

**Date:** Monday, September 12, 2005  
**Time:** 3.00 p.m.  
**Place:** Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

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**PRESENT:****Board**

I. Adam Assistant City Engineer (Chair)  
T. French Assistant Director of Current Planning  
B. MacGregor Deputy City Manager  
P. Judd Deputy City Engineer

**Advisory Panel**

A. Endall Representative of the Design Professions (Urban Design Panel)  
R. Acton Representative of the Design Professions  
K. Hung Representative of the General Public  
C. Henschel Representative of the General Public  
G. Chung Representative of the General Public

**Regrets**

J. McLean Representative of the Development Industry  
J. Scott Representative of the Development Industry

**ALSO PRESENT:****City Staff:**

D. Morgan Development Planner  
M. Gordon Senior Planner, Central Area  
V. Potter Project Facilitator  
M. Thomson City Surveyor

**777 Dunsmuir Street (Holt Renfrew, Pacific Centre)**

Anita Leonoff IBI Group  
Peter Moore Holt Renfrew  
Jeff Hess Cadillac Fairview

**Recording Secretary:** D. Kempton

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**1. MINUTES**

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

THAT the Minutes of the Development Permit Board and Advisory Panel Meeting of August 2, 2005 be approved.

THAT the Minutes of the Development Permit Board and Advisory Panel Meeting of August 29, 2005 be deferred to the next meeting for approval.

**2. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

None.

**3. 777 DUNSMUIR STREET - DE409483 - ZONE DD  
(COMPLETE APPLICATION)**

Applicant: IBI Group

Request: To in-fill the existing amenity space (atrium) at Levels 1, 2 and 3 of Pacific Centre II, to provide a single-tenant retail space (Holt Renfrew) and a new mall corridor system. The project involves a request to transfer 14,311 sq. ft. of heritage density to the site, from 46 Water Street, which requires approval by the Development Permit Board.

**Development Planner's Opening Comments**

Dale Morgan, Development Planner, presented this application for a change of use to the 3-storey atrium in Pacific Centre Mall. The existing atrium is a public amenity space and the conversion of the atrium to a single tenant, retail occupant is subject to endorsement from City Council. Mr. Morgan stated that there are ongoing negotiations with the developer regarding replacement of the public amenity elsewhere in Pacific Centre.

**Note:** Mr. Morgan stated that a future public amenity space to replace the existing atrium would be secured through a legal agreement. This is factually not correct. Future replacement of the lost public amenity space will be negotiated with the property owners with the expectation it will be dealt with at the time of anticipated rezonings of Blocks 42 and 52.

Mr. Morgan described the site as the north end of the Pacific Centre Mall, north of Dunsmuir Street bordered by Granville, Dunsmuir and Howe Streets. The existing atrium is located in the centre of the lower level of the mall which is connected to the main mall by an underground tunnel and an upper level pedestrian bridge. This site is located in Sub-area B of the Downtown District and allows for up to 7 FSR. Transfer in of up to 10% of heritage density is also permitted. The Downtown District guidelines emphasize retail continuity and development of the public realm and pedestrian amenity which ties in with the Note to Applicant under condition 1.1 of the Staff Committee report dated August 31, 2005.

The two main issues for the Board to consider with respect to this proposal are exterior upgrades to the storefronts on Granville, Dunsmuir and Howe Streets and the loss of public amenity space in the form of a 3-storey atrium. Mr. Morgan said that subject to City Council endorsement of this proposal, staff recommend support for this infilling of the atrium on two

conditions. The first condition being prior to issuance of the permit further design development to the mid-floor layout connecting Granville Street Mall and the Dunsmuir frontage for pedestrian entry and interest, noting that this frontage has a variety of small scale stores and staff would like to see that maintained. The second condition is that prior to occupancy of the retail space the exterior store fronts have to be completed to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning.

