

Date: Monday, October 29, 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

W. Franci Representative of the Design Professions (Urban Design Panel)
J. Hancock Representative of the Design Professions (excused 1281 W Cordova Street)
J. Ross Representative of Development Industry
J. Leduc Representative of General Public
R. Bruce Scott Representative of General Public

Absent

P. Kavanagh Representative of Development Industry
D. Chung Representative of General Public
M. Mortensen Representative of General Public

ALSO PRESENT:

R. Segal Senior Development Planner
A. Molaro Development Planner
V. Potter Project Facilitator
R. Whitlock Senior Housing Officer
K. Yuh Senior Property Development Officer
M. Thomson City Surveyor

Item 3 - 1281 West Cordova Street - DE404757 - Zone CD-1

J. Hancock Hancock Bruckner Eng & Wright Architects
C. Philips Philips Wuori Long Inc., Landscape Architects

Item 4 - 1321 Richards Street - DE406078 - Zone DD

L. Adams Neale Staniszki Doll Adams Architects
D Kroeker MCC Housing

Clerk to the Board: C. Hubbard

1. MINUTES

The following amendments were tabled:

298 Thurlow Street

p.2, final paragraph, should read:

To exclude from FSR, a public atrium area of *approximately 5,740 sq.ft.* located on the main floor level, under the Interior Public Space Guidelines.

2515 Ontario Street

P.10, penultimate paragraph, last sentence, to change "previous" to "proposed".

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

THAT the Minutes of the Development Permit Board and Advisory Panel Meeting of October 15, 2001 be approved as amended.

2. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

3. 1281 WEST CORDOVA STREET - DE404757 - ZONE CD-1 (COMPLETE AFTER PRELIMINARY)

Applicant: Hancock Brückner Eng + Wright Architects

Request: To construct a 35-storey residential tower with 127 units including 16 grade level townhouses. The Project includes residential amenity space and 3 levels of underground parking for 293 cars and 168 bicycle stalls.

The Chair noted the preliminary approval in principle of this project on May 15, 2000 was for Towers 2A and 2B. Tower 2B proceeded as Phase 1 and is now under construction. The subject application is for Tower 2A.

Development Planner's Opening Comments

Senior Development Planner, Ralph Segal, presented this application, referring to a context model and a model of the proposed development. He briefly reviewed the site context and noted this application will complete Sub-Area 2 of the 501 Bute CD-1. No substantive issues have been identified with respect to this proposal. Staff and the Urban Design Panel were very pleased to see the complete submission live up to the promise of the preliminary scheme in terms of its exceptional tower design along with the townhouse base which forms a high quality public edge along the three sides of the site. Two detailed conditions are contained in the Staff Committee Report dated October 17, 2001, subject to which the recommendation is for approval. The conditions relate to the parking garage entry and the level 3 play area. In addition, Mr. Segal tabled a new condition to require the planter walls facing the Jervis right-of-way and Harbour Green Park to be lowered not to exceed 3 ft.

Questions/Discussion

In response to questions from Mr. Beasley relating to the townhouses, Mr. Segal advised 11 of the 16 townhouses have direct access to their own private underground parking, and confirmed the townhouse roofs provide open space for the adjacent 4th level tower units. Each townhouse has a grade level patio as well as substantial balcony areas on the third level.

Referencing the Fire and Rescue Services comments in Appendix C of the Staff Committee Report, Mr. Scobie questioned whether the review called for with respect to fire hydrants differs from the commentary received at the preliminary stage. Mike Thomson, City Surveyor, advised Fire & Rescue comments at the preliminary stage did not indicate the need for additional standpipes or hydrants. Mr. Scobie recommended the applicant seek early clarification from the Chief Fire Prevention Officer on this matter.

