

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: August 13, 2008

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
John Wall, Chair
Maurice Pez
Douglas Watts
Bill Harrison
Martin Nielsen
Mark Ostry
Albert Bicol (Excused Item #3)
Walter Francl
Richard Henry
Gerry Eckford
David Godin

REGRETS: Tom Bunting

RECORDING SECRETARY: Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	False Creek North ODP Sites 10A and 10C
2.	4353 West 10 th Avenue
3.	Passive Design Best Practices Guide Presentation and Review
4.	Granville Loops

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Wall 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:	False Creek North ODP Sites 10A and 10C
DE:	N/A
Description:	Review of a development proposal for the balance of the stadium lands including stadium rehabilitation. The proposal is the basis for consideration of an amendment to the False Creek North ODP to allow for new development potential on the BC stadium lands.
Zoning:	FCN
Application Status:	Complete ODP
Architect:	Stantec Engineering
Owner:	BC Pavilion Corporation
Review:	First
Delegation:	Peter Wreglesworth, Stantec Architecture Rainer Passler, Stantec Architecture Brent MacGregor, PavCo
Staff:	Michael Gordon/Ralph Segal

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (10-0)

- Introduction:** Michael Gordon, Senior Planner, Downtown Group, introduced the proposal. Mr. Gordon noted that staff were working on a public amenity strategy last year when PavCo came forward and said they wanted to pursue an upgrade to the stadium and were also looking at an infill development around the stadium. Within the North-East False Creek Design Study staff had envisioned an infill development around the stadium. The study looked at land use scenarios as well as considering the development capacity for the area. Mr. Gordon said they were confident that there will be a demand for approximately 1.3 million square feet of commercial space in the area. He said they are also willing to consider residential use. An acoustical consultant has been hired by the City. He noted that this is not an area where you would typically see residential. This is an area where there will be higher noise levels and there will be thousands of people coming into the area to use the stadium. Mr. Gordon said there will be ways to mitigate the impacts and they will notify the residents that they can't anticipate the same quiet enjoyment as they would in a more residential area. Also, the Vancouver Art Gallery is planning to move to the Plaza of Nations area. Mr. Gordon said they are looking to see if the Plaza of Nations site is a good location for the Vancouver Art Gallery. He noted that this type of facility fits in with the anticipated goal for the area. He also noted that this will be an amendment to the ODP rather than going to a CD-1 as staff felt this was the best way to establish density allowances and land uses for the area. There will be a public Open House on the 26th and 28th of August as well additional Open Houses in September and the plan will be referred to a Public Hearing in mid October.

Ralph Segal, Senior Architect/Development Planner further described the proposal using the context and architectural models. Mr. Segal noted that an Official Development Plan (ODP) is a very broad policy statement rather than a more advanced CD-1 zoning which would involve a specific form of development. What is being brought forward on the BC Place site is a conceptual massing leading to a fairly defined form of development. By way of context, there is the BC Place site, the Georgia Viaduct and an area that is within the BC Place site which has been referred to as the Georgia steps. It has been long anticipated that a pedestrian linkage between the upper grade of the downtown and Pacific Boulevard

onto the waterfront would be created in this area. Mr. Segal further described the context for the surrounding developments including GM Place, the Plaza of Nations and the Concorde lands. Mr. Segal noted that should the plans for relocating the Vancouver Art Gallery to the Plaza of Nations go ahead Enterprise Hall will be demolished.

In terms of the proposal, Mr. Segal noted that the idea is to have a very strong street edge definition, referred to as shoulders wrapping around as much as possible with higher elements rising above. Another signature piece in the skyline of the city will be the new roof on the stadium. One of the instructions from Council was that the view corridors were respected and that is what is holding the height on the site to what is being proposed. There will be a review in 2009 of the Council approved view corridors. Mr. Segal noted that although Pacific Boulevard will remain a one-way street, it is anticipated that it will become a "great street". A downtown street car is also planned to run along Pacific Boulevard.

Mr. Segal noted that the remaining north-east False Creek lands are still under review however it is planned for a high density and entertainment destination with an enhanced public realm and the addition of the Vancouver Art Gallery. The idea is that the sites will be very penetrable thought to the waterfront.

Mr. Segal noted that they will be recommending to Council that the present ODP mandated Georgia Street end view be maintained.

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

- Overall Massing Concept:
Is the conceptual massing approach for the proposed additional density supportable?
- Public Realm:
Do the various proposed initiatives appropriately enhance the Public Realm at both the edges and within the site.

