
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: April 22, 2009

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Mark Ostry, Chair
Richard Henry
Bruce Haden
Oliver Lang
Steve McFarlane
Gerry Eckford
Jane Durante
Douglas Watts
David Godin

MEMBER OF THE HERITAGE COMMISSION (2nd Item Only):

Kim Maust
Marian Brown
Andre Lessard
Cheryl Cooper
Karen Jarvis
Charlene Krepiakevich

REGRETS:

Martin Nielsen (UDP)
Vladimir Mikler (UDP)
Maurice Pez (UDP)
Steve McFarlane (UDP)
James Burton (Heritage Commission)
Richard Keate (Heritage Commission)
Denise Cook (Heritage Commission)
Judith Hansen (Heritage Commission)
Charlotte Murray (Heritage Commission)

RECORDING

SECRETARY: Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	4620 Main Street
2.	Historic Area Height Review Workshop

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Ostry called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There being no New Business the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 4620 Main Street
DE: 412763
Description: To construct a 4-storey mixed-use building containing 2 levels of underground parking, ground floor commercial and dwelling units above on this site.

Zoning: C-2
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Adab Architects Inc.
Owner: Trafalgar Enterprises
Review: First
Delegation: Fred Adab, Adab Architects Inc.
Mark Van der Zalm, Van der Zalm + Associates Inc.
Raaj Baga, Trafalgar Enterprises
Bill Kangura, Mechanical Consultant
Damien Crowell, Pottinger Gaherty Environmental Consultants

Staff: Marie Linehan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Marie Linehan, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a 4-storey commercial and residential building, with underground parking accessed from the lane with two commercial units at the ground floor and three storeys of residential above. The entry for the residential units will be on East 30th Avenue. As well there are two adjacent townhouse units. Exterior cladding materials are brick, hardy-panel, metal cladding at enclosed balcony projections with a steel and glass canopy and architectural concrete at the lane elevation.

Ms. Linehan described the context for the area noting Clarkdale Motors and the adjacent zoning district for single-family houses.

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

Comments from the Panel on the overall design with particular regard to how the corner conditions are handled:

- At the exterior corner, there is an inset entry angled toward the street with brick above. The Panel was asked to comment on that relationship, and the extent of solid wall to glazed. There are opportunities for views north along the Main Street corridor.
- At the inside corner at the lane, staff are looking to relax the height about 4' to allow for the 2-storey townhouses. The Panel was asked to comment on the treatment of the lane elevation which is quite visible from the street, as well as the corner detail with the concrete fin wall extending from the lane elevation. Staff were also looking for comments on the recessed nature of the townhouses with an overhang above.
- Comments from the Panel on the use of hardi-panels continuing from the upper storey to the third storey volume at the rear which is quite visible from the residential neighbourhood.
- Comments were also requested on the continuous aluminium and glass guardrail detail.

Ms. Linehan took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Fred Adab, Architect, further described the proposal. He said he hoped the proposal would help to improve the neighbourhood. The property has a slope along Main Street and as a result there have been some difficulties in transitioning the brick with the hardy panel. The zoning requirement on the 4th floor has helped to create a design which is horizontal along with vertical elements in the bay windows that gives more scale to the design. The colour palette for the building includes a light yellow colour on the hardy panel with a light grey brick veneer.

Mark Van der Zalm, Landscape Architect, noted that landscaping is not extensive on the project but is an important part of the sustainability objectives with the use of an eco friendly system. There are three existing street trees that will be retained. Mr. Van der Zalm described the various proposed plant material for the project. The roof garden will have some trees and a drain structure that will capture rain water as irrigation is not proposed for the project.

Damien Crowell, Environmental Consultant, described the sustainability features which will include passive design, low-e glazing on the western façade and using highly efficient mechanical systems.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Increase the articulation on the northeast corner;
 - Consider more brick on the building at the lane;
 - Consider design development to the units for better liveability;
 - Use more vibrant colour on the building;
 - Design development to the angled entry door; and
 - Further design development of the public space.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a successful background building for C-2.

The Panel thought the applicant presented an overall well designed building that had some challenges within the zoning bylaw. They felt the northeast corner of the building needed more articulation to open up the building. They suggested the corner at the lane could have some brick and more glazing as it is a prominent corner. The Panel noted that Main Street has a history of brick construction and several Panel members thought the general balance of solid and glazing was successful on the project.

The Panel supported the height relaxation. Several Panel members thought the units could be more liveable. The Panel also thought the applicant needed to address the colour as they felt it was too muddy with one Panel member stating that the applicant need to add a vibrant colour so that the building looked good on rainy days. Another Panel member encouraged the applicant to include something more abstract for the building to have a presence in the urban environment. A couple of Panel members thought the angled doorway didn't work and suggested it could be an indentation in the building. The Panel had a mixed reaction to the use of hardy panel. One Panel member noted that detailing of the guard rail was important for the architecture of the building and needed to be a higher quality.

Regarding the landscaping, one Panel member was concerned that irrigation wasn't being installed and thought the landscape would suffer even if there was a contract with a landscape or gardening company. It was also suggested that the outdoor space be made more useable by adding a trellis and benches for a more interesting space that the

residents would use. Also, the two suites with patios would benefit from a glass railing to let light into those suites since they are on the north side of the building. Several Panel members thought the public space needed to be more habitable and felt there wasn't a sense of a program with one Panel member noting the lack of a sign band on the building. One Panel member thought the roof should have access or perhaps a green roof.

