

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: August 18, 2004

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Mark Ostry, Chair
Larry Adams
Robert Barnes
Marta Farevaag
Ronald Lea
Jennifer Marshall
Brian Martin

REGRETS: Bruce Haden
Jeffrey Corbett
Alan Endall
Steven Keyes
Margot Long

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	125 Milross Avenue
2.	900 Pacific Boulevard (BUILDING A)
3.	900 Pacific Boulevard (BUILDINGS B and D)
4.	900 Pacific Boulevard (BUILDING C)

1.	Address:	125 Milross Avenue
	DE:	408609
	Use:	Residential (22 storeys, 167 units)
	Zoning:	CD-1
	Applicant Status:	Complete
	Architect:	Perkins & Co. Architecture & Urban Design
	Owner:	Bosa Development Corp.
	Review:	First
	Delegation:	John Perkins Jr., David Stoyko
	Staff:	Jonathan Barrett

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-1)

- **Introduction:** Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, presented this application for a 22-storey residential tower with a 3 - 5-storey townhouse and apartment base, for a total of 167 units. The CD-1 zoning was approved in March 2004. The four major conditions applied to the rezoning related to the townhouses along Milross Avenue, privacy and livability, overall building character and overall landscape plan.

The Panel's advice is sought on whether the rezoning conditions have been adequately addressed, and on a minor concern identified by staff relating to whether the townhouses should be stepped up to avoid having a wall facing the street.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** John Perkins, Jr., Architect, briefly described the design rationale and David Stoyko, Landscape Architect, reviewed the landscape plan. The applicant team responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Concern that the development is "turning is back" on Main Street and suggestions to improve the relationship of the lane to the street, including animating the lane and integrating more trees;
 - Recommendation for design development to the materiality, in particular the relationship of the brick and concrete and, to a lesser extent, paint colour choices;
 - Improve the relationship between the base and the tower;
 - Lower level roof access recommended as well as greening of roofs;
 - Suggestions for improved public amenity at the corner of Quebec and Prior and attention to the raised court at the southwest corner to make it more inviting.
- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel strongly supported this application and generally found the architecture and massing to be well resolved. It was thought to have improved a lot since the rezoning stage.

While it was acknowledged that the developer may not wish to have units overlooking the lane at this time, the Panel found the lane façade the least successful of the scheme. It lacks animation and "eyes on the street" and there was concern that this approach may compromise the redevelopment potential of the heritage buildings on Main Street. One Panel member suggested revisiting the possibility of developing the property at the rear to somehow enhance the connection to Main Street.

The Panel thought more detailed design development was needed with respect to how the tower and the base come together, possibly bringing something of the tower down to the ground or extending some of the brick to the tower.

The Panel had some concerns about the materiality of the project and thought more attention should be given to the distribution of the brick, possibly carrying it around to the townhouses. The maroon piece at the end was thought to be a bit of an anomaly.

The landscape plan was generally supported. The interior courtyard was considered to be well resolved with privacy issues addressed to make it a successful amenity. Design development was recommended to the amenity space at the corner of Quebec and Prior and a concern expressed that the banners shown may not be the best treatment for this space. Something to make it more inviting was recommended, possibly a trellis or some sort of public art feature. It was noted that trees seem to be missing in some places, particularly in the lane. Further greening on Prior Street was recommended and a recommendation to consider some soft landscaping (2 - 3 ft.) at the base of the walls rather than just a lawn.

The townhouses were generally thought to be quite successful but a concern that the townhouse landscape treatment may be too unified with little opportunity to individualize patios and provide greater pedestrian interest.

The Panel strongly recommended that the lower rooftop should be landscaped and accessible to the residents. At the very least it should be a green roof as a visual amenity for residents in the tower and especially to improve the overlook from the viaduct. It was noted that, on this project, the roofs are very much a fifth elevation of the scheme.

It was recommended that the second level of the Prior Street townhouses have windows added to the bathrooms to improve the large expanse of blank walls and add a level of interest to this elevation.