Applicant's Comments

James Hancock, Architect, said he was pleased to advise he had no problem with the prior-to conditions, including the new condition tabled earlier by the Development Planner. Regarding access to the townhouse roofs, Mr. Hancock explained that the townhouse units that are not adjacent to the tower do have access to their own rooftop gardens. With respect to fire hydrants, Martin Bruckner, Architect, noted there was a requirement to add another hydrant for the first phase of the project. He said he believes this site is adequately served. Responding to an earlier question from Mr. MacGregor about the change in the penthouse since the preliminary stage, Mr. Hancock explained the slight increase in width was partly for mechanical reasons and partly for compositional reasons.

Comments from Other Speakers

None.

Panel Opinion

Mr. Francl complimented the applicant on what the Urban Design Panel found to be a very handsome and exquisitely designed tower. Noting it set a very high bar for the entire project, there were some comments from the Panel that the tower somewhat outshines the design of the townhouses. There was also commentary with regard to the open space and advice that there be a clear separation between the private and public open spaces. The Panel considered the proposed walkway to the park and lookout to be an excellent resolution and a positive development of the scheme. With regard to the townhouse rooftops, given there will be a considerable amount of overlook onto them from this and other nearby towers, it was suggested there be some guidelines as to how they might be landscaped. There was also a suggestion that the canopy at the primary tower entry is somewhat understated.

Mr. Ross, Ms. Leduc and Mr. Scott strongly supported the application.

Board Discussion

Mr. Beasley moved approval of the application, including the additional condition tabled earlier. He noted, this application is realising the image that was envisaged both in the original planning and later replanning for this neighbourhood. He said he was pleased to see it being followed so carefully and so well. He added that, from a marketing point of view, row houses are more successful if they have connections to their own underground parking and some roof gardens. Mr. Beasley cautioned both staff and the applicant that the interface conditions among projects *and especially between private projects and the public realm*, are sometimes not being resolved very carefully and he urged that close attention be paid to this issue in the detailed development of this project. He said this is an excellent submission.

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. 404757, in accordance with the Development Permit Staff Committee Report dated October 17, 2001, with the following amendments:

Add condition 1.3:

design development to lower specific townhouse planter walls facing the Jervis right-of-way and Harbour Green Park such that a height of 3 ft. is not exceeded;

Note to Applicant: The planter walls for townhouse units 20, 22, 23, 24, 27 and 28 are likely to be affected.

The Board and Panel took a brief recess and reconvened at 4.00 pm.

**4. 1321 RICHARDS STREET - DE406078 - ZONE DD
(COMPLETE APPLICATION)**

Applicant: Neale Staniszakis Doll Adams Architects

Request: To construct a 12-storey multiple dwelling development (low income housing) containing 87 dwelling units with enclosed, above-grade parking accessed from the lane and amenity space for residents' use.

Development Planner's Opening Comments

The Development Planner, Anita Molaro, presented this application, referring to a model, posted drawings and the Staff Committee Report dated October 3, 2001. She briefly reviewed the site context and noted the adjacent development site to the north is restricted to a height of 70 ft. and 3.0 FSR. However, if developed with social housing it could be increased to 120 ft. high and 5.0 FSR, although this is unlikely given City policy to avoid clustering social housing projects. The subject site is 75 ft. wide. The application proposes ground floor amenity uses with 11 storeys of residential above. Additional amenity space is provided on the third floor at the rear.

The issues arising from this application include: the proposed density, which is related to the parking, the side yard setbacks, and livability of the residential units. The slope on the site from the lane to Richards Street amounts to a difference of almost one floor. As well, parking has presented a challenge because it is above grade and therefore included in FSR. The Planning Department supports this arrangement given the small site which limits the ability of the proposal to provide below grade parking that would not impact the street frontage. This above grade parking area creates an additional FSR of 0.23 which can be considered by the Development Permit Board for low cost housing use (Section 3.11 of the DODP), subject to Council approval. Staff recommend support as the impact of this additional FSR on adjacent existing and future development sites is minimal. Staff also recommend that the residential parking requirements be relaxed in consideration of the intended residents having a low level of vehicle ownership.