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

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Peter Wreglesworth, Architect, noted that they will be coming back to the Panel at the High Level Review for North-East False Creek. He also noted that the project is at the ODP stage and it is essentially uses and density. The mandate from PavCo was to seek the maximum ability of uses. He said they also want flexibility with the uses that allows them the ability to explore more options from a marketing and development point of view. A tremendous amount of money will be spent on the upgrade of the stadium. The additional density will contribute to the cost of the upgrade but won't pay for it entirely. In terms of what will be done before 2010, this will include a seismic upgrade of the overall structure of the stadium so that it can receive the new roof, upgrades to all public washrooms on levels 1, 2 and 4, revisions to the concourse areas and pedestrian access ramps by introducing colour and lighting, improve the pedestrian and user experience within the stadium, upgrade to the concessions and suites, increasing the accessibility for the disabled, introduction of way-finding and environment graphics that create visual interest, upgrading the seating, and redoing the ceiling liner. Once the Olympics are over all the preliminary design for the roof will be done. The intention is that the upgrade to the roof would be implemented soon after the closing of the Olympics.

Rainer Passler, Architect, noted that one of the major tasks the project has is do is to link the pedestrian circulation to the waterfront. Also, they have responded to the City's aim of creating a minimum of 7,000 jobs. As far as the linkages are concerned, there will be the extension of Smythe Street with a street end view of the water. There is the Robson Street western concourse route to the Plaza of Nations and the most important one is the

Georgia steps. As far as the form of development is concern, Mr. Passler noted that created the design for a major shoulder development up to the existing concrete ring anticipating more animation over time. There is also the issue of how to make sure the stadium servicing functions as more development happens. Mr. Passler noted that they also had to keep in mind the exiting requirements of the stadium and how to get people down to grade. He added that they will be looking for animation and a level of interest along Smythe Street, along the concourse levels and to animate the ground level.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider reducing the amount of density proposed on the 10A site to allow for different and flexible future development scenarios;
 - Preserve the Georgia Street view cone down to the stadium;
 - Urban Design development to the Smythe Street elevation to improve the public realm and allow for improved access to the stadium from the westerly precinct;
 - Design development to the public realm surround the site and around the concourse; and
 - Consider more green building design to improve sustainability.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and was encouraged to see the proposed redevelopment for the area. They also supported the additional density and the proposed uses for the site.

The Panel noted that the applicant has some major challenges to overcome with the site. The project addresses four major streets and all of them critical to the fabric of the city. The building consumes four city blocks and people have to move around it and descend approximately forty feet from the upper level of the downtown to the sea wall level. How the concourse and how the public edges of the buildings are developed will be critical. The Panel encouraged the applicant to set out broad goals and guidelines in the ODP on how the building edges and public realm will be enhanced.

The Panel supported the general idea of densifying the project and supported the strategy for putting density out to the street edges. A few Panel members raised some concerns regarding the amount of density proposed particularly on the 10A site on the west side of the stadium. They suggested some flexibility or some alternate massing options should be considered so that the applicant and City staff are comfortable with the amount of density that will work with different development scenarios, and that it will work for different uses.

The Panel hoped that the view cone study opened up more possibilities for the site noting that the height challenges were affecting the 10A & 10C site. One Panel member suggested adding more height to the 10C site while another Panel member thought the site needed to be more transparent and sculptural and less bulky. A couple of Panel members thought the scale didn't fit with the rest of the project. The Panel suggested preserving the Georgia Street view cone and hoped that the view cone discussion came to a conclusion before the project was started.

The Panel noted that Georgia Street will be a critical street for the project. How that street transforms over time as well as how the public will move down Georgia Street through the new steps to the Art Gallery will be important. Georgia Street is a critical edge for the project. The Panel was concerned about the Robson Street Plaza as they felt this was also a critical edge and an important entry to the stadium. The new proposed entry on Pacific Boulevard is a great idea and will also be critical to the project. The Panel

noted that Smythe Street seems to be the forgotten street. Considering there will be a new Canada Line Station at Davie Street which will make for a tremendous amount of movement from the west to the east, this face will be critical as well.

The Panel thought the Smythe Street elevation with only one perspective presented, seemed rather mean. There was no suggestion of a stadium from that view point as you can't see any of the mass or sense of entry or any indication of a way finding up to the concourse level. Smythe Street will be the main entrance from Yaletown and the entertainment district for people who will have their dinner before the game and move from the restaurant to the stadium. It is an important link and the site should not turn its back on its westerly neighbours.

