
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: April 16, 2003

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Stuart Lyon, Chair
Helen Besharat
Jeffrey Corbett (present for Item #1 only)
Bruce Haden
Brian Martin
Kim Perry (excused Item #3)
Sorin Tatomir
Ken Terriss
Mark Ostry
Jennifer Marshall
Eva Lee

REGRETS: Reena Lazar

RECORDING SECRETARY: Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	C-2 Zoning Review
2.	4775 Valley Drive
3.	7000 Mont Royal Square
4.	1201 West Hastings Street
5.	86 SE Marine Drive (WAL-MART) - Workshop

The Chair briefly reviewed the meeting format for the benefit of new Panel members.

Ken Terriss reported on the Development Permit Board meeting of April 14, 2003.

The Chair noted there will be a special meeting of the Panel, to be held at Robson Square Media Centre, to which one or two high profile architects with expertise in very high buildings will be invited to participate. Two specific proposals will be reviewed and the guest architect(s) (not yet identified) will provide advice and vote along with members of the Panel. This meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 18, 2003.

1. C-2 ZONING REVIEW

Presentation: Trish French and Tom Staniszakis

Trish French, Senior Community Planner, explained that a major consultant study, completed last year, reviewed certain aspects of the C-2 zoning. The recommendations will be incorporated into a revised District Schedule and Guidelines. The draft report is expected to be considered by Council at the end of May and forwarded to Public Hearing in late June. Therefore, the earliest date anticipated for the zoning change would be late July. Ms. French briefly described the purpose of the study, what was included, and the consultation process that took place.

Tom Staniszakis, Consultant Architect, reviewed the process in greater detail and the issues that were identified. A set of options was then developed for further discussion with an advisory group that included developers, property owners and neighbours as well as architects who are active in C-2 design. Mr. Staniszakis described the final options/directions that were developed, and responded to questions from Panel members.

Panel Comments:**Height**

- strong support for a height limit of 45 ft. (measured horizontally) because it allows for better design and more workable buildings. Adjacency issues will be addressed by the setbacks;
- the designer should have the discretion as to whether or not the top floor should come forward;
- greater height will result in more viable commercial units;

Parking

- has there been any provision for relaxation of parking on smaller projects, noting they are generally in locations best served by transit?
(Mr. Staniszakis advised a recent Engineering study concluded that the parking ratio is appropriate.)

Front setback

- it is not appropriate to require the 8 ft. front setback in all cases;
- no strong opinion about the 8 ft. setback at the top;
- the setback at the top is good for the architectural vocabulary but it should be a decision of the designer;
- the 2 ft. front setback is good but with some concerns about street continuity;
- share the concern about the impact of the 2 ft. setback on continuity and the streetscape, noting there is also a charm to narrow sidewalks;
- support the 2 ft. front setback to allow some articulation;
- the sidewalks should be wider.

Rear setback

- support the rear setback to minimize impact;
 - the 20 ft. setback at the lane is good;
 - question the adequacy of a 2 ft. planting strip at the lane - it should either be a real landscape buffer or delete it altogether; maybe more attention should be given to the character of the 15 ft. base at the rear;
 - the 2 ft. planting strip does serve some purpose because it softens the wall if it is a parkade;
 - support for suites overlooking the lane for surveillance;
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Density

- reducing the FSR to 2.5 is a good idea: it will provide much better units (less deep) and likely no fewer than currently;
- on some sites it is possible to achieve more than the maximum density - in terms of sustainability it is unfortunate to be decreasing the density in C-2.

Courtyard

- question reducing courtyard size to a 20 ft. minimum clear dimension because it diminishes the quality of the environment.

General

- taming of traffic should be encouraged wherever possible;
- the balconies should be open.

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2. Address: 4775 Valley Drive
DA: 407380
Use: Residential (7 storeys, 92 units)
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Nigel Baldwin
Owner: Arbutus Gardens Holdings Ltd.
Review: First
Delegation: Nigel Baldwin, Brian Ellis, Bruce Hemstock
Staff: Eric Fiss
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction:** Eric Fiss, Development Planner, introduced this application for Phase 2 of Margeurite House which is the largest building in Quilchena Park, formerly Arbutus Gardens now undergoing redevelopment. The overall site will ultimately contain approximately 700 dwelling units. The Panel unanimously supported Phase I of the development.

