

Date: Monday, November 26, 2001  
Time: 3.00 p.m.  
Place: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

**PRESENT:****Board**

F. Scobie Director of Development Services (Chair)  
L. Beasley Director of Current Planning  
B. MacGregor Deputy City Manager  
D. Rudberg General Manager of Engineering Services

**Advisory Panel**

T. Bunting Representative of the Design Professions (Urban Design Panel)  
J. Hancock Representative of the Design Professions  
P. Kavanagh Representative of Development Industry  
J. Leduc Representative of General Public  
M. Mortenson Representative of General Public  
R. Bruce Scott Representative of General Public

**Regrets**

J. Ross Representative of Development Industry  
D. Chung Representative of General Public

**ALSO PRESENT:**

S. Hein Development Planner  
A. Higginson Project Facilitator  
M. Thomson City Surveyor

**Item 3 - 1005 Station Street - DE405521 - Zone FC-1**

N. Baldwin Nigel Baldwin Architects  
C. Gray Director, Housing Centre (representing the City of Vancouver as owner of the site)  
D. McClanaghan VanCity Enterprises Ltd.

Clerk to the Board: C. Hubbard

## 1. MINUTES

The following amendments were noted:

p.3, line 10, "or" should be "on";

p.6, line 9, add "street" before "furnishings"

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 November 13, 2001 be approved as amended.

## 2. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

## 3. 1005 STATION STREET - DE405521 - ZONE FC-1 (COMPLETE APPLICATION)

Applicant: Nigel Baldwin Architects

Request: To construct a six-storey, mixed-use building containing retail use at grade along the Main Street frontage and 80 units of non-market housing in the remainder of the building, all over one level of underground parking accessed from Station Street.

### Development Planner's Opening Comments

The Development Planner, Scot Hein, noted the following printing errors in the Development Permit Staff Committee Report dated October 17, 2001: top of p.9, under **Conclusion**, add: "to achieve a continuous streetwall facade fronting Main Street, by eliminating the proposed slots at the interior property lines above the main floor"; p.10/11, delete the last paragraph under **Urban Design Panel**, which appeared twice.

Noting the application is a residential project, Mr. Hein described the candidates who will be given priority in the selection process for the housing units, as well as those who will be considered unsuitable for housing in the project. Residential is a conditional use in the FC-1 zone. Retail, also proposed in this project for the ground floor, is an outright use. Referring to a model of the project and posted drawings, Mr. Hein described the site context. With respect to parking, 46 spaces are required and 15 spaces are proposed. Staff support the requested relaxation based on the intended occupant group of this non-market project. The notification and public involvement process was then reviewed. As of today, 139 letters of support have been received, and 100 in opposition. Because of the concerns raised, particularly with respect to the uses, an Open House was held on November 15, 2001. Regarding the proposed ground floor retail use, Mr. Hein noted this portion of Main Street is expected to revitalize with the introduction of the proposed TechPark.com site to the east as well as the completion of CityGate and the possible redevelopment of the Greyhound Bus site. It is expected that the three CRUs proposed in this project will be quite viable, if not immediately then in the mid-term future. The City expects the space to be used for bona fide retail use and would not consider some other form of social service use or amenity.

The Development Planner then reviewed the issues identified by staff, namely, the urban design response to Station Street; Station Street architectural expression; Main Street facade continuity; and impacts on the adjacent rooming house to the north. These concerns are addressed in the prior-to conditions outlined in the Staff Committee Report, subject to which the recommendation is for approval of the application. Staff consider it is an important project in terms of the social needs being accommodated. It meets the standards for urban design quality, public realm expectations, should help to energize Main Street as well as being an important segment of the Station Street frontage.

**Additional Staff Comments**

Regarding the proposed parking relaxation, Mike Thomson, City Surveyor, explained that in reviewing this project Engineering Services took into account similar projects for low-income, urban single residents. There are four such sites in the downtown where the parking ratio of one in ten has been applied. To date, no problems have been identified and the parking provisions are considered to be quite adequate. Two additional projects have also recently been approved where the same standard has been applied.