A number of built form relaxations are also sought for this project, which staff support. The proposed height of 112 ft. is within the permitted increase from 70 ft. to 120 ft. for social housing. It does not create any shadow impacts to public open space nor affect any public view corridors. An intrusion into the rear yard, ranging from 1.5 ft. to 5.5 ft., is supported by staff given the generally small scale and narrowness of the building. No side yard setbacks are required for buildings up to 70 ft. high, but for portions of building above this height, a 40 ft. side yard setback is normally sought. The side yards of the proposal are approximately 7 ft., increasing on the curve of the side elevations. The building maintains a neighbourly relationship to the two adjacent sites, taking into account both the existing and potential future conditions. It has an articulated building form as well as reduced window area to improve the livability of the residential units. Staff do not believe the development potential of the adjacent site is compromised by this proposal. As well, privacy and overlook has been minimized onto the existing neighbouring development as the primary orientation of the

residential units is towards the street and the lane, with the smaller windows oriented to the sides. On balance, staff consider the reduction in the upper setback acceptable and will not substantially impact the livability of the adjacent residences or the adjacent development site.

With respect to livability of the residential units, Ms. Molaro noted that 84 of the 87 units are less than the minimum 400 sq.ft. This requirement can be relaxed to 320 sq.ft. under Section 10.21 of the Zoning & Development By-law. The smallest proposed unit is 322 sq.ft. and overall the average median area is 336 sq.ft. per unit. In addition, semi-private and private open space area provisions are less than that recommended in the Guidelines. Staff consider the on-site amenity areas provided compensate for this reduction. Staff have considered the residents' accessibility to central city locations and are recommending support for the reduced unit size, semi private space and private open space provisions given the amenities provided and that the dwelling units are a substantial improvement over the current living conditions of the intended tenants.

Ms. Molaro briefly reviewed the major prior-to conditions contained in the Staff Committee Report and tabled an amendment to standard conditions A.1.4 and A.3.1.

Two major concerns were expressed by neighbours who responded to the public notification, parking, and overlook onto adjacent roof decks. It was noted there is already insufficient parking in the area for residents and visitors. Staff believe the parking relaxation will not generate further impacts to the existing parking demand. With respect to overlook, staff believe the privacy impacts of the proposal have been minimized because the primary orientation of the units is towards the street and the lane.

Staff recommend approval, subject to the conditions outlined in the Staff Committee Report and Council's approval of the additional FSR.

Questions/Discussion

Noting the proposed units are very small and the amount of private and semi private open space limited, Mr. Beasley questioned whether consideration had been given to having ~~use usability~~ of the two lower roof areas on the street side for either semi private or private open space. Ms. Molaro explained, the intent of restricting access to these areas was to try to address neighbours' concerns about privacy and overlook. Larry Adams, Architect, agreed it is physically possible to do but the client may have some concerns about security. It was noted a 6 ft. raised planter separates this building from its neighbour.

Mr. Ross questioned whether consideration had been given to providing a deck on the rooftop. Ms. Molaro agreed this could be discussed with the applicant.

Given the need to provide accommodation of this type to replace the loss of SRO units in the Downtown South area, Mr. Rudberg questioned the rate of loss that has occurred in recent years. Rob Whitlock, Senior Housing Officer, explained approximately 80-150 units are lost each year and the City has been keeping up with this loss fairly consistently. Presently, a net loss of 43 units exists. One project under construction on Granville Street will provide 63 units which, together with this proposal, will result in being about 143 units ahead. However, in the two year period for this project to be developed, it is anticipated there will be a loss of between 167 and 318 units for a net loss total of between about 24 and 175 units.

With respect to the request to reduce minimum unit sizes, Mr. Scobie noted the Board has on a number of occasions made this relaxation using the "hardship" provision, allowing units even smaller than 320 ft. This proposal is therefore still within the scope of what the by-law would normally consider as being the purview of the Board without invoking the "hardship" relaxation. With respect to the Parking By-law standard requirement of one space for every six units and the request to relax this provision to one space for every ten

units, Mr. Scobie noted this is a standard that has been applied to similar projects in the past and he questioned whether the standard for this type of occupancy should be incorporated into the Parking By-law. Ms. Molaro advised the lesser standard was applied in this case because of the intended low-income residents. Mr. Whitlock added, the emphasis of the funding from BC Housing over the last five years has been to low income singles' housing, although this may not continue after the current review being undertaken by BC Housing.

