

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** July 29, 1998  
**TIME:** N/A  
**PLACE:** N/A  
**PRESENT:** Joyce Drohan (Chair)  
Sheldon Chandler  
James Hancock  
Peter Kreuk  
Sean McEwan  
Norman Shearing (present for Items #1 - 4 only)

**REGRETS:** Patricia Campbell  
Per Christoffersen  
Geoff Glotman  
Joseph Hruda  
Jim McLean  
Peter Wreglesworth

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	4555 Dunbar Street
2.	3585 West 40th Avenue
3.	27 West Pender Street
3.	1742-1752 West 2nd Avenue
3.	2707-2733 Arbutus Street

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1. **Address: 4555 Dunbar Street**  
DA: 403192  
Use: Mixed Use  
Zoning: C-2  
Application Status: Complete  
Architect: Jack Lutsky Arch.  
Owner: Nelmart Ltd.  
Review: First  
Delegation: Jack Lutsky, Samuel Hanson  
Staff: Scot Hein
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## EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (2-3)

### Introduction:

Scot Hein, Development Planner, introduced this application for a mixed-use development to replace the Dunbar Theatre currently on this site. This review is in accordance with Council's recent directive that the Panel's advice on architectural quality be obtained on applications in the C-2 zone. The site is located mid block on the west side of Dunbar Street between 29th and 30th Avenues and has C-2 zoning to the north, south and east, and RS-5 to the west. The site has a northeast to southwest slope of approximately 12 ft. The proposal is for a mixed-use project containing three CRUs and 15 residential units off an internal core with double-loaded corridor access. Total FSR is 2.8. The building is 4 storeys, with the upper floor set back 5 ft. on the Dunbar frontage, and with terracing at the rear as prescribed in the guidelines. In addition to the setback, the fourth floor also has a change in materials to create a 3-storey expression along Dunbar. Proposed materials include brick veneer, metal, some stucco, and wood features. A height relaxation of up to 6 ft. 11 in. (worst case) is requested. The advice of the Panel is sought on the overall architectural quality (form and massing; impacts of the parking/ramping arrangement; materials, colour and quality; rear elevation landscaping) and on the height relaxation above 40 ft., noting the 12 ft. gradient on the site.

### Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Jack Lutsky, Architect, noted that height has been a major issue since the project's inception. A number of amendments have been made as the project has progressed, including the 5 ft. setback on the Dunbar frontage, reduced balconies in the rear, the canopy design, and an overall reduction in FSR. The design has been massaged in an attempt to address concerns identified by the Dunbar Residents Association with whom they have met for input on a number of occasions. Mr. Lutsky briefly described the project.

### Panel's Comments:

After reviewing the model and posted drawings the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel supported the quality of the materials and the general character of the building but was unable to support the application at this time.

Concerns were expressed about the exposed, above-grade parking at the rear. It is not sufficiently screened from the surrounding houses. It also detracts from the livability of the scheme for residents looking down on it. Much more could be done with landscaping in the lane both in terms of mitigating the impact of the building on neighbours and adding a level of interest and quality to the lane.

For a complete application, the Panel found the landscape plan to be rather weak. There was concern about the ongoing maintenance of the planters at the balcony edges, with a suggestion that these might best be eliminated in favour of allowing individual residences to provide their own

planters. It was recommended that the landscaping effort be concentrated at ground level rather than distributing it throughout the rear patios where it may not survive well in the long term without adequate irrigation and drainage systems.

The Panel did not consider the proposed four storeys to be a problem. It was, however, stressed that any height relaxation still needs to be earned. Since a height relaxation is being sought, it was strongly recommended that everything possible be done to minimize height from within the building in terms of floor-to-ceiling heights of the residential units. In this way, the overall height can be reduced by a few feet which will go some way to addressing the neighbours' concerns without adversely affecting the building.

The Panel generally supported the rear elevation. Attention should be given to the nature of the party walls on the patios. The Panel had a number of concerns about the Dunbar elevation which is somewhat "blockish". The effort that has been given to the rear elevation in terms of simplification and clarity should also be applied to the Dunbar elevation. The Panel thought there needed to be another level of design development to bring some pattern to the retail elevation. The details of the building - the cornices, railings, canopy - should be revisited so that a more complementary treatment is achieved between all the zones of the building. There were a number of comments about bringing continuity to the building by extending the ground floor treatment into the upper levels. Varying the proportions of the windows might be considered. The Panel questioned whether the 5 ft. recess at the top level was sufficient. This can be addressed in a number of ways, including strengthening the lower storeys and refining the termination of the third storey. Lightening the commercial level and at the penthouse may help to achieve the three-storey expression being sought.

