

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: April 22, 1998

TIME: N/A

PLACE: N/A

PRESENT: Joyce Drohan (Chair)
Sheldon Chandler (excused Item #1)
Patricia Campbell
Per Christoffersen
Geoff Glotman (not present for #1)
James Hancock
Joseph Hruda
Peter Kreuk
Sean McEwan
Jim McLean
Norman Shearing

REGRETS: Peter Wreglesworth

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

Planning Commission Invitation

The Vancouver Planning Commission invites members of the Urban Design Panel to attend its May 6, 1998 meeting for a presentation by the environmental consultant for Southeast False Creek and preview of the draft report on Sustainability. The Planning Commission meets at 12:00 pm, Wednesday, May 6, 1998 in Committee Room #1.

Agenda Packages

The Panel requests applicants' submission drawings to be in 11 x 17 format.

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	5605 Victoria Drive
2.	1199 West Cordova Street/501 Bute Street
3.	1575 West 6th Avenue

1. **Address: 5605 Victoria Drive**
Use: Mixed (2 - 6 storeys, 84 units)
Zoning: CD-1 Text Amendment
Application Status: Rezoning
Architect: James Cheng Architects
Owner: Westbank Projects Corp.
Review: First
Delegation: James Cheng, Dawn Guspie, Ian Gillespie
Staff: Lynda Challis/Ralph Segal

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (2-5)**Introduction:**

The Rezoning Planner, Lynda Challis, presented this application to amend the text of an existing CD-1, to increase FSR from 0.3 to 1.28 to allow redevelopment that would include a 6-storey residential building on 41st Avenue, two 2-storey commercial buildings facing a central surface parking area on Victoria Drive, and a 2-level parkade on the northwest portion of the site. The site includes two parcels. Ms. Challis briefly reviewed the site's rezoning history. In 1997, the entire site was rezoned to CD-1 with the development potential limited to 0.3 FSR, which was the density of the then existing Safeway store on the site. It also permitted all uses permitted under C-2 except for the residential uses. At the time, it was recognized this was likely an interim rezoning. The Safeway store is now vacant and the remainder of the site is occupied by surface parking. A development permit has now been approved to allow London Drugs to occupy the former Safety store. The site falls within the boundaries of the Kensington-Cedar Cottage community visioning program which is not yet completed.

The proposed rezoning would allow partial redevelopment of the site with retention of the large commercial store. An L-shaped residential building is proposed on 41st Avenue, stepping west to east from 3 storeys adjacent to the RS-15 neighbourhood to 6 storeys adjacent to the commercial lane. A portion of the building also extends on top of the proposed new London Drugs. The building generally conforms to the requirements for residential development under C-2 zoning, although the height exceeds the 12.2 m (40 ft.) which is permitted outright. Two small 2-storey commercial buildings are also proposed. The applicant is offering 150 m² of space in one of these buildings for a crime prevention office. The applicant is also proposing to provide a small kiosk which would be available for the use of the Neighbourhood House. High quality finishing is proposed for the surface parking area fronting onto Victoria Drive. A 2-level open air parkade is proposed in the northwest portion of the site to serve the commercial uses. Staff support the proposed residential and commercial uses and the proposed overall density. There are, however, concerns about the open air parkade and its potential visual and traffic impacts on the adjacent residential neighbourhood. Staff also have concerns about crime and safety aspects of the parkade. The Panel's advice is sought on this issue, as well as comments on the Victoria Drive streetscape.

