
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: April 17, 2002

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Walter Francl, Chair
Helen Besharat (present for Items 1 - 4 only)
Richard Henry (present for Items 1 - 4 only)
Joseph Hrudá (present for Items 1 - 4 only)
Reena Lazar (present for Items 1 - 3 only)
Stuart Lyon
Kim Perry
Maurice Pez (excluded Item 1)
Sorin Tatomir
Ken Terriss

REGRETS: Jeffrey Corbett
Gerry Eckford

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	900 Burrard Street (901 Hornby)
2.	455 Beach Crescent
3.	583 Beach Crescent
4.	1673 Bayshore Drive
5.	7001 Mont Royal Square

1. Address:	900 Burrard Street (901 Hornby)
DA:	406534
Use:	Mixed (24 storeys)
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Brook Development Planning/Rafii Architects
Owner:	Bosa Ventures Inc.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Chuck Brook, Foad Rafii, Jane Durante
Staff:	Jonathan Barrett

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-3)

- **Introduction:** Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, presented this application. The CD-1 zoning includes heritage density transferred from the adjacent Electra building and allows for an FSR up to 8.0 for a variety of uses: retail, commercial, residential and entertainment. There was a previously approved application for this site which comprised principally an entertainment centre, very similar in form to the subject proposal.

The proposal is for residential use and includes cinemas (2,000 seats). The application seeks approximately the maximum allowable density and the form of development as shown is what was anticipated in the zoning. The proposal includes a base containing the cinemas, with retail use along Smithe and Hornby Streets, and 466 dwelling units above.

Areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought relate to:

- appropriateness of the form of development for the proposed use;
 - organization of the residential component: access from grade to the units; the elevator core; length of the corridor;
 - appropriateness of the design, usability and accessibility of the open space for the residents;
 - the porte-cochere system (the two-way vehicular access from Burrard to Hornby for drop-off for the cinemas and the residents);
 - scale of the retail frontage (the guidelines call for a maximum 15 m frontage except at the corners);
 - building character.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Chuck Brook explained they have tried to work within the volume of the previous approved application and the whole approach has been to treat this submission as a re-interpretation of the previous scheme. He acknowledged the form is quite different from the more typical tower-and-podium developments in Downtown South. Mr. Brook noted they have met with the residents of Electra and they are generally more satisfied with this proposal than the previous scheme. Foad Rafii, Architect, described the project in greater detail and explained the design rationale. He responded to questions from the Panel, and Jane Durante, Landscape Architect, briefly reviewed the landscape plan.
 - **Panel's Comments:** The Panel supported this application and provided the following comments:

Form of Development and Building Character:

- like the general form of the development. The slab tower is an appropriate solution but have some difficulty with the way it is expressed, ie., there is a strong disparity between the expression of the residential in relation to the large grand expression of the commercial theatre mass below it. It is not yet resolved;
- concerns about the general building form which go back to fundamental principles which precede this development. This development has done a very commendable job of refining and making a better fit within existing context, but it could create a model for the city which is more like something between Manhattan and Las Vegas. It is far more urban than the nature of the urban picture which is being painted in Vancouver;
- question the conflicting objectives of view corridors and allowed densities which are prescribed by Council. Would hope there could be some flexibility or reconsideration in certain conditions that would allow the view corridors to be re-evaluated, given the resulting building form which is not a good precedent for the downtown;
- encourage the applicant to pursue a variety of methods of detailing with the fenestration pattern which is highly punctured in the upper residential facade in contrast to the very simplistic commercial expression below. Something might be done to mitigate the rigorousness, at the same time adjusting the scale;
- question the bronze glazing - both the retail and theatre components would benefit by appearing more transparent and the bronze glazing makes it more of a barrier;
- the architect has done a good job of transforming the previous requirements and dealing with all the complex issues of views and maximum height and density and access. It is a very exciting project. This kind of mixed use is very appropriate in this location;
- in general the rhythm and differentiation of materials are very well handled. The substation glazing should not be repeated - greater differentiation will glorify it more. More work is needed on coordination of all the materials;
- there is a need to animate and provide some variety in the residential elevation - it is not to the quality and level of design as the cinema and podium level;
- the success of this project will depend on the talent and level craftsmanship of detail that should come at a later date;
- the form of this building in terms of uses is an improvement over the previous scheme - prefer the way it steps, although it is a totally new form for downtown Vancouver;
- it is jarring to see very finely scaled openings of the slab over a very broad plane of glass - there needs to be better vertical integration of the two components;
- concerns about the two blank end walls facing west onto Burrard and south onto Hornby. It is a lost opportunity not to have them opening out onto Burrard to bring light and a sense of detail onto the end of the building;