With respect to the public realm treatment at the concourse level, a couple of Panel members thought it needed to be carefully animated with retail or active pedestrian uses on both sides of the concourse to improve it's viability and the safety of the public realm when the stadium is not in use. The panel questioned how security of the newly enclosed concourse level would be handled and asked the applicant team to carefully review whether this space is enclosed or open to the public 24/7. It was suggested that the applicant look at the pedestrian experience around the whole building as this was an opportunity to enrich and animate the public realm.

The Panel noted that the ultimate test of a good green building will be its durability and longevity. The Panel suggested the application look for opportunities to make the project truly sustainable both for the stadium and the new development. One Panel member applauded the applicant's plans for energy reduction in the stadium.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Wreglesworth thanked the Panel for their comments and for recognizing some of their challenges. He said he looked forward to addressing the comments.

2. Address:	4353 West 10 th Avenue
DE:	412159
Description:	To construct a 4 storey, with underground parking, mixed-use building consisting of 21 dwelling units with commercial ground floor.
Zoning:	C-2
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	B2 Architecture
Review:	First
Delegation:	Scott Posno, B2 Architecture Brian Billingsley, B2 Architecture Jonathan Losee, Jonathan Losee Ltd.
Staff:	Paul Cheng

EVALUATION: Support (10-0)

- **Introduction:** Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a four storey mixed use building located on West 10th Avenue in a vibrant and developing shopping area. The development looks to restore a gap in the streetscape caused by a fire.

Mr. Black described the context for the area noting that the properties across the lane to the north are single-family residential. The zoning and guidelines for the site are intended to encourage housing and commercial development along arterial streets while emphasizing design that furthers compatibility among uses; sets a high standard of liveability for housing; mitigates privacy and visual impacts on adjacent residential and achieves appropriate street scale and pedestrian interest. Mr. Black noted that the height and setback aim to establish minimum setbacks to nearby residential, as well reduce the apparent height on the street and provide space for landscaping, cornices and bays.

The proposal will contain 21 dwelling units with commercial on the ground floor and underground parking accessed from the lane. The expression is relatively contemporary and employs concrete finishes along with glass and metal elements. The side walls are of concrete block. Cantilevered shades and cornices will provide coverage for the residential decks on the north and south facades.

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

- The proposal requests the conditional permission for reduced front and rear yard setbacks and height. Taking into consideration the intent of these regulations, would the reduced setbacks negatively affect neighbouring residential and commercial sites or the public realm?
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Brian Billingsley, Architect, further described the proposal. He noted that they had designed the building next door for the same client and have carried over a similar rhythm with the new building. There will be cedar soffits on the large overhangs and black aluminum framed windows. Mr. Billingsley noted that they are planning on using geothermal for heating and cooling of the building. In terms of sustainability they are planning to use low flush toilets, water efficiency fixtures and locally harvested cedar. They have tried to mitigate solar gain in the summer months and in winter months generate a lot of daylighting into the units.

Jonathan Losee, Landscape Architect, noted that most of the landscaping is in the back patios. The roof deck is not heavily planted but there are opportunities for planters and pots. The private patios in the back have fireplaces. At the lane side there will be a

narrow strip of plantings to buffer the base of the building. The planters will have an irrigation system.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider further refinements to the colour palette for the building; and
 - Consider expanding the useable roof terrace.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was an attractive project.

They liked the fact that the building will be a concrete structure which will make it more substantial with a high level of quality in the detailing and materials. One Panel member noted that the building raised the bar for future developments in other C-2 zoned sites.

Several Panel members thought the colour palette for the building was a little drab and encouraged the applicant to reconsider the colour choices so that the building doesn't come off as cold. However, a couple panel members had no concern with the colour palette. The Panel thought the coloured soffits did a lot to improve the colour on the building and noted that looking up the façade from the street they would have a huge impact.

The Panel suggested the applicant include more sustainable measures noting that there will be continuous balconies on the south facade which is already a huge step towards sustainability. One Panel member asked the applicant to challenge the mechanical engineer regarding the use of air conditioning and suggested using natural ventilation instead.

Several Panel members encouraged the applicant to expand the useable roof terrace if possible with a couple of Panel members suggesting the addition of a green roof. The Panel thought the roof deck justified the encroachment on height for the elevator. A Panel member wished the roof terrace could be extended or made private with access from the suites below. Another Panel member thought the outdoor fireplaces should be perpendicular to the terrace so that they do not block the mountain views.

