
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: August 23, 2000

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room #1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Paul Grant [Chair]
Lance Berelowitz
Tom Bunting
James Cheng [Excused from Item 1]
Alan Endall [Excused from Item 3]
Bruce Hemstock
Jack Lutsky
Brian Palmquist
Keith Ross
Sorin Tatomir

REGRETS: Alan Endall
Roger Hughes
Gilbert Reynard

ACTING RECORDING
SECRETARY: M. Penner

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	201 Burrard Street [Burrard Landing] - WORKSHOP
2.	1239 West Cordova Street
3.	401 Burrard Street - WORKSHOP

1. Address:	201 Burrard Street [Burrard Landing] - WORKSHOP
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	Baker McGarva Hart & James Cheng Architects
Owner:	Marathon Development
Review:	First
Delegation:	Graham McGarva, James Cheng
Staff:	Ralph Segal

EVALUATION: Workshop - vote not taken

- **Introduction:** The Development Planner, Ralph Segal, advised Michael Gordon, Area Planner, would present an overview of the proposed rezoning, and he would present the urban design features.

Mr. Gordon confirmed their intent was to present an issues report to Council by late Fall, rather than a referral to public hearing, and sought general direction from the Panel on certain issues. He confirmed this project was one of two towers being proposed; the mixed-use proposed tower on Lot 30 being considered at this time, would incorporate a proto-type for office use, retail, and residential live/work on the upper half of the tower. [The second tower, on Lot 29, would be for future hotel use.] Another issue was the density that had already been assigned to this site [initially three towers were proposed] and staff were now dealing with two towers and the possibility of a Trade and Convection Centre [CTT] being developed to the north/east of these two towers, which could result in reporting back to Council on the residual density that now would not be consumed by these two towers and possible TCC.

Mr. Segal advised staff were seeking a height increase to 450 ft. [from 302 ft.] for this first tower, noting the trade-off would be a slimmer tower with a reduced floor plate of 13, 000 sq. ft., from approximately 19,000 sq. ft. He confirmed the Burrard Landing area “re-think” was two-fold: the proposed convention centre with portside to the north/east of this tower; and Marathon’s original commercial centre scheme for three towers [3 office and 1 hotel] which had remained dormant for 10 years, and that the zoning did not conform to market demands. He also confirmed that this scheme would reconfigure Canada Place Way, leading right through to Thurlow Street.

Mr. Segal referred to Harbour Green’s array of building heights and asked the Panel’s advice on the waterfront style for this front row of buildings, as well as how these added heights would relate to the skyline.

In response to an enquiry from the Panel, Mr. Segal confirmed there were guidelines in place for the tower location, height and floorplate. He also referred to a Skyline Study which alluded to potential heights of 600 ft. [Burrard Building], and Bentall V is proposed at 500 ft., incorporating the elevator mechanical decorative roof.

Mr. Segal noted the revised configuration of the carefully orchestrated sequence of open spaces, defined public realm edges, a public route through the middle of the site, as well as an open plaza between this project and Portal Park. He also mentioned the issue of the building edge in relationship to the sidewalk and that the inclusion of retail space would provide pedestrian interest on the sidewalk. Mr. Segal also touched on the problematic issues more prominent in standard functional needs for the ground floors of hotels including layby’s and drop-off areas which could result in “dead” sidewalk space, specifically in this downtown waterfront location.

Pertaining to building massing orientation, Mr. Segal categorized these into two volumetric zones, i.e., the podium component, and the tower - noting this varied site would be traversed by many axes, e.g., the Cordova Street and Canada Place Way, Burrard Street coming out of an obtuse angle, Thurlow Street and even the pier axis could influence this site - specifically the Marine Building in the Burrard Landing scheme. He concluded by specifically asking Panel's advice on the tower's orientation, designed to maximize views through the site, and the way the planes were set up geometrically in relationship with the context. Mr. Segal stressed the time-frame of obtaining Council's concurrence, and confirmed staff sought Panel's advice on the two proposed towers and how they would fit into this area, remembering to keep the proposed convention centre in low profile; however, bearing in mind that should the convention centre scheme be abandoned, Marathon would re-visit various parameters previously planned for this site.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Mr. Cheng drew Panel's attention to the skyline comparison of the old scheme vs the residential that was approved and the former height contemplated for Burrard Landing happened years ago prior to the existence of Harbour Green, etc. and that the rezoning occurred subsequent to Burrard Landing's rezoning assumed a lower building of 302 ft. However, although circumstances have changed since the original design, the main principle on that scheme had been preserved.

