

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** August 3, 2005

**TIME:** 4.00 pm

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Alan Endall, Chair  
Nigel Baldwin  
Robert Barnes  
Shahla Bozorgzadeh (present for items 1 and 2 only)  
Marta Farevaag  
Margot Long  
Edward Smith (present for Item 2 only)

**REGRETS:** Larry Adams  
James Cheng  
Ronald Lea  
Peter Wreglesworth  
C.C. Yao

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard, Raincoast Ventures

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1285 West Pender Street
2.	100 Keefer Place (600 Abbott)
3.	1010 East 17 Avenue

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**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Endall called the meeting to order at 4.05 pm. and briefly reported on the outcome of recent Development Permit Board meetings.

1. Address: 1285 West Pender Street  
DE: 409493  
Use: Mixed (21 storeys)  
Zoning: DD  
Application Status: Complete  
Architect: Busby, Perkins & Will  
Owner: Evergreen Building Ltd.  
Review: First  
Delegation: Peter Busby, Gerry Eckford, Veronica Gillies  
Staff: Ralph Segal

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (3-2)**

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner, introduced this application. The proposal is to replace the existing Evergreen Building, the owner's position being that it is no longer economically viable to retain. The redevelopment of the site was considered by Council who requested staff to continue to encourage retention options but also instructed staff to proceed with processing the subject application in the normal way.

Mr. Segal briefly reviewed the site context, identifying surrounding existing and approved towers and Coal Harbour Park. The site is in the Downtown District, Triangle West Sub Area. The proposal is for a 21-storey building at 236 ft., and the tower floorplates are generally within 6,500 sq.ft. The height of the existing Evergreen Building is about 130 ft. The program includes three-storey townhouses along Jervis Street, wrapping around onto Hastings Street, a single storey of ground floor retail on West Pender Street, and residential above in a series of terraced boxes. The application requests 6.0 FSR plus 10 percent heritage density transfer, for a total density of 6.6 FSR.

Staff consider the proposal responds quite well to the general massing criteria, with the exception of shadowing, in particular on Coal Harbour Park. Mr. Segal noted that shadowing cast on the park has been of particular concern in all the various options that have been considered for the site. The shadowing created by the current proposal reaches the circle of the park at the critical 11 a.m. - noon equinox period and is quite substantial during morning hours. The elevator core of the building extends to the east property line and is remote from the series of terraced boxes. While this generates an exciting building form it does present some questions about the overall volumetrics and whether it is the best attitude to take for the building given the shadow and view impacts it also creates.

The Panel previously reviewed and supported an earlier proposal to convert the existing Evergreen Building. The proposal was to convert the building to predominantly residential use, adding townhouses at the base and four storeys on the top. However, the Development Permit Board limited the upper addition to two storeys, which led to the owner's decision to withdraw the application because it became economically unviable.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- whether the site can absorb the additional ten percent heritage density;
  - the overall massing and tower form; its neighbourliness and impact on views and whether it is appropriate architecture for this site;
  - the impact on shadowing, particularly on Coal Harbour Park;
  - the impact on views, particularly for the building to the east, caused by the additional volume of the building form including the separated elevator core.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Peter Busby, Architect, briefly described the design rationale and Gerry Eckford reviewed the landscape plan. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
  - **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
    - The Panel questioned whether the site can take the additional density requested without exacerbating shadowing on Coal Harbour Park, particularly given the park will also be used by the future daycare and elementary school;
    - Consideration should be given to reducing the height of the building by a couple of floors and/or reducing the floor-to-floor height;
    - Design development is needed to the townhouse base;
    - Consideration should be given to the scale and articulation of the entry off West Pender Street.
  - **Related Commentary:**

The Panel supported this application but some Panel members expressed some discomfort about offering support while having serious misgivings about the proposed height. In discussion prior to the vote being taken, it was concluded that the Panel's advice on the height would undoubtedly be taken into consideration by the Development Permit Board.

In other respects, the Panel found the proposal quite supportable. The applicant was commended for the excellent presentation materials and model which make the project clear and easy to read.

Most Panel members found the proposed form quite intriguing and dramatic and holding the promise of becoming an evocative piece of architecture. However, there were also questions about whether the chosen form is the right one, and concerns that the stacked boxes make it seem quite massive. The free-standing elevator core also contributes to its massiveness, with a suggestion from one Panel member that it might be more neighbourly if it was smaller and less prominent. There was also a question about its impact on the development potential of the adjacent 66 ft., currently underdeveloped site.

The Panel's greatest concern was the shadowing of Coal Harbour Park and for this reason questioned whether the site can absorb the requested heritage density transfer. Some Panel members also expressed a general concern about an extra ten percent density being routinely sought on downtown sites, many of which are unable to accommodate it. The Panel noted

there would be no shadowing issue without the additional 0.6 FSR and a possible reduction of a few inches in floor-to-floor height on each floor. Regardless of the fact that the shadowing occurs on a less useful part of the park at its treed, southerly edge, the Panel strongly recommended that a solution be sought which does not compromise the park in any way. Of particular concern was the future daycare and elementary school which will use this park as well as the general public.