The Panel supported the height and the front setback.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Billingsley thanked the Panel for their comments.

3. Address:	Passive Design Best Practices Guide Presentation and Review
DE:	N/A
Description:	Looking for feedback and input regarding the Passive Design Best Practices Guide booklet that will serve as a reference for CoV Staff as well as the public.
Zoning:	N/A
Application Status:	N/A
Architect:	Cobalt Engineering and Hughes Condon Marler Architects
Review:	Workshop
Delegation:	Vladimir Mikler, Cobalt Engineering
Staff:	Rachel Moscovich

EVALUATION: NON-VOTING SESSION

- **Introduction:** Rachel Moscovich, Sustainability Office, introduced the workshop regarding Passive Design. The guide will eventually become a guideline for new buildings. It will define best practices and go through a number of recommended strategies specific to the City of Vancouver. The goal is to establish a common definition for passive design amongst staff as well as the Urban Design Panel so that staff can recommend the adoption of these practices to the design community as a way to approach building design with the aim to reduce reliance on mechanical systems and also as a way of assisting projects in meeting energy efficiency targets that are being upgraded through the Green Building Strategy.

As the Urban Design Panel will be using the guide, Ms. Moscovich noted that the Panel was being asked to give their comments early in the process. She said that they want to get the Panel's feedback, comments on how they would use the guide and what would be useful information to include in the guide.

Vladimir Mikler, Cobalt Engineering, said they were excited to have been awarded the project as they feel strongly about promoting building design for the best possible performance in terms of sustainability in general and energy efficiency in particular. He said they were fully committed to design the guideline as a practical tool for a non-technical audience. Developers will be able to use the guidelines to help shape and form the building and be guided in their decisions to develop the best approach for energy efficiency. The purpose is to present the concept and context of the whole approach and how it will be structured. Mr. Mikler said he appreciated the Panel's comments and professional opinion as they are mid way through the preparation of the guide. He noted that every recommendation in the guide will be backed up by solid engineering calculations and will be specific to the Vancouver climate with different levels of energy performance.

Mr. Mikler described how the guide will be structured. The purpose of the guide will serve as a reference to City staff to build on and implement into City By-laws as well as a reference guide for the building industry and will be made available to the public.

Mr. Mikler presented a slide show presentation noting the purpose of the guide; why passive design; approach and application; guide structure; passive design elements; sample page with overview, benefits, limitation, Vancouver applications, synergies and graph/analysis; passive design strategies.

Passive Design Best Practices Guidelines Purpose and Overview:

What is this document? This document will be a reference to staff and industry that will articulate best practices for passive design in Vancouver.

What defines success for this document? This document will be successful if it changes the way City of Vancouver staff, and its review Panels (DPB, UDP) approach the design of buildings and moves them to become more sustainable.

A secondary measure of success is if this document is embraced by the local design community.

What are the specific deliverables of this document?

1. To establish a common vision and definition of passive design, and the associated benefits and outcomes of adoption of passive design strategies;
2. to provide guidance to the design of buildings with the goal of improving occupant health and comfort without reliance on mechanical systems;
3. To promote an approach to architecture within the City of Vancouver that improves human thermal comfort and therefore the energy efficiency of buildings;
4. To move toward a design standard in Vancouver wherein energy efficiency and thermal comfort through passive design are assumed as a baseline in the design of new buildings.

The applicant team and staff took questions from the Panel.

• **Related Commentary:**

- Would like to see an even playing field and something that can be measured objectively from development to development.
- The guide will drive the building materials and esthetics of the building.
- How do you apply the standards and maintain affordability?
- Need to observe the appropriate long term life cycle of the building.
- For the energy performance charts, would it be possible to have two graphs or parallel lines as a comparison of best practices and 'worst' practices (where no passive strategies are utilized)? This would help the designer understand how all the strategies need to work together and to get a sense of the overall energy performance?
- Need to give people the ability to manipulate their environment.
- How external shading is applied to the building will still be up to the architect and leaves room for creativity.
- Has to be an economic correlation for each passive strategy so that the architect can sell it to their clients.
- Still have to do the life cycle costs as a design team that will guide and help raise the bar for passive design.
- The basic principle of architectural design is sustainability and the study impacts EcoDensity. It is related to LEED™ and is spelled out in EcoDensity. The guide is before LEED™ and beyond LEED™.
- The guide is something for the City to measure against and ultimately the goal is to legislate real guidelines, By-laws and policy.
- It will take some time for people to adjust. There will be some opportunities and trade-offs for the builders and the development industry.
- Could be a challenge for the purchasers to understand the value.
- Address thermal comfort properly through the architecture.
- Would be interesting to take an existing building program, for a building that exists in the last ten years, and then redesign the building with the same program and use the guide for energy performance.
- The boundaries in the guide were based on real building energy consumption from the existing real building data base.
- The Panel felt that the document will be useful and a transitional document that will be tweaked over the years.

