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**URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES**

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**DATE:** April 18, 2001

**TIME:** 4.00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Committee Room #1, City Hall

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Walter Francel, Deputy Chair  
Lance Berelowitz (Item 1)  
Jeffrey Corbett (Items 1 and 3)  
Gerry Eckford  
Alan Endall  
Bruce Hemstock (Items 1 and 2)  
Richard Henry  
Joseph Hruda  
Jack Lutsky (Items 1 and 2)  
Maurice Pez

**REGRETS:**  
Tom Bunting, Chair  
Sorin Tatomir

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Rae Ratslef, Raincoast Ventures

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<b>ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING</b>
1. 875 Expo Boulevard
2. 771 Great Northern Way
3. 1000 Station Street

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|-------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Address: | 875 Expo Boulevard         |
| DA:         | 405676                     |
| Use:        | Mixed (8 storeys)          |
| Zoning:     | CD-1                       |
| Architect:  | Busby & Associates         |
| Owner:      | Pacific Place Holding Ltd. |
| Review:     | 1 <sup>st</sup>            |
| Staff:      | Ralph Segal                |
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**EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (3-5)**

- **Introduction**

Ralph Segal, Senior Development Planner, referencing a model, introduced the application for 875 Expo Boulevard. Information was provided regarding Council's approval of a re-zoning for the site to change residential to commercial floor area. Mr. Segal discussed the project in the context of the surrounding neighbourhood and relayed details concerning the approved density for the site that the applicant intends to achieve in phases in response to market demand.

Members were further informed that the applicant is in negotiations with a retailer concerning the development of a 4,300 sq ft component of the site that, if achieved, will fill in the courtyard area to the plaza level. The applicant would propose to design this area to achieve an acceptable interface with the Terry Fox Plaza, to incorporate the bridge ramp area, and to reference the under-bridge environment.

Mr. Segal discussed the conditions of the re-zoning approval, particularly pertaining to the design of the south corner of the building, which is on axis with the Cambie Street Bridge, and how it presents itself to oncoming traffic. Panel Members were also asked to comment on whether the model reflects an appropriate dimension for the build up portion to be set back, whether it should be set-back further to create more of a setting for public art, or whether it should be designed more in a Yaletown context.

Comments were also sought regarding the public open space design of the application and concerning the proposed treatment for the above-grade parking.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments**

Michael McCall, Peter Busby & Associates, and Andy Croft, The PCI Group, joined the Panel for consideration of this item.

In response to questions from the Panel, the applicant discussed the public art plan for the site design noting that the model reflects the approximate size of the significant art piece that would be placed at the bridge head. The Panel was informed that this would be the first piece of a possible number of pieces that would be in the plaza as part of a theme and the possibility of continuing the art form into the restaurant planned for that corner was discussed.

The applicants relayed the principles behind the programming of Phases 1 and 2 and information was provided on the semi-private and public open space areas on the site and concerning their anticipated uses. Further comments related to the materials and finishes proposed for the building to tie together the old and new elements of its design.

*The Panel reviewed the model and posted materials.*

- **Panel's Comments**

With respect to the building's southwest corner and its view from the Cambie Street Bridge, Panel members commented on the importance of this view corridor and stressed the need for a strong public art and architectural element on that corner. It was generally agreed that what was shown on the model was weak and open-ended, that it did not achieve a key entry-way into the City, and that insufficient information had been presented concerning its design. Several suggestions were made for the corner's improvement, including incorporating both architectural and public art elements in its design and making it more inviting to the public at street level.

Various members indicated that it would have been helpful to have more information concerning the design of the gap and the semi-private triangular space above so that there would be some level of comfort that there is an alternative design in the event that negotiations with a retailer for use of the area not successful. Concerning the design as presented, it was suggested that there is far more richness of opportunity and choice that could happen at street level, and it was noted that the soil depth should be adequate enough to allow retrofitting for future tenants. Concerns were also expressed regarding the lack of information provided regarding the applicant's intention with respect to Phase 2 and how it will integrate with Phase 1.