Cameron Gray, Director, Housing Centre, explained that at one point consideration was given to providing health services in the building, including a detox facility, noting the zoning would allow additional commercial/institutional uses. However, the Health Board subsequently concluded this was not a suitable location and such use is no longer being considered and is not in this proposal.

**Questions**

Mr. Scobie sought clarification regarding the comments of Fire & Rescue Services in Appendix C of the report. Mr. Hein said he believed the issues raised can be easily addressed, noting also that there is a condition to redistribute the main floor uses which may also satisfy these concerns. Mr. Scobie questioned the inclusion of Real Estate Services condition A.3.1 which would more typically be a subject of negotiation between the City and the lessee. Mr. Hein agreed the deletion of this condition would be consistent with the spirit of the Staff Committee discussion on this detailed matter.

**Applicant's Comments**

Nigel Baldwin, Architect, said he was very pleased with the staff and Urban Design Panel comments. He agreed with all the design conditions contained in the report. With respect to 1.1, however, he requested the reference to "two-storey" streetwall be changed to "substantial". He explained that while there will never be two storeys of uses, he recognized the need for a reasonable amount of height and substance. With respect to condition A.3.1, Mr. Baldwin noted he has reviewed the plans with Real Estate Services who have found them satisfactory. He did not believe the Fire & Rescue issues would be a major problem.

**Questions**

In response to a question from Mr. Bunting about the streetwall on Station Street, Mr. Hein confirmed the intent of condition 1.1 was to address a concern raised by the Urban Design Panel, as well as staff analysis of some parcel assemblage that might occur on this block. As well, Staff are looking for a consolidation of some of the supportive uses at grade, such as the lounge, entry and ancillary spaces, to bring the streetwall out to the property line on Station Street. Mr. Baldwin confirmed he had no problem with the re-orientation of some of the spaces onto the street frontage, noting they also now intend to consolidate the two courtyards into one. He added, his only concern is that two storeys of programming on Station Street will not be feasible. In discussion, Mr. Hein agreed that staff would not object to the reference to two storeys being replaced by "substantial" and would work with the applicant on this aspect of the proposal.

Responding to a question from Ms. Leduc about the proposed retail space, Mr. Gray said tenants have not yet been sought. He stressed the City is committed to provide for retail use, noting Main Street has been identified in the Transportation Plan as being an important street for retail. Typically, tenants are sought once the project is under construction. He agreed the space may be vacant for a while. He noted the City already owns retail space beneath social housing projects, particularly on arterial routes.

**Comments from Other Speakers**

The following members of the public spoke in favour of the application:

Sarah Levine, 325 East 18th Avenue (Ms. Levine also read a letter of support from Kurt Locke who was unable to attend the meeting)

Tanya Faber

Corrina Hammond, 1329 East 15th Avenue

Toby Black, 3284 Prince Edward Street  
Andrew Macocevic, 1129 Main Street  
Walter Kehoe, 1189 Main Street  
David Patterson, Main Street  
Kerstin Stuarzebecher, Portland Hotel Society and Strathcona property owner/resident  
Jennifer Anderson, area resident  
Ashok Sarkar, 1129 Main Street  
Jo Thompson, 1129 Main Street  
Phong Lam, 647 East Pender Street  
Nyla Ranney, 161 East 3rd Avenue  
Kevin Grant, Strathcona homeowner  
Mark Townsend, Portland Hotel Society  
Frank Lopez, Portland Hotel Society employee  
Brian Gobell, 2137 West 1st Avenue  
Liz Evans, Portland Hotel Society employee

The reasons for support included:

- every neighbourhood should be looking at creating low-income housing, especially in areas close to where people sleep on the streets;
- the proposed site is in an ideal location, close to public transit and in an area in need of development;
- more social housing is needed in this neighbourhood;
- revitalization of neighbourhoods, particularly in urban centres, starts with social housing;
- many SRO units have already been lost and it is realistic to expect that more will be lost;
- social housing is part of our responsibility as a society;
- a secure, safe, environment will be beneficial to those being housed as well as to homeowners in the area;
- the City has a responsibility to all its residents;
- the zoning would allow uses much less desirable to local homeowners than social housing;
- the revitalization of the Downtown Eastside is dependent upon people having good quality, affordable housing;
- social housing can have a stabilizing affect on a community.

