

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: August 16, 2006

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Walter Francl, Chair
Nigel Baldwin
Albert Bicol
Shahla Bozorgzadeh
James Cheng
Eileen Keenan
Margot Long
Bill Harrison
John Wall
Peter Wreglesworth
C.C. Yao

REGRETS: Tom Bunting

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	2880 Venables Street
2.	SEFC sub-area 2-A re-zoning
3.	1885 Venables Street

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| 1. Address: | 2880 Venables (Notre Dame Secondary) |
| DE: | 410128 |
| Use: | Residential, retail, live/work, restaurant |
| Zoning: | RS-1 |
| Application Status: | Complete |
| Architect: | Killick Metz Bowen Rose Architects |
| Owner: | Notre Dame Secondary |
| Review: | Second (April 12, 2006) |
| Delegation: | Christina Marghetti, Lynne Varhol, Patricia Campbell |
| Staff: | Dale Morgan/Scott Barker |
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction:** Dale Morgan, Development Planner introduced this complete application to replace the existing Notre Dame Secondary School located on the site bounded by Renfrew, Venables, Kaslo and Parker Streets. The school is increasing the student capacity from 665 to 800, retaining the existing gymnasium and auditorium and providing onsite parking. The site is 4.5 acres in size. This application was viewed by the Urban Design Panel on April 12, 2006 and received unanimous non support.

At that time the Panel's consensus on key aspects needing improvement were:

- simplify and improve the consistency of the architectural expression, with design development recommended to the building massing and the material selection;
- increase the number and size of windows in circulation and classroom spaces;
- provide more outdoor gathering spaces for students;
- improve building entry definition;
- provide more landscaping and screening of the surface parking lot adjacent to the neighbours;
- design development to the exterior handicap ramp to better integrate it with the landscape;
- there was a comment about the removal of the Lombardy poplar trees provided they are replaced. Following discussion with the neighbours it was decided to keep the trees in place.

In the Related Commentary in the previous review, the Panel thought the over all site plan was fairly well resolved and appropriate given the proposed phasing program. Concern was expressed about the Renfrew elevation and recommended more strongly expressed chapel elements with consideration for entry along the primary street. The location of the meditation garden was questioned. Greater simplification was recommended in the material expression and to consider new material to the existing structures to improve overall cohesiveness. Budget restraints were acknowledged, however the proposed materials seem basic and a somewhat harsh. More glass and greater transparency would provide options for more sustainable building strategies.

The building sitting and functional layout will remain the same. More consistent materials have been sought using predominately colored smooth faced concrete for much of the lower massing. Existing split faced block has been retained partially on the existing auditorium and gymnasium walls. Double height columns either in concrete or concrete block are being used as a repeating motif. The Parker Street entry has been improved and the formal entry on Venables remains and has an expanded canopy. More glass has been added enlarging the classroom windows. Metal screening is proposed for roof top mechanical equipment. The meditation garden has been made more secluded and

screened from the south. More outdoor gathering places have been provided and a patio area access off the lower north-south concourse and a student gathering space off the activity room. On grade parking has been reconfigured. The disability ramp has been integrated with the landscaping and the changing grade. The popular trees are to remain. The applicant has agreed to enter into a Good Neighbour Agreement with the community.

Area in which the advice of the Panel is sought include:

- relating the architectural material expression;
 - window treatments;
 - outdoor gathering spaces;
 - landscaping.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Christina Marghetti, Architect reviewed the project and described how it has evolved since the last Urban Design Panel meeting. Patricia Campbell, Landscape Architect reviewed the landscape plan and the changes made to meditation garden and the parking lot.
 - **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects:**
 - The panel complimented the applicant on the improvement of the design;
 - There is significant improvement in the architectural expression of the building;
 - There was a suggestion that the Chapel be more prominently expressed in the building massing;
 - On the Renfrew and Parker Street corner it was suggested to reduce the retaining walls and open up the patio. The panel strongly support going back to the original design for the corner landscaping;
 - Regarding the large wall at the Parker Street entrance some opening should be should be introduced to open up the entry.
 - **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this submission. They appreciated the refinement that had been done with the color and palate and stated that it was a vast improvement from the previous submission. The panel also liked the fact the school has had more involvement with the community.

With respect to the chapel it was felt that since it was not open to the public there doesn't need to be an entrance on Renfrew Street but felt that as it is an important marker and the applicant may want to identify the chapel by making it taller.

The panel felt that the entrance on Parker Street was rather subtle and blended into the flat roof. Consideration should be given to enlarge the entrance as it will be used more due to its proximity to the parking lot. It was also felt that the bike wall could be improved. Also the panel recommends that the location of the garbage area be changed as it is the first thing you see when driving into the parking lot.

There were still concerns about the design of the handicap ramp and it was suggested that it could be softened as well as landscaped to retain more of the existing trees.

