham said the Panel made some good points that they could draw upon. He noted that they were responding to the previous Panel's comments from 2010.

4. Address:	150 East Cordova Street
DE:	416465
Description:	To construct a nine level plus basement residential/commercial building on this site.
Zoning:	HA-2
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Christopher Bozyk Architects
Owner:	My Gastown Developments Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Nick Bray, Christopher Bozyk Architects Macario Teodoro Reyes, My Gastown Developments Ltd. Dan LaFlamme, My Gastown Developments Ltd. Edward Buset, My Gastown Developments Ltd.
Staff:	Marie Linehan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (10-0)

- **Introduction:** Marie Linehan, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a site located at the easterly boundary of Gastown. She described the context for the area noting that the context is a mixture of building types and that there isn't a characteristic historic Gastown streetscape along Cordova Street. The proposal is for a 9-storey mixed-use building with a small commercial unit at the ground floor and eight storeys of residential above. The primary residential entry is located on East Cordova Street. Nine parking spaces will be provided at the ground floor and will include two car share spaces.

Ms. Linehan noted that a height relaxation is being sought by the applicant. The maximum permitted height is 75 feet and the proposed height ranges from 76 to 79 from the exterior northeast corner to the interior southwest corner due to the site topography as there is a drop in grade of about three feet.

Ms. Linehan described the HA-2 Gastown Design Guidelines that have very specific criteria for new buildings.

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

1. Height relaxation (75 feet permitted and 79 feet proposed);
2. Treatment of the exposed side elevations, including proposed materials;
3. Compatibility with the historic Gastown architectural character with particular reference to the following elements:
 - a. Cornice datums
 - b. Upper façade design
 - c. Open corner condition

Ms. Linehan took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Nick Bray, Architect, further described the proposal noting that the developer wanted to design a building with a strong community aspect to provide affordable housing. As a result they have designed compact but practical apartments aimed at first time buyers. They are activating the laneway by setting back and wrapping the ground floor commercial into the lane to open up the entrance. There will also be a public art gallery within that space working with local artists. This was inspired by some art work that is already in the lane. The building is providing two car share spaces for the wider public use. They are also providing a roof top garden that will be available for everyone in the building with a barbeque space, children's play, community garden beds

and every unit will have a balcony or a Juliette balcony. Mr. Bray described the architecture and the color and material palettes noting that they planned a modern building that respects the heritage character of Gastown.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider reducing the amount glassing on the façade;
 - Consider having the parking at grade;
 - Design development to improve the landscaping plans especially on the roof.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and like the contemporary expression with in the heritage context.

The Panel supported the relaxation of the height and thought it was a strong scheme. The Panel thought there was too much glazing on the lane side of the project and questioned whether it met limiting distance requirements. Some panel members commented that the amount of glazing along this facade was inappropriate for a gateway building to a heritage area. Additionally further design development was recommended to the vertical window wall element.

There were also several Panel members who commented on the rear units being compromised due to the configuration of the parking entry. One solution offered was for the parking to come in at grade. This would require the building to be slightly increased in height over the relaxation requested by the applicant.

The Panel supported the use of materials and thought they were successfully used to make a bold architectural statement while at the same time making references to the existing context. There were, however, a number of comments regarding the stopping and starting of the materials and a strong recommendation that further design development was required to simplify the approach presented. One Panel member thought that white brick might work better than painted concrete.

As well the Panel thought the upper cornice should be designed as simple as possible while referencing datum lines from other buildings in the area. The lower "storefront" cornice should wrap around to the lane side of the building and carried as a separating element between the garage doors located at grade and the upper portions of the building.

Panel members thought it was important to improve how the building meets the ground on Cordova Street. The corner expression requires further design development to make a much clearer compositional element. The panel supported the irregularity of the windows as they animate the building.

Some Panel member thought the landscaping was not successful on the roof. They thought the planter on the roof top did not seem useful and it was suggested that the height of it could be reduced to make it more useable. Further design development was required to minimize the "cubical" layout by centralizing common space and reducing the height of the partitions. One Panel member noted that there were some challenges with the grade at the lane and that the plant selection needed to be refined. They thought the planting needed to be simplified to better support the architectural design statement of the building.

Some of the Panel commended the applicant for the use of community based public art but could be better integrated. As well they wanted to see a little more whimsy in the expression.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bray thanked the Panel for their comments. He mentioned that they have struggled with the height issue and aren't sure that it could be changed.

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.