

Meeting: No. 460
Date: Monday, January 25, 1999
Time: 3.00 p.m.
Place: No. 1 Committee Room, City Hall

PRESENT:

Board

F.A. Scobie	Director of Development Services (Chair)
L.B. Beasley	Co-Director of Planning
E. Lo	General Manager, Corporate Services
D. Rudberg	General Manager, Engineering Services

Advisory Panel

J. Drohan	Representative of the Design Professions (Urban Design Panel)
J. Hancock	Representative of the Design Professions
P. Kavanagh	Representative of Development Industry
D. Chung	Representative of General Public
R. Mingay	Representative of General Public
R. Roodenburg	Representative of General Public

Absent

A. Gjernes	Representative of Development Industry
B. Parton	Representative of General Public

ALSO PRESENT:

R. Segal	Sr. Development Planner
M.B. Rondeau	Development Planner
N. Peters	City Surveyor

Item 3 - 2527 Pine Street - DE403769

N. Baldwin	Nigel Baldwin Architects Ltd.
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CLERK TO THE BOARD:

Carol Hubbard

The Chair welcomed Estelle Lo, General Manager of Corporate Services, to the meeting, attending for the first time in her capacity as alternate Board member to the Deputy City Manager. Mr. Scobie also acknowledged that this would be Ms. Drohan's last meeting, having completed her term as Chair of the Urban Design Panel. Ms. Drohan was thanked for her contribution to the Board's proceedings in the last year.

1. **MINUTES**

It was moved by Mr. Beasley, seconded by Mr. Rudberg, and was the decision of the Board:

THAT the Minutes of the Development Permit Board and Advisory Panel Meeting of December 14, 1998 be approved.

2. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

None.

3. **2527 PINE STREET - DE403769 - ZONE C-3A**
(COMPLETE APPLICATION WITHOUT PRELIMINARY)

Applicant: Nigel Baldwin Architects Ltd.

Request: To construct a new mixed use, six storey commercial/residential building containing a four storey residential mid-rise over two storeys of retail/restaurant with two levels of underground parking.

The building comprises:

- 77,051 sq.ft. commercial on the ground and second floors (1.76 FSR) including 65,051 sq.ft. retail and 12,000 sq.ft. of restaurant,
- 40,937 sq. ft. residential (51 units).

To relax the FSR from 1.0 to 2.7 and the building height from 30 ft. to 40.9 ft. for the 2 storey commercial base and 72 ft. for the residential mid-rise.

Development Planner's Opening Comments

The Development Planner, Mary Beth Rondeau, presented this complete application in the C-3A zone. The proposal supersedes an earlier application for a predominantly residential development which was approved in July 1998. In response to changed market conditions the developer is now proposing mostly commercial uses, including a proposed new Future Shop on the second floor.

The outright permissible density and height in the C-3A zone is 1.0 FSR and 30 ft., respectively, both of which may be relaxed by the Board. The previous application was approved at 3.0 FSR and 103 ft. Ms. Rondeau explained that a principal means by which increased height and density may be "earned" is in the form of the massing in terms of views through the site and the amount of sun penetration to the street. From the analysis of the massing, staff are satisfied that this development has significant benefits and contributes to earning the increased height and density. In addition, the proposal provides retail vitality on the street, high quality architectural treatment and detailing, continuous weather protection, street trees and furnishings.

Ms. Rondeau reviewed the three main prior-to conditions, to address concerns relating to the residential entrance, the stair access to the second floor, and treatment of the lane. Subject to satisfactory resolution of these conditions, as outlined in the report dated January 13, 1999, the Staff Committee recommendation is for approval

of the application. With these minor refinements, staff consider the proposal has earned the density and height requested.

Discussion

In response to a question from Mr. Beasley regarding the impact of conditions 1.1 and 1.2, Ms. Rondeau confirmed it will likely involve some loss of commercial floor space.