With respect to the requested increase in FSR, Mr. Rudberg questioned whether Council approval is required prior to consideration of this application. Ms. Molaro confirmed the DODP does require the prior approval of Council; however, the practice has been for such applications to be reviewed by the Board before being forwarded to Council. Mr. Scobie commented that, procedurally, it may be more appropriate for the application to be considered by the Board without making a formal decision but reporting the matter to Council, recommending approval of the extra density, and authorizing the Director of Planning to then deal with the application. He stressed, however, that the procedures be very clear to avoid delaying the project unnecessarily. He recommended that the Board consider dealing with any of the issues raised and provide any direction or commentary accordingly, but then not formally make a decision on the application but refer it to Council for its decision on the extra density. It could then either be returned to the Board or could be dealt with by the Director of Planning on the Board's behalf.

Mr. Beasley commented that rather than any procedural irregularity, he was more concerned about what impact the Board's actions today might have on the funding available for this project. Mr. Whitlock confirmed that all projects being funded by BC Housing and not yet under construction are under review. This review is likely to be completed by the end of this year. He therefore did not believe referring the matter to Council and returning it to the Board would likely seriously jeopardize the funding. The Housing Centre is optimistic that because this is a joint project, it will receive priority for funding. Don Kroeker, MCC Housing, confirmed that BC Housing are looking for strong partnerships and this project is strongly partnered by the City which is donating the land. It is also part of the Vancouver Agreement and has some partnering with the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board with funding for some of the support services that may be provided for some of the tenants. With respect to timing, he said it is very important that the application proceed through the system and be as far advanced as possible. In response to a question from Mr. Rudberg as to whether or not the application is approved by the Board today, Mr. Kroeker confirmed the process of the Board referring it first to Council and having it finally approved by the Director of Planning, was acceptable and caused him no concern provided it occurred in a timely fashion.

Applicant's Comments

Larry Adams, Architect, said he had no major concerns with the recommended prior-to conditions and he commended staff on a very good review of the project. He reiterated it is physically possible to provide rooftop and deck access but there may be some programming issues. He noted there are implications with respect to access to the roof because handicapped access would necessitate a higher elevator shaft. With respect to the proposal's impact on the development potential of the neighbouring site, Mr. Adams said their analysis indicates it would be very difficult to develop above three storeys on this site. Regarding the parking relaxation being sought, Mr. Adams stressed they have had extensive negotiations with Engineering Services, Planning and their client to determine the appropriate number of parking spaces for this project. He briefly explained the difficulties involved in providing underground parking on this very narrow site.

Questions/Discussion

In response to questions from Ms. Leduc about the housing societies involved in this project and the kinds of services that will be provided by the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board, Mr. Kroeker advised MCC Housing will be the main sponsor operating and managing the building. As well, Wings Housing Society will select tenants for twenty five percent of the units. Wings locates housing for victims of HIV and AIDS and currently has a waiting list of approximately 1,000 people. There will be no permanent Health Board staff in the building but

there are seven handicapped units whose tenants will receive some level of support from the Health Board. There will be a resident manager in the building. The expectation is that there will be a mixture of tenants representing a cross-section of society within the low income urban singles category. Some of the tenants may have substance abuse problems, but such tenants are neither targeted nor excluded. He added, there is provision within the BC Housing management program to provide for security staff if necessary. In response to a question from Mr. Beasley, Mr. Kroeker confirmed the expectation is that most of the tenants will be people displaced from SRO's in the Downtown South. Mr. Whitlock advised the City considers this type of housing to be independent living and its internal management is left to the housing sponsor, the societies and BC Housing. He confirmed that other similar projects are well managed.