The panel would like to see some of the retaining walls reduced or find a way to more gradually grading around the corner of the building. The students will tend to congregate on the west side of the property and it was felt that benches would work to open the area to the street.

It was suggested that the applicant should look at doing green roofs although the panel is aware of the costs this could incur. More glazing in the gymnasium was also suggested, perhaps using skylights .

In general the panel found an overall improvement to the design and the architectural development of the building and that a lot more thought has gone into the outdoor spaces.

- **Applicant's Response:** Christina Marghetti, Architect agreed with all the comments and thanked the panel for their suggestions.

2. Address:	SEFC sub-area 2A re-zoning
DE:	Rezoning
Use:	Mixed-use residential (Olympic Village)
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	GBL
Owner:	Millennium
Review:	First
Delegation:	Stu Lyon, Jennifer Stamp, Roger Bailey, Paul Merrick
Staff:	Scot Hein/Karis Hiebert

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-3)**• Introduction:**

Scot Hein, Planner, presented the south east false creek rezoning submission and noted that there has been two workshops with the Panel. Relating to use density and form of development Mr. Hein presented several questions for the panel to answer.

- With respect to use, there is general compliance on sites 4 and 11 to flip for the Community Centre (previously supported in 2nd workshop);
 - To comment on the purposed day care location;
 - The anchor tenant strategy specifically the food store location with respect to challenges for loading;
 - Commentary on what might be the uses on the north end of the Salt building;
 - Location of affordable and modest market housing;
 - Option for an interfaith spiritual centre could work within the neighbourhood and on which of two sites it would best work;
 - With respect to density the proposal provides for an increase of approximately 102,000 square feet over the RFP potential and 215,000 over the ODP with the difference of 113,000 attributed to passive features/overhangs and an additional 3% non-market housing. This is attributed to modest market strategy adding 132 units in addition to 251 non-market units. Can the precinct absorb this additional area as a strategy to introduce modest market housing opportunity?
 - Would like some general advice on the disposition of density noting - Partial 9 storey heights on sites 6 and 10 (meets height in ODP), 7 storey height on site 3 (meets height in ODP), Partial 13 storey on sites 2 and 9 (exceeds ODP height by 8'-4");
 - General advice on the building and unit typologies presented with respect to livability;
 - Comments on the approach taken to the book end sites;
 - Advice on the disposition of massing around the Salt building and the plaza;
 - The residential building on site 4 has doubled in height and as this is a change since the workshop they are looking for some advice on the change.
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- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**
Stu Lyon, Architect focused in on the responses to the Urban Design Panel's comments of a month ago. He described the changes to the density and rational for changes to building heights and the location of market housing and the grocery store and other anchor positions. He also asked the Panel for their suggestion on what could be done with the Salt building. Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect, reviewed the landscape plan for the site. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
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- **Panel's Consensus:**

- Community Centre site seems to be under utilized, great location for a daycare, could have housing on top. This site could take the 102,000 sq ft - the community centre would be the place to put at least some of it. ;
- Lot 9 is the better location for the grocery store and will draw people into the site. Need to decide what kind of a grocery store;
- Keep cars as far south as possible and animate 1st Avenue with a big anchor;
- North end of the Salt Building could be a plaza and house a pub or other public use. Additionally, smaller retail on the plaza will help animate it;
- The East/west streets are hard to understand. The applicant needs to take a closer look at the street elevations and the character of the street. The character as presented is underdeveloped. They seem to lack a certain level of joy and interest;
- The intersection of blocks 3, 4 and Block 6 have too much density;
- South end bookends have become identical. Current level of massing very confused between the two cubes. Some concerns about offering 13 stories on this site. Needs to be better integrated with the neighbours. Some were opposed to the 13 storeys, they did not want the massing to approach that of a tower;
- Some of the buildings appear to be too close together and need more space and set backs;
- It is unfortunate to offer rental for modest housing when most middle income people want to own their own homes;
- Original False Creek Plan was to have a low scale plan to bring people to the water and this plan has become less permeable to the pedestrian wanting to go to the water;
- Concerned about how people will experience the streets and the public realm;
- Zero Avenue should not operate as a thoroughfare;
- Move the non-market housing to Block 4 and take some of the density there;
- Good idea to have affordable housing. Works well in the Round House community
- Concerns about shadowing given the proposed density;
- Agreed with the approach to the landscaping;
- Important that 1st Avenue have a strong massing and that it respect the height of the Salt building. This will be the main entry to the area;
- Consider the private lands across the street as people will be walking down from Broadway;
- Support land swap of Lot 4 and Lot 11 for community centre (previously supported in 2nd workshop).

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel has some concerns around the 102,000 square feet increase in density although they generally felt that the site could take the density if handled properly. Some of the members felt that some buildings were too close together and there were some concerns with shadowing given the density. The Panel suggested breaking up the block on Site 4 as it comes across as a large undifferentiated mass on the waterfront. This wouldn't affect the density and would help the scale. The density in Site 3 and Site 6 is a bit of a concern but could be handled if the community centre takes some of the density as well either adjusting or reducing some of the heights on Lot 2 and Lot 9. The Panel felt that nine stories on the plaza is too high, seven on modest housing would work. Several of the panel members did not support the 13 storey height of the bookend buildings.

