

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: April 14, 2004

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall (Item 1)
Plaza 500 Hotel (Item 2)

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Bruce Haden, Chair
Mark Ostry (excused Item 1; not present for Item 2)
Larry Adams
Robert Barnes
Jeffrey Corbett
Alan Endall
Marta Farevaag
Jennifer Marshall
Brian Martin (excused Item 1)

REGRETS: Steven Keyes
Ronald Lea
Margot Long

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

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| 1. | 33 West Pender Street |
| 2. | 1000 Canada Place Way - Convention Centre |
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1. Address:	33 West Pender Street
Use:	Mixed (9 storeys, 52 units)
Zoning:	CD-1
Applicant Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	Acton Ostry
Owner:	Centurion Investment Properties Inc.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Mark Ostry, Senga Lindsay
Staff:	Scot Hein, Abigail Riley

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Abigail Riley, Rezoning Planner, presented this rezoning application. The proposal is for a 9-storey market residential building containing 57 units with retail use at grade. Commercial parking is at grade and residential parking in 3-1/2 levels of underground parking, both having access from the rear lane. The site, which currently contains a surface parking lot, is on the north side of West Pender Street between Abbott and Carrall Streets. A former right-of-way runs through the eastern portion of the block. Ms. Riley briefly reviewed the site context. The existing Downtown District zoning on this site allows a maximum total density of 5.0 FSR (maximum residential 3.0 FSR), and a maximum height of 150 ft.

The proposed rezoning is to allow a modest increase in density to 5.88 FSR, with an increase in residential density from 3.0 to 5.64 FSR. To address the requirement for community amenity contribution the applicant is proposing to purchase and transfer heritage density to facilitate the increase in residential density beyond 3.0 FSR. The proposed residential use is consistent with policy which identifies the Victory Square precinct as a housing-encouraged area. As well, in 1998 Council endorsed a series of principles to guide future development in the Downtown Eastside, one of which is to encourage a diversity of housing. Staff are currently working on a draft Victory Square Plan that anticipates increases in density and height, expected to be considered by Council in Fall 2004.

Scot Hein, Development Planner, noted the focus of this rezoning application is use, density and form of development. The project will be returned to the Panel at the development application stage. Staff consider the proposed market residential use to be a significant benefit and are satisfied that the proposed heritage density and associated costs will not lead to overt speculation in the area. As well as advice on the use and density, the comments of the Panel are sought on the overall massing, particularly as it relates to the inherent quality of this portion of the Victory Square precinct, noting that increased activity is anticipated (including the redevelopment of the Woodward's building). The differentiation of the façade will be addressed at the development application stage.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Mark Ostry, Architect, briefly described the design rationale, Senga Lindsay described the landscape plan and the applicant team responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Summary of Panel's Key Issues:**
 - Upper communal deck should extend to the edge;
 - Detailed streetscape items, including canopies, entries and differentiation of the 25 and 50 ft. widths;

- Early attention to CPTED issues, particularly at the lane, to ensure later retrofitting measures are not necessary;
 - Explore duplicating the 25/50 ft. Pender Street expression on the lane elevation.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application for rezoning. The Panel generally found it to be a handsome scheme and expressed the hope that it will be a catalyst for other redevelopment that is also sensitive to the historic scale of the area. The Panel very strongly endorsed the proposed market residential use in this location.

The Panel unanimously supported the proposed height and density. Some Panel members noted that it is a high building, but were satisfied that it is not inappropriate, particularly once further redevelopment occurs in the area.

The proposed form of development was supported and the Panel applauded the efforts made to break up the façade on West Pender Street. The Panel very much liked the proposed 25 ft. and 50 ft. modules which pick up on the historical pattern in the area. One Panel member thought this concept might be pushed a bit further, possibly through materiality. Another recommendation for the next stage of the design was to give further consideration of the street pattern in the resolution of the retail units at grade. Also, to explore a similar saw-tooth expression on the lane façade, which currently reads as a single 75 ft. wide building. Another suggestion about the Pender Street expression was that the external differentiation might be a more honest reflection of the internal planning of the units, noting that the interior of both the 25 ft. and 50 ft. modules are currently identical.

The Panel questioned the higher level canopy, which may be carrying the façade breakdown too far. It will also likely not provide much weather protection at that height. One suggestion was to replace it with a simple cornice line to provide differentiation from the lower canopy.