- **Panel's Comments:**

- The proposed building was respectful in terms of scale in the family of buildings in the surrounding area, but felt it overwhelmed the Marine Building further up Burrard Street.
- Seeing the tower with its actual materials and colour palette would give the Panel a realistic impression of this project.
- Referenced the Daon building re the handling of its corner location and its relationship to the Marine building.
- Preferred Lot 30's proposed tower be taller and slimmer, making it more respectful to surrounding buildings.
- Burrard Street's impressive ceremonial route past the Marine building and leading down to the water's edge needed to be established as a precedent in this area regardless of whether the convention centre becomes a reality or not, to be an important element for the proposed Burrard Street Plaza.
- Pleased with the orientation and symmetrical building form, with its axis perpendicular to the alignment of Canada Place Way [CPW].
- Not comfortable with the orientation of the facades re the Burrard alignment being reflected in the geometry of this basis.
- In favour of the strong overall scheme pertaining to the historical alignment of the waterfront, the escarpment, the railway, including the golden triangle - providing a strong urban edge to the city.
- It was suggested that a better connection to the proposed convention centre be planned, rather than just a walk through.
- The suggestion of a skybridge connection across CPW was not received favourably, and that the first order of business should be the surrounding city street.
- The treatment of the urban street edge would depend on which tower gets constructed first - the live/work, or hotel use.
- Canada Place Way would still need to be extended right through and must be built as part of Burrard Landing.
- The opportunity of making Canada Place Way into a very exciting, major civic street should not be lost, but rather ensure this evolves into an animated street edge; bearing in mind that this would be the last street on the water front in this major public and civic community.
- The facades down to grade should be carefully handled to make them a fantastic link between the commercial downtown core and this new emerging community.

- Landscaping should consist of a double row of street trees, incorporating a good configuration of street furniture and lighting , ensuring a well-detailed type of park-like urban edge.

The Chair extended his appreciation to the proponents of presenting this project at a Workshop; he thought it was a well-resolved proposal thus far and looked forward to seeing a formalized submission.

2. Address:	1239 West Cordova Street [Tower 2B]
DA:	404441
Use:	Residential [27 storeys, 89 units]
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete, after Preliminary
Architect:	Hancock Brückner Architects
Owner:	Delta Land Development Ltd.
Review:	<i>Second</i>
Delegation:	J. Hancock, C. Phillips
Staff:	R. Segal

EVALUATION: [8 - 1] Support

- **Introduction:** The Development Planner, Ralph Segal, re-introduced this project, tower 2B, to be part of a ‘family’ of 5 towers adjacent to Harbour Green Park. At the preliminary stage the Applicant requested a 15 ft. height increase in excess of the guidelines, i.e., total height of 76.5 m [251 ft.]. The Panel had supported this additional height on the basis of a slimmer tower with a smaller floorplate. Mr. Segal confirmed that although staff recommended support for this height increase, the Development Permit Board did not; however, suggested that the Applicant negotiate this additional height with the upland owner, and should this owner sign off and agree to the additional tower height of 15 ft. they would reconsider it. Mr. Segal confirmed the Chair’s suggestion that Panel’s support of the additional height was not an issue, that the primary concern related to the reduction of the additional mass as a result of the additional 15 ft. height. He also confirmed that the reduction of the mechanical appurtenances was the trade-off for the increased tower height.

Mr. Segal referred briefly to the Panel’s previously noted concerns about the central courtyard, the drive way situation, etc. and noted the applicant’s refined landscape and vehicular movement solutions. He also pointed out the strong public Bute Street edge and the beautifully configured townhouses surrounding the site. He conceded that although the guidelines suggested a larger floorplate, the width of the building more than met guideline requirements and noted staff were satisfied with the resultant trade-offs.

A Panel Member enquired as to the location/status of the proposed park and Mr. Segal confirmed it would be at the Bute Street edge in “no man’s land” and that its construction would not lag behind the proposed tower.

- **Applicant’s Opening Comments:** Mr. Hancock advised this 5-tower design would be viewed as the front line of the city and felt the proposed structures in sail motif would reflect the site and maritime setting. He confirmed their detailed process of examining the views and impacts in consideration of the upland owners and had obtained their support/approval. He pointed out that with the height relaxation, various refinements had been implemented since their preliminary presentation. They had diminished the elevator shaft, had screened the mechanical by not utilizing solid glass, and had incorporated silver-blue reflective glass between the floors.

Panel viewed the model and posted materials

- **Panel’s Comments:** The Chair noted there weren’t many issues with respect to staff’s concerns; however, how the penthouse issue had been resolved required Panel’s comments, and reminded the Panel that this was a complete application.