Responding to a question from Mr. Rudberg regarding the lane, Ms. Rondeau advised a lane setback is not always sought but it was considered appropriate for this site given the context, noting also that the previous approved application provided a significant lane treatment. She added, the lane can also be softened in ways other than a setback.

Mr. Rudberg also sought clarification regarding the criteria for relaxing density and height above 1.0 FSR and 30 ft. Ms. Rondeau reiterated the advantages the proposed massing offers in terms of views through the site and reduced shadowing on the street, noting also that the project is 30 ft. at the lane. Ralph Segal, Senior Development Planner, added, the C-3A Design Guidelines indicate a massing formula with a maximum height of 70 ft. over 75 percent of the frontage. Staff believe the proposed massing has considerable advantages over that suggested in the guidelines. With respect to the lane treatment, Mr. Segal noted the City generally tries to “green” lanes on private property with as much landscape as possible. In this case, the adjacent development, Prospect Centre, also has a continuous line of trees along its lane frontage. It was noted that condition 1.3 does not actually *require* a lane setback, only that improvements *may* involve a setback. In response to a question from Mr. Hancock regarding the setback for the residential entry, Mr. Segal advised the 25 ft. rear yard setback requirement is not relaxable except under the “hardship” clause.

With respect to the relaxations being sought, Mr. Beasley said that he was also somewhat troubled about how the amount of density above 1.0 FSR is determined to be justified. Ms. Rondeau explained that, in addition to the form of the massing, the development also merits the relaxations in terms of building design, the overall amenity of the area, high quality materials, street treatment, landscape setbacks, etc., and residential livability. Mr. Scobie noted the outright limits in the C-3A District Schedule were established as a result of earlier, higher, limits having produced some developments with no opportunity for qualitative review. The 1.0 FSR and 30 ft. were established as a baseline so that higher quality developments could be achieved for applications seeking greater height and density.

Responding to a question from Ms. Lo regarding the possibility of the second floor retail space being later converted to office, contrary to the Central Area Plan, Ms. Rondeau said this issue was considered by staff but it was felt the amount of floor area was not enough to be a concern. She also noted this site has previously maintained office use on the second floor.

Applicant's Comments

Nigel Baldwin, Architect, said he had no problem with the prior-to conditions. With respect to condition 1.1, they agree to relocate the residential entrance. Condition 1.2 will also be addressed to improve the livability of the stairs, without increasing the width. He said they also agree with the intent of 1.3, noting there are several things necessary, including a material better than stucco (architectural concrete or masonry are being considered), improved scale, and increased greening. He added, however, that a global 5 ft. setback would be very damaging to the scheme because it damages both the size and shape of the prime tenant space. Given the amount of servicing required in the lane, it may also not be possible to provide a full row of trees along the full length of the site. Mr. Baldwin said he had no objection to the wording of the condition, provided he had the opportunity to work with staff in considering options.

Comments from Other Speakers

None.

Board and Panel members briefly reviewed the model and posted materials.

Panel Opinion

Ms. Drohan reported that the Urban Design Panel supported this application unanimously and thought it would be a very positive addition to this part of West Broadway. The residential entry was a concern to the Panel which looked for a stronger identity. A much more positive gesture would be to have the entry closer to the street. Fine-tuning of the entry to the second storey was also recommended by the Panel to deal with the depth of the recess. With respect to the treatment of the lane, the Panel recommended some consistency with the neighbour to the west, although not necessarily identical landscape treatment. Certainly, some trees at the easterly end next to the Prospect Centre would be very helpful, together with some lower level landscaping or vines throughout the rest of the length of the lane. The Panel also commented on signage and was concerned that the signage should be in keeping with the modern spirit of the building. The Panel agreed that this project earned the relaxations being sought. Ms. Drohan added that while she thought the previous, predominantly residential proposal was more desirable in this location, this applicant has done a commendable job of accommodating "big box" retail.