- it is refreshing to see a big bold building downtown that holds the street. It is also refreshing to see a break from the tower and podium form;
- question the use of green glass in combination with the coated concrete. The dark colour may not be achieving the transparency required;
- it is a very challenging site given all the parameters that exist on it, but there are some problems with the way the uses are arranged. There is a major opportunity for a really dynamic relationship between the different uses, within or close to the prescribed FSR;
- concerns about the quality of the space where the inside corner of the two wings meet, which is an internal light well type of space with a rather small opening. While probably not in the FSR, this space is contributing greatly to the overall bulk of the building;
- a two tower scheme would be more successful by splitting right through the other half of the building. Without the typical 80 ft. separation between buildings there is the opportunity to have one development, creating something quite exciting in a very small space between the two. It would provide an opportunity to affect the scale of the project by treating the two buildings slightly differently: a different kind of assemblage which is basically two residential pieces sitting on the theatre piece;
- very much welcome the form of this building as a break from the podium and tower forms; it creates a much more interesting urban environment;
- very disappointed in the project. It does not do justice to the part of the city it is in. It does not fit in this general area which has very strong, fairly simple geometric forms. The relationship between the volumes that form the large theatre element and the residential component is not convincing. It will look awkward and unrealistic. I certainly would not support the stepped elevation along Hornby Street.

Residential organization:

- generally the residential organization works fine;
- the long corridors in the wings could be more developed in terms of design: they are very flat walled, long corridors with nothing that implies a little richness and character at entries;
- generally the livability looks okay. See no problems with this type of urban living from a residential point of view;
- the canopies to the residential entry should be emphasized. They look too much like the canopies over the retail;
- the entrances seem quite mean for the number of residents in the building; very long, narrow and minimal space in front of elevators. A building of this significance major needs to celebrate its entries. There is the flexibility to make a more interesting statement about how to enter this building;

- the long corridors could be very unpleasant spaces if not done really well, eg., the lighting needs to be exceptional;

Open space:

- strongly recommend that the terraces stepping down towards the Electra be developed as planted and usable areas. The Electra residents should have a say in influencing the nature of the design of the building but should not dictate whether the terraces and roofs should be developed. Developing them as private terraces which will actually make their overview much more pleasant;
- do not think a stepping down building is appropriate for this block. It is not necessary to step down to highlight the Electra;
- question whether the trees will grow to the height shown; question the need for tall trees on the roof;
- the landscaping is too busy with too much layering. The proportions of the elements are close to, but not the same proportions as the Electra building elements;
- have a problem with the space on the west side at the lower level above the amenities. It will never see light and will be unusable;
- recommend a garden on the roof top - it would be a lost opportunity not to create a rooftop park for the residents with this large floor plate;
- it is very appropriate for the primary open space, which is slightly higher on the building, to be visually appealing given the number of people overlooking it, but opportunities for making it more usable should be explored;
- like the way the terraces open up the view to the building but they should be landscaped. The neighbours' privacy concerns can be addressed with trellises, etc.

Porte cochere/drive-through:

- it is very lacking in design development. It has the potential for being a very dynamic, exciting laneway, adding to the theatre-going experience with various interactive elements. It should be fronted with retail;
- there needs to be significant signage to make it a very dynamic, energetic space with all kinds of exciting events happening;
- the laneway will only be successful if you have full glazing and retail;
- the spatial quality of the drive through is a major concern. It has dead-end pedestrian spaces. There are serious CPTED problems in the kind of space that is being created there;
- it is not realistic to consider putting shops on this frontage;
- concerns about safety in the drive through. A lot more could be done to make it more interesting,

i.e., daylighting and details and possibly public art;

- the driveway has the potential to become a rather unfortunate urban space;
- pedestrian movement through this space is in conflict with the vehicular movement. There needs to be clear, direct pedestrian paths that do not have to cross vehicular paths.