The Panel felt this to be an excellent, exemplary building, providing a delightful image on the

harbour skyline; that the tower was dramatic and had been skilfully handled, presenting a whimsical nature of the compounded curves. Although several Members were 'nervous' about the planned quintet ensemble and stressed that given the prominence of the site it was of paramount importance to ensure the Applicant "gets it right" with the first tower, that with careful handling it would create an iconic "front row" to the city. The majority of the Panel saw no problem with the 15 ft. height relaxation, although one Member noted this 15 ft. height increase would result in 30 ft. of additional shadowing on the public realm all the time, including a good percentage of the day on the seawall. Some Members felt the Applicant had handled well the penthouse mechanical; others suggested that the mechanical could recede more to the back from the glass wall, thereby presenting a more transparent look. A majority of Members felt the transition from podium to the elegant tower left the podium appear rather mundane - one suggestion was to introduce some of the window treatment into the base for a more connected appearance, another Member thought the Applicant could incorporate colour to the base to better differentiate it from the tower. The majority of the Panel was pleased with the project's landscaping giving the site an urban feel, but several Members felt the border of townhouses impaired this image.

There was doubt expressed about the proposed connection from the townhouses to the park, specifically on the park side leading onto the escarpment walkway. It was also queried whether all 5 buildings would connect to the park - suggested that it should be all, or none. Also, a Member suggested that the driveway be spun around to face the park side; and that the driveway to underground parking be curved for more visibility.

In response to the proposed quintet to incorporate compound curved glass, a Member queried whether wind or aerodynamic tests had been performed. Concern was expressed that the proposed flat facades would have no overhangs and would be open to the brunt of our inclement weather.

Referencing the sail part motif, a Member queried the possibility of enhancing this 'sail' with slightly tinted or reflective glass. He also had concerns with the connection between the waterfront townhouses and the Harbour Green walkway, noting this was supposed to be a continuous walkway across the Harbour Green, and enquired as to the responsibility of the "no man's land" between the townhouses and the park.

The Chair summarized noting the positive comments about this project, but highlighted a couple of areas of concern: [a] the continuation of this set of 5 towers; [b] the clear glass [and how the mundane consideration of draperies will be handled, etc. Good points were raised about the energy and some of the concerns of rain and sun shadowing re townhouses, and the suggestion that possibly the glass at the sail could be tinted and the spinnaker given a stronger expression.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Hancock noted the Panels comments were well taken; they had a dilemma re the townhouse interface with the park - a secondary path had been designed, and that the draperies could be attached top and bottom. He confirmed many of the concerns had already been worked out, and thanked the Panel for its comments.

3. Address:	401 Burrard Street - WORKSHOP
Use:	Office
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Inquiry into Amendment to DP.
Architect:	Architectura
Owner:	Canada Land Company
Review:	First
Delegation:	A. Endall, R. Bernstein, D. Kester
Staff:	R. Segal

EVALUATION: Workshop - vote not taken

- **Introduction:** Mr. Segal advised the applicant was seeking a minor amendment to their application and that the development permit had been approved a number of years ago, when this project had been reviewed twice by the Panel who deemed this project to be a contextual example for this prominent street in the city. He confirmed this project, which had been on hold for a number of years, would replace Customs House, a good example of modern architecture of the '50s or '60s. Mr. Segal advised that in order to display a contextual reference to the Customs House, the architect had incorporated a stone facing frame element, and noted that retention of the actual Customs House building element had not been sought.

Mr. Segal noted the former podium type stones leading to the original building had now created an interesting transition from the tower to the street edge. The proposed curved glass of the lobby on the Pender Street side would intermingle with some frame element devoted to a covered arcade for outdoor seating, etc.

Mr. Segal concluded by detailing the two component issues being presented for Panel's comments: [a] the applicant's request to delete this frame element, which would result in a cleaner expression of the building; and [b] removal of the traffic island from the right-turn lane off Burrard Street, westbound to Pender Street, which had been deemed unnecessary by the downtown transportation engineers, in order to normalize this intersection and thereby expand the public realm. Also, deletion of this traffic island would be incorporated into the proposed landscaping of this project.

In response to the Chair's inquiry about there being any direction from the City to delete the frame, Mr. Segal confirmed Planning staff believed that, not only on principle, but in terms of strengthening the expression and orientation of the Burrard Street frontage, the frame added more solidity and street definition on Burrard Street. The Chair confirmed the Panel would comment on the option as presented.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Mr. Alan Endall confirmed that the model being presented was the original design completed around 1990-91, that the development permit had been issued in 1993, but had remained dormant since then for market reasons. He confirmed at present this project was 80% into working mode and that construction had commenced, as per agreement between their client, Canada Lands and Public Works and

Government Services, Canada.