Panel members generally supported the simple and strong massing and approach to the building expression. However, one member commented that the top base is a little awkward in the application of the cornice and that a simpler more robust frame would be a better reference to the neighbourhood. Another member commented that the height of the building along Beatty Street will impact the character of the street so more setting back from Beatty Street may be appropriate.

- **Applicant's Response**

The applicant, in response to Panel members' concerns regarding the lack of information provided concerning the intentions for the gap, advised that details of negotiations with a retailer for the area could not be disclosed at this time. Concerning Phase 2, the applicant advised that it is a money, per forma and leasing issue and that the applicant is not in a position to build Phase 2 at this time but will be coming back with a development permit at a later date with detailed plans. It was clarified that phasing has always been discussed as part of the re-zoning for this site.

Regarding the site's southwest corner, it was originally intended that a portion of the public art piece would be connected to Phase 2 and that this was part of the problem in finalizing its design at this time. It was noted that the applicant has dedicated their entire public art budget to ensuring the significance of the corner. With respect to the art being engaged or not engaged, discussions are underway to create a normalized sidewalk along Smythe Street, to create a larger plaza on the corner and the applicant agreed that the building could step back to define a clear space for the art.

As a final point of information, the Panel was informed that the building's articulation is in direct response to a request for this from the client and tenant, however, the applicant felt that the cornices and articulation are appropriate to the building and noted that there is precedent in the area for this type of treatment.

2. Address:	771 Great Northern Way
DA:	405679
Use:	Office (2 storeys)
Zoning:	CD-1
Architect:	Ledcor Industries Ltd.
Owner:	360 Pacific (Canada) Ltd.
Review:	1 <sup>st</sup>
Staff:	Scot Hein

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-1)**

Panel member Jeffrey Corbett declared Conflict of Interest and did not participate for review of this Item.

- **Introduction**

Scot Hein, Development Planner, introduced the application for 771 Great Northern Way, commented on the development in the context of the surrounding neighbourhood, and provided information on the status of the developing guidelines and policies for this area. Mr. Hein referenced the drawings to give a sense of what is anticipated overall in the False Creek flats and discussed long-range opportunities for the area.

Information was also provided on the re-zoning application for this site and concerning expectations for height, view corridors, landscape set-backs, the street wall, parking, and building massing and form. It was noted that generic/module building types are discouraged and that high quality design, materials and public domain landscaping are sought for this area. The Panel's comments at re-zoning were reviewed and pertained to addressing unrelenting massing, better accommodation of smaller high tech companies, 45 ft vs. 60 ft buildings, a central plaza and more technically advanced landscaping.

Mr. Hein advised that this proposal is a termination station for broadband fibre optics and is the first of two phases. Information was provided on the project's square footage, density and height and concerning discussions with the applicant to offer a parking relaxation given the building's uses.

Staff are generally very pleased with the application and its response to the developing guidelines for this area. The Panel's specific comments were sought regarding:

- overall proposed architectural quality of the project;
- the public realm quality and fronting streets' landscaping; and
- how the building marks the overall Finning development given its corner prominence.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments**

Carl Stewart, Murray MacKinnon, Ledcor Industries Ltd., and Thomas Lee, Ron Eagleton, IBI Group, and Jonathan Losee, Jonathan Losee Ltd. joined the Panel for consideration of this item.

The applicant commented that the building design, in addition to referencing the existing guidelines, takes into consideration the residences across the street and, with respect to the rooftop equipment, locates it to be at a distance from the residences both acoustically and visually. The final building will be filled more with equipment than people and is one of a number of buildings that the design team is doing as part of a trans-Pacific fibre optic communications cable network. A series of similar fibre optic communications terminal stations has been completed in four other international locations.

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*The Panel reviewed the model and posted materials.*

- **Panel's Comments**

The Panel generally agreed that the proposed building is quite unique but that it would not likely set the stage for other buildings in the precinct given its specialized use. One member suggested that a simpler, more disciplined approach to the massing would do a better job of announcing the corner and introducing the developments that will happen behind it.