The retail frontage:

- the retail space should be entirely market driven;
- the market should dictate the size of the retail units;
- agree with the objective of achieving a finer rhythm and animation. This will be a busy street with people coming in and out of the theatres, so getting some interest and animation will be very important;
- there needs to be maximum flexibility in determining the retail space: we don't want empty retail spaces.

Other comments:

- suggest a repetition of the Electra lighting scheme for the blank walls on Burrard Street;
 - the water feature would be better in the landscape;
 - where the building meets the street is somewhat mean given the large numbers of people that will be coming out from the theatres onto the sidewalk at the corner of Burrard and Smithe;
 - it is commendable that someone has come forward to pursue this project. It will assist in vitalizing the area;
 - regret that it may hasten the decline of Granville Street as theatre row but it is clearly no longer viable and needs to be redeveloped to meet current market conditions;
 - there is no reason to tie in to the colour of the Electra.
- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Brook thanked the Panel for its interesting comments, noting there are a number of things they can work with. The Panel clearly appreciates the challenge of working with the adaptation of the form in the CD-1. Mr. Brook said he was heartened to hear a number of Panel members welcomed a change from the tower and podium pattern that is becoming quite dominant in Downtown South. Mr. Rafii added, they will work hard to improve the drive-through, although the general form of the development will not be revisited. He acknowledged the comments about materials and colours which he agreed can be looked at further. He also agreed the residential entries can be improved.

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2. Address: 455 Beach Crescent
DA: 405455
Use: Residential (increase from 29 to 32 storeys)
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete
Architect: The Hulbert Group
Owner: Concord Pacific Group Inc.
Review: Second
Delegation: David Negrin, Rick Hulbert
Staff: Ralph Segal
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3. Address: 583 Beach Crescent
DA: 406178
Use: Residential (from 29 to 32 storeys)
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete
Architect: The Hulbert Group
Owner: Concord Pacific Group Inc.
Review: Second
Delegation: David Negrin, Rick Hulbert
Staff: Ralph Segal
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EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (4-5)

- **Introduction:** These two applications, Towers 1D and 1M in the Beach Neighbourhood, have already been approved by the Development Permit Board. The current submissions seek to add three more storeys to each tower. Ralph Segal, Senior Development Planner, explained that concerns have been raised from an urban design point of view about mid-rise massing on public waterfront and park edges, resulting in a rethink of the overall massing to see if it is possible to move some density around on the site to overall advantage, but in such a way that does not compromise the intent of the Beach Neighbourhood Guidelines. The issue is whether it is justifiable to add height to the two towers, noting the Development Permit Board will need to take into account that the guidelines call for 29 storeys. As well, a major principle of the guidelines for the pattern of development relates to stepping tower heights down from Pacific to the waterfront. Mr. Segal noted that the floor to floor heights in the towers are fairly conservative at 8.6 ft.
 - **Applicant's Opening Comments:** David Negrin, Concord Pacific Group, noted that while the guidelines call for 29 storeys, they could have had 10 ft. floor to floor heights, resulting in higher towers. Originally, they were attempting to move density to the waterfront but this was opposed by the Panel. They now have to find a way to redistribute that density. Rick Hulbert, Architect, reviewed the history of the Beach Neighbourhood and explained how the total allowable density was distributed into four sectors of the site. After some visual analysis they concluded it was very reasonable to consider increasing the height of these two towers by three storeys. As well as presenting a taller, slimmer image, they believe it also works from an urban design composition point of view. He stressed they are still not encroaching on the maximum permitted height of 91 m, nor are they adding density. Mr. Hulbert responded to the Panel's questions.
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- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel provided a narrow vote of non support for this submission.