The following advice is sought from the Panel:

- whether this phase achieves the high standard of architectural design established by Phase I;
 - whether the proposal creates an appropriate relationship to its context, on the street and future development to the south, and to phase I;
 - the roof form and its massing;
 - architectural expression;
 - landscape design and site circulation around the buildings.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Nigel Baldwin, Architect, briefly reviewed the proposal, noting that all the existing site trees have been preserved and the design intent is to allude to the Craftsman style. Bruce Hemstock briefly described the landscape plan, and the design team responded to the Panel's questions.
 - **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application.

The Panel found the continuity of vocabulary between the phases to be quite good although there was some commentary that this phase does not quite meet the standard established in phase one. This could be partly because the granite has been limited to the two main elevations. It was recommended extending the granite around to the south and west elevations as well. It would also strengthen the sense of arrival at the entry area.

With respect to the roof, comments were made that the sloped roof will not be visible at ground level and the vertical decorative elements are unnecessary. It was noted that the roof on phase one comes to the edge of the building on the south side, which this phase does not. Given it is uncertain whether the sloped roof of this phase will be perceived at all, it was suggested to either eliminate it or bring it to the edge so the slope can be appreciated.

Some Panel members thought the south elevation needed a lot more articulation, in keeping with the first phase which has a podium that has been defined at the fifth floor with articulation at the top of the building which wraps around. There also needs to be more development of the corners

and the ends. An observation was made that the transparent corner contains a master bedroom which needs to have the most privacy.

There were some questions about the appropriateness of the entrance canopy and the form and shape of the porte cochere not being quite in keeping with the architecture. Concerns were also expressed about how it will be drained and detailed.

Some Panel members questioned the underground location for the exercise room. It was strongly recommended that daylight and view potential be introduced to this room.

It was noted that the corridors are very long and could benefit from some breaking up. There would also be a good opportunity to introduce some natural light into the exit stairs which would make them much more usable.

The Panel strongly supported the landscape plan and commended the applicant for retaining the mature landscape and specimen trees. A suggestion was made to make the front yard of the building more pedestrian friendly by eliminating the fence in favour of visually extending the park to this area. An alternative means of delineation could be achieved by repeating some of the stonework from the first phase.

Minimizing the number of parking access points was appreciated.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Baldwin thanked the Panel for its commentary, much of which he agreed with. He stressed they will be working on the south façade

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3. Address: 7000 Mont Royal Square
DA: 407381
Use: Residential
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Burrowes Huggins
Owner: PCI Palladium Projects
Review: First
Delegation: Mike Huggins, Kim Perry
Staff: Eric Fiss
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EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (2-6)

- **Introduction:** Eric Fiss, Development Planner, presented this application and briefly reviewed the history of the site. The application is the final phase of the redevelopment of Champlain Mall (Parcels F and G). The overall site planning and massing was established at the rezoning stage and some minor adjustments were later made to the form of development. Mr. Fiss briefly reviewed the design conditions that were applied at the preliminary stage and noted the following areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought on this phase:
 - end conditions on rows of townhouses;
 - diversity of units across the site;
 - architectural identity for each cluster;
 - amenity;
 - children's play area in association with each cluster;
 - overall form of development;
 - livability of the outdoor open space;
 - the distinct character of this phase;
 - architectural design, including composition, details, finishes;
 - building edges.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Mike Huggins, Architect, described the design rationale, noting that this phase is a sister project to Parcels A and B. Kim Perry, Landscape Architect, reviewed the landscape plan and the design team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel did not support this submission.

The Panel had major concerns about the tightness of the building forms on the site, not necessarily the density but the footprints of the buildings. This has resulted in serious overlook issues as well as difficulties with way-finding around the site. The Panel strongly recommended deleting one of the townhouses in building B to improve the tight adjacency condition. The Panel agreed with the architect's intent to cut back the roofline to bring light into the building 6 interior units which are currently overshadowed.

The Panel had major concerns about the architectural character, suggesting it may be inappropriate for this neighbourhood. Panel members had difficulty with the use of a style that bears no relationship to its context. Some Panel members acknowledged the difficulty of designing in a context that is already underway on the overall site, and urged the developer to revisit the approach. A number of comments were made that the buildings could be significantly simplified,

noting there seem to be many different elements competing on the form. The use of the same roof material on both building types was questioned. There is also need to consider overlook in treating the roof of the lower buildings. The entry to the 4-storey building was considered to be quite unlike the rest of the building.