With respect to the building form, most members agreed that it is interesting and unique with good quality of materials and that it interprets its program well. However, various members suggested that more transparency may have been interesting, that it may have gone too far in terms of its articulation and that a simpler, more rationale approach to its expression would be desired. It was also noted that the expression and treatment on the north and south walls could have been improved given their visibility. One member commented on the difficulty in discussing the design given that there is no neighbouring context to compare it with.

Concerning the application's landscaping, Panel members expressed no concerns regarding the street frontages but suggested that there is more opportunity for expression of the eastern lawn for use of the public or the building's employees. Several members felt that the landscaping is effective in softening the hard edges of the building, notwithstanding one member's suggestion that it could have pushed contemporary design and been a little more edgier. It was further suggested that the incorporation of high tech landscape and filtration systems to deal with storm water on site would be a great precedent to set in these industrial lands.

In considering the parking for this site, several members were concerned with the location of a portion of the parking at the front of the building on the most visible corner of the site. Alternately it was suggested that the corner be opened up a little to give it more prominence and that the rear parking be expanded and the visitor parking relocated there.

With respect to the front entrance of the building, it was suggested that it does not address itself to the street and could embrace the street and sidewalk more positively. At the same time suggestion was made that it seems strong enough for its purpose given that employees are likely the only ones to be coming to the site.

- **Applicant's Response**

The applicant advised that the building was designed in reference to the existing CD-1 guidelines for the area and from the first four buildings of this nature that have been designed for the client and the client's related positive feedback. It was clarified that the parking located in the front is visitor's parking and is located in close proximity to a meeting room at that end of the building.

3. Address:	1000 Station Street
DA:	405656
Use:	Mixed (7 storeys)
Zoning:	I-3
Architect:	Musson Cattell Mackey
Owner:	Schroeder Properties Ltd.
Review:	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Staff:	Scot Hein

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### **EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-0)**

Bruce Hemstock declared Conflict of Interest with respect to this Item and joined the applicant team for its presentation to the Panel.

- **Introduction**

Scot Hein, Development Planner, referencing a model, introduced the application for 1000 Station Street in the context of the surrounding neighbourhood. Information was provided on adjacent zoning and regarding FSR and height allowances. It was noted that no guidelines exist for I-3 and that high technology offices are an outright use. What is presented is an accurate reflection of the quality of the guidelines that have been developed by the applicant in consultation with staff.

Mr. Hein further commented on the Development Permit Board's review and approval of the preliminary application in August 2000 and discussed the conditions of approval at that time pertaining to the inner street design, public realm and architectural quality, and the scale of the development in terms of height and FSR.

It was further noted that the development is generally consistent with what was viewed and supported by the Panel at its preliminary stage and that Phase 1 is consistent with the expectations for the site. Mr. Hein, referencing the detailed design model, commented regarding the views in the courtyard that relate to circulation paths and regarding other design details that have been revised given the Board and Panel's previous comments and discussions with staff.

Staff feel that this development will somewhat set the bar for future developments and, as such, the Panel's advice was sought regarding:

- overall proposed architectural quality;
- how material changes at the facade massing breaks is handled in the transition;
- overall public realm and landscape quality focussing on the public and private amenity;
- relationship of the development to Central Station;
- configuration of the Thornton Park annex; and
- proposed surface treatment for streets and sidewalks.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments**

Mark Whitehead, Musson Cattell Mackey, Ken Grassi, Schroeder Properties Ltd., Bruce Hemstock, Phillips Waori Long, joined the Panel for consideration of this item.

Mark Whitehead, Musson Cattell Mackey, commented on the project's greenlink through the annex as a stepping stone to connect people with the Park, the SkyTrain station, and/or to the seawall and

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concerning the lanes that offer views into the courtyard and that break the architecture. Mr. Whitehead noted that each building has been designed to have an individual identity while relating to one another in their composition and in elements that connect between the buildings.