A comment was made that the tower entry takes no advantage of the courtyard and there may be an opportunity to provide an inviting view from the amenity room into the courtyard.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Perkins said they will be pleased to work with staff to respond to the points raised by the Panel.

2.	Address:	900 Pacific Boulevard (BUILDING A)
	DE:	408503
	Use:	Residential (15 storeys)
	Zoning:	CD-1
	Applicant Status:	Complete
	Architect:	Walter Francl
	Owner:	Concord Pacific Group Inc.
	Review:	First
	Delegation:	Walter Francl, David Negrin, Bruce Hemstock
	Staff:	Jonathan Barrett

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, briefly described the rezoning process for Sub area 6A of the Concord Pacific development site. The site was rezoned in May 2004, at which time the building forms, heights, floorplates, access and general landscape systems were fairly precisely established. The Panel unanimously supported the rezoning application. The site is affected by view cones and this has determined the building heights. Mr. Barrett noted there is a defined park at one edge of the development site and Pacific Boulevard to the north, which has resulted in the proposal for non-standard towers.

The conditions applied at the rezoning stage included a redesign of Coopers' Park and a redesign of the area under the Cambie bridge. There is also a new street system proposed that will eventually connect to a new extension of Smithe Street. A sustainability condition was applied to all the buildings and staff are working with the applicants to achieve sustainability measures.

Landscape Architect, Bruce Hemstock, explained that his firm was engaged to develop an overall landscape plan for the neighbourhood as well as for each of the three buildings currently under review. He briefly described the organizing principles that were applied in the development of the plan.

Building 6A

Mr. Barrett noted the proposal is for a 15-storey residential building containing 86 units and ten townhouse units at the base. Issues for the Panel to consider include how the townhouses relate to the tower and the surrounding public realm, on-site landscape systems and overall building character.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Walter Francl, Architect, briefly described the proposal, noting the height is dictated by a view cone. He explained the building has relatively squat proportions and relatively shallow tower depth and they have elected to use the elevator core as an element to distinguish the two distinct building masses. The curve of the building takes its form from the adjacent bridge off-ramp. Materials are metal panel, painted concrete and clear and spandrel glazing. There are wood trim details at the soffits and entrances.

Bruce Hemstock explained that they have tried to develop a rhythm along the street and achieve "eyes on the street" at both the street and park edges. He briefly described the landscape plan and the applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
This application was unanimously supported. The only concern related to the Concord Pacific sign which the Panel found totally unacceptable.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel was very enthusiastic about this proposal and found it a very refreshing departure from other Concord Pacific developments. The units will be very livable and the townhouses have been very well integrated with the scheme. The way the building comes down to the ground was thought to be very successfully handled, and the tower's response to the Cambie Bridge is very positive. Having the units expressed externally was welcomed by the Panel.

There was some discussion about whether the materials and colour should match the adjacent Coopers' Park Neighbourhood buildings. It was thought this project could stand on its own as a fairly sculptural tower without the need for homogeneity with its neighbours. There was also some discussion about the orange element and suggestions that its fin-like shape seems weak compared to the rest of the mass of the building.

With respect to the landscape treatment, one Panel member found the entry area to be somewhat under-treated. Another member questioned whether the space at the southwest corner would work as a semi-private amenity space given the circulation patterns, although as a public space it is fine.

The Panel unanimously considered that to advertise the developer at the top of a residential building is not acceptable. It was suggested that if there is a desire to identify the neighbourhood it can be addressed at ground level with paving or street banners. Given this colour palette is such a departure from the more typical green in the area it was thought that this will go a long way to distinguishing Coopers' Park as a distinct neighbourhood.

In general, the Panel was very positive about this proposal and commended the applicant on an excellent scheme as well as very good presentation materials.

