

Date: Monday, June 16, 2008
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Place: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT:**Board**

R. Jenkins Assistant Director - Current Planning Division (Chair)
B. Toderian Director of Planning
J. Ridge Deputy City Manager
T. Timm General Manager of Engineering Services

Advisory Panel

J. Wall Representative of the Design Professions (Urban Design Panel)
S. Tatomir Representative of the Design Professions
J. Stovell Representative of the Development Industry
D. Chung Representative of the General Public
H. Hung Representative of the General Public
C. Nystedt Representative of the General Public
K. Maust Representative of the Vancouver Heritage Commission

Regrets

N. Shearing Representative of the Development Industry
M. Braun Representative of the General Public

ALSO PRESENT:**City Staff:**

B. Boons Assistant Director of Processing Centre - Development
S. Brodie Civil Engineer
S. Black Development Planner
R. Segal Senior Architect/Development Planner
J. Greer Project Facilitator

1098 RICHARDS STREET - DE411778 - ZONE DD

L. Doyle Lawrence Doyle and Wright Architects
D. Negrin TriPower Development

Recording Secretary: L. Harvey

1. MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Timm seconded by Mr. Toderian and was the decision of the Board:

THAT the Minutes of the Development Permit Board and Advisory Panel Meeting of June 2, 2008 be approved with the following amendments:

Amend Mr. Hung's comments on Page 5 by deleting the third sentence and replacing with the following:

He noted that the unit size and two parking spaces per unit are not EcoDensity friendly which is probably due to the market demand.

Amend Mr. Toderian's comments on Page 5 to read:

Mr. Toderian supported the amendments. Mr. Toderian noted that at the moment there isn't ***applicable*** policy regarding sustainability but that Council is proposing to pass a new ***EcoDensity Charter*** at their meeting on June 10th ***which would be applicable***. Mr. Toderian thought it was reasonable to relax the guidelines for family housing relative to allowing family housing above eight stories. Mr. Toderian also agreed with relaxing the height of the tower for the additional height on the cap. He encouraged the applicant and staff to look for all opportunities to allow for ***lighting*** showing through during the day and for the lantern to be lit at night. *(The remainder of the minutes are unchanged.)*

Amend the Motion on Page 6 with the following at the end of the Motion:

Mr. Toderian sought a further minor amendment to the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Ridge and accepted by Mr. Timm:

Amend Condition 1.8 by adding "***clarified on the drawings***" at the end of the first sentence to read:

Specifics of the project's Green Building performance, to be ***clarified on the drawings***;

Amend Mr. Tatomir's comments on page 11 to read:

Mr. Tatomir recommended approval for the application with the prior-to conditions. He liked the floor to floor height which would make the units more liveable. Mr. Tatomir stated that he was in support of having the solar panels removed from the project. He noted that the initial cost of adding solar panels was very high and with today's technology the return would have 5-12% efficiency. In areas like Arizona with 270-290 sunny days per year the efficiency would be higher but in Vancouver because of the lack of sunshine the efficiency might only be 5-6%. That would mean \$600.00 would need to be spent in order to produce \$100.00 worth of energy. Also a huge collection area would be required and there would also be maintenance and storage considerations.

2. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

3. **1098 RICHARDS STREET - DE411788 - ZONE DD
(COMPLETE APPLICATION)**

Applicant: Lawrence Doyle and Wright Architects

Request: Construct a Multiple Dwelling consisting of an 18-storey tower and an eight-storey low-rise for a total of 226 dwelling units. The proposal also includes the relocation of two character houses (4 dwelling units), currently located at 1062 and 1080 Richards Street, to the corner of Richards and Helmcken Streets (currently 1094 Richards Street), and their rehabilitation and designation as protected heritage property.

In addition, staff recommend that the Board exercise its authority under the provisions of the Interpretation Section of the Downtown Official Development Plan to grant a Floor Space Ratio increase of approximately 3,888 sq. ft. which represents the approximate floor area of the two existing houses.

Development Planner's Opening Comments

Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the complete application and described the adjacent properties and zoning. Mr. Black described the architectural design and noted that two heritage houses would be relocated on Helmcken Street. The interior property line at the back of the heritage houses will be 14 feet from the new tower and staff are asking the applicant to improve privacy between the tower and the heritage properties. The Urban Design Panel in their comments noted that the proportions of the development are somewhat stout given the density and FSR. It is staff's opinion that the architect has made the best of the constraints with the site although further design development could be taken. Mr. Black said it was worth noting from both Heritage and Planning staff's point of view the project does something very commendable which is the preservation of the two heritage houses. Mr. Black noted that there are a number refinements being requested including an opportunity to save the mature cedar tree which is located on City property on Richards Street in the middle of the future sidewalk, how to offer access to the new heritage buildings and possibly the existing heritage houses to the underground parking, and working out the easements that will provide access over the property owned by the Strata Corporation.

Mr. Black reviewed the recommendations contained in the Staff Committee Report dated May 21, 2008. The recommendation was for support of the proposal, subject to the conditions contained in the Staff Committee Report.