Panel members were informed that the architectural response to Central Station is to contrast the ornate, heavy stonework of the Station. Its cornice is picked up by the projecting third storey of the development and the towers are referenced by the upper floors. This was developed in consultation with the City from the idea of a street wall around Thornton Park to provide a strong sense of enclosure. Each block has separate entries but the buildings are interconnected for maximum flexibility for the future tenants.

Bruce Hemstock, Phillips Waori Long, discussed the project's landscaping that was planted to create some rhythm and pattern relating to a campus and in reference to the City's guidelines. The design includes the careful articulation of the square as the ultimate focus for the development, a linear green that connects the park to the seawall walkway, and the retention of the existing trees with flowering beds. With respect to the inner courtyard, Mr. Helmstock noted that it has been designed in order that the public can look into the private courtyard through a glass wall and space has been left along its edges to allow some flexibility for the buildings. Information was provided regarding the glass covered elements of the courtyard intended as more passive areas with gardens and water. Additionally, it was noted that building roofs are treated with paver patterns so that the residential overlook is more interesting.

In response to questions, additional information was provided on the project's vehicular circulation pattern, its retail component and the demarcation between it and the high tech areas, the estimated population for the site, limitation of office space to one third of the development, public benefits including linear connections, improvements to the park, and infrastructure improvements. Information was also provided regarding the phasing plan for the development and the positive response of neighbouring residents to the proposed development.

*The Panel reviewed the model and posted materials.*

- **Panel's Comments**

Generally, Panel members commented on this project as an exciting and interesting addition to the City. It was suggested that the concept of the circulation patterns and the street are very clear and simple and are reinforced by the architecture. Members commended the applicant on the high quality of the architectural design, the landscaping of the public realm, and concerning the mid-block breaks providing access into the middle of the development.

It was suggested that the size of the project is appropriate for its use but the applicant was encouraged to look at ways that it could be phased in to increase its viability. One member suggested that the roof-scape could be made more interesting and that the terrace areas could be expanded while another member suggested that the corner of each building should better define its individuality. Concerns were also expressed regarding the density of the project and the limited sunlight that will reach the courtyard given the height of the surrounding buildings.

One member expressed their discomfort with the one storey cantilever projection in reference to Pacific Station noting that it seems a little thin and needed strengthening. Another member suggested that a better response, rather than a jutted out lobby, would be some stepping, given that the present design makes it appear as the lobby for the whole annex.

With respect to the material changes at the facade, members generally agreed that the transition is skilfully handled and looks like a connection of buildings in the right proportion to the neighbourhood, notwithstanding one member's comments that there could have been less differences between the building materials.

Panel members commented on the great fun and interesting notions incorporated in the landscape design, including the greenway connection as a wonderful way to bring people through the project and provide access to the SkyTrain station. Appreciation was also expressed for the high level of finishes that it was felt would add to the neighbourhood.

Generally, members felt that the configuration of the Thornton Park annex worked very well, however, one member suggested that it be kept within the context of the park and that the eastern side be dedicated to the pedestrian circulation.

Concerning the proposed surface treatment for streets and sidewalks, Panel members were very much in support and favoured any increase in the quality of the public realm. Also, a member commented that the project's connection to False Creek, and access to the waterfront, seemed ill-conceived.

One member emphasized that it is a fundamental error for the City to maintain the concept of segregated zoning at this scale and noted that it had the potential for long-term disaster. The member further noted that approaches to sustainability, and incorporating work and live places are fundamental components of the future and commented regarding related safety concerns.

The Panel voted to unanimously support the overall project application.

- **Applicant's Response**

Mr. Whitehead discussed the animation of the street noting that once the project reaches its critical mass it will provide the eyes on the street because of the extended hours that the high tech community works. The non-traditional work schedule provides more reason for retail and entertainment components similar to Yaletown.

Regarding the courtyards and the height of buildings and shadowing the applicant has struggled with this but a study of the computer dynamic does show significant sunlight at various times. Additionally, the linear green is 100 ft wide and there is a lot of green space around the project that will provide sunny rest opportunities.

Mr. Whitehead noted that the significant lobby facing Central Station will be in the first building to be developed and has been conceived as a marketing space to advertise the development well into the future.

- **4. Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.