Mr. Morgan reviewed the history of the site and noted that the original permit issued in 1986 allowed for the exclusion of 6,000 sq.ft. for the public amenity atrium space with conditions regarding the physical space, programming and restriction of use. Since this site is already at the maximum FSR the proposal to fill in the atrium requires a transfer of heritage density to make up the shortfall. This transfer of heritage density is at the discretion of the Development Permit Board.

In terms of scheduling, there are two applications: one for the storefront improvements, and this application for interior construction, both of which need to come together so that the developer can meet his time objectives.

In summary, staff conclude that this application has earned the requested transfer of heritage density with the agreement for a future amenity replacement possibly at the corner of Georgia and Howe Street, in the form of an entrance to the future RAV line or as otherwise determined in the ongoing negotiation process with staff. The Staff Committee recommendation is for approval, subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

#### Questions/Discussion

Ms. Hung questioned how many hours the atrium space is programmed currently. Mr. Morgan deferred to the Applicant for a response. Anita Leonoff, IBI Group, responded that the fountain has limited programming space and will speak to that during her presentation.

Mr. Henschel expressed his concern about losing 3 levels of amenity space and having it replaced with something of a lesser size. He notes that documentation clearly states the atrium was an important part of the original development permit and Mr. Henschel feels that the replacement should be similar in scope or benefit to the community in keeping with the original intention. Mr. Morgan responded that staff are in active negotiations with the applicant with the possibility of having an amenity of similar size at Georgia and Howe Street or the opportunity to provide a large RAV line entrance. Ms. French further clarified that the city is requesting a replacement for the amenity that will be of equal benefit, not necessarily equal size.

Mr. Henschel sought clarification with respect to the authority of the Development Permit Board in granting approval to infill an existing public amenity. Mr. Adam responded that the Board is not being asked to rule on the value of the amenity and whether it can be filled in. Ms. French further clarified that the amenity is a condition of the existing development permit and the Board has the authority to approve a development that would alter the space.

Referring to condition A.1.3, Mr. MacGregor asked for information about the donor site involved in the transfer of heritage density. Ms. Potter responded that the donor site is 46 Water Street. Verification that the donor site has the density has been received via a signed copy of standard Letter "A" which also acts as an agreement by the owner of the donor site to effect the transfer of density.

**Applicant's Comments**

Referring to drawings which show the existing Holt Renfrew location, Ms. Leonoff, IBI Group, explained that Holt Renfrew is looking at a unique spot to design a flagship store for Vancouver. In response to an earlier question by Ms. Hung regarding programming of the atrium, Ms. Leonoff stated that the atrium space is quite a substantial area that currently does not interact with the street as much as it should. Ms. Leonoff acknowledged the waterfall as a beautiful feature; however as a result of the noise that emanates from it the use is limited. Ms. Leonoff also stated that she sees a lot of potential to do more with the store fronts.

The applicants only concern with respect to the conditions are how their timeframe might be affected by the extent to which the first condition will need to be addressed before the permit is issued. Ms. Leonoff said that she will go through this in more detail with Mr. Morgan.

**Questions/Discussion**

Mr. Endall asked whether any new storefronts were planned and how many entrances to the new store would be provided. Ms. Leonoff responded that there are many little boutiques within Holt Renfrew, all of whom would like to have a store front with street access and their own entrance. Holt Renfrew is eager to have transparency in design and to open up the streetscape and create a vibrant store front.

In response to a question from Mr. Endall regarding retail tenant displacement as a result of this proposal, Ms. Leonoff said that there are 30 retail tenants either relocating or leaving the shopping centre out of a total of 125 in Pacific Centre Mall today. Holt Renfrew is vacating 60,000 sq. ft. that will be occupied by other retail tenants.

**Comments from other Speakers**

A member of the family that owns the Bower Building, Dane Campbell, requested the Board insert a condition requesting the applicant remove the duct work for the existing food fair. The vents for the food fair block a substantial portion of the view from the Bower building. Ms. Leonoff responded that any ducts that are defunct will be removed.

