

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** April 9, 2008

**TIME:** 4.00 pm

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
John Wall, Chair  
Walter Francl  
Tom Bunting  
Maurice Pez  
Douglas Watts  
Bill Harrison  
Mark Ostry  
Gerry Eckford  
Bob Ransford

**REGRETS:** Albert Bicol  
Richard Henry  
Martin Nielsen

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1308 Seymour Street
2.	188 East 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue
3.	288 West 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue

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**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Wall gave an update on items previously seen at the Panel that went to the Development Permit Board on Monday, April 7<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Wall called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. The Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 1308 Seymour Street  
DE: 411958  
Description: Social and Supportive Housing Project  
Zoning: DD  
Application Status: First  
Architect: NSDA Architects  
Owner: Granville Mennonite Housing  
Review: First  
Delegation: Larry Adams, NSDA Architects  
Rob Barnes, Perry + Associates  
Staff: Anita Molaro/Paul Cheng

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

- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a social housing project which is one of the 12 sites recently identified by Council. Ms. Molaro described the surrounding developments in the area. The site is located in the block where the Seymour Street off ramp ends. The project will include 106 units with support and amenity spaces at the ground floor. The units vary between 315 to 450 square feet. On the upper floor there will be space for heat recovery and green roofs. There is a view cone over the site which limits the height to 125 feet so the applicant has set the height at 120 feet at the lane. The proposal meets the Downtown South Guidelines which indicate a separation of 80 feet from future tower development. The applicant will be seeking LEED™ Gold registration.

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

Urban design response including:

- Massing response including height and side yard relaxations.
- Overall building design/character including resolution of the elevations and their various orientations.
- Liveability of the units.
- Design of open space.
- Use and quality of the proposed materials.

Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Larry Adams, Architect, further described the proposal. He noted that BC Housing's goal was for 300 to 350 square foot units with the intention of around 100 units in total in the project. The design of the building is modular so that all the units are similar although some are larger than others. The social component will be on the ground floor and will include a kitchen, lounge, TV room and patio area onto the street and the lane. There will be a minimum number of parking stalls, around 10 which will largely be used by staff. Regarding sustainability, BC Housing has a mandate that all of the 14 new social housing projects are to achieve LEED™ gold registered. BC Housing did not want to entertain using green roofs so the proposal is for patterned gravel roofs. The project will also use a geothermal heat pump system for the

domestic hot water system, heating and air conditioning on the main floor and radiant floor heating in the units. Because the heat recovery can not be put on the roof, two units have been removed so the system can be incorporated into the building. Mr. Adams added that the intention was to establish a 60 year building.

Rob Perry, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans for the site. There will be a seven foot setback with a double row of trees. The entry court will have wheelchair access and at the rear of the project there will be a raised terrace with green screening along the edge of the lane. Plans are for a resident watering program so the project will not have irrigation and there will also be a resident gardening program.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Some design development to the north face of the building;
  - Consider enlarging the front patio and provide a stronger public realm interface along Seymour; and
  - Consider some screening or other landscape device for privacy on the open space at the entry.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel unanimously supported the project and thought it was overall a clean and handsome project.

The Panel supported the building height, the side yard relaxations and location of the elevator core. However, the Panel had some concerns with the north face (facing Drake Street) as they thought it was a little too simple and some how lacking in design. One Panel member suggested adding more windows to the north façade. Another Panel member would like to see more window sizes particularly going around the south side of the building.

Regarding the livability of the units, the Panel thought although they were small, they were well conceived.

The Panel thought the landscape was well handled given the amount of room that is available. One Panel member thought it was unfortunate that the main outdoor space was the most shaded. The Panel was concerned with the open space at the front of the building as they weren't sure it was durable and would be well occupied by the residents. They also thought it could be larger by giving up some planters and making more patio space. Also it was suggested that privacy could be an issue and that screening the area might help. One Panel member suggested using rain water capture devices to water the gardens. One panel member suggested a more urban approach to the building's public realm interface along Seymour and a more contextual residential expression for the entry and patio.

The Panel supported the brick and Swiss pearl panels as they thought they were a good choice for the area. One Panel member suggested more animation on the façade of the building. One Panel member suggested leaving out the orange Swiss pearl panel at the top of the north east façade and continuing the window expression to the top of the building.

