

Date: Monday, May 26, 2003
Time: 3.00 p.m.
Place: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT:

Board

F. Scobie	Director of Development Services (Chair)
L. Beasley	Co-Director of Planning
J. Forbes-Roberts	General Manager of Community Services
T. Timm	Deputy City Engineer

Advisory Panel

S. Lyon	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
C. Henschel	Representative of General Public
J. Leduc	Representative of General Public

Regrets

E. Mah	Representative of Development Industry
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ALSO PRESENT:

S. Hein	Development Planner
M. Mortensen	Project Facilitator
G. McGeough	Heritage Planner
M. Thomson	City Surveyor

1477 West 15th Avenue

W. Francl	Walter Francl Architects Inc.
R. Lemon	Robert Lemon Architect Inc.
T. Pappajohn	4354 Investments Ltd.

Clerk to the Board: C. Hubbard

1. MINUTES

Mr. Henschel requested an amendment to paragraph 2, p.8, for his comment to read: "LEED certification is only meritable if it is *silver or gold* rating".

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

THAT the Minutes of the Development Permit Board and Advisory Panel Meeting of May 12, 2003 be approved as amended.

2. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

**3. 1477 WEST 15TH AVENUE - DE407312 - ZONE C-3A
(COMPLETE APPLICATION)**

Applicant: Walter Francl Architects Inc.

Request: To construct a mixed-use development including renovations to the existing two Heritage (B) building and the addition of a new penthouse floor to each Heritage (B) building and the addition of a four-storey building adjoining the existing Heritage (B) buildings on the north end of this site.

Development Planner's Opening Comments

The Development Planner, Scot Hein, introduced this application, noting it is the first mix-use redevelopment proposal to seek 3.0 FSR in the South Granville sub area of the C-3A zone. Referring to the Staff Committee Report dated May 14, 2003, Mr. Hein briefly described the site and surrounding developments. The proposal has been under consideration for some time, the initial inquiry being for a 6-storey building, mid-block, without the two heritage buildings. Staff worked closely with the applicant to explore a development program to reduce the height and potential view impact on neighbouring residential buildings, in particular Hycroft Towers to the south, and an application was submitted for a 5-storey building. After some review of the initial 5-storey proposal in the community when a number of concerns were registered, it was recognized that more work needed to be done. The proposal subsequently incorporated the heritage buildings which resulted in a larger site to accommodate the 3.0 FSR available in C-3A and further lowering of the height to the current 4 storeys (49.49 ft.). This height is fairly consistent with other development on commercial arterials. A further public information meeting was held, primarily focussing on view impacts on the Hycroft Towers, and staff concluded the applicant had gone a long way to address the neighbours' concerns. The inclusion of the two heritage buildings in the scheme also created an opportunity to incorporate underground parking for these buildings, currently non-conforming with respect to parking and loading. This will relieve the current pressure on street parking in the vicinity as well as provide some additional commercial parking for the retail units that will front Granville Street and 15th Avenue.

Mr. Hein noted the application seeks slightly above the maximum 3.00 FSR. The Board is asked to consider relaxation to 3.05 FSR based on the proposed restoration and seismic upgrading of the heritage buildings, to be secured through a Section 219 covenant on Title. Mr. Hein briefly reviewed the main prior-to conditions recommended in the Staff Committee Report. Subject to satisfactory resolution of these conditions, the recommendation is for approval of the application.

Questions/Discussion

Gerry McGeough, Heritage Planner, provided some background on the heritage aspects of the proposal, in response to a question from Mr. Beasley as to why staff are not recommending heritage designation as a

condition of approval. Mr. McGeough explained, the proposed heritage conservation, which is very generous, will be secured by a Section 219 covenant registered on title. This will secure the retention and restoration of the heritage façade and the seismic upgrading of the buildings. As well, the adaptive re-use of the buildings will contribute to their long term viability. The economic investment to retain and restore the façades is significant and far exceeds the value of the floor space relaxation being sought. Mr. McGeough added, the applicant will also seek a Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA), separate from this process, at the Building Permit stage, requesting a reduction in the Development Cost Levy in exchange for the long-term legal protection of the heritage façades. The main impact of requiring heritage designation as a condition of approval would be to extend the process by another six to ten weeks which could cause economic hardship for the owner.

