

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** August 11, 2010  
**TIME:** 4.00 pm  
**PLACE:** Committee Room No. 1, City Hall  
**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Robert Barnes  
James Cheng  
Jane Durante (Excused Item #1)  
David Godin  
Oliver Lang (Chair Item #3)  
Steve McFarlane (Chair Item #1 & 2) (left after 2<sup>nd</sup> Item)  
Scott Romses

**REGRETS:**  
Bruce Haden  
Jeff Corbett  
Jim Huffman  
Vladimir Mikler  
Maurice Pez  
Alan Storey

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1850 Victoria Diversion
2.	10 Terry Fox Way
3.	2889 East 12 <sup>th</sup> Avenue (Renfrew Business Centre)

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**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Lang 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: 1850 Victoria Diversion  
DE: RZ/DE413947  
Description: To construct two five-storey residential buildings all over one level of underground parking, including 10 live-work units in Building A, under the STIR program.  
Zoning: MC-1 to CD-1  
Application Status: RZ/Complete  
Review: First  
Owner: Cressey (Victoria Diversion) Development  
Architect: Rositch Hemphill & Associates  
Delegation: Keith Hemphill, Rositch Hemphill & Associates  
Anka Hurst, Rositch Hemphill & Associates  
Dylan Chernoff, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects  
Staff: Grant Miller and Ann McLean

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

- **Introduction:** Grant Miller, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a concurrent rezoning and development permit application for a MC-1 site in Cedar Cottage. The rezoning is to allow the development of two 5-storey guaranteed market rental residential buildings over one continuous level of underground parking accessed from Porter Street and consisting of 192 dwelling units and 10 artist live-work units.

The site falls within the Cedar Cottage MC-1 area. Council adopted the policies for the area in 1996 which are meant to support the unique light industrial, commercial, residential mixed use character of this neighbourhood. The application was made under the Short Term Incentives for Rental Program (S.T.I.R.).

The Cedar Cottage MC-1 Policies recognized the long history of mixed residential, commercial and industrial uses which contribute to the area's unique flavour. New non-industrial development is meant to respect existing industrial uses. The local artist population is recognized and to be supported through live/work space. The rezoning is required for a change of use and modest increase in height. The all residential building effectively converts commercial density to residential. The applicant proposes to achieve LEED™ Silver equivalency which meets the City's Green Building through Rezoning Policy.

Mr. Miller noted that the local area received notification and staff have heard some concern from residents of the building to the south that the proposal is too tall.

The S.T.I.R. program was adopted in June of 2009 and provides incentives for the private development of guaranteed rental units. These incentives include:

- DCL waiver for rental units
- Parking requirement reduction
- Additional density (in this case change of use) consistent with policy and attention to urban design

Ann McLean, Development Planner, further described the proposal noting that it is located at the north end of the Cedar Cottage neighbourhood, just south of Trout Lake and adjacent to the Expo Line guideway. She described the context for the surrounding area noting the commercial and industrial uses in the area.

The proposal is comprised of two 5-storey buildings separated by a twenty foot breezeway. The easterly building will be entirely residential uses while the westerly building has ten artist live/work studios at the ground level along Victoria Diversion.

Ms. McLean noted that the Cedar Cottage MC-1 Policy recognizes that the area has a unique character comprised of mixed use and recommends retaining the mix. As well the policy suggests that Porter Street be better developed as a street and recommends pedestrian links through the blocks.

The project proposes achieving LEED™ Silver (33-38 points required/35 points proposed).

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

- General commentary on the building form, height and use proposed;
- The location and treatment of the Artist Live Work Studios;
- The way the building addresses Porter Street;
- The design of the breezeway;
- The livability of the units adjacent to the lane, the specific respect to the proximity to the Lane, and their floor level relative to the lane; and the
- Choice of materials.

Mr. Miller and Ms. McLean took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Anka Hurst, Architect, further described the proposal noting that the site is close to transit. She also decided to have the live/work studios on the ground floor which are excluded from the STIR program. They created two buildings separated by a pedestrian pathway. Ms. Hurst described the architecture noting that the buildings have a robust expression as a result of the massing, materials and colour palette. The materials were chosen because they are already on buildings in the area and include brick and siding. The units are very well organized and compact and they all have ensuite storage and laundry.

Dylan Chernoff, Landscape Architects, noted that they have integrated the streetscape with a pedestrian scale the entire way around the site. It is still an area in transition and so it has to be pedestrian friendly. There is a six foot high fence that is transparent at the lane. Along the front there will be trees on each of the patios to allow for some privacy into the units. A little landscape feature is included along with seating at the entrance under the canopy and as well the landscaping has changed the lane from and industrial to a pedestrian friendly environment.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Design development to enhance the connections to the industrial and mixed character of the neighbourhood.
  - Design development of the ground plane to acknowledge the mixed use character of the neighbourhood.
  - Design development to the breezeway to improve its contribution as an amenity to the project.
  - Design development to the Porter Street open space and how that could take on a more urban, less suburban attitude and become an improved amenity.