The Panel would like to have seen the design for the roof since it is not going to be a green roof, and recommended that the applicant team consider providing additional outdoor amenity space. The Panel congratulated the applicant and owner for pursuing LEED™ Gold

and a sixty year building. They noted that the best aspect of sustainability is to build a building that will last over time.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Adams thanked the Panel for their comments saying that they would take them into consideration as they moved forward. He added that there were some concerns regarding livability and they are trying to make the space as pleasant as possible.

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2. Address:	188 East 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue
DE:	411957
Description:	Social and Supportive Housing Project
Zoning:	Rezoning
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	GBL Architects
Owner:	Lookout Emergency Aid Society
Review:	First
Delegation:	Tom Bell, GBL Architects Pawel Gradowski, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT WITH NOTED DISTINCTION OF ARCHITECTURAL EXCELLENCE (8-0)**

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a social housing project at the corner of Main Street and East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The proposal is both a rezoning and a concurrent development application. The program for the building includes retail on Main Street, in accordance with the Official Development Plan (ODP) for SEFC, and 97 residential units. The ODP for SEFC showed a 12 storey massing on the site. In order to keep the historic character along Main Street, heights of the buildings will be kept between eighty and ninety feet. The proposed height of the building is 90 feet on Main Street and 100 feet on the westerly partial top floor. Generally the density in SEFC is 3.5 FSR with this proposal being at 4.5 FSR. Staff have no concerns regarding the increase in density as the proposal fits well within the intent of the ODP. The form of development works well and has a strong massing with a gap between the end massing and the future development next door. The gap is to be used for an outdoor amenity space with an art feature proposed to embellish the enclosure in the form of a gate or glass fence at each end. Urban agriculture is planned for one of the roof decks and the top floor will have another amenity deck attached to the indoor amenity. The building is to be LEED™ Gold with solar panels proposed as well as passive solar shading on the south and west facades.

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

- Does the Panel support the use, form and density for this site;
  - Does the Panel support the variation from the ODP from 12 storeys down to 10 storeys; and
  - Does the Panel support the increase in density from 3.5 to 4.51 FSR.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Tom Bell, Architect, further described the proposal. He noted that they have had a great working relationship with the Lookout Emergency Aid Society. The building has been designed as a series of cubic forms. Mr. Bell noted that the colour of the building had been chosen with the help of the Society and the residents.

Pawel Gradowski, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans for the project. Mr. Gradowski noted that there were three requirements for the landscaping. The first requirement was for the residents and needed to be low maintenance. The SEFC requirement is for 50% of the site in urban agriculture and this project has 51%. The last landscaping requirement was for achieving LEED™ Gold and the site is to have a green roof. Also, rain water will be collected in a cistern in the underground parking area and then recycled in the water feature.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

The Panel had no substantial concerns with this proposal.

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- **Related Commentary:** The Panel unanimously supported the project and acknowledged it as an exemplary project.

The Panel supported the use, form and density increase and hoped the project would stand for a new standard for Social Housing. They particularly liked that there are four distinct facades that respond to their solar orientation and that they are well integrated to the overall design of the building. Most of the Panel supported the applicant to go to the full height under the zoning for the building.

Most of the Panel were impressed by the building materials and the colour palette and thought it would relate well to the SEFC context. They also thought the applicant had chosen quality materials and hoped that value engineering would not diminish the project.

The Panel liked the lobby stating that it would be a wonderful experience for people that don't usually get enough attention for their architectural needs.

The Panel liked the higher ceiling heights for the retail and liked the way the retail was integrated into the design of the building as it addresses Main Street in an appropriate way.

The Panel thought the outdoor spaces were well handled and liked the way they were integrated with the indoor amenity space. Several Panel members suggested making the usable outdoor amenity space larger by deleting some of the planting areas from the landscaping plan and moving the common space away from the private units. One Panel member suggested turning the benches so they face the view. Another Panel member suggested having a covered area on one of the outdoor amenity spaces for rainy weather. A couple of Panel members thought the trellis on the lower roof had no relationship to the architecture and suggested some further design development be given to these elements. They also thought the solar panels on the roof were a great idea and thought affordable market housing projects could take cues from this development.

