
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: April 2, 2003

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
*Walter Francl, Chair
Helen Besharat
Jeffrey Corbett (present for Item #2 only)
*Gerry Eckford
*Richard Henry
Reena Lazar
Stuart Lyon
Kim Perry
Sorin Tatomir
Ken Terriss

NEW MEMBERS (Non-Voting this meeting):

Mark Ostry
Jennifer Marshall
Eva Lee

REGRETS: *Joseph Hruda
*Maurice Pez
Bruce Haden (new member)
Brian Martin (new member)

*Retiring Panel members

RECORDING
SECRETARY: Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	2303/05 West 41st Avenue
2.	3089 Oak Street

The Chair introduced the new Panel members and announced that the next Chair and Vice Chair will be Stu Lyon and Helen Besharat, respectively. These appointments were endorsed by the Panel.

1. Address:	2303/05 West 41st Avenue
DA:	407335
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	C-2
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	F.P. Sly
Owner:	607767 BC Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Fred Sly
Staff:	Bob Adair

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (1-7)

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner, presented this application in the C-2 zone. The proposal is for a single storey residential addition (two dwelling units) to the top of a 2-storey commercial building on the north side of West 41st Avenue in Kerrisdale. The new residential units are accessed by a common stair and elevator that already serve the commercial floors below, and a new exterior stair is added at the rear. Council requires C-2 conditional applications to be reviewed by the Panel to ensure good architectural design. The proposed dwelling use is conditional and there may also be a height relaxation.

The advice of the Panel is sought in the following areas:

- general design, materials and detailing and whether the addition appropriately matches the existing character and materials of the existing building;
- height, noting a relaxation will probably be required for the small gable roof which would not qualify as an architectural appurtenance.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Fred Sly, Architect, briefly described the proposal noting he has tried to keep the character of the existing building in the addition. He noted the small gable element will require a height relaxation of about 3.5 ft. However, because it only extends to the depth of the livingroom of the front unit it will cause no shadow impact at the rear. He explained that the residential units are intended to be used by the owners of the building whose offices are below. Mr. Sly responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Comments:** The use and density were unanimously supported. Panel members liked the idea of adding residential on top of an existing commercial building and agreed that this is an ideal location to do it. However, the Panel had major concerns about the form of development and was unable to support the application at this time.

The residential units were considered to be very livable. I was suggested they could be improved with the introduction of more natural light from the lightwell.

The Panel had major concerns about the language of the building. It also recommended that the proposed materials be re-examined. It was thought that the existing structure has a certain modern elegance that is being seriously compromised by the proposed addition. While the addition may not be visible from the street below, it will be visible from buildings beyond. Something light and

modern was recommended. The use of rainscreen stucco was questioned, as well as the somewhat token amount of granite trim at the top. It was suggested that something other than granite might better complement the building below, e.g., metal cladding. The fenestration is also very foreign to the existing building.

Some Panel members thought the building could benefit from bringing the addition flush with the current building face.

A height relaxation for the pediment was not supported by the Panel. The pitched element was thought to be an unnecessary feature and it was suggested the existing peak could be removed without compromising the integrity of the building.

There was a recommendation from one Panel member that the hot tubs be deleted from the scheme because they will be very difficult to achieve.

A comment was made that the outdoor space for the west unit is not very useful. An alternative could be to set back a part of the building for outdoor space.

2. Address:	3089 Oak Street
DA:	407274
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	C-2
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Eco Design.ca
Owner:	651850 BC Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Brian Palmquist, Michael Apostoudes, Lena Chorobik
Staff:	Eric Fiss

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-1)

- **Introduction:** Eric Fiss, Development Planner, presented this C-2 application located on the west side of Oak Street, north of West 15th Avenue. The site is currently vacant and previously contained a gas station. The proposal is for a 4-storey mixed-use building containing retail on the ground floor and residential above (27units). The proposal is below the maximum allowable 40 ft.