There was one concern expressed about the lack of balconies in the building.

Mark Townsend, Executive Director of the Portland Hotel Society, apologized to the Board concerning some letters of support for the project. He explained, they organized three events - at Science World, LTD Homes and in McDonald's Restaurant, the latter venue aimed at residents of the SRO hotels because they are difficult to access. Unfortunately, the organizers paid some residents \$5.00 instead of buying them a McDonald's meal, as had been intended. Mr. Townsend said while he appreciated that the Board does not count letters or petitions in arriving at its decisions, he suggested the letters of support be disregarded in this instance, given there is no way to identify those which may not be legitimate. With respect to the ground floor retail use, which may not be viable in the immediate future, Mr. Townsend suggested there should be an incentive for legitimate businesses to initially rent the space free of charge. Regarding building materials, he suggested the building would look better, and more modern, in metal rather than brick. He noted there was originally intended to be a 2-storey detox facility on this site and the description "treatment room" was not removed from all the drawings, which may have created some misunderstanding with some CityGate residents. He stressed the project is social housing only.

The following members of the public were opposed to the application:

Lorraine Shorrock, Main Street store owner  
Jeff Ranger, 1255 Main Street  
Nazzar Nabahat, Main Street business owner  
Benita Douglas, 1128 Quebec Street

The concerns expressed included:

- there is already a large number of social housing projects in the area as well as 340 SRO rooms in this block;
- this project is "warehousing" and placing undesirable residents in the neighbourhood;
- the residents will be dual-diagnosis individuals (having severe mental deficiencies as well as drug addictions and/or involved in the sex trade);
- the vast majority of supporters are employees or former employees of the Portland Hotel Society which will be operating this building;
- the retail use will likely be low-rent retail outlets, and there are already unoccupied retail spaces near Main/Terminal;
- the project should be located elsewhere in the city;
- what are the guarantees that the "treatment room" on the ground floor will not be introduced at a later date.

Mr. Gray noted this project was among seven non-market housing projects reported to Council in February 2001. With the anticipated new developments (TechPark.com, Finning, etc.), it is anticipated that this area will change quite dramatically. The City is therefore seeking to preserve some low income housing stock for existing SRO residents, noting it is expected that, over time, the existing SRO hotels will likely be converted to tourist accommodation or redeveloped. Mr. Gray noted there have been a several recent social housing projects outside the Downtown Eastside.

With respect to the impact of social housing on land values, Mr. Gray advised there have been recent studies in B.C. and Ontario which indicate there is no negative impact on land values caused by non-market housing projects.

In response to a question from Mr. Beasley as to whether there will be a contact person or a committee to address any neighbourly issues that arise, Ms. Stuarzebecher said it has been considered and the Society is willing to work with the neighbourhood in any way they can.

*Board and Panel members reviewed the model and posted drawings.*

Mr. Baldwin confirmed he was willing to redesign to eliminate the "slots" at the interior property lines, as called for in condition 1.3.

### **Panel Opinion**

Mr. Bunting advised the Urban Design Panel was very supportive of this application and thought it was a strong scheme given the financial constraints of the project. The Panel found it to be a very good response to Main Street, although perhaps a little less so to Station Street. However, given the discussion today, it would seem that a softening of condition 1.1 would very much embody the Urban Design Panel's commentary, namely to create a more substantial streetwall along Station Street. Mr. Bunting said he was confident it could be worked out between the applicant and staff. Mr. Bunting supported the applicant's proposal to join the two courtyards to produce a more usable open space. As an architectural response, the Panel supported the proposed "slots" as a good response to Main Street, creating relief while maintaining the streetwall. However, the Panel would support an alternative solution as long as the livability issues are satisfactorily resolved.

Mr. Hancock supported the application and said he supported this kind of social housing, noting that one of the foundations for a good community is good housing. He applauded those who are trying to deliver that in this neighbourhood. With respect to the 2-storey expression on Station Street, Mr. Hancock noted there seems to be no 2-storey expression elsewhere in the block. He said he would be satisfied for the applicant to work this out with staff. He said the dual courtyards are a function of programming and they should remain if it is appropriate; otherwise merging them into one is acceptable. Mr. Hancock concurred with Mr. Bunting that the

“slots” do perform a useful function in allowing light into the one-bedroom units. The gap on either side of the building also helps to define it in terms of the streetscape.