The Panel strongly supported the landscape plan which it found a refreshing departure from more typical schemes. One concern about the outdoor space related to the common amenity area on the 8th floor deck which it was thought to be too small. It was suggested the private open space could be reduced in favour of the common area. It was also strongly recommended that the deck be extended to the edge of the building.

With respect to CPTED issues, the Panel strongly urged that careful consideration be given to security in the initial stages of design to ensure that "Band-Aid" solutions are not necessary later on. This applies particularly to the lane but should also be considered with respect to the front entries of the retail units. Security is also an issue to be considered for the amenity area on the lane which will probably not be well used since it is north facing with no direct sun access.

One Panel member noted that signage is a particular characteristic of West Pender Street and suggested considering a projecting building sign to pick up on this pattern.

The architect was applauded for providing a modern, contemporary expression while being very respectful of the historical context. It was agreed to be a good model for the area.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Ostry thanked the Panel for its comments which he said he believes they will be able to incorporate in design development.

2. Address:	1000 Canada Place Way
Use:	CONVENTION CENTRE
Zoning:	CD-1
Applicant Status:	WORKSHOP
Architect:	Downs Archambault/LMN/Musson Cattell
Owner:	VCCEP Corp.
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Ken Grassi, Jim Brown, Bruce Hemstock
Staff:	Ralph Segal, Anita Molaro

The Chair noted that Panel member Alan Endall had raised a question about a potential perceived conflict of interest because another branch of his firm, Stantec, is involved in the project management of this project. The Chair advised he was satisfied, after having discussed the matter with the applicant, that there is no conflict of interest.

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner, introduced this workshop review, noting that the Panel's input at this critical stage of the design will be very important to the proponents and staff as the project proceeds through the City's formal review. A preliminary development application is expected to be submitted fairly soon.

Mr. Segal briefly reviewed the background and history of the project, noting the Panel reviewed the proposal in an introductory workshop in June 2003. In September 2003, Council agreed to the sale of the arts complex site to the convention centre proponent to allow the convention centre site to be expanded. Although the arts complex is no longer incorporated, the CD-1 Guidelines still apply.

In briefly reviewing the guidelines, Mr. Segal noted some key principles that define the role of this important site which is about connection, linkage and transition between the downtown and the water, between the commercial CBD and Coal Harbour and between the working waterfront - the Port and Canada Place cruise ships - and Harbour Green Park. This site should be where all kinds of people - workers, tourists, shoppers, residents, strollers, bicyclists, roller bladers, etc., etc. - can meet and interact. This design should be about creating places where these vertical and horizontal connections and transitions are encouraged, where the public can get from the street down to the water.

In addition to comments on the building design, the Panel's advice is sought on the following:

- The overall reaction to the scheme (is this a "world class" development, does it take full advantage of the spectacular site, is there a compelling architectural statement?);
- Is the public realm lively, animated, connected and gracious?

Mr. Segal noted that staff have some concerns about the treatment around the west and northwest edges of the site (at water level) and that public access to the water relies on a phase two master plan which is dependent on the response to an RFP for this portion of the site. As well, there are no active uses indicated at this stage for the Thurlow plaza, also dependent on a future RFP. Staff also have some concerns about the character of the proposed retail space on the north edge of the building.

Jim Brown described the design rationale, including the "folded land forms" concept, with the aid of a Power Point presentation, and Bruce Hemstock reviewed the landscape plan. Staff and the proponents responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Summary of Panel's Key Issues:**
 - General concern about the public nature and animation of the edge and what is going to bring people there - what makes that edge attractive?;
 - Specific concern about the north edge and the viability of the retail and how that is handled. Also, the retail with respect to the adjacent public space;
 - Routes and access generally appropriate;
 - The overall building has the potential to be a place of very high quality but there were some reservations;
 - Consider the possibility of the Thurlow plaza taking a real role in the public space system of the city in a collective way;
 - The relationship of the westerly edge to the water is not resolved;
 - The green roof: In addition to design development issues, questions about whether the broad sweep of the green roof is sufficiently dynamic given its very large scale;
 - Concerns about sense of arrival and entry, particularly the Canada Place Way access;
 - Ambiguity about the relationship of the screening to the water (no strong consensus);
 - The sweep of Harbour Green Park should be completed by the detail design of Thurlow Plaza.
- **Panel's Comments:** Several Panel members commended the applicant team on the very clear presentation of a complex project, and for the sophisticated model.