4. Address:	Granville Loops
DE:	N/A
Description:	Looking for feedback regarding the Granville Bridge Loops. The transportation goal is to provide better connections throughout the area and to improve the access between Granville Street downtown and the False Creek waterfront.
Zoning:	N/A
Application Status:	N/A
Owner:	City of Vancouver
Review:	Workshop
Staff:	Richard Johnson

EVALUATION: NON-VOTING SESSION

- **Introduction:** Richard Johnson, Central Area Planning, stated that staff have been working on the Granville Loops project for approximately a year. He noted that there are various lease problems with the property. The area wasn't originally thought of as an area for redevelopment however some of the new development in the area has helped to create the plan for the area. The Granville Loops area is bounded by Pacific Boulevard, Drake, Howe and Seymour Streets. Two thirds of the property belongs to the City and the remainder is privately held property. The area wasn't incorporated into the Downtown South Zoning area. Mr. Johnson noted that the land is relatively under-utilized due to problems with access. The City leases the west loop and part of the east loop to Black Top Cabs. The lease runs until 2022. The motivation for developing the area came from trying to improve the pedestrian access from Granville Street to the False Creek shoreline. It became obvious that some redevelopment could happen to pay for developing the access.

Developing the Granville Loops is the single most popular improvement in the Downtown Transportation Plan. Council gave direction to pursue the plan to re-create the original city grid before the Granville Street Bridge was added.

An urban design study looked for different building types with bigger buildings located on Seymour and Howe Streets with the overall massing concept to provide a "memorable" gateway celebrating the street grid and providing public amenities. The concept plan will provide a new residential neighbourhood with "eyes and doors" on the street. Maximum building heights will be reviewed as part of the higher building review and respect for the high-rise form of Downtown South and the mid-rise form of Granville Street will be taken into consideration.

The Plan also focused on street level use with retail prohibited zones where retail would not be viable due to a lack of street parking. Also, residential only streets will give an opportunity for a quiet townhouse lined street with a limited ability for parking on the streets.

In terms of the Granville Street Bridge, staff wanted to have a similar situation as the Georgia Viaduct that would create another intersection so there is a feeling of the downtown extending down to the bridge with ten foot setbacks to the buildings.

The approximate gross area floor space in the Granville Loops area, which is subject to dedications and negotiations, is approximately 1,225,000 square feet with 85,000 square feet from heritage bonus transfers. Comparably, the Downtown South Areas has a total floor area of 1,140,000 square feet with 80,000 square feet of public open space.

There are several phasing options which would allow for existing uses while improving access where possible. The Black Top Cabs are currently looking for another site although their lease doesn't expire until 2022. In order to develop that site, it will have to be rezoned going from 3 FSR to 5 FSR residential and CD-1 zoning.

Mr. Johnson presented the Public Open House Feedback. The open house was held on July 14, 2008. The majority of people saw this as a significant improvement to the gateway to the city and connectivity through the area. The plan will be going to Council Planning and Environment on October 30th. He added that the City will be getting a significant amount of funds that will help pay for all the engineering needs ranging from soils to utilities to roads to bridges, etc. The funds will also help pay for the rebuilding of the Old Continental Hotel at double the size to potentially address a unit loss in terms of the Cecil Hotel which is being demolished.

- **Panel Commentary:**

The following comments/questions arose in the general discussion that followed:

- There is a section in the Plan that addresses sustainability and EcoDensity. It is expected that LEED™ at the time of CD-1 will be adhered to.
- There is an opportunity to have a shared utility on the site with the possibility of net-zero buildings.
- There is a possibility of extending the street car along Drake Street and terminating at Granville Street. There may be an opportunity to extend the street car to Burrard Street and maybe taking the street car across the Burrard Bridge.
- The Panel liked the massing and the circulation and thought the plan would create situations at grade that would create a better pedestrian experience.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.