**Panel Opinion**

Mr. Endall stated that he doesn't see any issues with the proposal particularly with regard to the fact that there will be no apparent change to the massing or form of development on site. With respect to the existing atrium space, Mr. Endall feels that it is not performing up to its potential and the proposed development will be a positive change; however the proposal for the alternate amenity is short on details.

Mr. Endall has a small concern about how the street frontages will play out. He notes that when this project was originally developed the street frontages were an issue and that issue remains therefore he supports condition 1.1. Mr. Endall asked the applicant to consider how store fronts are handled, keeping in mind regular accessibility.

Mr. Acton supports this change of use and the transfer of heritage density. He believes that this development is going to be an improvement on the existing underutilized atrium space. Regarding street access to the store fronts, Mr. Acton was pleased with the applicants approach.

Mr. Henschel stated his strong non-support for this proposal to fill in the public amenity atrium without knowing what type of replacement amenity will be negotiated. Mr. Henschel does not support giving away the atrium, which is part of the community, in the interest of a private,

exclusive venture. He noted the renovation performed at Metrotown Mall that has made it a more vibrant space and questioned whether the Pacific Centre atrium could be renovated to be made better.

Ms. Hung expressed mixed feelings about the proposal. On the one hand the existing amenity space is not being used to its potential and at the same time it is a covenanted community amenity. If it is not an option to have the same size amenity space somewhere else then Ms. Hung would like to see the Georgia and Granville Street plaza updated. She states that there is animation in the plaza now in the form of outdoor concerts and other activities. Ms. Hung is concerned that a future RAV entrance in the plaza area will displace the activities that exist in that space now.

The proposed street front improvements would be helpful to liven up and tidy the area; however Ms. Hung agrees with Mr. Henschel that not enough information about how that will play out has been provided.

Ms. Chung said that she uses this space every day to walk to and from work and she enjoys the waterfall feature and the white noise generated by it. She believes that it is important to have a space that can handle the overflow from the food court that is full during the lunch hour with people that enjoy coming in from Harbour Centre to have their lunch there.

Ms. Chung is concerned with one large, upscale retailer taking over the space versus multiple retailers. She believes that the proposal is not reflective of the young, urban community that lives and works downtown. Ms. Chung believes that this proposal will transform Pacific Centre into an upscale mall, catering to exclusive clientele and therefore she cannot support the proposal.

#### **Board Discussion**

Mr. MacGregor said that it has been an overall objective to get more activity on the street level and more store front entrances on the street level in this area and it looks as though that will be done here. Mr. MacGregor acknowledged that it is unusual not to have a replacement amenity identified. He said that we are hearing that the existing atrium space is not being well used and this proposal will go a long way in enlivening the street at Dunsmuir, Granville and Howe.

Mr. MacGregor noted that the entire square footage of this proposal is being created by heritage density with no exclusions for amenity space.

Mr. MacGregor moved for approval of the Staff Committee recommendations as outlined in the report dated August 31, 2005.

Mr. Judd seconded the motion for approval noting his support for the transfer of heritage density and recognizing that Council will deal with endorsing the infill of existing amenity space.

Ms. French thanked the members of the advisory panel for their wide range of views and stated that their insights about how the atrium space is used will be taken into account as this proposal proceeds.

Ms. French stated that the City has had a long relationship with the owners of the site, Cadillac Fairview, and the owners have a stake in this site and downtown. Ms. French agrees that it would have been ideal to have the replacement public amenity in place at the time this

application was before the Board but it did not seem reasonable to ask the Applicant to wait for a full rezoning in order to have that happen. The City will recoup a good replacement amenity and therefore Ms. French supports the motion to approve this proposal as well.

Mr. Adam said that he finds the existing atrium to be an attractive amenity space and as much as he doesn't want to see it go he knows that Cadillac Fairview will be held to a high standard as this application goes forward.

**Motion**

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

THAT the Board APPROVE Development Application No. 409483, in accordance with the Development Permit Staff Committee Report dated August 31, 2005.

**4. OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

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D. Kempton  
Recording Secretary

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I. Adam  
Chair