

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: April 20, 2011

TIME: N/A

PLACE: N/A

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Robert Barnes
Helen Besharat
Gregory Borowski
James Cheng
Jeff Corbett
Jane Durante (excused)
Jim Huffman
Geoff McDonell
Arno Matis
Scott Romses (Chair)
Norm Shearing
Alan Storey

GUEST PANEL:
Rick Cook
Jack Diamond
Richard Henriquez
Bing Thom

REGRETS:
Alan Endall

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 1290 Burrard Street and 1281 Hornby Street
-

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Romses called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There being no New Business the meeting considered the application as scheduled for presentation.

1. **Address:** 1289 Burrard Street and 1281 Hornby Street
DE: Rezoning
Use: To provide a mixed-use multi-tower development with a total FSR of 11.96 (825,500 square feet) and a maximum height of 534 feet.
Zoning: DD to CD-1
Application Status: RZ
Architect: IBI/HB Architects
Owner: Reliance Holdings Ltd. and Jim Pattison Development Ltd.
Review: First
 Jim Hancock , IBI/HB Architects
 Martin Bruckner, IBI/HB Architects
Delegation: Gwyn Vose, IBI/HB Architects
 Peter Kreuk, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects
 Jon Stovell, Reliance Holdings Ltd.
 Michael Lee, Jim Pattison Development Ltd.
Staff: Scot Hein and Dwayne Drobot

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (6-8)**Introduction:**

Karen Hoese, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a rezoning application for a mixed-use, multi-tower development. Ms. Hoese described the policy context noting the current zoning provides a base-line for development in the area. As well she noted that Council policy allows rezoning of the site with policies regarding greener, more sustainable buildings that public benefits.

Ms. Hoese noted that the maximum density under the current zoning is 5.00 FSR and a further 10% could be achieved through the transfer of heritage density to the site. The maximum height permitted under the current zoning is 300 feet. A view corridor, from the Granville Bridge to the Crown of Grouse, further limits the height at the corner of Burrard and Drake Streets. The proposal includes three towers; at 54-storeys, 36-storeys and 13-storeys with a maximum height of 535 feet.

Ms. Hoese noted that this area of Downtown South is a primarily residential area with a limited amount of commercial, institutional and cultural uses permitted. She noted that the proposal is for a mixed use development that will include:

- Along Hornby Street two residential towers are proposed, with a total of 540 units; one tower is immediately at the corner and the other mid-block.
- A 7-storey podium to include retail uses at grade; office uses on levels 2 through 4; and 79 units of rental housing and amenity space on levels 5 through 7.
- Along Burrard Street a 3-storey car dealership is proposed that includes an expansion of the existing dealership; a 13-storey office building; and a 2-storey retail building.

She noted that the proposed mix of uses is generally consistent with the zoning for the area.

Ms. Hoese described the enabling policy noting that through rezoning and with the objective of achieving additional public benefits, Council Policy for the Downtown South area allows for consideration of some additional height and density, subject to urban design analysis. In addition, the General Policy for Higher Buildings has identified the site as a higher building site, providing a “gateway” to mark the entry into the downtown from the Burrard Street Bridge. This policy anticipates a single prominent tower of 500 feet height, in axial alignment with the Burrard Bridge.

She also noted the Higher Building Policy requires both architectural excellence and a high level of sustainability. She quoted from the policy, noting a Higher Building must:

- *“establish a significant and recognizable new benchmark for architectural creativity and excellence, while making a significant contribution to the beauty and visual power of the city’s skyline”;*
- *It “should demonstrate leadership and advances in sustainable design and energy consumption” and*
- *“demonstrate and advance the city’s objective for carbon neutrality for new buildings, with a stated objective to achieve a 40-50% reduction in energy consumption from 2010 levels.”*

Ms. Hoese added that a Higher Building should *“provide a lasting and meaningful public legacy to Vancouver”*. This includes careful consideration of factors such as:

- the achievement of community benefits,
- the inclusion of activities and uses of community significance;
- the provision of on-site open space that contributes to the downtown network of green and plaza space; and
- minimization of adverse shadowing and view impacts on the public realm.

Regarding sustainability, Ms. Hoese stated that in addition to the Higher Building Policy, the requirements for sustainability for rezonings are subject to the Green Building Policy. This policy requires that rezonings achieve LEED™ Gold, with specific emphasis on optimized energy performance and that they certify upon completion of the project.

Ms. Hoese stated that all rezoning applications are also subject to the City’s Financing Growth Policy. The majority of the increase in land value that results from a rezoning is provided to the City in the form of a “community amenity contribution” (CAC). This CAC is used to provide public amenities and services that will meet the needs of new and existing residents, or to achieve other City-wide objectives. Ms. Hoese noted that the applicant has included a number of such benefits in their proposal, including the provision of a daycare and gallery space, secured rental housing, and a transfer of heritage density to the site. She added that this component of the application is still under review and will be assessed as the application progresses on the basis of local and city-wide priorities.