Regarding sustainability, the Panel applauded the applicant for pursuing LEED™ Silver equivalency.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Adab thought all the Panel's concerns are achievable.

2. Address:	Historic Area Height Review Workshop
DE:	N/A
Description:	Review of height, form, scale and typology considerations for the downtown area east of Richards Street, including Gastown, Victory Square, Chinatown, Hastings and Main Streets corridors. The workshop session will focus on the materials that will be shared with the public.
Zoning:	N/A
Application Status:	N/A
Architect:	N/A
Review:	First
Delegation:	Brent Toderian, Director of Planning Jessica Chen, Senior Planner, DTES Tanis Knowles, Planner, DTES Neighbourhoods Group Marco D'Agostini, Senior Heritage Planner
Staff:	Scot Hein

EVALUATION: NON-VOTING (Joint Meeting between UDP and the Heritage Commission)

- Introduction:** Brent Toderian, Director of Planning, introduced the workshop noting that staff would not be presenting a completed piece of work as the presentation was at the beginning of a public engagement process. Jessica Chan and her team have already begun the process with the public which is an urban design exercise looking at the value of heritage. The review was implemented because of a number of tall building proposals that the Planning Department had looked at over the last couple of years. It culminated in a Council motion and was added as an action item under the EcoDensity work program by the past Council to consider looking at significantly higher buildings in the historic area of the city. The community has expressed some concerns regarding adding height and density and as a result a motion was re-crafted to adjust the values. The new motion will “look at opportunities for height in the area that didn’t fundamentally damage or harm the historic scale and character of the area”.

The purpose of the additional height and corresponding density is to achieve public benefits. One of the public benefits is the landing of heritage density from the Heritage Density Bank. There is a challenge around the size of the Heritage Density Bank and staff are looking for ways to preserve the potential of onsite heritage.

Additional public benefits would include everything from affordable housing, social housing, daycare, and the kinds of amenities that multiple communities might want in order to make this part of the city more liveable. There are all sorts of public benefits that could be achieved through height and density while making sure the appropriate heritage scale is preserved.

Mr. Toderian concluded by saying that Council had asked staff to peruse a National Heritage designation as well as looking at the possibility of an UNESCO Heritage Density while also considering height and density for the area.

Jessica Chan, Senior Planner, noted that the heritage area is the birth place of the city and is rich with history. As part of the planning program for the Downtown Eastside (DTES) the historic area height review looks at how growth and development is managed in the area while maintaining the overall character and scale. Another objective is to make sure that potential new developments resulting from the review will be able to help generate public benefits such as affordable housing, heritage conservation and social/cultural infrastructure that will help support the current and future community. The approach of

the review starts from understanding and respecting the function of the community as it is home to many low-income residents. Given the complexity of this historic area, planning staff have always taken an integrated approach to planning in the DTES, looking not only at community issues but also land use. This particular review is trying to address and have a public discussion with the issue of built form and in particular how sustainable rehabilitation of heritage buildings owned by Chinese benevolent societies can become contemporary housing.

Ms. Chen noted that staff have also looked at new construction that would be suitable for heritage, particularly in Chinatown. They have engaged consultants to help look at the urban design for possible heights above current policies and appropriate locations for the taller buildings. They are in the middle of the process with public consultation and will be talking to different advisory bodies and community groups. The community workshops will start on April 23rd with three public workshops planned in the neighbourhood that will be open to the general public. As well, two open houses are planned. Ms. Chen stated that they on having the process concluded in May and then will report back to Council with their recommendations in July.

The result of this review will form the Chinatown Community Plan that will include the revision of the zoning and design guidelines as well as how planning staff will respond to the taller building and rezoning inquiries in the future for the historic area.

Tanis Knowles, Planner, showed a Power Point presentation which was an abbreviated version of all the material available. The presentation will also been shown at the community workshops.

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

- What is the urban design role of this part of the city with respect to the downtown, citywide and perhaps even regional context?
- Is the lynch approach a reasonable basis to assess locational criteria, and if so, should it supersede our best urbanism practices including shadowing and public view impacts specifically?
- What are the most appropriate built form strategies for intensification without compromising the integrity and identity of this part of the city? What would be the tipping points?
- How fast/slow should we go?

The staff team took questions from the Urban Design and Heritage Commission Panels.

• **Related Commentary from the Urban Design and Heritage Commission Panels:**

- The Panel had extensive concern regarding the height of the significant tall buildings and thought the 120 foot height was the tipping point. There was a great deal of concern and non-support for high tower-like buildings in the historic districts in general and as presented in the approach to “marker” sites as places for significant height and density.
- The Panel noted that there is a certain strength in the neighbourhood currently and were concerned that could be lost.
- The Panel also thought there was still a lot of possible redevelopment that would respect the heritage aspects of the neighbourhood.
- The Panel also noted that Chinatown and Gastown have international recognition as a heritage site and changing the height could change that recognition.
- The Panel felt that some sort of sensitive intervention that would define the open space in the area was required with one Panel member suggesting there should be more public space above grade with either roof terraces or balconies.

- It was suggested that to preserve heritage the adjacencies also needed to be taken into consideration.
- One Panel member suggested a scale model be completed to show the actual height and density for the proposal. Jessica Chan noted that a model is being developed but was not completed in time for the presentation.

Website:

<http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/hahr/studyarea.htm>

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.