Mr. Hancock agreed the project is very well conceived, with appropriate massing for this block. He said he had mixed feelings about the residential entry, seeing merit in the proposed location because it is south-facing and can be nicely landscaped to create a very pleasant entry. If it has to be moved, he said he hopes there is still an opportunity to keep it green and exposed to the sun. Mr. Hancock said he liked the architectural expression very much. He said he had no problem with the commercial entry. With respect to the landscaping at the lane, he noted there is opportunity for plants above to grow down and provide cover, as well as plants in recesses to grow up. He suggested it be left to the applicant to present some options in response to condition 1.3. He recommended approval of the application, with no amendment to the conditions.

Mr. Kavanagh said it is an excellent project that will be modestly improved by the conditions. He recommended approval of the application.

With respect to condition 1.3, Mr. Chung said he agreed there is an opportunity to enhance the lane. He supported the height relaxation and thought it a commendable project.

Mr. Roodenburg did not support the condition to relocate the residential entry, believing its proposed location to be quite appropriate. With respect to the treatment of the lane, he noted it is essentially a commercial lane, with greening being more appropriate at the lane entries on both sides. Otherwise, he was totally in favour of the project.

Ms. Mingay also supported the residential entry as proposed. She supported the project and its contribution to this part of Broadway. It meets the high quality of design sought for this area.

Board Discussion

In moving approval of the application, Mr. Beasley commented it is a much better project than the previous proposal and is also quite a suave architectural piece. He agreed the lane treatment needs some work and he was satisfied with the applicant's explanation of how it might be addressed. While he also agreed it may not necessarily involve a setback, he stressed that performance will be important given the relaxations being sought. With respect to the residential entry, Mr. Beasley suggested it is possible to achieve the same quality of relationship to Pine Street with a new configuration which will also give more room for landscaping, replicating to some degree the treatment at the other end of the lane at Burrard Street.

Mr. Beasley said he remained somewhat troubled by how C-3A projects achieve a density increase from the outright 1.0 FSR to 3.0 FSR. It is difficult to discern how it is justified and to understand the equity across many projects. He said while he was convinced this is a good piece of architecture he hoped it is not necessary to allow twice the density allowed outright in order to achieve the kind of architectural quality that should be a given in

Vancouver. He noted that this Board has on a number of occasions questioned whether it would be beneficial to codify things better in C-3A areas.

Mr. Beasley commented the three prior-to conditions are quite gentle and will only enhance the project.

Mr. Rudberg said C-3A projects do need to earn the additional density and height, and a subjective judgment has to be made in this regard. He said he was concerned that relaxation becomes justified on the basis that an application could have sought even greater height and density. He suggested that requirements used to be more rigorous in the past, considering such things as public amenities, public open space, view corridors, and significant amenity contributions to justify additional height and density. He added, he has come to expect good architecture, which this project does provide, but he has also come to expect more in terms of earning the increased height and density. Nonetheless, he said he was prepared to second Mr. Beasley's motion of approval, although noting it does not provide as much as was once required.

Ms. Lo agreed it appears that approval of C-3A projects is quite subjective. She suggested that, to make it a level playing field, steps be taken to codify matters, as suggested by Mr. Beasley. In general, she found the recommended conditions of approval to be reasonable and noted that this proposal is an improvement over the previously approved project. She supported approval of the application.

Motion

It was moved by **Mr. Beasley** and seconded by **Mr. Rudberg**, and was the decision of the Board:

THAT the Board APPROVE Development Application No. 403769, in accordance with the Development Permit Staff Committee Report dated January 13, 1999.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

With respect to signage, Mr. Scobie urged the applicant to consider the Sign By-law provisions to ensure there is no conflict, particularly with respect to the second floor tenancies.

Notwithstanding Mr. Rudberg's concern that the Board may be becoming less rigorous in its demands of C-3A projects, Mr. Scobie commented that he found it encouraging to see a complete application (without preliminary) coming before the Board with only three minor prior-to conditions and he commended the applicant in this regard.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4.00 pm.

Carol Hubbard
Clerk to the Board

F.A. Scobie
Chair