Mr. Beasley questioned the proposed removal of the two fire escape stairs currently attached to the 15th Avenue façade. Mr. McGeough said this has been discussed with the applicant and he noted that a condition of approval is for provision of detailed conservation plans. The intent is to retain as many aspects of the stairways as possible, removing those parts which interfere with the entrance archway. He noted the fire escapes were added after the original building was constructed and in a way that does not fully respect all the heritage features, particularly over the entrances. The suggestion is to fully restore the entrances to the heritage buildings and maintain a legacy of the fire escapes in some form.

In response to a question from Ms. Forbes-Roberts about the public consultation process, Mr. Hein advised the neighbours' response to the current scheme was very positive. Much of the concern related to the intensity of use in the commercial lane and a desire to retain some of the existing locally-serving commercial tenancies. Mr. Hein noted that if the existing heritage buildings were demolished a 6-storey development could be contemplated on this site. Responding to a further question from Ms. Forbes-Roberts regarding the condition to better distinguish new construction from the existing heritage structures, Mr. Hein and Mr. McGeough briefly outlined how staff believe this could be achieved. Mr. Timm suggested it would seem to be quite important that the new construction be set back sufficiently to expose the corner of the heritage brickwork and detailing.

Mr. Henschel questioned the amount of change that can be made to a heritage building without compromising its heritage value. Mr. McGeough agreed this is an important issue and noted that heritage is one of several interests on this site. It was concluded that the view impact issues were significant, which led to the current solution. The ability to provide parking for the heritage buildings was also considered to be a major benefit of the scheme. Heritage staff and the Heritage Commission determined that the key heritage value of the buildings is in the façades and believe that they should be faithfully restored. Mr. Hein added, it is the heritage aspects of the proposal which staff consider earn the additional density above the outright permitted 1.0 FSR.

In response to a question from Ms. Leduc as to the point at which heritage integrity is compromised, Mr. Hein said it is believed that the introduction of the penthouse element, properly distinguished and set back, in concert with the heritage conversation exercise, is a reasonable design approach to achieve a balance with addressing view impacts. Mr. McGeough said while it is recognized there will be some heritage loss in this proposal, it is considered to be outweighed by the gains. He noted that property owners can, on undesignated sites, redevelop without the heritage assets. The security of the heritage buildings is realised in this proposal. The approach is not unusual and is not contrary to standard heritage practice. Mr. McGeough confirmed that façade retention is an acceptable conservation method.

Responding to a question raised by Mr. Scobie regarding condition B.2.4, Mike Thomson, City Surveyor, explained the condition to maintain the site in a neat and tidy condition relates to the construction period.

Further clarification was sought by Mr. Scobie about heritage designation and a heritage revitalization agreement. Mr. McGeough explained that staff have not yet fully determined whether to seek an HRA or an HRA and designation. This will be finalized in preparation of a recommendation to Council. In response to a

question from Ms. Leduc about forthcoming federal guidelines for heritage preservation, Mr. McGeough noted the federal guidelines have not been finalized. The project has been evaluated on existing policy, past practice and the advice of the Heritage Commission. He suggested it is likely the project would meet federal guidelines given the high standards of conservation practised in Vancouver.