Ralph Segal, Development Planner, briefly reviewed the built form aspects of the proposal noting that given the limitations of this site staff are generally supportive of the scheme and believe it holds some good potential for the Victoria Drive frontage for the long term future. It also offers a good transitional response to the adjacent RS zone.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

James Cheng, Architect, explained that public information meetings have been held as well as meetings with local business associations. The public response to earlier high rise options was a preference for 18 - 20 storeys but this was not supported by the Planning Department. The main reason for the absence of streetwall on Victoria Drive is to ensure the exposure and survival of London Drugs. In response to the neighbourhood's serious concerns about the services lost with the

closure of the Safeway store, the intention is to replace most of the services previously offered by Safeway in the new London Drugs, with the remainder provided by the other retailers. The neighbours also indicated a preference for at grade parking and a Granville Island-type market environment. The major anchor London Drugs tenancy is also strongly supported by the local retailers. The intent is to create a small village-like shopping centre as a community focus. The proposed parking is also in direct response to input from the neighbourhood whose major concern related to employee parking in the lane and local residential streets. For this reason, parking for an additional 27 cars is proposed in the parkade. As well, there is no vehicular access via the single family neighbourhood. Mr. Cheng noted the intent is to retain all the existing trees at the rear of the old Safeway store. Materials are intended to be brick combined with some timber and metal to create a Granville Island-type atmosphere.

Panel's Comments:

After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel did not support this application. Panel members supported the use and thought the project had good potential but had serious reservations about the built form and the general distribution of the massing on the site. The proposed density was considered appropriate and there was one suggestion that it could go higher. Several Panel members said they found the scheme to be quite clever.

There were serious concerns expressed about the proposed residential addition over the future London Drugs store. The livability of these units relating to their adjacency to the tar and gravel roof needs careful consideration. It was recommended that at the very least there needs to be extensive landscape treatment on the roof to improve the outlook for residents. There were strong suggestions made to redistribute the massing, relocating the residential units above London Drugs to the parkade at the north end of the site.

There was general consensus that the courtyard is an important catalyst for this project which, given the right treatment, could become a very appropriate model for a street such as Victoria Drive. However, it needs significantly more landscaping, and extending the paving treatment across the lane to the London Drugs forecourt was strongly recommended. The amount of landscape was considered to be very minimal as proposed. The Panel generally thought the pedestrian environment throughout the site needed to be of much higher quality. To achieve the Granville Island-like atmosphere being sought there needs to be many more trees on the site, with suitable conditions to promote their growth. Concerns were expressed about the potential viability of the trees proposed to be retained close to the parkade.

The lane was considered to be a very important part of this project, calling for high quality treatment, including street trees, noting this lane is becoming a secondary street in the community. A greater setback at the lane was strongly recommended.

The lack of permeability of the site from the westerly neighbourhood was questioned by one Panel member who also strongly recommended that weather protection be provided along the opening on Victoria Drive.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Cheng assured the Panel the trees can be saved. He explained they have explored with staff the potential of putting housing on the north portion of the site. Concerns relate to potential shadowing on the single family homes. There is also concern about livability for residents facing the single family garages along the lane. With respect to access to the site from the neighbourhood, the neighbours have made it very clear they do not want penetration from the west side, for safety and security reasons. Finally, Mr. Cheng noted the London Drugs building is designed in such a way that it can be redeveloped without destroying the residential above.

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2. **Address: 1199 West Cordova Street/501 Bute Street**
DA: 403135
Use: Retail/Services (Harbour Green Cafe and Rest rooms)
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Besharat Friars
Owner: City of Vancouver
Review: First
Delegation: Helen Besharat, Ben Barron, Bruce Hemstock
Staff: Mike Kemble
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

Introduction:

The Development Planner, Mike Kemble, presented this complete application which is before the Panel because a Rezoning Text Amendment is in process to permit an increase in the amount of retail/service area in Sub-Area 4 of Coal Harbour. The proposal is for a small cafe and public washrooms (total area approx. 2,000 sq.ft.) to be located under the escarpment in Harbour Green Park. The site is City-owned and the proposed facilities will be operated by the Park Board. The park design concept has already been approved by the Park Board. Servicing will be via the waterfront walkway. Materials include granite facing on the main promontory wall, precast concrete panels, and metal and glass canopies. The main area in which the advice of the Panel is sought relates to how well the facilities are integrated in the park design.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Helen Besharat, Architect, described the project and proposed materials and Bruce Hemstock, Landscape Architect, briefly described how these facilities are intended to fit into the park. He noted the general theme of the new park is that it is to be very much an urban space.