Questions/Discussion

In response to questions raised by the Board and Panel, the following clarification was provided by Mr. Black and Mr. Boldt:

- Without the Bonus Density equal to the two heritage houses' floor area, there would be no incentive for the applicant to retain the heritage houses. This is established practise where heritages houses have been retained on site.
- Council approval is not required regarding additional on site density less than 10% as referenced in the Heritage Policy and Guidelines.
- As there is a shortage of mature trees in the downtown area, it would be worth investigating to see if the large cedar tree can be retained in the middle of the future sidewalk. Saving the tree was a request of the neighbourhood.

- Staff are generally satisfied with the landscaped proposed however the applicant can work with the Engineering Department for a solution to widen the narrow sidewalk on Helmcken Street and remove any landscape encroachments on City property.
- The site has a view cone over it and since the building can not go higher, the building was designed with a wider floor plate to accommodate the density.
- The Urban Design Panel suggested a stronger cornice line to reinforce a two storey penthouse expression, and a more significant cap on the tower.

Applicant's Comments

Larry Doyle, Architect stated that they had reviewed the Development Permit Staff Committee Report and confirmed he was in agreement with the recommended conditions. Regarding the large cedar tree, Mr. Doyle noted that there were still some studies to be done to see if it was realistic to save the tree. He noted that a lot of changes have been made since the UDP review. The heritage houses have been lowered, the stairs that went straight out to the sidewalk are going to be kept within the property line and they are not intending to have any landscaping beyond the property line. The walkway between the heritage houses and the new development is necessary as there won't be any access to the lane without it. Mr. Doyle said they were looking at making it a more interesting space for privacy and access.

Questions/Discussion

In response to questions raised by the Board and Panel, the following clarification was provided by the applicant team:

- The applicant didn't want the project to read as two separate buildings and as a result there is a change of plane rather than by colour to separate the tower from the low rise.
- The applicant wanted the connection between the tower and the low rise building to be subtle.
- The applicant was not opposed to making the base of the building different from the tower.
- The Urban Design Panel gave the application unanimous support on the second review.
- The project is to have a strong LEED™ rating.
- The heritage houses will be sold to prospective purchasers.

Comments from other Speakers

None.

Panel Opinion

Mr. Wall said the Urban Design Panel (UDP) did support the project and recognized that it was a challenging site and that the applicant team had worked hard to resolve the massing. He noted that it was not a familiar massing for Vancouver as it is more bulky. The care in the details will make it a quality project. Mr. Wall noted that there were a number of small concerns that the Panel asked the applicant team to consider further that have been captured in the Staff Committee Report. Some of those concerns included the relationship with the tower and the heritage houses, especially regarding issues of privacy. Also there was a concern regarding how people would move between the heritage houses and the development and access to parking. The UDP suggested refinement to the design especially the top of the tower and for a stronger expression on the lane side. The Panel also wanted to see a stronger delineation of the cornice at the penthouse and sub penthouse levels. Their last concern was the entry way and supported the idea of a masonry expression to reduce the number of materials. Regarding colour, the Panel suggested a richer palette of materials and to find a language that was clear and legible. Mr. Wall suggested adding a third colour to the top of the strong brick frames on the base which may make for a stronger read as it was a way to strengthen the relationship between the base

and the tower. Mr. Wall noted that the Panel felt it was a calm and respectful building and would fit in well with its context.

Mr. Tatomir recommended approval with the conditions contained in the Staff Committee Report. He suggested eliminating the cornice and to keep the vertical brick and to keep with the same colour for a visible separation. Mr. Tatomir said he would like to see the amenity space improved and felt it was in the wrong location. He suggested reversing it with the one bedroom unit that faces the patio area on the 9th floor. Mr. Tatomir said he would retain the large cedar tree. He also said he encouraged the applicant to use all the means necessary to preserve the heritage houses and suggested adding a heritage element to the top of the tower.

Mr. Stovell said he was in support of the project. He said his first reaction to the building was that it was rather bulky. He thought adding a small reveal where the tower meets the podium would make more differentiation between the tower and the podium rather than just using colour. Regarding the heritage density transfer, Mr. Stovell said he had some concerns regarding adding buildings to the heritage list in order to give the heritage incentive of relaxing FSR. He thought it was a contrived circumstance particularly in light the current amount of density in downtown south. Mr. Stovell added that he was sympathetic to the idea of keeping the heritage houses but was concerned about how that was being achieved.

Ms. Maust recommended support for the application. She said she was happy that all the heritage concerns from the Heritage Commission had been addressed in the conditions. She added that she was pleased to hear from the applicant that they are intending to address all the conditions. As far as the concern regarding adding the houses to the Heritage Register, Ms. Maust noted that it was standard practise when a heritage project goes through the system and the Commission had recommended that the houses be added to the Register. Regarding the large mature tree, Ms. Maust stated that the Heritage Commission would like to see the tree retained. As far as colour or a change in the building elevation in order to make them read as two different buildings, Ms. Maust said she would support either plan.

Ms. Nystedt stated that she had recently visited Dorothy Higginbotham now 102 years old who had lived in one of the houses on Hornby Street. Ms. Nystedt noted that this was the last of the heritage houses and felt it was important that they be saved. She added that she was pleased to see them added to the development and was in support for the application.