With respect to the landscape plan, the separation of private and public spaces with elevational differences was appreciated and found to be quite successful. One Panel member suggested the need for some outdoor meeting spaces for the residents, perhaps a kiosk in the lawn. Improvements to the allee were strongly recommended to deal more sensitively with the edge and create more of a social connection between the allee and the rear yards of the townhouse units. There is a need to create a friendlier and safer environment along the allee in terms of surveillance. The hedge needs to be kept low.

One Panel member commented on the amenity space, suggesting it is too small for a complex of this size.

Concerns were raised about access to the underground parking and a strong recommendation for a thorough analysis of pedestrian circulation patterns throughout the site. It was considered particularly difficult for visitors.

Other concerns included the overlook onto the lightwells of the townhouses, more design development around the interior townhouse entries, and the abruptness of the vehicular entry which might be softened in the detailing. The end treatments, especially of the large buildings, were also found to be somewhat abrupt in their relationship to the townhouses.

Some Panel members suggested that the volume of drawings provided by the applicant was excessive and unhelpful. One set of elevations would have been adequate.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Huggins thanked the Panel for very good comments. He commented it is difficult to challenge an established site plan and setbacks. With respect to the architectural style, he noted there is no context to respond to and the attempt has been to create a style to inject some life into it. He agreed the lightwell treatment is not a preferred arrangement and design development can be done to make them less severe.

4. Address:	1201 West Hastings Street
Use:	Mixed (30 storeys, 141 units)
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	Downs Archambault
Owner:	Delta Land Development Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Mark Ehman, Bruce Langeveis, Bruce Hemstock
Staff:	Alan Duncan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- Introduction:** Rezoning Planner, Alan Duncan, presented this application to rezone this split-zoned (DD/CWD) site to CD-1 to permit residential use and a single storey retail space for grocery store. Proposed density is 6.8 FSR, 6.0 for residential and 0.8 for grocery store. The proposed form of development is a 30-storey tower with 5-storey choice-of-use townhouses fronting onto Hastings Street, and the one-storey grocery store fronting onto West Cordova and Bute Streets. 354 below-grade parking spaces are proposed (including 27 for the retail component), and 178 bicycle parking spaces. The proposal also includes a public art component for the corner of Hastings and Bute Streets. Mr. Duncan briefly reviewed the site context and surrounding zoning, noting the Coal Harbour Official Development process did not provide this site with any regulations, resulting in it being an "orphaned" Central Waterfront District parcel. In 1997, the City rezoned the CWD portion to remove its development potential and to include it in the Coal Harbour Official Development Plan area. This allowed the future negotiation of an appropriate CD-1 zoning for the entire site. The DD portion of the site includes about 13 percent (27,000 sq.ft.) of the total site density, but most of the density (about 165,000 sq.ft.) will be achieved by the purchase of density from the heritage density bank.

Staff generally support the proposed uses and overall massing. The form of development is fairly consistent with other recent development in the area, noting it will be assessed against the Coal Harbour development criteria which encourages slim towers and a strong streetscape relationship to provide street enclosure and animation, as well as a neighbourly response to a largely built-up context.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- use, overall massing and public realm interface;
 - general tower location and form;
 - height;
 - location of the amenity space at the top of the tower;
 - response to public and private views;
 - response to the three street frontages, in particular the adequacy of the one-storey podium frontage along Cordova Street; width of sidewalk; streetscape retail frontage along Bute Street; relationship of the townhouse frontages along Hastings Street and the entrance;
 - response to the interior property, in particular the four townhouses facing directly onto the site.
- Applicant's Opening Comments:** Mark Ehman, Architect, described the project and the design rationale, and Bruce Hemstock, Landscape Architect, reviewed the landscape plan. The design
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team responded to the Panel's questions.

- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this rezoning application. All but one member of the Panel supported the proposed height.

The Panel unanimously supported the grocery store use in this location. It is a much needed amenity for this area.

With respect to the placement of the tower, the Panel generally supported the applicant's rationale although several Panel members thought consideration should be given to moving it slightly to the west given its tightness on Bute Street and the potential impact on public views. It was thought that moving the tower somewhat could be achieved without impacting views from the Palladio. One Panel member suggested the tower could be a bit bolder as it meets the ground by strongly expressing its at the corner.