The residential entry needs to be much more visible and more strongly defined. As well, a more animated treatment for the retail units should be explored - appropriate signage might achieve the extra dimension needed.

There was a comment that the top metal railings should be of high quality, complementing the canopy system, so that it doesn't detract from the desired overall effect.

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2. **Address: 3585 West 40th Avenue**  
DA: 403103  
Use: Mixed (4 storeys, 12 units)  
Zoning: C-2  
Application Status: Complete  
Architect: Timothy Ankenman  
Owner: Cypress Park Development Corp.  
Review: Second  
Delegation: Timothy Ankenman, Fred Liggett, Art Cowie  
Staff: Scot Hein
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## **EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-0)**

### **Introduction:**

Scot Hein, Development Planner, introduced this application. A previous submission was not supported by the Panel on June 17, 1998. The Panel supported the proposed mixed use but had major concerns with respect to the overall massing of the building. In accordance with Council's recent directive, the Panel's advice is sought on architectural quality and the general design response. The site, at the northeast corner of 40th Avenue and Dunbar Street, presents particular challenges not normally seen in the C-2 zone.

The application has been completely revised and now proposes a three-storey building containing seven office suites at grade and seven double-fronting residential units on the second and third floors. Access to the office use is from Dunbar Street. The ground level also contains some residential use in the form of dens, accessed via a shared vestibule. Proposed FSR is 1.49. Height is 35 ft. 3 in. The proposal essentially meets all the zoning requirements. The only relaxation being sought relates to the location of the crossing which is proposed off 40th Avenue given the absence of a lane. In addition to advice on architectural quality, the Panel's comments are sought on the shared entries and access arrangements. The Panel's comments on this fairly unusual live/work proposal are also welcomed, noting the Planning Department is currently working on this policy issue.

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

Timothy Ankenman, Architect, explained the home office option was explored due to the severe constraints of this site. He briefly reviewed the access arrangements, adding they have tried to use interesting, high quality materials including glass and aluminum cubes, redwood siding, exposed concrete, and perforated metal. In discussion on the proposed use, Art Cowie noted there is a high demand in this area for home office use.

### **Panels Comments**

The Panel provided the following comments after reviewing the model and posted drawings:

The Panel unanimously supported this application and commended the applicant for taking such a dramatic departure from the previous proposal. It is a very creative approach that the Panel hopes will set a precedent for C-2 zoning.

There was strong support for the proposed 3-storey form and massing which was thought to be very appropriate and a good fit in this neighbourhood. The façade treatment was also seen as quite appropriate and the choice of materials excellent. The applicant was encouraged to pay some attention to the treatment of the concrete end wall, given that until the neighbouring property is developed it presents a rather harsh aspect on the north elevation. There was also a suggestion to take another look at the canopy treatment at the 40th/Dunbar corner.

The Panel's response to the proposed live/work arrangement was very positive. It was felt this unique approach provides a good transition from the adjacent RS-5 neighbourhood. This kind of mixed use will add another dimension of activity and character on the street that will be an interesting departure for the city. The Panel accepted the shared entry arrangement as being part of the concept for this type of building.

The Panel supported the location of the crossing and thought the angled access would add to the scheme. It creates very little impact on the adjacent RS-5 neighbourhood and ensures continuity of the pedestrian experience along Dunbar Street.

The landscape plan was considered very well resolved. It provides a good buffer to the easterly neighbour.

- 3. Address: 27 West Pender Street**  
DA: 403381  
Use: Non Market Housing (7 storeys, 98 units)  
Zoning: DD  
Application Status: Preliminary  
Architect: Joe Wai Architect  
Owner: City of Vancouver  
Review: First  
Delegation: Joe Wai  
Staff: Mike Kemble
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### **EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-0)**

#### **Introduction:**

Mike Kemble, Development Planner, presented this application which is in the Victory Square Precinct of the Downtown District. The former CPR rail line traverses the site which the City intends to preserve as a future public right-of-way. The site has an irregular shape with a 75 ft. frontage on Pender Street. There are a number of significant buildings in the vicinity: the heritage Pender Hotel to the immediate west, the 10-storey Portland Hotel to the north on Hastings Street, and the Simons (BC Hydro) Building on Carrall Street. The emerging International Village development is across Pender Street to the south.

The proposal is for 98 units of non-market housing, the majority being bachelor suites and the remainder 1-bedroom units. The bachelor units are approximately 300 sq.ft. which, while less than the 320 sq.ft. by-law minimum, is about the size proposed in the Victory Square Plan. Proposed FSR is 3.7. In addition to the residential use there is a small amount of retail at grade (3,500 sq.ft.) along Pender Street. The building is 7 storeys, stepping down to 5 storeys at the Pender Street frontage. A number of amenities are proposed including a laundry area, a workshop, a health office on the main and second floor, and lounges on the second floor and at the rooftop level. The right-of-way is currently shown as semi-private space with the intention that it will ultimately be opened up as a public right-of-way. The building is predominantly brick, with masonry, architectural concrete and metal balconies. Parking and loading access is from the north lane and the residential entry is off the right-of-way.

