

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** August 10, 2011

**TIME:** N/A

**PLACE:** N/A

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Robert Barnes  
Helen Besharat (Chair)  
Gregory Borowski  
James Cheng  
Jane Durante  
Alan Endall  
Jim Huffman  
Arno Matis  
Geoff McDonell  
Norm Shearing

**REGRETS:**  
Jeff Corbett  
Scott Romses  
Alan Storey

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

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### ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

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| 1. | 601-650 West 41st Avenue |
| 2. | 3657 West Broadway       |
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**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Besharat called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There being no New Business the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. **Address:** 601-650 West 41st Avenue  
**DE:** 414795  
**Use:** Interior/exterior alterations and additions to change the current cinema, restaurant and adjacent retail/service uses into one major retail store (Crate & Barrel).  
**Zoning:** CD-1  
**Application Status:** Complete  
**Review:** First  
**Architect:** Stantec Architecture Ltd.  
**Owner:** Ivanhoe Cambridge  
**Delegation:** Roman Czemerly, Stantec Architecture Ltd.  
Jimmy Turner, Crate & Barrel  
Gordon Wylie, Ivanhoe Cambridge  
**Staff:** Pat St. Michel

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

Pat St. Michel, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a Crate and Barrel store at the northeast corner of Oakridge Centre at West 41st Avenue and Cambie Street and fronting the existing plaza, close to the Canada Line Station. She noted that the proposal was previously reviewed and was not supported by the Panel. Ms. St. Michel described the three main areas of concern from the Panel's previous review: including the relationship to the plaza and Canada Line station; relationship to Cambie Street; and the architectural expression. She also described the Panel's consensus of key aspects needing improvement: design development to incorporate weather protection on the façade; consider ways to enliven the plaza area; design development to incorporate high quality building materials; design development regarding the signage; and design development to incorporate more display windows on the façade.

Ms. St. Michel briefly outlined the changes made in response to the comments. The Panel thought the proposal should bring more animation and vitality to the plaza and the station area. In response, the applicant has insured the extent of glazing and visibility into the store has been greatly increased. The continuous weather protection is proposed in the form of a generous canopy of about 15 feet in depth. There are also some important improvements proposed to the plaza space itself. An existing grove of trees is retained, and the hard surface between them would be replaced with soft plantings as a landscaped island. Benches will be introduced around the island and in convenient proximity to the Canada Line Station. Desire lines will be respected in the configuration of the island and will be marked by new material treatments on the plaza. Light granite bands are to be introduced in a linear pattern that recalls the horizontal expression of the entry atrium. These bands are marked with lit bollards at the northern end and echoed by in-ground lighting at the southern end.

Ms. St. Michel explained that in the previous submission the plan was to retain an existing planter wall and eliminate a set of steps thereby creating a barrier to pedestrian access to and from Cambie Street. The design has been significantly altered to create a generous pedestrian connection to Cambie Street. This has been accomplished by cutting through the existing

planter and creating a wide set of steps connecting from the Cambie Street sidewalk to the plaza. In addition, the store front along the plaza is set back 8 to 9 feet further than the previous proposal, which facilitates a generous pedestrian connection while enabling the retention of two existing trees in the planter.

Ms. St. Michel noted that the Panel was supportive of the general approach to the architecture and of the contrast with the existing building, but thought that design development was needed to incorporate weather protection. As well they thought further consideration was needed regarding the relationship to the existing building, quality of materials and a hierarchy of signage. Continuous weather protection is now proposed in the form of a generous canopy of about 15 feet in depth. In addition to the proposed changes to introduce substantial weather protection, the height of the solid parapet has been reduced and a metal blade railing introduced to better relate to the offices above. In general, the horizontal expression has been strengthened to relate to the existing entry atrium and new banding on the plaza. Materials are brick, composite metal panels, metal blade screens and railings, swiss pearl cement board panel, and glazed aluminum curtain wall. Previously proposed sections of stucco have been eliminated.

Changes proposed to the signage include more subtly scaled signs adjacent to the centre entry and a reorientation to a vertical sign on Cambie. The primary sign for Crate and Barrel has been relocated somewhat further west on the diagonal façade. Oakridge Centre will retain its major pylon sign at the corner of West 41st Avenue and Cambie Street.

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

- The response to advice from the previous Urban Design Panel session.

Ms. St. Michel took questions from the Panel.

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Peter Wreglesworth stated that they had taken the Panel's comments from the previous review into consideration.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

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

- There were no substantial aspects that needed improvement.

**Related Commentary:**

The Panel supported the proposal and thought the applicant had made some significant improvements to the project.

The Panel thought there concerns had been addressed including the addition of weather protection, improved signage, adjustment to the parapet and the selection of materials. One Panel member suggested continuing the show window at the entrance to invite people around the corner. A couple of Panel members thought the fin blades were not critical to the composition while others thought they added a nice graphic touch.

The Panel liked the addition of the green triangle and thought the paving pattern was an improvement although one Panel member was concerned that it might be hard to grow grass in the shade of the trees. Several Panel members noted that the planter under the overhang would probably need irrigation with one Panel member suggesting it could be a seating area as well.

**Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Wreglesworth stated that they had the support of Crate and Barrel as well as from Ivanhoe Cambridge in making the changes. He noted that there is a duct to service the parkade behind the planters. Mr. Turner noted that the louvers add to the façade and will add texture and as well will soften the solid brick wall.