The advice of the Panel is sought in the following areas:

- livability of the courtyard;
 - architectural quality and response to Oak Street context (form and massing, streetscape, materials);
 - landscape design;
 - appropriateness of the residential entrance.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Brian Palmquist, Architect, described the design rationale. He noted the proposal fits all the zoning criteria and a deliberate decision was made not to seek relaxations. The major challenge has been to create a building that is an attractive addition on a very visible site, noting they have had to deal with the S-curve in this location.
 - **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application. It was noted that this is a significant development because it will set a precedent for other redevelopment in the neighbourhood.

The Panel supported the residential entrance off Oak Street. Most neighbouring apartment buildings have entries off Oak Street and locating the entrance on the narrow strip on 15th Avenue was thought to be inappropriate. It was recommended that the residential entry could have greater emphasis and be more strongly differentiated from the commercial.

Careful attention should be given to the quality of the canopies. They were thought to be too light as currently shown. There also needs to be clarity about how the tenants will treat their canopies.

The Panel agreed the courtyard is a bit tight but can still be quite livable given it is secondary rooms that face onto it. One Panel member suggested reconfiguring the three end units and eliminating the setback at the lane in order to enlarge the courtyard. The Panel strongly recommended introducing some windows into the courtyard to provide some natural light in the stairwell. One Panel member suggested that greater investigation is warranted to line up the courtyard with the neighbouring building's courtyard. Most Panel members found the lack of alignment satisfactory.

I'm usually not a fan of stepping back the top floor but I think because of the large overhang it works quite well. There was a recommendation to increase the overhang for improved weather protection.

There was mixed response with respect to the setback on the lane. Some thought it was detrimental to the building and unnecessary while others appreciated the opportunity it provides for outdoor space for the residents.

The vista this building offers down Oak Street was thought to be quite interesting and appropriate. Several Panel members questioned whether the building should relate to the neighbouring Roger's building which has little merit. Others thought the building could respond a little better to the Oak Street elevation. There were a number of comments about the treatment of the corner and the clarity of the "drum". Several Panel members thought it could be improved, and some questioned whether it does the corner justice. It might also create some livability issues for the units behind the curved piece. It was also suggested that corner "drums" seem to be becoming a bit of a cliché.

The Panel liked the choice of materials and thought the intent of the guidelines were met in this respect. One Panel member questioned the board and batten vocabulary at the top of the building.

Some Panel members had a serious concern about the grille on 15th Avenue and strongly suggested that an alternative be found for dealing with the HVAC.

It was suggested the number and proportions of the windows needs to be revisited.

It was recommended that the materials be taken farther around the corner onto 15th Avenue so that it does not look like an applique. It was also suggested there could be opportunity for another street tree on 15th Avenue.

One Panel member questioned the interior unit layout, finding it unacceptable for the front door to open into the kitchen.

One Panel member recommended that consideration be given to changing this building from wood frame to non combustible steel frame.

There were some questions raised about the choice of the yellow brick in this context.

The Panel liked the forecourt which provides some relief between the building and the street. There were suggestions to reconsider the lawn. It was thought to be a good location for a coffee shop with outdoor seating. There were, however, major concerns that Engineering proposes to straighten the S curve which it considered would be a great loss to the city from an urban design point of view as well as to this building. Panel members strongly urged that everything possible be done to reverse this decision.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Palmquist thanked the Panel for the comments. He agreed the canopies should and will be appropriately designed, and light can be introduced from the courtyard into the corridors, consistent with code requirements. He said the drum expression has been an interesting challenge and they will work with the Panel's suggestions. He agreed the corner on the lane may benefit from having less or no curve. Mr. Palmquist said they do not know the anticipated timing of the proposed adjustments to the S curve. He suggested that one solution might be to create the best possible temporary urban space which may encourage the local neighbourhood to strongly oppose the loss of the curve. The colour palette can be revisited.