Concerns were expressed about the treatment of the townhouse base and suggestions that its transparency so close to the street creates livability issues, despite the likelihood the front patios will be little used in favour of the upper decks. There were also concerns about the entry side of the building where the five box forms are less articulated, and recommendations for more consideration of the articulation of the underside of the terraced boxes.

The Panel found the landscape plan very strong and well handled. A gap in street trees was noted and a recommendation made to rationalize the street tree pattern and strengthen the streetscape.

There were comments made about the irony of the proposal emulating many of the qualities of the existing Evergreen Building. Some Panel members expressed disappointment at the prospect of the Evergreen being demolished, noting it is not a very old building and its prominence has only increased since the Coal Harbour area has been developed. There was also an observation that while the proposed sustainability features are very commendable the demolition of a fairly new building seems counter to the objectives of sustainability. It was also noted that the previous conversion proposal had the potential to be a rich and somewhat quirky addition to the city fabric.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Busby agreed that the townhouse base needs design development. With respect to the issue of shadowing, Mr. Busby said it is a matter of degree, pointing out that the building will cause no shadowing on the park between April and September. Shadowing only occurs for 11 days in the spring and nine days in the fall, during which time it is a sliding scale of shading from eight minutes to a maximum of one hour and 40 minutes between the hours of 10 a.m. and noon.

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2. Address:	100 Keefer Place (600 Abbott)
DE:	409456
Use:	Mixed (2 towers, 35 storeys)
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	Hancock, Bruckner Eng & Wright
Owner:	Henderson Land Development
Review:	First
Delegation:	Jim Carney, Martin Bruckner, Peter Kruek, Hilde Heyvaerts
Staff:	Ralph Segal

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)**

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner, introduced this preliminary application to develop one of the last remaining sites in International Village. The application is also the subject of a Text Amendment to the International Village CD-1, which seeks to remove the non-market housing component from this site in exchange for pay-in-lieu which will facilitate the International Village non-market housing allotment being achieved on the site at the corner of Pender and Abbott Streets. The Text Amendment is expected to be considered by Council on September 15, 2005. The proposed form of development respects the overall parameters for International Village by creating a strong streetwall, incorporating retail at grade, and completing the Keefer Circle. The revisions to the scheme are for some additional height and a slightly larger floorplate on Tower B.

The areas in which the advice of the Panel are sought include:

- tower forms and relationships to surrounding towers, noting the additional height and larger floorplate in Tower B;
  - how the development relates to the street edges, in particular Abbott Street and Keefer Circle, and how it ties in with the Keefer Steps;
  - streetscape treatment at the pedestrian level, in particular the corner of Beatty and Expo Boulevard;
  - interface with the Skytrain alignment.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team briefly reviewed the design rationale and program and responded to questions from the Panel.
  - **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
    - Two Panel members suggested Tower B might be too wide but in general the Panel had no major concerns with the height and size of the floorplate;
    - The Panel recommended increasing the width of the planted edge buffer facing the Skytrain alignment;
    - At the complete stage the Panel will look for detailed design development of the streetscape and the courtyard, including programming details;
    - Further development of a sustainable design strategy is recommended.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this application and considered it to be very well thought out for a preliminary submission. The Guidelines are fairly prescriptive with respect to the form of development and the application responds very well. The proposal was thought to be a good basic massing strategy that improves upon the original CD-1. Panel members commented on a number of inconsistencies between the model and drawings and the small- and large-scale floor plans and found the model less successful than the drawings which suggest a more curvilinear form for tower A.

The Panel found the towers to be correctly located on the site and responding well to the street and the urban expression already established.

The Panel had no concerns with the increase in floorplate of Tower B, but one Panel member thought the floorplate of Tower A could be smaller, noting it seems to be very close to the Abbott streetwall and tower across the street. Another comment was that expressing the two radii from the circle in Tower B presents a larger façade than necessary to the Skytrain side, which is unfortunate. Two Panel members thought tower B was too wide.

The Panel found the continuation of the streetscape to be well established although in some areas the street trees could be more continuous. The double row of trees on the corner was questioned, noting they have not been very successful in other places.

The Panel found the street edges to have been handled quite thoughtfully and looks forward to seeing the development of greater articulation at the retail level, with a wider sidewalk in some areas. Careful attention will need to be given to how the mass is detailed and scaled and how the end of the circle is treated. It was suggested that cues could be taken from the Paris development. One Panel member recommended more retail at the base of Tower A noting its location facing GM Place.

The Panel was satisfied with the treatment of the corner of Abbott and Expo Boulevard.

Concerns were expressed about the connecting pedestrian bridges between apartments and towers which seem weak and a bit like dead space. It also seems awkward because there is no architectural relationship between the two building forms.

The Panel recommended design development to the buffer between the rear of the townhouses and the Skytrain alignment, recommending that it should be wider and greener. Locating the amenity space and the townhouses to create a larger buffer to the Skytrain was seen as very positive in terms of general noise reduction for the development.