- Other amenity spaces should be considered including a potential for access to the roof and adding a green roof.
  - Improve the liveability of the units on the lane by raising them out of the ground.
  - Consider changing the materials to reflect the more industrial heritage of the area.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel acknowledged the applicant for adding more rental housing.

The Panel supported the use, height, massing and form of development. There were a couple of small items that the Panel thought should be improved. They thought the entry lobbies were not as recognizable as they could be and didn't express very well on the exterior of the building. A couple of Panel member said they were struggling with the colours proposed in connection with the industrial vernacular of the area. Several Panel members suggested using the color to strengthen the industrial building as it gives way to the residential. A couple of Panel members would like to see more distinction in the building on Porter Street while another Panel member thought the buildings looked more suburban than industrial. Several Panel members thought some design development needed to take place on the breezeway as it seemed unexciting.

The Panel supported the location of the artist live/work studios and they appreciated the expression being more industrial on Victoria Diversion. They noted that it reads more private on the street side while being more inviting on the lane. A couple of Panel members thought the courtyard should be an amenity for the residents and should be semi private and a little bit restricted. One Panel member suggested moving the benches so they aren't focusing on the bedrooms.

The Panel felt that the lane units would need careful detailing in order to be liveable. They noted that the back corner units were challenging and suggested eliminating the basement level so that the units are above the lane with large patios.

A couple of Panel members thought the landscape should be transitioned into lane noting that that the corner treatment wasn't reading as a feature. One Panel member suggested turning the corner of Victoria Diversion and Porter Street into a public corner and that the landscape design should reflect that for a great addition to the community. One Panel member suggested making the stone wall a feature as well as adding gates on the patios to make them more private. It was suggested that the public realm should be expressed differently around the live/work units. The Panel liked the street trees with one Panel member suggesting they be extended further on the street for more privacy into the units.

A couple of Panel members suggested using a flat roof for extensive green roofs while several other Panel members thought it could be used as a community amenity space. A couple of Panel members suggested making a more glassy expression on the exit stair to invite more of the residents to use the stairs instead of the elevator.

- **Applicant's Response:** Ms. Hurst said they appreciated the comments and thanked the Panel for their constructive criticism.

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2. Address:	10 Terry Fox Way
DE:	Rezoning
Description:	To construct a 20-storey residential building with commercial uses on the main floor.
Zoning:	BCPED to CD-1
Application Status:	RZ
Review:	First
Owner:	Concord Pacific
Architect:	IBI/HB Architects
Delegation:	Martin Bruckner, IBI/HB Architects Jim Hancock, IBI/HB Architects Peter Webb, Concord Pacific Andrew Robertson, Phillips Farevaag Smallemberg Landscape Architects
Staff:	Dwayne Drobot and Ralph Segal

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-1)**

- **Introduction:** Wayne Drobot, Rezoning Planner, gave a brief policy background of the project. The policy is for the North East False Creek Directions for the Future. There are a couple of key things in the policy. This is part of what is going to be ODP amendment because this was designated as commercial space and is now switching to a commercial podium of two storeys and then residential above. Height and density is dictated by a couple of view cones which slice across the site. As part of the vision for North East False Creek, there are a set of principles to support the area vision. The sixth principle talks about encouraging innovative architecture and variety in building form. It talks about differentiating this waterfront from other waterfront areas that have relied predominantly on the tower and podium building form and similar architectural expression. This is one of the key policies governing all of North East False Creek.

Ralph Segal, Senior Architect and Development Planner, further described the proposal. He described the context for the area noting the new Smythe Street which is a cul-de-sac and doesn't connect to the street system at the west end of the street. Bicycles and pedestrian linkages are part of the public realm network allowing Smythe Street to extend down to the waterfront walkway. This portion of North East False Creek with the entertainment centre and how it relates to BC Place will be part of a high energy precinct. North East False Creek is envisioned as a high density neighbourhood with the focus on sports, entertainment and special events as a mixed use destination area for play, work and live. The proposal is for twenty storey building stepping down into a curved elongated building form. There will be a very small floor plate tower at the corner of Smythe Street and Pacific Boulevard with a south facing plaza. A future downtown street car is planned with stops under the Cambie Bridge. A couple of other aspects of the proposal include a commercial podium consisting of retail with restaurants, a second level of office space and an attempt to meld some challenging interfaces into an enhanced public realm. There is a desire to resolve the interface with the bridge by having the east side sidewalk connect to the downtown and to have a way through to the plaza and then onto Smythe Street.