Ralph Segal, Senior Architect/Development Planner described the context for the site noting that Burrard Street is one of the city’s two ceremonial boulevards with Georgia Street being the other, and is also a gateway to the heart of the Central Business District from the Burrard Bridge. He also noted that Downtown South has a mix of towers and mid-rise buildings.

In addition to the Downtown South Guidelines, slim, well spaced towers and active, continuous three to seven storey podiums line the streets. The Higher Building Policy purses a more coherent urban design form for the Downtown peninsula, while still preserving approved view corridors by:

- Highlighting Georgia and Burrard Streets on the skyline with a few key sites identified for taller buildings;
- Marking key entry points to Downtown from Granville Bridge and the subject site from the Burrard Bridge;
- Identifies this site for a 500 foot tower on axis with the Burrard Bridge. This specific height was arrived at through testing of options, noting that 500 feet was the absolute maximum height possible without shadowing at the Equinox another key future development site at the northwest corner of Davie and Burrard Streets, where a public plaza at this sunny, shopping street corner and a generous setback on Burrard Street is being negotiated to enhance the public realm.

In addition to Vancouver's usual high standards for urban design and architecture, higher buildings under the Policy must achieve:

Architectural Excellence:

Mr. Segal noted that it is implicit in "earning" the additional height that there must be meaningful contribution to the beauty and visual power of the downtown skyline. For this specific site, the response to the Burrard Bridge axial view is the focus. The Policy also calls for minimizing negative impacts such as shadowing and view impacts on the public realm as well as providing on-site open space that contributes to the Downtown's Public Realm network.

Sustainability:

Mr. Segal noted that a 40-50% reduction in energy consumption from 2010 levels and minimum LEED Gold certification, all aimed at the City's objective for carbon neutrality in new buildings. He also noted that there is a question of what an environmentally-friendly, carbon-neutral building should look like and how energy-efficiency and green building design should be the driver of the building's aesthetics.

Mr. Segal described the proposal noting that the FSR is double the zoned density. The proposal is for a mixed-use (2/3 residential: 619 units including 79 market rental), office, retail and a car dealership. The proposal has a 550 foot tower, a 390 foot tower and a 7-storey podium on Hornby Street. The 13-storey office is limited in height due to the Granville Bridge View Corridor.

The project does not provide a public open space but proposes active uses (retail, restaurant, tower lobbies) and car showrooms on its three street frontages as well as an open Hornby Street fronting breezeway beneath the podium. The project is LEED™ Gold targeted, which, following through to certification, is the minimum requirement for a Rezoning. An extensive array of strategies are being pursued including solar control through design of the building skin, a particular challenge in Vancouver where the desire to maximize views has generated extensive glass. Also, heat recovery from the mix of uses and geo exchange are proposed.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

Use, Density and Form of Development:

1. Have the proposed uses and density been incorporated into an overall form of development that is well integrated into the surrounding context?

Architectural Excellence:

2. Does this proposal overall meet the test for Architectural Excellence set out in the Higher Building Policy? Has it "earned" additional height and its resultant prominent position on the skyline and Burrard Bridge axis?

Urban Design and Public Realm:

3. Will the proposed form and massing create positive streetscapes on the three fronting streets and a compatible "fit" with the immediate evolving context?

4. Does the proposed form of development and landscape architecture contribute to enhancing the Public Realm?

Sustainability:

5. Will the proposed strategies for Sustainability advance the City's objectives for carbon neutrality in new buildings, demonstrating innovation in Green Building design for Vancouver?

Mr. Segal took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Jon Stovell, Developer, thanked the Panel for their time and introduced the applicant team. He noted that it had been a challenging mixed-use program and had many discussions about how the program would be expressed on both the inside and outside of the buildings. He said it was important that the project responds to the site and that the different facades have different jobs. The critical importance of the ground plane and the shadow impacts were also considered. He said it is important the architectural expression be about the response to the environment and what the project can contribute to the community.

Jim Hancock, Architect, described the project noting the site is located at the corner of Burrard Street at Drake Street and wraps around to Hornby Street. It is currently the home to the Downtown Toyota Dealership. He also noted that both Hornby and Drake Streets currently have bicycle lanes. The context of the site is that it is largely free of view corridors except for one that restricts the height slightly on one of the towers. The bridge alignment from Burrard Street twists off 19% as it comes into the downtown core and they tried to develop a form of building that would reflect and respond to that alignment. Mr. Hancock described the context for the surrounding buildings noting that there are a number of rezonings excepted in the area. They are proposing and number of uses in the project including office, rental housing and retail. It was noted that applicant is working with the City in order to have a significant food store in the podium which would enhance the services to the neighbourhood. The Toyota dealership is proposed for the corner of Drake and Burrard Streets with a service centre in the underground parkade. Other uses include two residential towers, rental units with amenity space in the 7-storey podium and a children's daycare. On the lane there will be a co-op car component and an urban garden is planned for the roof of the dealership. Mr. Hancock described the sustainability strategy noting that they are planning to reduce the energy uses over the 2010 City's requirements.