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<b>2.</b>	<b>Address:</b>	<b>3657 West Broadway</b>
	<b>DE:</b>	<b>414874</b>
	<b>Use:</b>	To develop a 4-storey, mixed-use commercial/residential building consisting of commercial uses on the ground floor and three storeys of residential uses above (29 units), together with one level of underground parking and surface parking at the rear of the building.
	<b>Zoning:</b>	C-2
	<b>Application Status:</b>	Complete
	<b>Review:</b>	First
	<b>Architect:</b>	Yamamoto Architecture Inc.
	<b>Owner:</b>	Orr Development
	<b>Delegation:</b>	Taizo Yamamoto, Yamamoto Architecture Inc. David Stoyko, Sharp & Diamond Landscape Architecture Tim Orr, Orr Development
	<b>Staff:</b>	Sailen Black

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#### **EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (4-5)**

##### **Introduction:**

Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a mixed-use building between Alma and Dunbar Streets. Mr. Black described the context for the area and indicated that there is commercial zoning in both directions along the block with two-family zoning north of the site. He noted that the lane is unusually narrow at only fifteen feet. Guidelines for the area recommend that all sides of the building, including parking and loading areas, should have a neighbourly urban design and maintain residential liveability. For example, the residents should be provided with views of gardens and landscape areas. He stated that the height and setback regulations are intended to set appropriate distances to nearby residential buildings as well as provide space for landscaping and articulation. He added that the ground floor commercial space should have a strong pedestrian orientation which would include building articulation, colour, texture and detailing.

Mr. Black indicated that the rear of the building facing the two-family residential lots to the north generally meets the recommended setbacks except for portions of the main floor massing and top floor roof. Parking will be underground except for an accessible space on the lane beside the loading bays.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the architectural and landscape design in general, including:

- Proposed design of building sides;
- Interface between new development and existing two-family residential properties, especially at the top of the north structure and the lane façade at grade; and
- Proposed approach to public realm interface along the front façade, in terms of creating pedestrian interest.

Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

##### **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Taizo Yamamoto, Architect, further described the proposal and indicated that the owner will be keeping the 29 units as rental although they aren't going through the STIR program. There

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will be 18 one bedroom and 11 two bedroom units. He stated that the height encroaches because of the height of the retail space which will be fifteen feet and as well the nine foot ceilings in the residential. Mr. Yamamoto described the architecture and indicated that they had done a shadow study regarding the extra height and that the shadowing will fall within the garages and back portion of the residential across the lane. The loading is constrained because of the width of the lane. Mr. Yamamoto described their sustainability strategy noting that 84% of the windows are covered with overhangs. They are considering having lighting for the parking on motion detectors as well as the storage and utility rooms. Weather protection is planned along the commercial units. He noted that they are allowing for six CRU's. He described the proposed materials and mentioned that the side walls would be clad with cement panel.

David Stoyko, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans and stated that there are existing trees on the front of the building and they are planning some special paving around the commercial units. A lot of attention has been given to the rear of the building where there will be a continuous planter with trees to provide a screen between the building and the neighbours. There will be some plantings along the lane and they are planning to use the storm water from the balconies for irrigation.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Design development to the north main floor, to reduce height on the lane;
- Design development to the front façade is needed to create a stronger expression, add rhythm and flair to the street, and avoid an overly familiar vocabulary;
- Lower the height of the canopy over the commercial units;
- Return the brick on the façades;
- Make the planting in the lane more viable;

**Related Commentary:**

The Panel did not support the proposal and suggested the building needed more work in terms of architectural detailing.

The Panel supported the overall height, but thought that the rear façade was too high at the lane. Some Panel members felt that the wall would be too brutal for the residential units across the lane. Some Panel members suggested reducing the height floors to help the lane façade. Many of the Panel thought the front façade seemed relentless, with a several Panel members suggesting the balconies could be glazed to give them some punctuation which would also change the rhythm of the facade.

One Panel member suggested adding clerestory glazing into the recycle/garbage rooms to add natural light. Most of the Panel thought the canopy over the commercial units was too high at fourteen feet to be effective as weather protection. The Panel had some concerns regarding the location of the signage. They also thought the residential entry should have more distinction. One Panel member noted that the circulation through the building was compromising the residential lobby.

Several Panel members mentioned that the building was too traditional and thought people who would be renting the units would want the suites to have a more modern flare. Several Panel members thought the handicap stall should be removed to give more room in the lane. One Panel member noted that the elevator was at one end of the corridor and thought the residents might be inclined to use the stairs. It was suggested that the stairs be connected to the street and some glass added in the stair well for natural light.

Most of the Panel liked the choice of brick for the materials but thought it was a pity to see it as appliqué. Several Panel members suggested the brick return the corner to give a solid feeling to the building. One Panel member suggested detailing of the concrete at the base of the building. Some Panel members thought it was a lost opportunity to not use the roof considering the fantastic views available looking north.

Some of the Panel thought the planting areas outboard of the building close to the lane might not survive. They thought watering the plants with storm water was great but they would get dusty and would benefit from rain to wash them. A couple of Panel members suggested adding a green screen rather than a green wall for texture along the lane. One Panel member suggested that the plants on the lane needed to be robust and strong enough to take some abuse. Most of the Panel would like to see some street trees along the front to add some richness to the streetscape. Several Panel members thought the planter on the lane created a nice edge but it also increased the height of the rear wall and though it should be dropped to reduce the height of the loading bay. One Panel member suggested adding greenery that would spill over the edges to soften the area.

Regarding sustainability, one Panel member suggested looking into ways to make the building energy efficient including the use of glazing materials, sun shading and efficient envelop detailing.

**Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Orr stated that they are looking into a system to recapture the heat. He thought that dropping the planter on the lane was a good idea and also adding glazing to the rear facade. He also agreed that returning the brick was a good approach. Mr. Yamamoto stated that the lane was difficult but would look at removing the handicap stall. He noted that there is a handicap parking stall in the underground for the residential. He also agreed with the Panel's comments regarding the height on the lane.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.