Board and Panel members took a review minutes to review the model and posted materials.

Comments from Other Speakers

Lon LaClaire advised he is an employee of Engineering Services but has had no involvement in the preparation of the report on this project and his interest is as an affected resident. He also spoke on behalf of the neighbouring townhouse owners and commented that many of the residents were under the mistaken impression that this project was on hold as a result of the provincial government review. Mr. LaClaire said their concerns relate to the form of the development, and he noted the Urban Design Panel was not asked by staff to specifically comment on the impact on the existing development to the south. Given the project is almost twice as dense as would be permitted for a non-social housing development, Mr. LaClaire said their biggest concern is the impact on the three adjacent townhouses. They did not expect a neighbouring development having a tower 6.5 ft. from the property line. They consider the form of development should most respect the developments that have occurred before considering those which have yet to occur. He explained, the townhouse roofs are located at the first 10 ft. off Richards Street and because the townhouse units are quite small, the rooftop gardens are very well utilized by the residents. The proposed tower, which will rise directly above that outdoor living space, will have a major impact. However, if the building is pushed back towards the lane it could be right up to the property line because the roof of the loading bay and commercial units provides a buffer. Mr. LaClaire noted the height of the planter is chest height rather than 6 ft. He added, it will be difficult to deal with any issues that arise from such adjacency with a neighbouring tower. He urged that a way be found to push the building back on the site.

Mr. Adams said one of the issues in tower design is placement of the building core. With the placement as proposed the parking can be fit on the site but any movement of the core will inhibit the parking. He agreed that their development is quite close to its neighbour but noted this is a very urban environment. As well, they have oriented their windows away from the neighbouring roof decks, and it was pulled in away from the property line on the sides to provide some animation. He confirmed that pulling the building back was considered but ultimately rejected as an option.

Wade King, 501 Pacific, expressed concern at the proliferation of social services in this neighbourhood and its impact on residents. Parking is also a major issue in this neighbourhood, noting the subject site currently contains surface public parking that will be lost with this development. Mr. King circulated a list of social service agencies in the area.

James Ward, Wings Housing Society, explained they provide housing for people living with HIV and AIDS. They currently run 102 affordable housing subsidies through BC Housing and since January 1999 have also operated The Bonaventure building on Comox Street, across from St. Paul's Hospital. Mr. Ward confirmed they will be working with MCC Housing who will be managing the building and Wings will be allocated approximately 22 housing units. He explained, they administer affordable housing subsidies throughout the Province but most of their clients end up living in the West End and Downtown South to be close to the health services that are concentrated in that area, noting this particular site is located within walking distance of the Pacific AIDS

Resource Centre, St. Paul's Hospital and the Dr. Peter Centre. With respect to parking, Mr. Ward noted The Bonaventure has no parking and there have been no problems because most of their clients access services within walking distance. In their experience, very few of their clients own vehicles. He noted the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board is also committed to this project to make sure the residents are accessing and knowledgeable of the services that are available in the area which allow them to maintain independent living. Security has not been an issue at the Bonaventure. He agreed that some of their clients have substance abuse problems but special security arrangements have not been necessary. Many of the people on their waitlist currently live in neighbourhood SRO's which have inadequate kitchen and bathroom facilities, which impacts their health. He stressed the importance of the project and expressed appreciation for the City's contribution of the land.

Panel Opinion

Mr. Francl advised the Urban Design Panel unanimously supported this application. Recognizing it is a very difficult site, the Panel felt it was an innovative design solution, that the parti of the building as proposed was quite strong and responded in large measure to most of the concerns. The massing was thought to be good. With regard to the setbacks, the perception was that the infringement was actually potentially more severe for a proposed development to the north and little concern was expressed for the existing townhouse developments to the south. There was a general concern that some of the fenestration did not respond as strongly as it might to the fact that it was either side or street facing. The Richards Street windows were thought to be somewhat small. It was also noted that there is on the adjoining residential development a strip of commercial at grade which is not continued on this project and given that the Downtown South Guidelines did not appear to be particularly well followed in terms of the front landscaping, it was felt the patios should be enlarged. There is room to enlarge the landscaping and reduce the hard surfaces and reduce the width of the perceived width of the sidewalk on Richards Street. It was also observed that the residential windows on the second and third floors on Richards Street have quite a commercial feel to them. With respect to the lane landscaping at the rear, it was felt it did not respond particularly well to the entry location.

