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## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

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**DATE:** April 4, 2001

**TIME:** 4.00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Committee Room #1, City Hall

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Tom Bunting, Chair  
Walter Francl, Deputy Chair  
Lance Berelowitz (left early)  
Jeffrey Corbett  
Gerry Eckford  
Brian Hemstock  
Jack Lutsky (left early)  
Maurice Pez  
Sorin Tatomir

**REGRETS:** Alan Endall  
Joseph Hruda  
Richard Henry

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Rae Ratslef, Raincoast Ventures

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. V401 Helmcken (1085 Homer)
2. 1055 W. 41 <sup>st</sup> Avenue (Louis Brier Home & Hospital)
3. 2973 Kingsway (2955 Kingsway)

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1. Address:	401 Helmcken (1085 Homer St.)
DA:	405652
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	DD
Architect:	Rafii/Brook Developments
Owner:	Yaletown Management Ltd.
Review:	1 <sup>st</sup>
Staff:	Ralph Segal/Anita Molaro

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-1)**

- **Introduction:**

Ralph Segal, Development Planner, referencing the applicant's model, presented the application for a mixed-use, commercial and residential development and discussed the project in the context of the surrounding neighbourhood. Panel members were informed of the applicant's utilization of a 10% heritage density bonus to augment the project's FSR from 5 to a 5.5 and were asked to comment on whether the bonus had been adequately incorporated into the project design. Panel members were also requested to comment on the project's massing to the lane, and concerning the public and semi-private open spaces design.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:**

Stuart Howard commented concerning the project's facade, use of materials, and the status of neighbouring development sites. Information was also provided relating to the development's commercial/residential division.

Foad Rafii commented that the project is within the guidelines for semi-private open space and, referencing the drawings, discussed the layby into the site, the lobby entrance way and emergency exists from the office through the landscaping. Given that the landscaped areas are not very large the rooftop area has been made accessible to all. Mr. Rafii advised that the building is designed to reflect the Yaletown character and discussed the treatments to the base levels and tower. Confirmation was provided that the residential and commercial elements were designed to share the same character.

Question was raised concerning plans for power lines in the lane. Staff advised that it is not a requirement of the development to have them eliminated but that the City does encourage this. The applicants advised that the electrical plans will anticipate the location of poles, and their impact on entry and exit ways and lighting.

*The Panel reviewed the model and posted materials.*

- **Panel's Comments:**

Panel members' response to the overall development with its proposed residential and commercial components was generally positive. It was generally agreed that the 10% heritage bonus is validated on the site given the site's configuration, achievement of standards, and architectural fit with the surrounding neighbourhood.

Panel members commented concerning the lack of distinction between the residential and commercial components of the site. While several members supported the continuity, others suggested that the distinction could be played up while still maintaining the pedestrian interest.

Concerning the lane massing, notwithstanding one member's suggestion that the massing be relocated to the Homer elevation, particularly given the width of the lane, most members supported the proposed massing and looked forward to the development of materials and secondary massing in more detail. Also, with respect to the lane access, concerns were noted regarding the location of the drop-off and related security issues were raised. One member completely questioned the City designation of the lane as the drop off location.

The Panel's primary concern focussed on the public and semi-private open spaces design. Problems concerning the design relating to accessibility to the upper space and disabled access, and shadowing were noted. It was suggested that the design could be improved upon by linking the spaces to amenities, providing elevator access, and/or by expanding the commercial open space.

- **Applicant's Response:**

The applicant expressed surprise regarding the Panel's comments concerning the need to make greater distinction between the commercial and residential components of the project, and suggested that the drawings may illustrate these as being closer to one another than they actually are.

Concerning the massing stepping issue, the applicant did not agree with the Panel's comments in this regard given that Homer Street rather than the lane makes the urban fabric and that the project's reaction to the street is more in keeping with the City's policies in this regard. Also, with respect to the lane drop off, it was noted that it is in response to the City's designation of the lane as the appropriate location.

With respect to the public and semi-private open spaces, the applicant advised that every effort would be made towards their improvement taking into consideration the massing, grid, and the requirements of the street wall.

2. Address:	1055 W. 41 <sup>st</sup> Avenue (Louis Brier Home & Hospital)
DA:	405610
Use:	Hospital/Residential
Zoning:	RS-5
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Neale Staniszkis Doll Adams
Owner:	Jewish Home for the Aged of B.C.
Review:	1 <sup>st</sup>
Staff:	Eric Fiss

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

Eric Fiss, Development Planner, referencing the posted drawings, led Panel members in a review of the project. Council granted approval in principle of a re-zoning for the site to permit a three storey mixed use building, subject to 11 conditions which were reviewed for the Panel. The re-zoning has not yet been enacted. It was noted that the Panel considered and expressed unanimous support for the original application on this site in January 1999. Mr. Fiss reviewed the issues identified by the Panel at that time concerning use, density, height, the hedge and set-backs.

Key changes over the original application were introduced pertaining to unit size standardization, rationalization of corridors, improvements to dining and lounge locations, relocation of the entrance door to align with the lane and cause less impact to a neighbour, landscape treatment at the rear entrance and seating area, and the street scape design created in consultation with area residents.

The Panel's comments concerning the application were sought, particularly concerning:

- residential building character, height, massing and roof forms;
- treatment of set-backs on 41<sup>st</sup> and Osler;
- landscape treatment of the site on public faces and the inner courtyard;
- resolution of hedge issues; and
- design and layout of congregate housing.