Some of the Panel's comments included the following:

Overall Concept:

- Initial concept is very strong, the folded land form idea allows Canada Place to remain as the signature building and the skyline of Vancouver is the more dominant architectural "read";
- The dominant view focus is from Harbour Green Park and Stanley Park but the primary view for most Vancouver residents will be coming down Burrard and Thurlow Streets;
- More energy needs to be put into the Burrard corner which is really the front door of the building - the oblique view of the façade facing Canada Place and Canada Place Way feels more like the back of the building;
- I agree the definition of entry needs to be looked at - it doesn't feel quite strong enough;
- There is greater opportunity to explain the green roof from the city side;
- The plaza connection and continuation of the curve needs more work because right now it feels unresolved and like it's geometry is laid on top of each other;

- Very impressed with the basic moves being made to make this building not so much a black box that it could have been;
- It is very important to make as much of it compelling and attractive and well programmed so that the public will want to go there;
- A lot more needs to be done to bring the public down there;
- Concerned that the general public won't be invited inside the building unless they are convention delegates;
- Concerned that many of the moves tip the balance in favour of the convention centre experience against that of the local Vancouver population;
- It has been very successful in taking advantage of its location; the spaces for the delegates to look out over the water will be fabulous;
- It is unfortunate that the fabulous views and spaces created for the delegates will not be accessible to the general public;
- It would be great if the program could be arranged to allow some public access to the inside spaces at the upper levels (e.g., restaurant);
- The introduction of the water elements are great and I would like to see that played up as much as possible - rivers on the roof for people looking down and coming down onto the plaza level;
- The use of wood is a great idea - it's something we don't do enough of here in our larger scale buildings;
- I like the folded plate concept - it may not fold enough in that it tends to disappear at the pedestrian level;
- Not sure the scheme is "spectacular" - maybe "sub-iconic", which may be where it should be;
- Appreciate the rational, considered way the applicant has approached the overall placement of the pieces and the overall urban design response to this very important site;
- The folded land form metaphor is a very strong idea; it has the promise to provide a very strong architectural statement and the potential to be world class; however, the key will be how well that idea gets developed and how it progresses over time;
- I am struggling with seeing this as a compelling architectural statement - you have certainly thrown your lot in with the folded land form idea which presents challenges;
- I agree it is unfortunate the general public will not have the opportunity to participate in this building given it is the public paying for it;
- I like the use of wood inside the building; many of the exposed columns on the exterior could also be wood clad as well;

- There is no sense of arrival for such a large and important building; more work is needed at the Burrard corner to provide a grander gesture to the city;
- Recommend more than one parking exit;
- In general the building needs to be more dynamic;
- Congratulate the design team on a contemporary building and idea with a strong theme; the folded plane idea has a lot of potential and I like the idea that it doesn't compete directly with Canada Place;
- Not sure whether the tidal habitat and green roof idea will be successful but it will be great if you can pull it off - it would really set a precedent;
- What is missing is some of the fine scale details - e.g., what will it be like to walk along the walkway - do bikes or pedestrians go on the outside?; how you get to the outside edge?; is the street furniture contemporary? etc.;
- One of the characteristics of the city's recent development has been the simplification of the waterfront, i.e., the waterfront edge is a consistent green walkway; this is an opportunity to do something different;
- In terms of public animation of the water's edge, there are some crucial opportunities not yet being taken advantage of: at the northeast corner you could bring the walkway behind a great restaurant space over the water - it would mean better protection for the walkway and give the city a true waterfront restaurant;
- Given the size of the site the provision of a waterfront restaurant as part of Thurlow park is essential because it will not have the same acoustic problems that exist elsewhere;
- One of the characteristics of the project is that the major formal public space is at the termination of Thurlow whereas the major ceremonial street is Burrard which feels weak and secondary compared to Thurlow; while recognizing the desire to bring activity and use out, the ceremonial quality of Burrard is not represented in this scheme;
- The formal and ceremonial quality of Burrard and its termination is not represented in this scheme;
- The overall formal language of the building, leaving aside the big brush gestures, is relatively straightforward which means that its very dependent on the quality of the detailing;
- Since convention centre activity tends to be episodic I wonder whether there are creative things you can do with lighting (e.g., the pixelated screen seen previously);
- I agree with the comments that the face to the city feels like a second cousin;
- There is a possibility of at least some secondary reference to the language of Canada Place.