- **Applicant's Response:** David Negrin, Concord Pacific, said they believed it was important to design a different neighbourhood and this has been achieved with the architecture. He acknowledged they have struggled with the colour and said it could be changed given the three buildings are quite different. Mr. Hemstock advised there is no public thoroughfare intended through the courtyard and it is for the use of the residents only. He agreed there could be further design development to clarify territory.

3.	Address:	900 Pacific Boulevard (BUILDINGS B and D)
	DE:	408563
	Use:	Residential (2 x 24 storeys)
	Zoning:	CD-1
	Applicant Status:	Complete
	Architect:	Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden
	Owner:	Concord Pacific Group Inc.
	Review:	First
	Delegation:	Alan Boniface, David Negrin, Bruce Hemstock
	Staff:	Jonathan Barrett

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, briefly described the rezoning process for Sub Area 6A of the Concord Pacific development site. The site was rezoned in May 2004, at which time the building forms, heights, floorplates, access and general landscape systems were fairly precisely established. The Panel unanimously supported the rezoning application. The site is affected by view cones and this has determined the building heights. Mr. Barrett noted there is a defined park at one edge of the development site and Pacific Boulevard to the north, which has resulted in the proposal for non-standard towers.

The conditions applied at the rezoning stage included a redesign of Coopers' Park and a redesign of the area under the Cambie bridge. There is also a new street system proposed that will eventually connect to a new extension of Smithe Street. A sustainability condition was applied to all the buildings and staff are working with the applicants to achieve sustainability measures.

Landscape Architect, Bruce Hemstock, explained that his firm was engaged to develop an overall landscape plan for the neighbourhood as well as for each of the three buildings currently under review. He briefly described the organizing principles that were applied in the development of the plan.

Buildings B and D

This proposal is for two 24-storey residential buildings containing a total of 223 units and townhouse units at the base. Issues for the Panel to consider include how the townhouses relate to the towers and the surrounding public realm, the overall building character, in particular the waterfront façade, and the overall landscape systems and relationships between the public realm and the park.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Alan Boniface, Architect, described the proposal, noting part of their mandate was to design sister buildings for this very odd shaped site, with its sharp angles defined by view corridors and setback requirements. He noted that the majority of the amenity space for the whole neighbourhood is contained in Building C; Buildings B and D have only two shared public amenity rooms. Mr. Boniface briefly reviewed the design rationale and Bruce Hemstock described the landscape plan and noted there is a 3.6 m wide public right-of-way through the courtyard. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

The Panel responded very positively to this application, with one unanimous suggestion to improve the openness of the space between the two buildings at ground level.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel found this to be an exciting, very well developed project that contributes to the creation of a very different Concord neighbourhood. The Panel found the townhouses to be particularly interesting and unusual. The applicant was commended for an excellent scheme. The Panel also welcomed the inclusion of the earlier conceptual drawings which helps in the understanding of how the architects arrived at this solution.

The one area of concern related to the diagonal route from the corner through to Coopers' Park which looks quite tight and with very little offered to pedestrians in the way of borrowed landscape. A suggestion was to acknowledge that it is a restricted space and make it public, removing the tot lot. The Panel thought this play area would be little used given the larger public playground nearby. This would allow the area to be simpler, more generous in scale, and more public. Another comment was that there did not seem to be any proper announcement of the entrance to the park.

The Panel generally liked the colour scheme but there was some discussion about whether the same colour palette should be applied to each component of the neighbourhood. There was a recommendation that the orange element should be truly contextual and speak to something about Vancouver or B.C.

One Panel member thought the symbol of the roof had been watered down and suggested this symbolism could also be applied to roofs lower down in the building where it would be more identifiable at pedestrian level.

The Panel found the water features along the street to be a good substitute for interest provided by townhouses.

The Panel liked the feature of bringing the water from the roof to the ground but suggested it needs to be stronger to create a more distinct and interesting urban edge. It was also suggested that it needs further consideration from a technical point of view. Finding a better way to terminate the water was also recommended, possibly capturing and making use of the water.