**• Applicant's Opening Comments:**

Jerry Doll, Neale Staniszkis Doll Adams Architects, commented regarding the public consultation process employed in designing the project's streetscape, and provided information concerning the increased set-backs, reconfigured unit modules, and significant changes in the building materials.

Kim Perry, Perry and Associates, further commented regarding the project's landscaping, including plans to maintain several significant trees, and reviewed the related reference drawings. Mr. Perry also reviewed landscaping surrounding the site and discussed the interior's enclosed gardens.

The applicants responded to Panel members' questions regarding set-backs, parking requirements and impacts of the project, and the condition of re-zoning requiring the creation of a traffic management plan.

*The Panel reviewed the model and posted materials.*

- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel expressed its overall support for the project as presented and commended the neighbourhood consultation process employed by the applicant with respect to the street scape. Panel members felt that the residential character of the facility in relation to the surrounding neighbourhood was handled quite well but suggested that it could be taken a bit further in the ups and downs of the roofscape.

With respect to the ground floor, the Panel suggested that it could be less institutional in character if some of the upper building materials were brought down to that level. It was also suggested that the articulation of the entrance on Osler Street be bolder.

Support was expressed for the landscaping in a casual way that is appropriate to the streets and uses adjacent to the building. Several members suggested that exploration of retaining the hedge on 41<sup>st</sup> Ave. be undertaken but it was recognized that the proposed amenity uses of the units that would be obscured by the hedge would make it more appropriate to remove it and replace it with the suggested landscaping. The Panel also requested that steps be taken to maintain the soil depth to support the trees on the parking slab.

Positive comments were expressed regarding the unit layouts in general, however it was felt that some additional amenities could be added to these, such as outdoor private balconies or window boxes..

- **Applicant's Response:**

The applicant thanked the Panel for its comments and expressed support regarding the suggestion to carry the upper building materials to the lower level. With respect to the articulation of the entrance, the applicant advised that it was a condition of the re-zoning that it be redesigned low key with its usability and functionality being maintained. Concerning roof-slopes, the applicant expressed support for raising these but advised that the line could not be moved. Explanation was also offered regarding the elevator's location.

6:28 p.m. Jack Lutsky and Lance Berelowitz departed the meeting.

3. Address: 2973 Kingsway (2955 Kingsway)  
DA: 405638  
Use: Mixed  
Zoning: C-2  
Application Status: Complete  
Architect: Rositch Hemphill  
Owner: VanView Construction  
Review: 1<sup>st</sup>  
Staff: Mary Beth Rondeau
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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)**

- **Introduction:**

Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, referencing the applicant's model and posted drawings, reviewed the project and provided contextual information concerning the surrounding neighbourhood. Panel members were asked to comment on the applicant's request for a height relaxation and were provided information concerning Council's related policies.

Comments were also sought concerning the treatment of the facade given its visibility from Rupert Street, regarding the overshadowing of the project on the residences across the lane, and potential public benefit for allowing a height relaxation of 40 ft. Ms. Rondeau also advised that there was a previous approval on this site that allowed for a height relaxation but which had a further set-back from the lane.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:**

Keith Hemphill, Rositch Hemphill, advised that, given changes in the commercial marketplace, the owner is seeking to reduce the amount of commercial and convert it to residential which has resulted in a new application be submitted.

Information was also provided regarding differences in the original application vs. the new application and the relationship of the building to the library to the east was discussed. Changes to the parking layout and access were also demonstrated and details regarding building materials and proposed changes to them were shared.

Concerning the height relaxation, Mr. Hemphill noted that the building has been stepped from east to west as the site slopes in a variety of ways. The maximum difference between points is 13.7 ft which falls within the guideline's allowances for sloping sites. With respect to the shadowing issue, Mr. Hemphill referenced a comparison of the project vs. what the guidelines would allow and commented on the impact of each on views from across the lane. It was noted that the proposed building does not cross the property line given its slope.

Wendy Armstrong-Taylor, WGLA, described the landscaping plans for the site designed to work with the building lines, and discussed the residential entrance and planting opportunities at the back of the site to screen the residential.

*The Panel reviewed the model and posted materials.*

- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel expressed support for the project's height relaxation given that the overshadowing impact seems minimal. Various suggestions were made in terms of earning the relaxation through improvements to the landscaped area of the eastern neighbour (presently unused).

With respect to the residential entry, it was suggested that it was underplayed and needed some reconfiguring to articulate the entry to the project. Playing up the building materials, carrying them forward to the front side of the building and possibly cutting back on the commercial area were suggested. It was also agreed that the change (decrease) in the amount of commercial space positively affects the viability of the project.

General support was expressed concerning the building materials along Kingsway and for the articulation, however, some negative feedback was given regarding the use of cultured river rock. Concerning the lane elevation, several negative comments were made concerning the complexity of the elevation particularly with respect to water proofing and moisture infiltration issues. It was also suggested that the complexity seems to add to the mass and comments were made regarding the monotony of the design.

Further suggestion was made that the western facade be articulated given that it would be very visible to the neighbourhood in future and loading bay access issues were noted.

- **Applicant's Response:**

The applicant expressed support for the Panel's suggestions regarding changes to the eastern side of the sight, to bring the yard to the property line and offered to explore the suggestion to upgrade the neighbour's yard to improve the residential entry. Agreement was noted with regard to the suggestion to develop a more coherent open space and stronger statement for the residential entrance.

Concerning comments around the building envelope, the applicant expressed no concern regarding related weathering issues. Also, it was clarified that loading bay access has been determined with turning radiuses and through discussions with Engineering this location was chosen given that there were complications with alternate areas.

#### **4. Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.