

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** April 26, 2006

**TIME:** 4.00 pm

**PLACE:** Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Walter Francl, Chair (not present for Item 1)  
Margot Long (Chair Item 1, excused Item 2)  
Albert Bicol (items 2-4)  
Shahla Bozorgzadeh  
James Cheng (arrived at 4:40 p.m.)  
Eileen Keenan  
Bill Harrison  
John Wall  
Peter Wreglesworth  
C.C. Yao

**REGRETS:** Nigel Baldwin  
Tom Bunting

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Debbie Kempton  
\*Carol Hubbard, Raincoast Ventures

\*Not present at the meeting. Minutes completed from audio recording.

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	8440 Cambie Street (Marine Drive)
2.	201 West 2nd Avenue (Murphy's Yard)
3.	1695 Main Street
4.	102 - 160 West 1st Avenue (Playhouse)

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1. Address:	8440 Cambie Street (Marine Drive)
Use:	Transit Station
Application Status:	Workshop
Architect:	VIA
Owner:	InTransit BC/RAVCO
Review:	First
Delegation:	Allen Parker, Jane Durante, Dale Rickard
Staff:	Anita Molaro, Donny Wong

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- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Planner, presented this application for a transit station at Marine Drive and Cambie Street and briefly explained the City's role which is to provide advice on issues relating to the alignment, stations, station entries and connectivity.

The City has urban design objectives for the station design and seeks the advice/comments of the Panel on whether the proposal achieves the following:

- a strong sense of publicness conveyed through the highest quality architecture that also highlights access and openness;
- good connectivity/accessibility for transit users and pedestrians;
- a safe environment both within and around the station;
- high quality public realm interface with high amenity sidewalk areas with active edges providing pedestrian interest and weather protection; and
- allows for future commercial/retain opportunities within or near the station.

The Marine Drive Station has three components including an elevated station, a bus loop (south side of property) and portal. The portal comes out at grade south of 64th Avenue, becomes a side-by-side track and then elevated over Marine Drive to the elevated station. The station will straddle the ICBC site and Cambie Street. Currently there is low rise residential across the street (RT-2), north across Marine Drive is mixed use retail/residential and immediately in front of the portal are duplexes (RT-1). To the west is CD-1 townhouse development and on the corner is a gas station at Marine Drive and Cambie Street. ICBC is reassessing its site and will be providing some pre-build elements, most importantly a pedestrian access from Marine Drive along the east side of the station fronting their property. There is a fire lane adjacent to the portal which is a requirement.

It is important that there is no net loss of green space, particularly on the Cambie boulevard and to keep this stretch as a gateway to Vancouver.

Issues for this station in addition to principles mentioned:

- No net loss of green space for the median allows for it to be reshaped but need to account for any area lost;
  - Opportunity for the architecture of the station to represent not only Canada Line but as a gateway into Vancouver and its role as a "hub" at the south end of the city with the elevated station and the bus loop. This is the only elevated station in Vancouver as part of this line;
  - Provide advice on the architectural expression and opportunity this station has as an entryway/terminus of the Cambie Heritage boulevard and architectural treatment of its edges/fence for the portal;
  - Given the public nature of this kind of structure, the goal is to get the highest quality architecture.
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- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Allan Parker, gave a brief overview of the station. This is the only aerial station in the city of Vancouver. The Marine Drive station will have an elevated walkway from Marine Drive to the station entrance and will be designed and constructed by others as well as the vertical circulation elements from the bus loop up to the station entry and elevated walkway. The area underneath the platform and guideway is being considered for retail potential.

At grade level there will be service rooms housed in what will look like a glazed box. Material has not yet been decided but will be some kind of superior concrete block.

Jane Durante, Landscape Architect, talked about the mandate to look at location, the portal itself and how to make it less industrial looking for the community living which is adjacent to the site. The community wants the structure to be semi-transparent. They are looking at several approaches to landscaping two blocks of boulevard. Some suggestions have been to use the BC centennial tree which is the Dogwood. Looking to shield the trains to some degree.

It is necessary to find a way to enhance the part of the train going in and out of tunnel as the fence is only 18 inches away from the train. There are a couple of ideas on the table including the use of uprights of material and colour to get a rhythm or perhaps wave patterns of flat steel which would be attached to the fence. There is a small space to have some greenery, and one side of the portal might have vines, although that may be a bit of a security issue.

Donny Wong, Engineer (RAV Office), mentioned that the median will be narrowed quite a bit and the Cambie Heritage Group is in favour of keeping it but there will be a loss of half the median. The City is improving the area around the portal and looking to have pedestrian level lighting and making it more user friendly.