The areas in which the Panel's comments are sought include: the residential entry (its location and visual prominence from the street); open space treatment (the right-of-way, treatment of the decks and security aspects); the lane elevation and interface; general massing and exterior character and materials.

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

Joe Wai, Architect, briefly described the design rationale. He noted the size of the units has been debated at length, and they have attempted to achieve approximately 300 sq.ft. to allow adequate movement of furniture within the unit.

#### **Panels Comments:**

After reviewing the model and posted drawings the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application and thought the approach taken on this difficult site and the challenging program has been quite effective.

In general, the Panel thought the exterior treatment had been handled very well. Panel members supported the Pender Street façade and the sympathetic treatment complementing the adjacent heritage building, with comments that it may be a bit complex at the cornice line and that the

expression of the rooftop amenity needs further design development. It was also suggested that the applicant consider an even greater separation of the two building parts. The Panel thought the internal courtyard would be a good amenity area.

The Panel thought the lane façade needed greater articulation and encouraged the addition of some glazing, possibly in the kitchens.

The units seem to be very well planned and the general internal layout is very good. There was one comment that the shared French balconies appear quite awkward.

It was recommended that use of the large roof as an open space be explored. There could be a good opportunity to take advantage of this space with the provision of defined programs for the residents.

The location of the residential entry was considered to be very appropriate and advantageous in terms of providing a more generous public space than is usually found at entries to buildings such as this. It enhances the use of the building by allowing for very spacious lobby areas and functional support spaces. It also avoids eroding the Pender Street façade.

Most of the Panel's commentary focused on the character of the open space and the future public right-of-way. Most Panel members found it regrettable that a secured area is necessary and were not entirely comfortable with taking a totally defensive attitude towards the space. It was acknowledged that its long term future use while the area is still in a state of flux presents a particular planning challenge. Hopefully, emerging developments in the vicinity will ultimately "normalize" this part of the city. It was stressed that the success of the space will depend on the amount of use it gets and certainly putting the entrance in this location will contribute to the activity. As well, every effort should be made to ensure that the retail space is occupied by a use that also creates some animation for as many hours as possible during the day so that it becomes unattractive for nefarious activities. Generally, the Panel felt the goal should be to create a highly amenable space for the residents now, that the public can also enjoy in the future. It was suggested that some cues be taken from the Van Horne on East Cordova. It has a similar space that is less than successful because it is not well used and gives the sense of a gated community. With respect to the design of the space, the Panel strongly recommended the use of very high quality fencing. It was also recommended that this project pick up on some aspect of the former CPR railway and strongly reinforce the right-of-way with some special treatment so that it becomes a real asset to the neighbourhood.

#### **Applicant's Response**

Mr. Wai thanked the Panel for its helpful advice. He noted the main issue is the resolution of the open space.

4. **Address: 1742-1752 West 2nd Avenue**  
Use: Mixed (4 storeys, 12 units)  
Zoning: IC-1 to CD-1  
Application Status: Rezoning  
Architect: Weber & Assoc.  
Owner: Millboro Holdings Ltd.  
Review: Second  
Delegation: Thomas Ecker, Robert Weber  
Staff: Lynda Challis/Eric Fiss
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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-0)**

- **Introduction:**

The Rezoning Planner, Lynda Challis, presented this rezoning application for office/ retail/service and residential uses on this site, presently occupied by a single storey frame structure used for wholesaling and warehousing, with parking for 15 cars provided at the rear off the lane. Other buildings in the area are generally one to two storeys and used for retail/offices, vehicle dealerships, warehousing and wholesaling. Rezoning of the site is guided by the Burrard Slopes IC District's Interim Policies which were adopted by Council in 1993. These policies recommend maximum densities for the office/service/retail and residential uses as well as providing built form and massing criteria. Development in Burrard Slopes is also subject to a Development Cost Levy at the Building Permit stage.

The proposed development is a 4-storey building which would include storage and parking for 54 vehicles below and at grade, retail and service uses at the street level facing West 2nd Avenue, offices and residential uses at the second level, and residential on the 3rd and 4th storeys. Maximum FSR is 1.93 which is consistent with the density recommended in the Burrard Slopes Policies.