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

1. Are the proposed uses and density supportable on this site?
  2. Does the proposed building massing and form, as well as its architecture as presented at this rezoning stage, achieve the desired "gateway" to the downtown at this key bridgehead location?
  3. Does the proposed array of open spaces and pedestrian links, including pathways beneath and alongside the Bridge, contribute to the desired high quality, interconnected Public Realm sought for this precinct?
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4. Is the proposed Streetscape along Smithe Street contributing appropriately to pedestrian interest and amenity, contributing, along with the Casino, to enhancing this route to the False Creek waterfront?
5. Is the proposed porte cochere/vehicular turnaround off the Smithe Street circle appropriate?

Mr. Drobot and Mr. Segal took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Jim Hancock, Architect, further described the proposal noting that they are excited to design a different form of building. It is a much more curvilinear; more of a slab type building partnered to the building across the street so there is a sense of gateway to the city coming off the Cambie Street Bridge. There will be a retail frontage at grade with a drop off for the Casino at the front of the building. The courtyard on the south side has been created to provide an opportunity for restaurants and retail operations with room for patrons to sit. There will be an amenity on the third level that opens out to a courtyard for the residents to enjoy. The entrance to the parking will be tucked under the building with a turn around and a drop off.

Martin Bruckner, Architect, noted that the form of development was seen by the Panel about two years ago. The idea was to have a bridge head or gateway at the north end of the Cambie Bridge coming into the downtown and that is what their design followed. He noted that they have had meetings with the Planning and Engineering department to make sure the detail design for Smythe Street evolves in a way that is beneficial for the neighbourhood and has access to the seawall and the downtown for cyclists. There is a space between the bridge and the curved building and the aim is to raise the grade on the site so that a pedestrian zone can be created. Further thought will be given to providing access for disabled persons with either with a lift or ramp. Given the limited access to the site, the design strategy is fairly modest for the Porte cochere. The idea is for cars to come into the Porte cochere and do a turn to come out again or carry on to the underground parking.

Andrew Robertson, Landscape Architect, noted there is a concern regarding the potential vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist conflicting so they are planning on widening the ramp and pulling back the vegetation to create a more generous width. They are looking for a bold expression with the ground plane with regard to the paving. There is an opportunity to introduce a lot of energy into the ground plane with the entertainment complex. Mr. Robertson noted that they are envisioning a strong public art component with a series of elements and as well there is an opportunity for lighting underneath the overpass.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Design development to improve the civic quality of the public realm specifically the Smythe Street extension and Pacific Boulevard. Greater integration of the elements including the Porte cochere of the plaza, improve linkages to the casino as well as improving the pedestrian character of the public realm in general.
  - Bring design development to improving the gateway character of the project through a greater degree of articulation or definition leading to a stronger expression that are more responsive to the larger scale masses of the buildings adjacent for a more distinctive and civic presence.
  - Engage in an exploration to improve breath and variety of use and look beyond the conventional retail models to enliven the precinct that is more supportive of the overall vision of the precinct.
  - Significant non-casino entertainment opportunities would be worth exploring and should be allowed to influence the ground plane to the greatest level possible.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it would bring a whole new scale to the city.

The Panel agreed that it was an important project and will clean up a massing entrance into the city from the Cambie Street Bridge as well as creating a special destination. The Panel thought the use and density was supportable and accepted the height restrictions due to the view cones. Some of the Panel thought the proposal hadn't met its potential at the ground plan although they thought the form and massing was interesting. One Panel member thought the building looked out of scale, small in the context, and suggested strengthening its presence. It doesn't need to be bigger, just more confident looking. Another Panel member suggested using green design and passive strategies to create something distinct for the city.

One Panel member thought the architectural expression was too residential at the moment and needed to be more urban. A couple of Panel members thought the plaza area should be grander in scale as befitting an entrance to the city. Also, several Panel members suggested there be a stronger link between the casino and the plaza.

The Panel acknowledged the applicant for the way they had organized the Cambie Street Bridge off ramp. The Panel for the most part liked the plans for Smythe Street however, several Panel members thought it could make a remarkable moment in the city with more than a one or two storey retail edge and residential above. One Panel member thought the project needed to respond more to the neighbourhood. They also thought Smythe Street needed to be more about pedestrians and cyclists and less about vehicles. Another Panel member stated that the space on Smythe Street as it hits Expo Boulevard felt like a left over space.

Several Panel members thought the Porte cochere needed some design development to make it more than just a drop off area. And as well they thought the pedestrian circulation should be enhanced with one Panel member suggesting there could be something of interested added along the path.