The Panel thought that combining the rezoning with the DP had produced an excellent result. They also commended BC Housing for seeking a LEED™ Gold development with a 60 year mandate for durable buildings.

The Panel took a separate vote to acknowledge that this proposal is an exemplary project.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bell was very appreciative of the comments from the Panel and thanked the members of the Lookout Emergency Aid Society for their help and support.

3. Address:	288 West 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue
DE:	411938
Description:	Residential Development
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Rafii Architects
Owner:	Cressey (Cook) Development
Review:	First
Delegation:	Foad Rafii, Rafii Architects Rene Marcott, Rafii Architects Pawel Gradowski, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects David Evans, Cressey (Cook) Development Robert Brown, Resource
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

#### EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (2-6)

- Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, introduced the project at the corner of Crowe Street and West 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue which is a complete development application after a rezoning. The project is for 152 market residential units and includes a 13 storey tower on the corner with 3 stories on West 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The open space off the lane will create a small courtyard with a seating area using SEFC character furniture and treatment. There will be an indoor amenity room and outdoor amenity space at ground level that looks out onto the space. There is also another amenity room on the roof that is associated with the elevator penthouse and creates shared open space with urban agriculture and a variety of other uses. An artist will be hired for the proposed art feature for the pilaster elements on the building. Ms. Rondeau noted the Panels comments from the UDP Minutes from review at the rezoning.

Ms. Rondeau took questions from the Panel.

- Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Foad Rafii, Architect, further described the proposal noting the changes to the design since the last review. Mr. Rafii also noted that they had tried to reduce the apparent bulkiness of the tower by articulating it as much as possible. Different sides of the tower have different features including shade control on the west side of the tower. There are two storey townhouses facing the street along West 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue.

Pawel Gradowski, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans for the project. Mr. Gradowski noted that because the site is on SEFC there was a requirement for the site to be 50% green which has been achieved. Storm water for the site will be collected through the water feature and over flow will go to the SEFC overall system. The playground area is located on the roof along with a shed and composting area for the urban agriculture. Part of the roof will be extensive green roof and part will be intensive green roof. A rain garden is proposed that will collect all the rain water which will be directed to the overall SEFC storm system.

Robert Brown, Sustainability Consultant, gave an overview regarding the LEED™ Scorecard. He noted that they will be complying with the SEFC Green Building Strategy which is LEED™ Silver equivalent.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Design development to the city homes at ground level of the tower; and
  - Design development of the tower to simplify the form, reduce the apparent bulk and improve the passive solar response on the south and west facades.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the proposal.

The Panel had two main concerns regarding the project. The first concern was the city home unit expression at ground level of the tower. The Panel thought there was a lack of articulation and residential expression in the unit facades. They also thought the entry to the units needed further work. Some panel members suggested adding some solid elements to the town home facades to help create more privacy and to help define the unit entry. (Note: Unit City Home G does not show a door). However, the Panel did like the design of the townhouses and thought they were well considered and had a clear expression and identity. A couple of Panel members said they look like individual homes. Another Panel member liked the punch outs on the top of the townhomes but was not convinced about the material colour palette suggesting it could be toned done.

The second concern of the Panel was around the articulation and bulky reading of the tower, and felt the applicant had not adequately addressed this concern from the panel's last review at rezoning. The Panel thought the overall tower expression needed to be simplified and have a stronger hierarchy of elements. Several panel members suggested that the applicant should find a more functional solution for the tower expression that includes a passive solar strategy. It was noted that it is the sustainable features that typically act as design guides in the SEFC neighbourhood. Several Panel members thought the slab extension did not help the design of the building and actually increased the apparent bulk of the tower. A few panel members thought the south facade tower expression needed to be more residential in expression. The Panel suggested that there could be a resolution to the bulkiness of the tower that would achieve greater simplicity and legibility, and have potential cost savings that would benefit the project.

The Panel thought the landscaping was very well treated and that there was a clarity of design. The Panel liked the use of urban agriculture but would like to see the theme taken more consistently through the project. Also they thought the breezeway through the project had been improved since rezoning and that the lane treatment was well done and linked well into SEFC. A couple of Panel members liked the rain garden but suggested it be pulled to the edge of the site. The Panel thought the landscaped areas would be well used.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Rafii thought the Panel offered some very good comments and would try to comply with the commentary on simplifying the building.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.