The Panel found the courtyards quite interesting and looks forward to seeing the details at the next stage of the design.

There was a strong recommendation to give early consideration to sustainability issues, including energy and life cycle costs of the buildings, choice of materials and orientation.

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

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3. Address:	1010 East 17 Avenue
DE:	409382
Use:	Elementary School
Zoning:	RS-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	James Tamaki
Owner:	Vancouver School Board
Review:	First
Delegation:	Henry Ahking, Don Nicolson
Staff:	Bob Adair

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#### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-0)

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner, presented this application to replace Charles Dickens Elementary School on East 17th Avenue just north of Kingsway. The site currently contains the original school which was built in 1913 with a number of additions over the years. Seismic upgrading of the school has been identified as a high priority and it has been determined that replacing it is the most economical approach.

The proposal is to construct a new school adjacent to the existing structure and when the new school is completed the original school will be demolished. Although it is not on the heritage register, the Vancouver School Board and City Heritage Planning are also considering options to retain the existing school. The subject application is being considered concurrently with the retention options. If there is an agreement to retain the existing building there will likely be some revisions to this proposal but the Panel is asked to comment on the scheme as currently proposed. The application will be considered by the Development Permit Board because of the level of public interest it has generated.

The proposal consists of three major blocks and includes a gymnasium block, the main entry into a commons space, and a two-storey classroom block on the north side. Below the classrooms is a semi-underground parking structure, accessed by a ramp off East 17th Avenue. A green roof is proposed for the centre commons/lunch room component. Exterior materials include brick, cementitious panel system, a membrane roof and wood soffits and support brackets for the large roof overhangs.

The application seeks a minor height relaxation. Maximum permitted height in RS-1 is 30 ft., relaxable to 35 ft. The application seeks a height of 38.4 ft. at its highest point.

The advice of the Panel is sought in the following areas:

- the proposed height relaxation;
  - the overall massing and setbacks along the streets and the overall fit in the neighbourhood;
  - the location of the parking entry off East 17th Avenue;
  - impact of the proposed parking structure on the elevations along Windsor Street and 17th Avenue and on the 17th Avenue streetscape.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Don Nicolson, Architect, briefly reviewed the design rationale and noted they intend to seek LEED silver certification. Henry Ahking, Vancouver School Board, explained that the provision for a portable structure is for the future accommodation of a music program. Funds for a separate structure for this purpose are not available. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
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- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Some concerns about the impact of the exposed portions of the parking structure on the street frontages;
  - Design development is recommended to:
    - 18th Avenue street edge; coordination and refinement of fencing and landscaping;
    - consider a more substantial and highly developed green roof on the commons component and the potential for a visible means of rainwater collection on the gymnasium roof;
    - refinement of grading details to avoid retaining walls as much as possible;
    - further consideration of the parking edge treatment including the need for mechanical ventilation and the potential for berming and landscaping.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this application. There were no concerns about the height, the overall massing and the setbacks. The Panel found the project well thought in terms of site planning. It integrates well with the adjacent park and in general with the neighbourhood with its generous setbacks.

The Vancouver School Board was commended for its commitment to sustainability on this project and the Panel strongly supported the goal of achieving LEED silver certification.

The Panel supported the roof form and thought it fit well in the residential neighbourhood. One Panel member recommended consideration of a stronger roof expression at the entry. There was also a recommendation to consider revising the roof form of the gymnasium to allow more daylight and sunlight into the courtyard.

The Panel found the parking entry off 17th Avenue to be well resolved but there were concerns about the exposure of the parking structure at the edges and its impact on the street frontages. One Panel member suggested the use of berms if mechanical ventilation is not required. An awkward relationship between the ramp and the stair was also noted as warranting further attention.

A concern was expressed about the "back of the house" expression on 18th Avenue and it was recommended to soften it as much as possible with landscaping. The applicant was also urged to carefully consider desire lines on the site to ensure the planter areas remain undisturbed. As well, as much as possible should be done to avoid retaining walls.

With respect to materials, there was a suggestion that the small amounts of brick on some parts of the building could be eliminated and more added to the parking podium and the entrance above the parking ramp. Given the commons component is largely expressed as a glazed slot through the building it was also recommended to continue this glazed expression on the 17th Avenue elevation.

The proposed green roof gesture was considered to be too weak and insubstantial, and it was recommended that the planters on the green roof be rearranged to create more usable spaces. There was a recommendation to consider rainwater collection off the gymnasium roof, and to include more urban agricultural edible landscape in the project if this is reflective of the neighbourhood's direction.

The Panel supported the investigation of retaining at least a portion of the existing school building.



**Applicant's Response:** Mr. Ahking noted the VSB acquired extra funding from the Ministry of provide underground parking rather than surface parking. However, there are concerns about security in the parkade which led to the design which allows as much daylight as possible. Mr. Nicolson said he believes they will be able to resolve the treatment at the corner.