One Panel member thought both tower entries could be more welcoming.

Some Panel members thought there could be a little more articulation on the elevation facing the water, perhaps more colour and definition of the floors, although another opinion was that its calmness is positive.

4.	Address:	900 Pacific Boulevard (BUILDING C)
	DE:	408515
	Use:	Residential (30, 10 and 6 storeys) (219 units)
	Zoning:	CD-1
	Applicant Status:	Complete
	Architect:	Hancock Bruckner Eng & Wright
	Owner:	Concord Pacific Group Inc.
	Review:	First
	Delegation:	Jim Hancock, David Negrin, Bruce Hemstock
	Staff:	Jonathan Barrett

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-2)

- **Introduction:** Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, briefly described the rezoning process for Sub area 6A of the Concord Pacific development site. The site was rezoned in May 2004, at which time the building forms, heights, floorplates, access and general landscape systems were fairly precisely established. The Panel unanimously supported the rezoning application. The site is affected by view cones and this has determined the building heights. Mr. Barrett noted there is a defined park at one edge of the development site and Pacific Boulevard to the north, which has resulted in the proposal for non-standard towers.

The conditions applied at the rezoning stage included a redesign of Coopers' Park and a redesign of the area under the Cambie bridge. There is also a new street system proposed that will eventually connect to a new extension of Smithe Street. A sustainability condition was applied to all the buildings and staff are working with the applicants to achieve sustainability measures.

Landscape Architect, Bruce Hemstock, explained that his firm was engaged to develop an overall landscape plan for the neighbourhood as well as for each of the three buildings currently under review. He briefly described the organizing principles that were applied in the development of the plan.

Building C

This proposal is for a 30-storey and 10-storey building with a 6-storey centre component, containing a total of 219 units, and six townhouses. Building C also accommodates a major amenity component for the neighbourhood. Areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought relate to the character and animation of the amenity space on Pacific Boulevard, whether the 10-storey component needs more prominence and strength, and the relationship between the three major building forms. There is also a public pedestrian route to the adjacent Plaza of Nations and the Panel's advice is sought as to whether the bridge connection is expressed appropriately. Comments on the overall character are also requested.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Jim Hancock, Architect, briefly described the design rationale and Bruce Hemstock reviewed the landscape plan, and the applicant team responded to the Panel's questions.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Increase the height of the underpass to improve the public connection;
 - Strengthen the expression of the amenity building;
 - Strengthen the expression of the 10-storey component within the overall composition;
 - Reconsider the colour scheme (especially the orange);
 - The sign is unacceptable.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel strongly supported this application and found it to be a refreshing departure from other Concord developments. The Panel supported the overall character and materials.

The Panel generally had no concerns about the relationship between the various building components although some Panel members thought the connection between the 6- and 10-storey pieces could be improved.

The Panel found the 10-storey component to be the weakest in the composition and not taking full advantage of its waterside location, with a number of suggestions for strengthening the "prow" of the building. There was also a recommendation to consider introducing a roof element that would tie together all the neighbourhood projects.

As with the other two proposals for this neighbourhood, the Panel was strongly opposed to the sign at the top of the building.

The Panel generally thought the amenity building could be stronger and treated as the fourth piece of the composition. Comments were made that it seems tacked-on and foreign to the rest of the scheme. One Panel member thought it might be more appropriate to be located on the water side, suggesting this could also be a means of strengthening prow of the 10-storey building.

With respect to the pedestrian underpass, the Panel strongly recommended that it should be much higher to better serve as a future public connection. More visual clues about its existence were also recommended, including lighting.

Other minor comments included:

- There is an opportunity to take advantage of the roof to create a usable amenity for the residents;
- The east side of the tower needs more colour;
- A more open and inviting entry into the elevator lobby might be more appropriate for a building of this size;
- The colours could be made stronger by extending them down another storey;
- The penthouse element is too small relative to the size of the tower;
- With the exception of the yellow, the colours seem a bit gratuitous.