Thurlow Plaza:

- Concerns about the plaza itself because it has always been seen as an opportunity for the city to have a sense of the collective, whether it was occupied or not. It's the ability for there to be 50,000 people in the plaza that I think is significant because we have no such outdoor celebratory space Vancouver;
- Rather than thinking about how to break down the scale of that space, maybe think about how that space can speak to the city, at city scale, and connect that to the mountain views;
- We don't have a great public gathering place in Vancouver and this place has always been considered the place for that to happen;
- The interface between the convention centre at the extension of Thurlow and the plaza could have a synergy so that events might be facilitated; I would encourage the programming of the convention centre's westerly pre-function space to build in elements that will facilitate it occasionally being transformed as a public gathering place that would attract people;
- Understand the urge to break down its scale but it is important not to break it up arbitrarily and lose the opportunity for this kind of gathering space;
- Overall, I think the weakest part is the Thurlow plaza because it hasn't been programmed; it's not the place we are all hoping for in terms of an outdoor gathering space;
- The connection of that space more specifically to the convention centre could be quite interesting where you could have a large indoor/outdoor space connecting into the convention crush space;
- It will be extremely important to develop Thurlow plaza in a way that reinforces the land form metaphor;
- Programming the space will be very important; I would hate to see the plaza compromised by retail or restaurants that don't really relate to the overall form and massing of the project;
- Understand the need for a gathering space but wonder whether it will work with the hard space; I may be more comfortable seeing it green so if it doesn't work as a gathering space at least it will be green;
- There could be an opportunity to take a very active role whereby a major public event, such as Canada Day, could be programmed when there is no convention event, opening up the west face and allowing public access to the building.

Roof:

- Concern that the turndown of the roof at the plaza could be eliminated in a budget cut;
- The roof is very big and monolithic - it will be a vast thing for people to look down on from neighbouring buildings;
- Appreciate it is not possible for people to access the roof but it is important for the public to understand it and for the City to take pride in it - consider an interpretive facility for the public to understand its benefits;
- The slopes of the roof will be very subtle at the pedestrian level to its patterning will be essential to its success;
- It is very important that the green roof remain as part of the program;
- There is a lot of potential with the green roof, but there is also a long hanging on the idea;
- From an environmental/sustainability standpoint the green roof makes sense but I'm not sure how you are going to execute it effectively; it may be necessary to take the metaphor further;
- I would not want to see you resort to simple landscape patterning on the roof;
- Perhaps part of the roof could be more like a regular roof form, breaking down the overall massing as viewed from above; perhaps a reflective or metal roof;
- The roof terminates very abruptly at the glass line; perhaps the roof should extend further and provide some weather protection;
- The folded roof form looks more like seismic plates; I don't find them very dynamic; question whether there should be a gesture to the mountains;
- The roof should be higher at the north end (extending up towards the mountains);
- The roof forms should be more dynamic - the skewed roof forms seem a bit flat and Frank Gehry-like;
- The green roof is a great idea but I wonder about the plant material; it will be tricky to pull it off;
- I like the idea of green planes coming down and touching the ground - there must be ways to keep people off;
- It may be possible to interrupt the very large planes with some stronger vertical elements - the small pieces puncturing through on the Thurlow side are a start but it could be a larger gesture that really animates the roof;
- There will need to be a large number of service penetrations through the roof which will have to be grouped and controlled very carefully and that will be a real challenge;

Public Access to the Water's Edge:

- You have been very successful at slowly elevating people up around to the Canada Place level - from the model you don't really perceive that you're leaving the water;
- The pieces shown for the waterfront master plan at the west and northwest sides look very unresolved, crowded and inelegant;
- Support the notion of there being a sub-route for pedestrians to take down from the plaza to the water and come back up (possibly something floating);
- There is an opportunity for stairs to get down to the water from Thurlow Plaza, tied to the concept of bringing water from the roof down to the harbour;
- The right decision has been taken not to have two separate complete routes: the place is big and the danger is to have too few people there so it's important to have only one complete route; its location above the water level is acceptable;
- From the water side it will be very monolithic; it's really key to see the lower floating elements delivered; the activity of the float planes etc. is essential to humanizing the scale of the lower part of the building and to making it interesting and give people things to watch;
- Having the walkway at the upper level is perfectly acceptable; the continuous walkway elsewhere in the downtown is fabulous but in most other locations you are down at the sea wall level near the water so I don't think it's necessary to be closer to the water than you are here - if you're much closer to the water the cruise ships won't be very visible;
- I like the level at which the walkway is at, at the low level; it's appropriate and I think it will be quite successful. This is an urban edge we are dealing with, it's not a beach;
- I also would like to see the float plane terminal there in terms of providing activity;
- The single level walkway is fine;
- Hope the float plane and retail extension along the waterfront level will be developed in a way that is consistent with some of the overall concepts of the project;
- I am disappointed there is no pedestrian connection to the water from the plaza; I would encourage you to revisit that and see if there is a way that people could get closer to the water along that west edge;
- I think it will be wonderful to allow the opportunity for public access to the new floating dock, because that's not an opportunity that exists very much elsewhere;
- The view from the west when you are approaching from Harbour Green Park is compromised by the screen element at that side; if there is a visual continuity (not necessarily access but a higher quality materiality) it will visually continue the sweep from Harbour Green Park so that it concludes at a logical place;
- The basic route is fine because it is a gentle incline, but I have some concerns about the handling of the Thurlow plaza/Harbour Green Park connection; the arrangement of the

plaza has no sense of the collective and there is no gesture to the mountains and the water which is contradictory to the sweep coming from the park;

- The sweep of Harbour Green Park should continue and allow the public to come down to the waterfront - that sweep was a very conscious move made many years ago at the conception of the Coal Harbour master plan and I think it stops too abruptly;
- I agree continuing the sweep of Harbour Green Park is critical and it needs to be terminated in an exciting way - if you can touch the water there that would be great.

Screening the Waterfront Work Level:

- No problem - it further reinforces the fact that that waterfront walkway level, even though it's not down near the water, is actually the lowest level;
- I don't believe the screening is necessary - it might be better to put the money elsewhere; it is interesting to see activity at the waterfront level;
- I think the screening works - it's an intriguing idea to do that;
- Having something different from Canada Place would be welcome;
- It think it should be screened but at the same time provide some controlled openings through the screening so that from the water people can see some activity at night;
- It's an interesting concept to hide the exhibition hall effectively below grade - question whether precast concrete is appropriate screening material - maybe consider the use of wood piling?
- The screen seems a bit monotonous - maybe rather than being a skirt of the same texture it could somehow relate to the columns above;
- The screen element on the east elevation feels somewhat arbitrary compared to the simplicity of the rest of the building.

Retail on the North Edge:

- I can't see this retail functioning as anything else but restaurant/café type places because people aren't going to shop there;
- The colonnaded retail is a concern - it favours the convention centre over Vancouver residents;
- It is important to have the continuous walkway but most of the time it will not be very pleasant to walk along; it will not be a place for shopping; having the retail set back exacerbates the problem because pedestrians will be closer to the edge;
- Retail in this location will not be successful;
- It is critical that the retail space is successful; pulling the retail up onto the Burrard side is a good thing; it will be quite a challenge to keep the retail viable on a year-round basis;

- I share some of the doubt about the viability of retail along the north water front edge; for much of the year it will be pretty inhospitable, even recessed and covered; perhaps it should be an enclosed space - maybe some means of weather protection and forming a more solid base top the overall complex might be appropriate;
- I agree there are many weaknesses in the walkway and specifically with the retail space; I think pedestrians should be brought around in an enclosed environment - we have enough open environments in the city which have southern exposure and have good views;
- Unless there was some specific destination retail I think an indoor space would not be inappropriate;
- Maybe there could be some kind of retail space that runs north-south rather than east-west along the north face of the building - a place where retail space could co-exist with the convention delegates;
- There needs to be a variety of experience that ties into the pedestrian link around the outside; right now the covered space will be pretty dark and unfriendly; I would much rather see the pedestrian route pushed right outside past the building - even if it cantilevers off the edge;
- I can't imagine retail being viable here;
- Maybe the outside walkway edge could be heated, not necessarily fully enclosed.