Panels Comments

After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application and generally found it to be a very elegant scheme.

The Panel generally appreciated the classical form approach but strongly suggested that it lacks an element of whimsy that would be appropriate for this prime waterfront location. The English Bay bathhouse was cited as a good example in this regard. The canopy detailing may offer some opportunities for softening.

Some Panel members felt it was a missed opportunity not to have a lively, attractive restaurant in this location, given its spectacular views and potential clientele from the 5,000 new residents immediately behind. A lively, well-lit restaurant was thought to be ideal for this site, especially in terms of creating a safe and active place at nighttime.

Consideration should be given to creating a different expression to the two components of this scheme, with the restaurant receiving much greater priority than the washrooms. It is unfortunate the restaurant does not take full advantage of the view. It could benefit from being more a part of the outdoor space as opposed to being walled off from it, and with a much more free flowing public access. Several Panel members thought the 30-inch high sills should be reconsidered.

Applicant's Response:

Ms. Besharat thanked the Panel for its comments which will all be explored. With respect to the canopies, she said they will try to make them as light as possible.

3. Address: 1575 West 6th Avenue

DA: 403066

Use: Artist Live/Work Studio

Zoning: C-3A

Application Status: Complete

Architect: Milkovich, Erickson

Owner: Hillside Developments Ltd.

Review: First

Delegation: Arthur Erickson, David Siverson, Grant Machern

Staff: Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)**Introduction:**

The Development Planner, Mary Beth Rondeau, presented this application for an artist live/work studio building on West 6th Avenue between Granville and Fir Streets, close to the Fir Street off ramp. The proposal is the second phase of an existing artist live/work rental building. The proposal generally complies with the massing envisaged in the C-3A guidelines. Proposed density is 3.0 FSR which is the maximum that can be earned in the C-3A zone. In this Burrard Slopes sub area of C-3A the use is determined to be predominantly residential, and staff consider the proposed use to be appropriate given the quasi residential nature of artist live/work studios. The proposal responds well to the adjacent bridge deck. Proposed materials are heavy timber with a flush mounted exterior glass system and steel shadowing devices. The Panel's advice is sought on the street edge condition, privacy of some of the units, and shadowing. In general, staff consider this is a unique development and seek the Panel's overall advice on the proposal.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Arthur Erickson, Architect, described the proposed roof treatment which includes a boxed hedge edging that will be seen from the bridge deck. There is also provision for some tenant planting, and brick paving throughout. The inner paved terraces are intended for community projects and have planting in movable containers. Mr. Erickson described the proposed building materials, noting the rough wood frame will be visible behind the glass. Black steel will be used for connections and the mullions. The elevator tower, not yet designed, will also probably be glass.

Panels Comments

After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application and congratulated the applicant on an exceptional proposal. The Panel appreciated the overall strength and clarity of the project as a pure urban design statement.

Some concern was expressed about the livability of some units, particularly at the lower level. The close proximity of the adjacent building was noted as an area of concern but most Panel members felt there were options for dealing with the privacy issues.

Noise attenuation will need careful consideration, particularly for the suites immediately adjacent to the bridge deck.

The landscape plan was supported and the applicant was urged to ensure the landscape complements the purity and simplicity of the building. Sculptural artwork displays on the roof would also add to the visual experience for people driving over the bridge.

The Panel found the building's contribution to the streetscape to be very positive. There was also a recommendation to make it even more generous in order to provide opportunities for art display at the street level.

The height at the rear of the building was not considered to be a serious issue.

Overall, the Panel found the proposal a welcome departure from some recent projects in the area. The re-establishment of the industrial character was strongly endorsed. It was assumed that all the technical issues, especially structural, will be adequately addressed.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Erickson agreed it would be very nice to incorporate some art display at the street edge but it will not be possible to move the building back. He added, his client is to be commended for pursuing a strong interest in alternate housing and mixed use projects such as this which make a positive contribution to the city.