The Panel supported the rationale for the location of the retail and townhouses, although noting that reversing the locations would be ideal if it weren't for issues of loading and site topography. The live/work use was strongly supported. One Panel member found the Hastings Street townhouse elevation lacking and not as elegant as the tower.

The relationship to the neighbouring townhouses was agreed to be a major challenge for this project. The Panel emphasized that they must be given serious consideration in this scheme and every attempt made to be a little more polite. It was suggested there may be other options worth exploring for this edge.

The Panel was very enthusiastic about locating the amenity at the top of the building and thought it would be a wonderful space for the residents. It also provides an opportunity to reduce exposure of the mechanical. Suggestions were made to wrap it all the way around, although one Panel member preferred that the west deck be retained.

The initial attempts at a landscape plan were supported as moving in the right direction. It was stressed that the public art will need to be carefully integrated with the street frontage and the landscape.

The Panel strongly recommended a significant usable outdoor space close to the corner. Several suggestions were made for a large outdoor café in this location. The Cordova/Bute corner needs to be very public given its location across from the entry to a public park.

5. Address:	86 SE Marine Drive (WAL-MART)
WORKSHOP	
Use:	Retail
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	Brook Dev. Planning/Abbarch Partnership
Owner:	First Pro
Review:	First
Delegation:	Chuck Brook, Darren Kiniatkowski, Mike Burton-Brown
Staff:	Scot Hein, Lynda Challis

- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Development Planner, introduced this workshop on the proposal to rezone this large site for large-format retail use (Wal-Mart). A formal rezoning application is expected to be submitted in the very near future. Staff believe a successful application will need to be distinguished and represent a different way of thinking about large-format retail. The purpose of this workshop is to explore site planning options for this site as well as to consider some principles that might apply to not only this site but large-format sites in general. The Panel's feedback is also sought on the images presented by the applicant.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Chuck Brook briefly described the site which is the former Dueck on Marine property, just west of Main Street on the south side of Marine Drive. It is part of an area which Council, in May 2001, designated for highway oriented retail use. The site is flanked by buildings on the east and the west, its open street frontages being on Marine Drive and East 69th Avenue to the south. Mr. Brook noted there is another large-format store to the east, The Real Canadian Superstore, which was approved under its existing M-2 zoning in 1986 (as a wholesale distribution centre with store above).

The proposal is to pursue the first CD-1 rezoning in the Marine Drive highway oriented retail policy area. The main element is approx. 133,000 sq.ft. for a Wal-Mart store plus about 20,000 sq.ft. in a number of smaller buildings for smaller retailers and restaurants, and approximately 700 surface parking spaces. The proposal is guided by the following basic principles:

1. to achieve a campus-like design in the organization of all the buildings;
2. to treat the edges appropriately;
3. to design circulation systems that accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and transit users as well as vehicular traffic;
4. to break down expansive areas of surface parking so that the "campus" is understood as a series of spaces;
5. to "tame the box" in terms of the architectural approach;
6. to introduce "green" systems;
7. to integrate appropriate signage, both commercial and directional.

Darren Kiniatkowski briefly reviewed the Wal-Mart formula, noting that Wal-Mart considers site design to be a fundamental part of its success in creating a positive shopping experience for its customers. He stressed that all Wal-Mart stores are not the same and they have adapted to more urban markets, particularly in California, where the architectural expression of various communities has been recognized. The floor plan is fundamental to Wal-Mart's operational efficiencies so the building footprint is the least flexible aspect of the design.

Mr. Brook noted that Wal-Mart is committed to providing a sustainable development and the intent is that this store will be the most environmentally friendly discount department store to date. The following options are being considered: the use of permeable asphalt; use of grey water and storm water run-off from the roof (including irrigation for outdoor plant displays and ways of managing stormwater over the site); a geo-thermal heating contribution to the hot water system in the store; LEED certification will likely be pursued; there will be a higher level of energy efficiency in the insulation of the store; Natural Resources Canada certification will be sought for environmental features; bio-swales will be placed along 69th Avenue to relieve the burden on the stormwater system; on-site transit facilities will be incorporated (requiring discussion with TransLink and Engineering Services); a home delivery system will be established; recycling; incorporation of native plants to reduce the need for irrigation and pesticides and to pursue certification under the BCHydro green program.