Several panel members wanted to see a higher degree of mixed-use in the project considering it is an entertainment area. One Panel member suggested teaming up with the performing arts community to see what else could be added into the project. Another Panel member suggested the applicant look for ways to reinforce play, work and live into the project and suggested talking to various groups to enliven the precinct. It was suggested that a big piece regarding entertainment was missing and encouraged the applicant to look at adding a theatre component, movie theatre and restaurants into the project.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Hancock noted that the proposal is a rezoning application. He said they will look at improving the entertainment component in the project. Mr. Bruckner acknowledged the Panel for their good comments.

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3. Address: 2889 East 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Renfrew Business Centre)  
DE: 414017  
Description: To construct a 7 storey commercial office building on this site.  
Zoning: CD-1  
Application Status: Complete  
Review: Second (first was rezoning)  
Owner: Renfrew Business Centre  
Architect: Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership  
Delegation: Mark Thompson, Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership  
Robert Spencer, Pacific Capital Real Estate  
Margo Long, PWL Partnership Landscape Architects  
Staff: Sailen Black
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#### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-0)

- **Introduction:** Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the proposal noting that it has been seen by the Panel previously at rezoning. The current application focuses on a part of the site. The project is at the corner of Renfrew Street and East 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mr. Black described the surrounding context noting that the Art Institute occupies a building on the site. The purpose of the rezoning was to permit general office on the entire site. This building is the first manifestation of that use. The zoning permitted the building to go up to 110 feet at the parapet, with this building going to 105 feet. Mr. Black gave a recap of the Panel's consensus items from the last review. The Panel recommended:
  - Design development to improve the interface between the buildings and public open space;
  - Improve the circulation and access from the SkyTrain station to site;
  - Consider moving the commercial/retail from East 12th Avenue to the internal plaza area;
  - Consider one parkade entrance in order to improve public realm and pedestrian movement.

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

- Resolution of building form
- Design of the public realm interface around the building at grade

Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Mark Thompson, Architect, further described the proposal noting the building will consist of office with some retail at the ground plane. Underground parking is also proposed. Mr. Thompson described the architectural expression noting the base element contains the retail, lobby and service functions and responds to the context and public realm at grade around the different faces of the building. The upper element contains the office functions and responds to the SkyTrain and road geometry. On the Renfrew Street frontage the building is set back to provide generous connectivity from the Renfrew SkyTrain Station to the Art's Institute and retail animates that edge. There is also a canopy for weather protection as well landscaping with a double row of trees and spaces for tables and chairs. In terms of materials and colours, there is clear glazing at the lower levels with the introduction of terra cotta as well as metal and glass canopies. There are some decks on the second and third levels to provide for amenity space. They eliminated the parkade entry on the north side which helped the site circulation and protects the greenway. Along the northern elevation at grade, commercial uses have been introduced. However it could also be used for retail as allowances have been made in the landscaping to have entries if there is a public function that could work.

Margo Long, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans noting the changes had been made at the pedestrian level with a variety of different paving where the cars and pedestrian will mix

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and also on the plaza. There will be bollards that will define where the cars go. There will be room on the extended plaza for students to bring out their art work. Additional benches are planned around the art's plaza and in the retail plaza. There will be rain gardens that will pick up rain water from the street and the roof will be an intensive green roof. Ms. Long stated that they tried to layer the landscaping so it varies as it gets closer to the building.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Consider having a drop off area and not having cars go through the site.
  - Consider making the site more pedestrian friendly.
  - Consider adding more bicycle storage.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and agreed that it had improved since the last review.

The Panel thought the project was improved and supported the material selection. However, a couple of Panel members were concerned with the similarity of the office building and thought it was too neutral. It was suggested it could be made to look more distinct with the use of green design. They liked that more space had been added in front of the art institute and the lane is a now a pedestrian space. They encouraged the applicant to make the site more pedestrian oriented especially because of the adjacency to the Central Valley Greenway. One Panel member suggested the drop off court could allow for emergency vehicles. A couple of Panel member noted that Kaslo Street seems to be the main entrance and thought it was worth looking to see if that could be improved.

Several Panel members would like to see more bike storage noting that six bike racks is unrealistic even in a transit oriented project. A couple of Panel member suggested making the ground plane more animated by adding amenity space or exercise rooms that could make the first level a more social space.

The Panel supported the landscape plans noting that the rain garden permeable pavers are to be commended. The public realm seemed to have more texture and makes for an interesting experience. One Panel member thought it was a shame that the street couldn't be closed off completely and turned into a pedestrian precinct between the Art Institute and this site. One Panel member noted that all the benches and tables are on the south side and will be in shade most of the time.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Thompson stated that they are working on the circulation and traffic situation and are trying hard to find ways to make it work. He added that they will take the Panel's comments and look at it again.

### Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.