Mr. Chung recommended approval. Regarding the large mature cedar tree, he thought it was intriguing to have the tree in the middle of the sidewalk. In terms of the building's architecture, Mr. Chung thought it was a blessing in disguise to have a different type of design. He added that he thought it made for a different type of housing choice and was nice to have a visual choice in the downtown setting. He commended the applicant for their improvements since the UDP review and said he liked the form of development which incorporated the balconies into the building.

Mr. Hung said he was happy to see the two heritage houses being retained and rehabilitated. He liked the architectural design and the vertical differentiation as well as a different colour of brick. Mr. Hung said he didn't see the need to make the project look like two developments. He said he would like to see a feature on the top of the tower to make it more distinctive. Mr. Hung added that he liked the project and was in support of the application.

Board Discussion

Mr. Timm said the block of heritages houses were a tremendous asset to the downtown as there aren't many of these types of houses left. Mr. Timm thought the frontage on Helmcken Street needed to be addressed with respect to the landscaping that encroaches on City property. Mr. Timm said he didn't think it was a good idea to have the large mature cedar tree retained in the middle of the future sidewalk. He thought the site struggled to contain the 5 FSR with the large floor plate and was glad more FSR wasn't being added. Mr. Timm said he was concerned with the process regarding the issue of how the density was being accepted under the hardship clause for the two heritage houses. He added that it was a minor point in terms of the overall issue but he thought it should be dealt with through the HRA process rather than a hardship relaxation by the Board. The benefit of this heritage retention is very significant and worthy. Mr. Timm moved approval with several amendments.

Mr. Toderian sought clarity regarding Mr. Timm's motion to remove the landscaping from the development permit and have the discussion separately. Mr. Black suggested adding to the condition "that design development be done to the satisfaction of the General Manager of Engineering and the Director of Planning".

Mr. Toderian said he didn't disagree with Mr. Timm's comments regarding the hardship clause. He said he was not opposed to its use in this case but wanted to make sure that the Board understood when such consideration of hardship could be dealt with by the Board and when it would go to Council. He also agreed that there was a challenge in assembling the 5 FSR density on the site. He said the site actually shows that there are contexts where 5 FSR is enough and where 5 FSR was pushing the comfort level. Mr. Toderian said that in this case he thought the comfort level was being pushed relative to appropriate density on the site because of the interfaces between the heritage houses. He said he thought the site could not reasonably accommodate more density. He added that staff and the applicant had done a good job of getting as much density onto the site as the site should appropriately accommodate relative to some of the limitations. Mr. Toderian said he also wanted to commend the applicants for their support of a creative approach to maintaining a unique assembly of a very special heritage building forms in the downtown. With regards to the tree, Mr. Toderian said he thought there was nothing quite as magical as a sidewalk wrapping around a tree. Mr. Toderian sought clarity from staff regarding the rearrangement of the amenity room location on the 9th floor. Regarding the architecture, Mr. Toderian assured the members of the Board that he didn't get into discussions on colour based on taste or superficiality. He said he thought it was because the site had a fair amount of stout density and required breaking up the massing and lightening the heaviness to really address through design creativity, including colour and materiality, what could be the negative results of that kind of an architectural approach. Mr. Toderian suggested a new Condition 1.9 which was accepted by Mr. Timm.

Mr. Black sought clarity from Mr. Tatomir regarding access from the amenity room to the patio on the 9th floor. Based on the discussion, Mr. Toderian suggested a new Condition 1.11 which was accepted by Mr. Timm.

Mr. Ridge said he was in support of the motion and the amendments. He added that he was pleased to support the application as it was a good development and was in support of the retention of the heritage houses.

Motion

It was moved by Mr. Timm and seconded by Mr. Toderian, and was the decision of the Board:

THAT the Board APPROVE Development Application No. DE411788, in accordance with the Staff Committee Report dated May 21, 2008, with the following amendments:

Amend Standard Condition A.2.10 to read:
arrangements for the provision of Downtown South sidewalk treatment on Richards Street **and on Helmcken Street from Richards Street to the lane** to the satisfaction of the General Manager of Engineering Services;

Delete Standard Condition A.2.11 and replace with the following:
remove the landscape encroachments shown on Helmcken Street fronting the two heritage houses, to the satisfaction of the General Manager of Engineering Services in consultation with the Director of Planning.

Mr. Toderian sought a further minor amendment to the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Timm and accepted by Mr. Ridge:

Renumber Condition 1.9 to 1.10;

Add a new Condition 1.9 to read:
consideration of additional design approaches to deemphasise the overall project scale and tower massing including the consideration of a third brick colouring within the podium to break-up the building massing and separate the tower;

Add a new Condition 1.11 to read:
the addition of a door from the 9th floor amenity room directly to the garden patio;

4. ECODENSITY DISCUSSION

Brent Toderian, Director of Planning gave an overview of the new EcoDensity Policy.

Link to website for EcoDensity: <http://www.vancouver-ecodensity.ca/content.php?id=42>

5. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:13 PM

L. Harvey
Assistant to the Board

R. Jenkins
Chair