Applicant's Comments

Walter Francl, Architect, stressed the collaborative aspects of the process to date and noted that refinements continue to be made that will address the conditions recommended in the report. He confirmed they are in full agreement with the conditions. He advised it is their intention to remove the lane façade and reconstruct it with the salvaged brick. It is also intended to retain the returns at the entry to the residential component between the two heritage buildings, and a pronounced reveal will be provided between the heritage façades and the new façades of the building. Revisions to the penthouse will make it much glassier and provide a more distinguished difference between it and the heritage structures. Mr. Francl also noted that the commercial aspects of the building will be returned around to the lane, in keeping with current guidelines for commercial development off Granville Street. With respect to Building Code issues, Mr. Francl advised they have met with the Chief Building Official and are confident the proposal will meet requirements. With respect to the proposed removal of the existing floors in the heritage buildings, Mr. Francl noted there has been a considerable amount of settlement, and there are three existing light wells currently forming part of the structure that would be difficult to retain in the new layout. He stressed it would be very difficult to retain the existing roofs and floors as well as add a penthouse above and underground parking below. He said they believe the primary value is in the façades and noted there is some existing tiling detail that they hope to incorporate into the new elevator lobby. Provision of parking is also a major positive addition.

Robert Lemon, Heritage Architect, reiterated that the key aspect of the proposal is the façade restoration along with the cornices and possibly some original storefront details that may be uncovered beneath the commercial signage along Granville Street. The intent is to use a fabric awning system on the heritage buildings, distinct from the contemporary glass canopies on the new construction. The linking penthouse above will also be compatible with both the new and existing components and add to the building's landmark value. Overall, they believe the proposed heritage conservation is consistent with the City's standards and international standards for conservation. With respect to the fire escapes, Mr. Lemon explained they are very old but not original. Unfortunately, they come down quite clumsily on top of the pediment. It has been concluded that restoring the pediment to its original configuration has greater heritage merit than retaining the fire escapes themselves, noting there may be issues relating to their attachment and safety.

Commenting on the question of heritage designation and the HRA, Mr. Lemon noted the use of the HRA specifically allows for Development Cost Levy relief. It also has protection requirements equivalent to designation. Mr. Lemon said he believes it would be redundant to have both designation and an HRA in this case. Mr. McGeough confirmed it has been past practice to require both but this is currently under review with Legal Services. He confirmed a Heritage Alteration Permit would also be required when there is only an HRA. In response to a question from Mr. Beasley regarding the fire escapes, Mr. Lemon confirmed he would have no objection to reviewing the matter further, in consultation with the owner. Mr. Lemon also confirmed the intent is to restore the commercial frontage on the heritage building. Responding to a question from Ms. Leduc, Mr. Lemon said he would not be opposed to seeking heritage designation but stressed the HRA provides the same level of protection.

Mr. Scobie drew the applicant's attention to new requirements of the Vancouver Building By-law, effective August 15, 2003. Mr. Francl confirmed this has been reviewed by their code consultant.

Comments from Other Speakers

None.

Panel Opinion

Mr. Lyon advised the Urban Design Panel enthusiastically supported this project for its use, the continuity of the retail at grade and for the general massing and height. The Panel also supported the residential entry off West 15th Avenue and the retention of the historic façade. Issues raised by the Panel related to cosmetic treatment of the building and to the courtyard. Mr. Lyon said the Panel would endorse the recommended proposal to relax the rear yard setback and increase the width of the courtyard to improve its livability. He confirmed the recommended conditions address the Panel's concerns.

Mr. Hancock was encouraged to see the restoration of the heritage façades. He said he would support relaxation of the full 15 ft. rear yard setback requirement in order to allow a wider courtyard. He agreed the character of the penthouse should be lighter and more contrasting with the heritage buildings. He also agreed that the junction between the new and old should be differentiated more, and that the corner detailing should be expressed as it abuts the new addition. Overall, Mr. Hancock said it is a commendable proposal. The courtyard could be very special and create a sense of family in the project. He recommended approval, subject to the conditions.

Mr. Kavanagh also recommended approval, with the deletion of B.2.4.

Mr. Chung recommended approval and found the treatment of the residential lobby to be a clever solution. He also found the retail continuity very supportable.

Mr. Henschel commended the applicant's commitment to restore the façade and stressed his agreement with condition 1.3 to improve the heritage façade at its edges. He questioned whether condition 1.1 would be too restrictive for residents using the rooftop patios. With respect to condition 1.2, Mr. Henschel said he was concerned that the interior of the courtyard could be quite noisy, in addition to privacy concerns. He recommended approval of the application.