The following comments were made by those Panel members not supporting the proposal:

- the original urban design concept was sound and we have been working with it to date;
- the interior spaces already seem a bit lost in the towers so I would not support adding more height to them;
- support the original proposal;
- it detracts from the gateway towers which should be the tallest elements;
- the original stepped massing is convincing compared with this;
- there should be a strong step between the back row and the second row. It may be possible to add one storey without affecting the stepping too much, but it is important that the stepping is retained;
- more floor area should have been added to the townhouses - the base needs more than three storeys;
- it is clear that the design guidelines for this area are very good. They have contributed to the very successful open space and the highest quality of architecture in the city that is happening in this neighbourhood;
- there could be a compromise solution of increasing the tower heights by one, possibly two, storeys. The benefit of reducing the apparent density in the massing is worth the compromise solution of increasing the tower heights and adding density to the two towers, but not to the degree proposed.

The Panel members supporting the proposal provided the following comments:

- the site supports the density and has no major impact;
- if the floor area is available in the neighbourhood by taking it from the two waterfront towers, it has been earned by this development;
- it is not a dramatic change - there is still a very strong sense of stepping in the form;
- very nicely handled design;
- in areas such as this which have a master plan there needs to be flexibility as it is built out, with design ideas continually testing the guidelines. We should not be so prescriptive that we do not allow that to happen;
- this proposal does not compromise the landmark tower now under construction;
- the additional three storeys will not be impacting anyone, including the neighbouring penthouse owners who anticipated this height;
- the applicant could have chosen a greater floor to ceiling height.

In addition, a general comment was made by one Panel member that the transition of the additional storeys and its articulation, especially at the back of the towers, needs to be improved. As well, the rooftops of these buildings are not to the quality of other towers in this area.

4. Address:	1673 Bayshore Drive
DA:	404739
Use:	Restaurant (Traders)
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Downs Archambault
Owner:	562270 BC Ltd.
Review:	Fourth
Delegation:	David Galpin, Al Johnson
Staff:	Ralph Segal

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)*

*One member abstained from voting on this application. However, in accordance with the *Procedure By-law of City Council and its Committees* (Section 8.3), *A member present at the meeting at the time of the vote who abstains from voting is deemed to have voted in the affirmative.*

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner, introduced this application and briefly reviewed its history. During the rezoning stage, the Panel saw three different schemes for this restaurant. At that time, some minor additional height was being sought together with a small amount of additional floor area to allow for development of a full two-storey building. The original CD-1 zoning permits a maximum height of 5 m and just over 5,000 sq.ft. density. The rezoning application was supported by the Panel but was subsequently rejected by City Council. The subject application proposes the original height and density in a predominantly single storey form with a partial second floor. The mechanical is housed beneath a curved roof form. The proposal complies with the height and density limitations of the zoning with the exception of the mechanical and other appurtenances, and the particular advice of the Panel is sought on the additional height created by these appurtenances. While this by-law does permit the Development Permit Board or the Director of Planning to consider elements projecting above the height limit, by-laws normally convey a very conservative approach to anything extending above the height limit. The advice of the Panel is also sought on the beams and piers which are other architectural appurtenances extending beyond the 5 m height limit.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Al Johnson, Architect, briefly described the proposal. Mr. Galpin noted the Panel had previously been very supportive of the architecture.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously* supported this application. (*see note above)

The Panel very strongly supported the height, including the appurtenances, and some regret was expressed that the composition has had to be pared down to something less successful than the previous iteration. It fits into its context very nicely and sensitively. The applicant was urged to go back as far as possible to the original design, a successful element of which was the extent to which the curved roof came forward. This version is not as dynamic and begins to be a little overpowering.

Some Panel members expressed some frustration with the City's apparent limited vision for the waterfront. Given Vancouver's climate it is unfortunate not use those spaces where there is opportunity to do something other than providing a walkway.

One Panel member suggested that an area for improvement was the detailing of the south elevation

which seems less straightforward than the previous submission with respect to its signage.

Considerable frustration was expressed by one Panel member who suggested the guidelines and by-laws are obsolete for this kind of architecture and this location, preferring to see something much more dramatic and higher and noting that some passing boats will be twice as high as this building.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Galpin thanked the Panel for its comments and noted Panel members' appreciation for the difficult task of carving the form back without compromising its integrity. He agreed an additional metre or so would make the building a lot more workable from a functional point of view, and said they are struggling to make it work at 5 metres.