- **Panel Consensus:**
  - Pedestrian walkway alongside the portal is half the width of Cambie Street and should have a permeable surface;
  - Expression of this station and the portal is unique to the line and needs to be celebrated and of landmark quality;
  - Needs to be integrated into the Cambie corridor and the neighbourhood;
  - Some concern about the quality and standards of the architecture which needs to be followed all the way through - make it a landmark;
  - Station needs to create a neighbourhood;
  - Celebrate portal and connect to station with two different expressions;
  - Support for not taking away any more landscaping but to consider how to add greenery on the pedestrian side;
  - Have a roof element over portal;
  - Would not like to see chain link fence;
  - Station and arch quality needs to be lightened and needs to be more exciting making it more of a feature in the neighbourhood;
  - Some frustration that the portal is in the present location and the decision has already been made. From an urban design standpoint it is wrong location; neighbourhoods should be considered as a whole, not just from financial standpoint.
- **Panel's Commentary:**
  - This station will be compared to stations in Burnaby and should meet a high standard; would like to see the use of materials like glass, wood and metal;

- From the pedestrian side the landscaping needs to be as green as possible even breaking up the paving with grass;
  - Should have a strong architectural expression of the portal and terminus at Cambie Boulevard;
  - The station should care about people and how they get from the station to the bus;
  - Should celebrate the way the train comes out of the tunnel and would it be possible to have the roof line follow the shape of the grade;
  - The station detail is elegant but needs to be lightened;
  - Celebrate the portal and the way it connects to the station with two different expressions. One on the street side and another one on the pedestrian side;
  - More detail in expressing the function of the station and celebrating movement;
  - The station could be more engaged with the intersection and urban realm;
  - Give further consideration to the building forms and make them more interesting;
  - Reduce the bulk and have a more open and transparent building;
  - Make sure the station looks good in five years and isn't littered with garbage;
  - The approach to the station from the buses needs to be developed. Try to integrate escalator and arrival from buses in a more sympathetic way;
  - Some concern about the acoustical issues in the portal;
  - Opportunity for an animated edge;
  - Only put into the station what needs to be there;
  - This station is an opportunity to do something exciting;
  - Opportunity for a fire lane to make it green for pedestrian walking;
  - A critical aspect is to integrate into the Cambie corridor and the neighbourhood;
- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the Panel for its constructive input.

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2. Address:	201 West 2nd Avenue (Murphy's Yard)
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	M-2 to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning - SEFC Private Lands
Architect:	VIA
Owner:	Michael Overholt
Review:	First
Delegation:	Graham McGarva, Peg MacDonald, Chris Sterry
Staff:	Grant Miller, Mary Beth Rondeau

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)**

- **Introduction:** Grant Miller, Project Planner, referring to the context model, provided an overview of the Southeast False Creek area and briefly described the land use objectives of the ODP including anticipated building heights. A more residential character is anticipated for 1st Avenue with a transit line and bikeway along 1st Avenue as well. Mr. Miller described the use and massing of the proposal noting that the proposal follows the ODP in terms of use, form and density. The proposal seeks 3.5 FSR.

The Development Planner, Mary Beth Rondeau, focused on the form of development. Ms. Rondeau advised that building form reinforces the key concepts for South East False Creek. The Panel was asked to comment on the character of the widened public realm on the area adjacent to Columbia Street, the architectural resolution and conceptual form.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team reviewed the project in greater detail and responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Design development to the atrium space to open it up, and allow more sunlight in;
  - General concerns about the distribution of mass. There were suggestions to consider redistributing some density to Columbia Street and reworking the building heights, to break down the mass of the building from the park side.
- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel strongly supported this application. The applicant team was commended for their approach to sustainability. A Panel member encouraged the applicant to conduct a wind study for the atrium because it would be the perfect place for a wind tower. The Panel liked the opportunities for natural ventilation and the idea of sliding screens to address the west facing glass. The Panel also supported the proposed landscaping and use of water as a fence around the open space.

The Panel stressed the importance of ensuring that the atrium is not a dark space. The penthouse on top of the atrium blocks the light and compromises the parti. There were suggestions for further refinement to the expression of the facades noting that the southwest façade receives more sun than the northeast façade and therefore could have a dynamic façade with movable screening and the northeast façade could have less of a horizontal expression.

The applicant was asked to consider moving the children's play area to the northeast corner so that it would get as much afternoon sun as possible. One Panel member

encouraged the applicant to consider locating the pedestrian mews along the northeast side of the building in the same alignment as Cook Street which aligns with the pedestrian access to the park and the waterfront. There was some concern expressed that the widened public realm sets up the expectation that it is a park.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the Panel for their comments.

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3. Address:	1695 Main Street
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	M-2 to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning - SEFC Private Lands
Architect:	Chris Dikeakos
Owner:	Beedie Development Corporation
Review:	First
Delegation:	John Clark, Rod Maruyoma
Staff:	Grant Miller, Mary Beth Rondeau

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#### EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (0-9)

- **Introduction:** Grant Miller, Project Planner, referring to the context model, provided an overview of the Southeast False Creek area and briefly described the land use objectives of the ODP including anticipated building heights. It was noted the ODP also has strong objectives with respect to sustainability. Mr. Miller described the use and massing of the proposal and noted the proposed density of 3.5 FSR is consistent with the ODP. The built form comprises a 12-storey residential component and 7-storey residential building with commercial at grade. Initially the ODP anticipated a taller form at the Main Street edge with a 4-storey podium on Quebec Street but in order to improve access to light that has been flipped. Mr. Miller advised that there is a significant setback in anticipation of the continuation of the light rail line and bike route to the False Creek Flats.