Ms. Leduc commended the applicant on the design and on the heritage restoration. She stressed the requested FSR is considerable and is based on the heritage component which is restoration of the façade only and not the complete buildings. The façade retention and restoration therefore must be extraordinary to earn the extra density. She recommended that at least one of the fire escapes be retained, and that the building be designated, not necessarily at this stage.

Board Discussion

Mr. Beasley said he thinks this is a great project, very elegantly conceived. He was also encouraged by the constructive process that has taken place, noting the absence of public delegations at this meeting. There clearly has been positive collaboration between the applicant, staff and the adjacent residents. He stressed the project needs to be detailed well and suggested keeping things as simple as possible. Mr. Beasley commented that he also appreciated the consideration given to the adjacent rental building. While noting it is not within the purview of the Board, Mr. Beasley urged the applicant to make every effort to retain the existing retail tenants. He moved approval of the application, with some amendments to the conditions.

With respect to the fire escape, Mr. Thomson cautioned the applicant that Engineering Services will need to ensure compatibility with an encroachment agreement.

Ms. Forbes-Roberts seconded Mr. Beasley's motion. She also recommended an amendment to the approval preamble to provide greater clarity for future consideration of the HRA and, potentially, designation. Mr. Beasley concurred with the amendment. Ms. Forbes-Roberts commented she found the project to be a very good precedent, noting there are a number of similar sites in the area that also contain heritage assets. She commended the applicant team on a carefully considered project. She also supported staff's recommendation to pursue an HRA in this case because it does not delay approval of the application. The ultimate designation of the building can be determined in the future. In any event, it is being retained, which is an important accomplishment.

Mr. Timm supported the motion. He agreed it is a very good project which maximizes the potential for the site with very minimal impacts on the neighbourhood. He stressed the importance of maintaining visibility of the corner of the existing façade at the conjunction with the new structure, to emphasize the difference between the old and new elements. In discussion, Mr. Franci pointed out that the detail returns only one brick depth. Mr. Beasley commented that he assumes the condition to address the detailing between the new and existing structures does include some careful consideration of that interface condition. He added, he was confident this could be worked out between staff and the applicant.

Mr. Scobie commented that he believes this project will have a very positive impact on the community, particularly the provision of parking and loading on the site.

Motion

It was moved by Mr. Beasley and seconded by Ms. Forbes-Roberts, and was the decision of the Board:

THAT the Board APPROVE Development Application No. 407312, in accordance with the Development Permit Staff Committee Report dated May 14, 2003, with the following amendments:

Amend the approval preamble to expand the description to read: *(including retaining façades, reconstructing the first three floors, and adding a fourth storey to each)*;

Amend 1.4 to read:

design development to storefronts and related entries and weather protection systems, to accommodate a variety of retail tenancies, and reflect the historical character of the historical portion of the storefronts while contributing to pedestrian interest;

Note to Applicant: Commercial unit entry design and related mosaic tile ground treatment for the heritage buildings should be consistent with original patterning and detailing as much as is practicable. Weather protection systems should accommodate opportunities for multiple tenancies while recalling the historical storefront widths of Granville Street. Careful integration of lighting, signage, entry and display systems is required. Locally serving commercial uses fronting West 15th Avenue, while preserving the existing window openings as far as possible, are appropriate as a transition to zoning to the east. Consideration should be given to retaining the existing fire escapes in-situ, if practical.

Delete B.2.4.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Scobie reported on recent third party appeals to the Board of Variance with respect to the Development Permit Board's approval of the application for a restaurant at Kits Beach on April 1, 2003. The Development Permit Board's decision was upheld by a vote of 4-1. In discussion, Mr. Scobie suggested the Board needs to be as thorough as is practicable in providing its reasons for discretionary approvals.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5.00 pm.

C. Hubbard
Clerk to the Board

F. Scobie
Chair

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