5. Address:	7001 Mont Royal Square
DA:	406527
Use:	Residential
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	W. T.Leung
Owner:	Intercorp
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Wing Ting Leung, Barry Krause, Wendy Armstrong-Taylor
Staff:	Eric Fiss

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-0)

- **Introduction:** Eric Fiss, Development Planner, presented this application for the third phase of development of the Champlain Mall site. The Panel did not support a previous submission when it was reviewed on March 6, 2002. Mr. Fiss noted the proposal generally complies with the approved form of development and with the draft design guidelines in terms of height and massing. The Panel's concerns with the previous submission and the applicant's response are as follows:
 - the sunken courtyards around the perimeter of the building on the street frontages which led to entrances to lower units in the stacked townhouses. The sunken entrance has been deleted. Access to the lower unit is now strictly from the inner courtyard and the entrance to the upper units is from the streets. The advice of the Panel is sought on the vestigial window wells that remain.
 - a key question in the change to the form of development in the last submission related to a shrinking of the gap and making the courtyard more private. This was supported by the Panel. However, in reconfiguring spaces and addressing some of the other concerns of the project, the applicant team has chosen to reduce the gap further by adding another unit, although the building has been stepped down so that the last two units are not stacked. The Panel's comments are sought on the further narrowing of the gap into the inner courtyard.
 - the end unit facade which the Panel thought should have greater articulation. The Panel's response is sought on the further refinements that have been made.
 - the Panel commented on the need for distinctiveness of each phase. There were also general comments about the architectural quality and whether the buildings were too monotonous in appearance. The Panel's advice is sought on the adjustments that have been made.
 - the Panel had a number of concerns about the apartment building, including: the expression of the main entry; the sameness of the window types; the narrow bay surrounding the building; the appropriateness and size of the amenity room. The entry is now wider and has more glazing, with a two-storey exterior expression. There is now a greater variety of window form and they have been enlarged. Two different bay types are now proposed and there has been some reconfiguration of balconies around the bays to eliminate large expanses of vinyl siding. The amenity room has been enlarged and has an adjoining small patio area.

- general concerns about the landscaping, site planning and access. Some additional layering has been provided around the outdoor patios and there has been a reconfiguration at the perimeter. The applicant has also now provided a gated egress pathway adjacent to the parking ramp. The access pavilion from the parking garage has been enlarged and an elevator had been added.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Wing Leung, Architect, reviewed the revisions in greater detail, and Wendy Armstrong-Taylor, Landscape Architect, described the changes to the landscape plan.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this submission and commended the applicant team for responding so well to its earlier comments.

The following improvements were noted:

- dropping the ends of the buildings down and creating hip roof forms;
- greatly improved accessibility from the large circular driveway at the entry;
- greater articulation of the landscape edge;
- the addition of an elevator from the parking garage will be a real asset for the many people who will be coming and going every day;
- the larger windows are a big improvement and the roof lines on the larger building are more successful than previously shown.

The applicant was commended for the variety of housing types being provided, including affordable, ground oriented units.

The only comment about the opening between the apartment building and the townhouses was that the previous iteration was preferred, but it still works at the now proposed 30 ft. 3 in.

The relationship to 54th Avenue remained a concern to one Panel member but it was acknowledged there is likely no alternative without a total rethink of the scheme. A concern was also expressed about the number of units which still have light wells, although, again, the problems of dealing with it were acknowledged. One Panel member questioned whether the roofs over the entrances to the parking garage might be more obtrusive than indicated. With respect to the landscaping, one Panel member suggested that something more robust for the fencing and porticos might fit better with the architecture.

One Panel member had a general concern about the sameness of the whole development and expressed regret that the opportunity has been missed to create a more distinct neighbourhood with a finer grain.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Leung noted there are seven parcels in this development and the first three parcels are somewhat different in expression than the two subject parcels now being considered. He said there has been an attempt to be somewhat distinct because they recognize the need to avoid a monotonous appearance.