Mike Burton-Brown reviewed the various site planning options that have been considered.

- **Panel's Comments:** Following the ensuing general discussion, the Panel was asked to respond to the proposed site planning. The following comments/questions arose:
 - since the building will be at the back of the site, will there be a huge identification sign on SE Marine Drive?
 - is there any possibility that the properties fronting Main Street might begin to connect with this development in some way?
 - how much pedestrian activity will there be? Is it realistic to expect much pedestrian traffic on this side of SE Marine Drive?
 - you have probably put the building in the best place on the site;
 - agree with all the urban design principles with the exception of the campus design which I am not yet convinced is the right way to go. While recognizing that, to some extent, Wal-Mart needs to pretend to be doing something different than it actually is, the fact is that this is fundamentally a car-oriented place which has certain design implications. What is the visual role of Marine Drive vs. its functional role? Approaching it to make it more like a nice little place results in a different solution than to make a great building and a great parking lot that responds to the scale of Marine Drive and recognizes its fundamental role in the city; the latter arrives at very different site planning solutions. As soon as you try to pretend that things are different than they are, it makes it much more difficult to do things properly;
 - I would tend to disagree with the idea of trying to create small scale retail along Marine Drive which has a different role in the city; you can't create a streetwall condition along Marine Drive and any attempt to do that will appear quite disjointed;
 - regarding the streetwall, it depends on the relationship of the smaller buildings to the Wal-Mart building and that will determine the connectivity of the site; this will be important in terms of the site being cohesively planned; the layout will be successful if the uses of the smaller buildings are well related to Wal-Mart;
 - the ability to achieve a campus is very challenging, especially when you consider the City's policy about frontage on Marine Drive;

- based on the criteria, this is the plan that makes the most sense in terms of the major components;
- regarding the use of permeable paving, this is a huge area of paving and the water has to go somewhere (soils issue);
- in this case, with the building at the back of the site, the north edge of the building will be very important; it is also very important to make the landscaped parking lot not look like a huge parking lot;
- support for what I have seen so far;
- this site is in similar circumstances to Ikea on Bridgeport Road, Richmond, which works well;
- try to use different types of paving material in the parking lot as a method of signage;
- your preferred solution seems the right one;
- how will the site topography be handled?
- the green initiatives are laudable but this project could go further and be a demonstration project;
- I have a problem with the terminology of "campus"; the more accurate term would be "shopping mall format" - call it what it is; it sets up a different expectation when you call it "campus";
- not sure whether the building should be at the front or the back of the site; it will all come down to the details; it will rely on meeting a much higher standard for design than applies to other shopping malls;
- regarding the green initiatives, I will look for demonstrated commitment; this is a huge opportunity to be in the forefront of green technology;
- we must ensure that the standard is raised not only for Wal-Mart but the smaller retailers on the site as well;
- the quality of the pedestrian paths is very important to the experience;
- this is the only option(at the back of the site) that will fit and I have no problem with it;
- the project should be at least LEED silver; it is easy for a building of this size to achieve silver because it does not have the complexities of other types of industrial buildings: it will force you to introduce more natural light and be more sensitive with lighting; to do it right, LEED requires orientation and natural light;
- materials are very important;
- consider having part of the parking underground;

- the quality of artificial light is unpleasant; more natural light will be better for the employees and improve productivity;
- the building is in the right place and has the right orientation for this site;
- it is not a good urban experience to drive along SE Marine Drive; what is disappointing about Marine Drive is that all the intersections look the same; it is unfortunate that this project has not captured the corner because Main Street is a principal street but it has no terminus; encourage Planning to consider how the Main Street frontage might be brought into the project in the future so that it becomes a stronger focal point in the city.

The following comments were made with respect to the representative images presented:

- the issue of scale is interesting because some of the more successful buildings of this type actually recognize that it is not exclusively pedestrian-scale but a larger scale automobile culture as well (Ikea is a good example);
- we are in the stage of development about green design that you should make it obviously green in some way;
- I feel fairly confident we will get a good building but the landscape is key; plan to have a lot of curved areas with trees to give a sense of being in a park rather than a parking lot;
- the traffic is a big component of how successful this will be; the 69th and Ontario elevations are relevant and should not be overlooked;
- focus on the lighting and paving; asphalt is not necessary, there are other alternatives that cost more but do not have the same impact on the environment.