The Panel did not support the application when it was reviewed on April 8, 1998. The Panel supported the proposed use and density but had concerns about the above-grade parking in the original proposal which resulted in a 2-storey blank wall at the rear of the building. There were concerns about livability of some of the units, and questions about whether the building captured the industrial imagery sought for this area. The revised proposal has responded to the Panel's concerns by locating all the parking below or at grade. The blank 2-storey massing has been reduced to one storey with less blank space. The building has been redesigned to provide a more industrial expression and has taken cues from other developments in the area. Units have been redesigned and reconfigured to improve liability. The large landscaped decks have been retained. Eric Fiss, Development Planner, noted the application now complies with the intent of the policies guidelines. The Panel's comments are sought on the built form and its expression as well as its image and character both at street level and on the lane.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Tom Ecker, Architect, briefly reviewed the revised submission.

- **Panel's Comments:**

After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel thought this submission was a significant improvement over the previous scheme. The applicant's positive response to the Panel's earlier concerns was appreciated.



The Panel found that the proposal effectively captured the light industrial character of the area. Its simplified massing is a much better fit for the context and is particularly improved at the rear elevation.

There was mixed response to the open frame on West 2nd. There was some support and a comment that it helps to resolve the elevation of the building. There was one suggestion to tone it down at the upper level. The Panel had no problem with the enclosed patios.

The Panel looks forward to seeing the sidewalk treatment details at the next stage of the development, noting this aspect of the scheme is as yet unresolved. Greater detail should also be provided with respect to development of the patios, and screening and privacy issues.

There was a suggestion that the unit plans need to be massaged in terms of the internal circulation.

The Panel acknowledged the considerable improvement of the lane elevation and was satisfied that the screening will be effective. It was strongly recommended that the applicant take the opportunity to introduce planting in the lane.

5. **Address: 2707-2733 Arbutus Street**  
DA: 403370  
Use: Mixed (4 storeys, 70 units)  
Zoning: CD-1  
Application Status: Complete  
Architect: Howard Bingham Hill  
Owner: Greystone Realty  
Review: First  
Delegation: Ron Howard, Randall Sharp, Maurice Pez  
Staff: Eric Fiss
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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-0)**

**Introduction:**

Eric Fiss, Development Planner, introduced this application, noting there was a previously approved application for this site that was not pursued. The site is at the northwest corner of 12th Avenue and Arbutus Street with a 270 ft. frontage along Arbutus and 130 ft. along 12th. Following a brief description of the immediate context, Mr. Fiss noted the overall L-shaped form of development generally conforms with the rezoning's approved form of development. It also conforms with FSR and height requirements. The proposed development straddles two parcels with a break at the view access point identified in the original concept plan for this precinct. Two levels of below grade parking are proposed. The areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought are: the setback of the 4th storey along Arbutus Street; the gap and building linkage at the lane access between 11th and 12th Avenues; and architectural character and landscape development of the private and public open spaces.

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Maurice Pez noted this is Greystone's sixth development in the Arbutus Walk Neighbourhood. He explained that the previous proposal was found to be unviable on this challenging site. The intent is to provide affordable housing for first time buyers. Ron Howard, Architect, reviewed the design rationale.

**Panel's Comments:**

After reviewing the model and posted drawings the Panel provided the following comments:

The Panel congratulated the applicant on achieving a building that responds to a number of difficult urban design challenges. The application was unanimously supported.

The Panel did not think it was necessary to set back the 4th floor along Arbutus Street and considered the intent of the guidelines had been met in this regard. There was, however, a concern expressed that the treatment of the upper storey is excessively spare. Given the need to be sensitive to the long views that exist in this neighbourhood the applicant was encouraged to add more character to the upper storey, e.g., canopies or a light metal cornice, etc.

The main area of concern for the Panel was the bridge linkage element. The applicant was strongly urged to provide a much greater degree transparency to enhance both the outside appearance of the building and improve the interior circulation. It was felt it was a missed opportunity not to take advantage of the gap to break up the length of the internal corridor. The lightness of the covered space will also be important, given the depth of the project. There was also concern expressed about the dead-end space created with the walkway through the gap, and several Panel members suggested it would be nice if a way could be found to carry the pedestrian link all the way through. The mixing of the residential and commercial entries could also benefit from further design development.

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Overall it was thought the landscaping had been very well resolved. The terracing planters on 11th Avenue provide a very nice framing of the public space, and the walkway on the west side also works very well. The children's play area is very well conceived. There was a suggestion to enlarge the gap to make it flare out a bit to add a greater level of richness to the open space between the retail and the entry. There was some concern about the loading bay area and a recommendation to provide some additional screening.

It was noted that the previous proposal for this site had a roof expression that designated the corner of Arbutus and 12th Avenue. The Panel urged that greater identification also be given to this building.

In general, the Panel appreciated the fresh approach that has been taken with this project. The applicant was commended for avoiding the somewhat formulaic façade treatment that has been seen to date in this neighbourhood.