Mr. Hancock supported the project in terms of its use. The design response is quite good in general and is also supportable. The building generally fits its context quite well. Mr. Hancock said he did have some concerns about the adjacency of this building to the neighbouring townhouses with respect to overlook. He noted on the west facade there are two units on the principal metal clad portion that could face north and south without having an overlook into the courtyard and this might be desirable to maintain some privacy. The lack of common open space is also a concern, noting there are no balconies being provided. There should be more usable open space wherever possible, including the roof where higher parapets can mitigate any overlook issues.

Mr. Ross recommended approval, noting it is a creative design on an extremely tight site. With respect to open space, Mr. Ross said he was persuaded by comments from the neighbours that access not be provided to the 4th level roof area. The rooftop, however, should be seriously considered.

Mr. Scott also supported the application. He had some concerns about parking, noting there is not adequate parking for the support staff who will visit this building. Regarding the open space, he observed there is much that is not being adequately used. Both the rooftop and the deck off the 4th floor should be utilized given the very small size of the units.

Ms. Leduc questioned the appropriateness of this site for this project and its adjacency to the neighbouring townhouses. She thought there should be lower density on this site with greater separation from the townhouses. She did not support access to open space which overlooks the townhouses. Ms. Leduc noted there is a need for this type of housing but had some concerns about the impact of tenants with substance abuse problems. She was also concerned about parking, noting there is already a shortage of parking in the

area. In summary, Ms. Leduc said she supported the application but with some hesitation. She suggested the City should look more carefully at where this type of housing is located.

Board Discussion

Mr. MacGregor recommended approval of the application, with some amendments. Mr. Beasley, in seconding the motion, said he was concerned about the lack of usable open space given these units are very small. He added, he was convinced by the comments of several speakers about use of the lower level roof areas, although a satisfactory design scheme could ~~have been be devised if the issue had been raised earlier~~. He supported Mr. MacGregor's recommended condition 1.4 and appreciated that the majority of Advisory Panel also made this recommendation. Regarding the issue of the adjacency of social housing to market housing, Mr. Beasley commented, almost all of the city's new neighbourhoods have social housing and market housing juxtaposed and, with one exception, there have been almost no interface difficulties in over ten years. He said he did, however, share the concern expressed by some speakers about the detailing of the interface.

Mr. Rudberg commented this is a difficult site because there does appear to be a lot of density up against the neighbouring market housing which creates the potential for future conflicts. He was concerned about opening up access to the westerly roof space off the 4th floor and its privacy impacts on the neighbours. He urged that, as staff and the applicant consider the issue, particular consideration be given to the interface issues and problems that could arise with the adjoining market townhouses.

Mr. Scobie drew the applicant's attention to standard condition A.2.3 which references pending amendments to the Parking By-law concerning disabled parking spaces.

Motion

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

THAT the Board *recommend that the Director of Planning* APPROVE Development Application No. 406078 as submitted, subject to Council's *prior* approval of the additional 0.22 FSR of enclosed, above-grade parking area ... etc.

Amend the approval preamble as noted above;

Add 1.4:

consideration be given to utilizing the rooftop areas for usable open space for the residents of the building;

Amend A.1.4 to add to the **Note to Applicant**:

Arrangements shall be made with the adjacent property owner (501 Pacific) to remove the existing concrete curb located at the property line between the two developments, to ensure continuity of the public realm landscape treatment.

Add to A.3.1:

Note to Applicant: Acoustical measures should address the night club use across Richards Street to ensure livability of the residential units.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5.30 pm.

C. Hubbard
Clerk to the Board

/ch

F. Scobie
Chair