Martin Bruckner, Architect, noted that the car dealership will wrap around from Burrard Street and Drake Street into the lane where there will be store fronts and access to the service department of the car dealership. Mr. Bruckner added that the daycare is in the sunniest corner of the site.

Gwyn Vose, Architect, presented a power point presentation for the applicant team.

Jon Stovell gave a summary of the presentation.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Design development for a more imaginative and innovative architectural expression to the Toyota dealership "jewel box", including sustainable features;
- Consider designing the expression of the landmark tower to have its own identity from the other two towers on the site;
- Consider making the corner of Burrard and Drake Street more public by incorporating either a public plaza or a stronger connection leading around the dealership into the courtyard;

- Consider additional vertical fins on the tower to improve the passive design;
- Design development to the 7-storey podium to reduce the mass, height and bulk;
- Design development to the podium wall on the courtyard (lane) side to bring more light into the public realm;
- Consider better expressing the sustainability features on the office tower;
- Design development to the corner tower's top for better sun access onto the corner of Davie and Burrard Streets;
- Consider conducting a wind study to test the thermal comfort on the sidewalks and public realm and as well an acoustical study given the proximity to Burrard Street;
- Consider the addition of public amenity spaces especially at the ground plane;
- Design development to add continuous weather protection along Burrard Street;
- Design development to the breezeway leading from the sidewalk to the courtyard to reduce the "canyon-like" feeling;
- Consider a stronger wayfinding strategy in the central courtyard and stronger clarity of pedestrian versus auto zones in this area.

Related Commentary:

The Panel did not support the proposal as they felt it did not meet the requirements of architecture excellence as defined under the Higher Building Policy.

The Panel complimented the applicant team for a thorough presentation but did not support the project. Several Panel members thought the project would have benefited from a non-voting Design Workshop with the Panel at the onset of the project. As well a number of the Panel thought there should have been a more detailed context model.

The Panel agreed that the addition of a significant food store would be a benefit to both the project and the community at large. A couple of Panel members suggested a more prominent location for the art gallery as it was not visible at street level.

The Panel felt that the density and height were appropriate for the site and that the extra "earned height and density" was approvable. However, some of the Panel felt that how the density was handled needed some work. For example, they felt the 7-storey podium made for shadow impacts on the public realm in the courtyard. They also thought that shadows from the highest tower would negatively impact the corner and future plaza at Davie and Burrard Streets.

Although most of the Panel liked the diversity of proposed uses for the site and the concept of integrating the laneway into the public realm, they were not satisfied with its proposed resolution. They felt there was a missed opportunity regarding how the interface between the auto/servicing and the pedestrian realms were handled.

The Panel also thought the public realm experience along Burrard, Drake and Hornby Streets needed improvement including a better interface with the Toyota showroom and the sidewalk. Several Panel members also suggested having a wider sidewalk and they also felt that the Hornby Street frontage was too permeable.

Most of the Panel felt the corner tower needed calming down as they felt there were too many ideas incorporated into the design. They felt the passive elements were the strongest and the most unique features of the tower and suggested the applicant strengthen those elements in order to create a memorable landmark identity. Also, several Panel members thought the "zipper balcony" treatment was visually distracting from the other design features on the corner tower.

The Panel had some concerns regarding the proposed design in terms of architectural excellence. They felt it should show a higher degree of design innovation, sustainable leadership, as well as promote and enrich a stronger public realm experience and community legacy. They felt the sustainability strategy needed to show more leadership through at least LEED™ Gold certification.

Applicant's Response:

Jon Stovell thanked the Panel for their comments stating that many of their suggestions had already been discussed with the design team. He agreed that a vast majority of the comments were achievable. He added that the architectural excellence is a condition of the rezoning and that Council could be told that the design was heading in the right direction and was achievable. Mr. Stovell added that the LEED™ Gold equivalent came from the rezoning but they would prefer to certify.

Mr. Bruckner said he took seriously what the Panel had said and thought a lot of the comments were good. He noted that energy modeling has taken into account the need for mitigation of slab edges and the buildings will meet 40-50% energy reduction based on 2010 standards. He said that they will be higher than LEED™ Gold certified noting the key is energy consumption.

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:22 p.m.