The Development Planner, Mary Beth Rondeau, discussed the character changes for Quebec Street which will have a treed median and will become a domestic street with townhouses lining the curb. Ms. Rondeau noted that the variation from the ODP by flipping the higher massing from Main Street to Quebec Street is because Quebec Street is a more desirable location for a tower. A 6-8 storey form on Main Street will better follow the curve of Main Street.

Ms. Rondeau said that staff would support a stronger mid-block mass on 1st Avenue and asked the Panel to comment on the positioning of the masses.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team reviewed the project in greater detail and responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Consider pulling the residential lobby to the corner of Quebec Street and 1st Avenue with a possible courtyard entry there;
  - Consider flipping the courtyard to the south side for access to sunlight, thereby animating the south façade;
  - The railyard needs better expression. Consider expressing the rail yard alignment not as a road but as a mews and extend the sidewalk character through to Main and Quebec Streets;
  - Sustainability approaches and green roofs need further refinement;
  - Consider breaking up the massing of the lower tower.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously did not support this application. A separate vote was taken on the proposed tower location and the Panel supported the current tower location (6-3).

The Panel liked the intensive use of the roof tops although they felt that the taller roofs needed further consideration with respect to green roof strategies. The urban agriculture and shoreline landscaping received support; however several Panel members felt that the street level needed further development. It was recommended to look at the street level landscaping from a more urban and gritty perspective, taking into account that the proposed courtyard location will not receive much sunlight.

One Panel member expressed concerns about the long and narrow live/work units and advised that those units need to be generous in size to actually enable people to work there.

With respect to sustainability, it was recommended that the applicant study the overhangs on the south side to be more passively designed to allow sunlight in the winter and shade in the summer. The extended concrete patios create thermal bridging. It was suggested that the applicant consider using metal decks to thermally break the patios and add shade to the building.

Some Panel members expressed concern about the lack of south light for the lower units and suggested that a private garden for those units may compensate for that. There was a suggestion to express the 12-storey tower as a building on its own.

A Panel member recommended that the proposed exit stair at the corner of Quebec Street and the railway mews should be relocated. It was also suggested that the townhouses should be moved to 1st Avenue.

One Panel member thought there was too much density on the site and that this may not be an appropriate site for a tower. It was suggested to move the tower midblock which would open up light to the railway mews, and if possible, try to achieve the density without a tower form. There was also a suggestion to explore moving the density back and paralleling the railway mews.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant thanked the Panel for its comments and noted that the tower is oriented with respect to sight lines. The applicant team can achieve some of the Panel recommendations; however, they want to ensure that they are meeting the spirit and intent of the ODP Guidelines. The applicant advised that the depth of the building, with respect to the long narrow suites, is an affordability issue and the result of a constrained site.



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4. Address:	102 - 160 West 1st Avenue (Playhouse)
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	M-2 to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning - SEFC Private Lands
Architect:	GBL
Owner:	Wall Financial Group
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Stu Lyon, Bruno Wall, Bruce Hemstock
Staff:	John Madden, Mary Beth Rondeau

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

- **Introduction:** John Madden, Project Planner, referred to the model and noted that the surrounding site context was the same as the previous two proposals discussed. The application was not supported by the Panel when it was first reviewed on March 15, 2006. Mr. Madden noted the scheme locates the Playhouse Theatre at the western corner on 1st Avenue with the main entrance on the mews. There will be townhouse units on the mews as well as on 1st Avenue. A centre courtyard is planned to help animate the laneway.

Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, noted that staff have identified no specific design issues at this stage.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Stu Lyon, Architect, briefly reviewed proposal and he described the order of events since the previous Panel review. One of the tower forms was reduced by 20 ft. to reduce the overshadowing effect on the park across the street, and the Playhouse Theatre workshop and rehearsal hall spaces were flipped.

The applicant team reviewed the project in greater detail and responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - The Playhouse Theatre interface with the streetscape and mews is very important at this location. Continue to develop the expression of the Playhouse in the building elevation so that it reads strongly on the street.
- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this proposal. The applicant team was commended for their quick and thorough response to the Panel's previous comments. The Panel considered that the public realm was well addressed and the alignment of the mews was much stronger.

In terms of the Playhouse Theatre, the Panel thought it had gained better identity in this proposal and the move to locate the lobby off the mews was supported. Several Panel members noted the importance of the Playhouse Theatre as a visible landmark for the area and the importance of its interface with the mews and the street. The applicant was encouraged to create opportunities to enliven the mews, including a suggestion to consider locating the proposed restaurant off the mews and across from the theatre lobby.

There was a minor concern that the rear of some of the townhouse units may not receive enough sunshine. One Panel member offered a minor suggestion regarding tower placement that would see the two flanking towers closest to the street pushed back and the midblock

towers pulled closer to the lane to create a better setback for the neighbouring developments as well as a better outlook for the towers. A Panel member expressed concern that the glass on top of the sloped roof might reflect onto the windows of neighbours above and create a problem in terms of livability and glare during the day time.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Lyon thanked the Panel for its comments.