Mr. Endall noted that the frame element in question had been one of several references made to the original Customs House, the reconstruction of both the Pender Street shoulder element for uses as an arcade that would connect Burrard Street to the Oceanic Plaza, as well as the Hastings Street shoulder for use as retail space and/or gallery. Mr. Endall mentioned that access to the parking elevator, retail and the elliptical penthouse mechanical enclosure form-like cantilevered edge-turned canopy at the main entrance also related to the old Customs House, along with the 2-storey high ceiling lobby which was reminiscent of the 2-storey banking hall located in the Customs House.

Mr. Endall advised originally the frame had been envisioned as a remnant of the Customs House, had been viewed as a transitional element from the tower through to the ground, and had established a mid-rise street presence along Burrard Street. Also, this frame had been fraught with technical and functional issues - from its structural detailing to detaching it, as well as view obstructions from within the building looking out, etc.

Mr. Endall also noted the development design of the reconstructed facade in order to adapt to the new building, required a high degree of manipulation to the original location, in that the old Custom House facade had been right at the property line and so as to improve views through to the Marine building, had pushed the building back approximately 20 ft.

Mr. Endall advised that since working with a new client in public works, they had been requested to consider some design modifications to the building, in particular to the frame issue which included the addition of a new primary entrance at the corner of Burrard and West Pender, whereas the original entrance was directly off Burrard Street. He noted that when City staff initiated the redevelopment of south-west corner into a plaza space, the question of whether or not to retain the 5 ft. column frame arose; however, ensuing discussions concluded that the removal of this frame, would provide a simpler, more direct transition of the structural loads, as well as the removal of a number of columns in that space would open up the street views from the pedestrian level from Burrard Street, across this site and through to the Hastings shoulder of the Marine building. Similarly it would allow for a more direct, stronger entry off the redeveloped plaza.

Ms. Jane Durante, Landscape Architect, advised the deletion of the traffic island provided more available landscaping opportunities and referred to the old Daon building which had had a similar situation and that the planting of trees which now were 20 years old, with 12 in. caliper trunks, created a significantly unusual experience by emphasizing the prime entrance to the Daon building, as well as the pedestrian walkway. Mr. Durante felt this style of treatment, with the introduction of benches and walkways, as a separation from the coffee shop, reconfiguration of trees, incorporating a variety of landscape design to include public art. Ms. Durante offered two displays of landscaping, one offered a planted oval on the southeast corner, the second was a clean oval with walkway around it with a few strategically placed trees.

Mr. Segal reminded the Panel that this application was for a minor amendment concerning the removal, or retention, of the frame.

- **Panel's Comments:** The Chair reminded the Panel their commentary was to pertain to the landscaping proponents as they had been presented, along with their decision to remove, or not remove, the frame.

- majority of Panel preferred removal of the frame - only one Member favoured it, stating the project had been designed with the frame in mind ; however, it was also suggested that upon removal of this frame, the 3-storey projection should be reduced to one storey, or removed completely;
- it was noted that the frame had originally been proposed as a post-modern notion portraying an honest modern building and as such, thought the frame to be "at best a conceit and at worst an insult" to the original Customs House;
- concerning the landscaping presentations, the Panel was in favour of Option 2, although a Member commented that the referred to Daon building was more successful than either one of the 2 options presented. Option 2 was favoured with various suggestions/alternates:
 - to incorporate some green, but sufficient hard edge design;
 - preferred incorporation of some trees, but with no ground cover - providing pedestrians with space in the plaza;
 - others preferred green ground cover for Option 2, noting this added interesting dimension;
 - one Member felt neither option was acceptable; said planters, etc. would get trampled on by pedestrians; preferred an art component be incorporated and that the architect should be asked to re-design a more interesting public space;
 - another Member felt Option 2 should be kept completely empty, with no green;
 - some felt this proposed plaza presented a great opportunity to create a hard, clean, tight urban space - to respect memory of the Customs House and its venture into the modern movement, would not have cluttered this space up too much, i.e., the landscape component should be as rigorous as the architectural component; and
 - the corner plaza, being the point of maximum traffic to the corner, should be clean and simply.

The Chair summarized the Panel's comments by confirming "the frame was toast". However, there were other interesting comments the Applicant could congregate over, i.e., some Members had misgivings about the prow, perhaps the frame's existence might be revisited; also it was mentioned that perhaps a floor could be added. Regarding the proposed landscaping, the Chair confirmed the Panel's preference of Option 2 - with some leanings toward cleaning up this oval in order to have a cleaner, harder open urban space - more akin to the random tree placement of the Daon building corner.

- **Applicant's Response:** Thanked the Panel and advised he appreciated their comments.

Although a vote is not taken at Workshops, the Chair confirmed the Panel's approval for

removal of the frame.

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