Mr. Kavanagh supported the application and thanked the members of the public who spoke about community and stabilization and the possibility of a new beginning for some of the residents of this area. He supported amending condition 1.1 as discussed, and with the deletion of A.3.

Ms. Leduc supported the application. She added, she would like to see the City make some effort to clean up the graffiti in this area as well as ensure the by-laws are enforced and criminal activities shut down.

Mr. Scott said he had some concerns about the high number of SROs in the area and about the viability of the retail. Redevelopment in this area is desperately needed and this project might encourage other neighbourhood improvements. Mr. Scott recommended there be a Good Neighbour Agreement associated with this project to avoid conflict with the CityGate neighbours and to foster good communication. He supported the application.

Mr. Mortensen also supported the project, noting that well managed social housing improves the quality of neighbourhoods. While some of the existing SROs may be renovated and remain available for the immediate future Mr. Mortensen commented the situation can change with changing market conditions, recalling the large number of SROs that were lost during Expo86.

#### **Board Discussion**

Mr. Beasley moved approval of the application, with some amendment to the conditions. He expressed his appreciation to the members of the public who addressed the Board, both those in favour and those opposed to the application. He added, he was encouraged by the proponents' sensitivity to the concerns, which bodes well for the whole neighbourhood. He reiterated, there will be no social service facility in this building. Mr. Beasley noted there will be a significant degree of change in the area when the adjacent high-tech development occurs, and having some level of the social housing secured will work in favour of achieving the ultimate balance that is sought for new neighbourhoods, namely 20 percent social housing. To date, this has worked extremely well in other parts of the City, with no significant problems identified. As well, as Mr. Gray has indicated, there is no impact on land values. With respect to the proposal, Mr. Beasley said he thinks it is a well designed building given the budget constraints. He also supported the staff recommendations. While there may be some architectural advantage to having the “slots” at the interior property lines, Mr. Beasley said he had some concern about ongoing maintenance issues. Finally, given that Station Street will be a major street in the future and will need identity and streetwall presence, Mr. Beasley said he believed this frontage could very easily be redesigned to be a friendly, positive part of the streetscape.

Mr. Rudberg said he supported the City's role in retaining control of the retail, even if it is subsidized to some extent if necessary, to achieve a good retail presence on Main Street. With respect to the amount of graffiti in this area, Mr. Rudberg noted that non-market housing projects are generally good neighbours in terms of maintaining their properties. He said he expected the situation to be much improved with this development. Mr. Rudberg advised the City has committed to remove all graffiti on public property within seven days of its appearance, and initiatives are underway to address the issue on private property as well. Current by-laws are not very effective and these may be strengthened in the future to allow the City to take more aggressive action, if appropriate, against private property graffiti so that we can begin to create a better street environment. This is certainly an area that needs some attention. He said he was pleased to support the application. He thought eliminating the “slots” was a good measure and the building will be a good addition to the neighbourhood.

Mr. MacGregor endorsed Mr. Beasley's comment that this area will be changing significantly in the future and this project is a good start. He supported the recommendations.

Mr. Scobie expressed his appreciation to the members of the public who attended today's meeting, both those who addressed the Board and those who observed the proceedings. The views of the public are important to the Board in its deliberations.

#### 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. 405521, in accordance with the Development Permit Staff Committee Report dated October 17, 2001, with the following amendments:

Amend the **Note to Applicant** in 1.1:

Consolidation of private courtyards; integration of a ~~two-storey~~ **substantial** street wall gesture for the site's full Station Street frontage; location of some active uses at the Station Street property line; provision of a double row of street trees; and anticipated precinct ground-surface treatment is recommended.

Amend A.1.10 to add: Delete reference on the drawings to a "treatment room";

Delete A.3 in its entirety.

#### 4. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5.10 pm.

C. Hubbard  
Clerk to the Board

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F. Scobie  
Chair