The Panel members thought the two bookend towers should be modified to better blend into the neighbourhood as well as being more sensitive as to how they meet the street.

Some of the Panel members felt the buildings had become too similar in character and should be more differentiated. The Panel suggested that there be more green spaces; a more generous open space in the area behind the buildings.

In looking at the community centre, the Panel felt the site would be better utilized to have residential on top of the building although they felt this was also the right location for the daycare. It was also suggested that the applicant may want to move the community centre to a smaller site as the building seems too small for this site.

The Panel would like to see the food store on Site 9. The food store could be a single anchor which would draw people into the site. The Panel felt it was important to look at how people will arrive at the store; not just by car but also by foot or bike. It was suggested that the food store could be part of the community interface and the applicant needs to decide what type of grocery store they would like to see on the site.

One Panel member suggested that the north end of the Salt building be a plaza like the Boston's Quincy Market and make this area the jewel of the development. They also suggested that Zero Avenue not be a thoroughfare but end at the Plaza. Smaller retail on the plaza will help animate it.

It was suggested to have the four buildings on either side of the Salt building be treated in a similar manner in deference to the Salt Building as the main entry to the area. They felt it was important that the building forms should have a stronger character and should only be six or seven stories so as not to adversely affect the shadowing of the plaza area.

Some Panel members would like to see the buildings set back further from the street to improve the public experience of the street. 1st Avenue and the front streets should be reserved for heavy volume traffic, to allow the remaining streets to have a more pedestrian friendly character. It was suggested that the applicant take a closer look at the street elevations and the streetscape character.

The Panel thought the affordable housing was a good idea and suggested there be a benefit back to the City. One member had concerns about offering rental properties. They would like to see any rental property revert back to the developer at some point in the future and then be sold below the market rate.

The Panel agreed with the approach for landscaping. Their biggest concern was the spaces between the buildings and the pedestrian linkages and paths to the water. The Panel suggested that the north south connection be opened up to the maximum. The Panel would like to see more public space on the water and with as much activity and animation as possible.

- **Applicant's Response:** Stu Lyon, Architect commented that it has been a whirlwind process. They have had lots of discussion with the Parks Board and did preclude housing on the community centre site. The City (Housing Centre) has decided that their component would be rental. Millennium hasn't been fixed as rental as they are looking at other opportunities. Mr. Lyon noted that the average density on the rear site is 3.11 FSR and across 1st Avenue it is 5.5 FSR and on the private lands it is 3.5 FSR. He thanked the panel for their comments and stated that they will continue to work on the project.

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3. Address: 1885 Venables Street
DE: 410267
Use: Cultural and Recreational - Theatre
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Preliminary
Architect: Proscenium Architecture and Interiors Inc.
Owner: Vancouver East Cultural Centre
Review: Second (June 21, 2006)
Delegation: Tom Weeks, Allison Good, Ron Clay, Catherine Taylor
Staff: David Autiero, Hugh McLean
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction:**

Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced this application to renovate and expand the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. The Panel had reviewed the application on June 21, 2006 but didn't give their approval. The new design does respond to the concerns from that meeting with a major massing change to move back the cultural lab and the administration space. The internal space has been changed to a breeze way and pulls back the new wall inline with the existing building. The new plan better preserves the large evergreen at the corner and the entry canopy has been scaled back. The exterior surfaces have been simplified. The upper lobby in Phase 2 has been modified so that the ceiling height is 7 feet in order to have the roof fit into the old building. The Heritage Department had some input and they asked the applicant to expose more of the west angle wall. Mr. Black asked the Panel if the concerns of June Urban Design Panel meeting have been met.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Tom Weeks, Architect, described the project and the changes to the facility from the last Urban Design Panels comments. He reminded the Panel that the project will be built in phases for funding reasons and that they have money available for Phase 1. The landscape plan was discussed and then the applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel supported this application. It was acknowledged that the concerns from the previous Urban Design Panel meeting had been met.

It was suggested that some consideration be given to the irrigation on the west side of the property to take care of the landscaping. Also adding shrubs for screening between the privately owned house and Phase 2 would be a welcome buffer.

It was noted that sustainability seems to still be weak on this site and it was mentioned that this building would be perfect for natural ventilation.

The Panel thought it was a good compromise to have the reduced ceiling in the lobby area although it was suggested that the second door way could be removed in order to have the same roof line in Phase 1 and 2.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Weeks noted that they had explored natural ventilation but due to the limited head room and existing building limitations, they could not achieve the sound attenuation of street noise required for musical performance using a natural ventilation system. He also stated that they are planning on going for LEED Silver.