

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: August 26, 1998

TIME: N/A

PLACE: N/A

PRESENT: James Hancock (Chair - Items #2 and #3) (excused Item #1)
Patricia Campbell
Per Christoffersen (present for Item #2 only)
Joseph Hruda
Peter Kreuk (Chair - Item #1) (excused Item #2)
Sean McEwan
Jim McLean (present for Item #1 and #2 only)

REGRETS: Sheldon Chandler
Joyce Drohan
Geoff Glotman
Norman Shearing
Peter Wreglesworth

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	302 Davie Street (1200 Hamilton)
2.	1138 Melville Street
3.	65 Water Street

1. **Address:** 302 Davie Street (1200 Hamilton)
DA: 403474
Use: Hotel (7 storeys)
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Hancock Bruckner Eng & Wright
Owner: Trilogy Dev. Corp.
Review: Second (first as Rezoning)
Delegation: Martin Bruckner, Ken Larson, Hani Lammam
Staff: Bob Adair
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-0)

Introduction:

Bob Adair, Development Planner, presented this application, seen previously by the Panel in January, at the rezoning stage. The proposal is for a 7-storey (98 suites) hotel with restaurant and lounge on the main floor, and three levels of underground parking. Proposed FSR is 5.5. The additional density above the 3.0 FSR maximum permitted in the HA-3 zone is being purchased from the heritage density bank (from the former public library and the Canadian Linen Building). The rezoning proposal has been approved in principle subject to a number of technical conditions and one design condition that the façade design strike an appropriate balance between a contemporary approach and the Yaletown character. The project has been unanimously supported by the Vancouver Heritage Commission. At the rezoning stage, the Panel's main concern related to the building expression. In general, the Planning Department supports the application, and seeks the Panel's advice on whether the windows are sufficiently recessed, and whether the parking entry could be lowered somewhat to reduce its visual impact from the street. Comments on the structural bays on the end elevations compared to those on Davie Street are also sought.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Martin Bruckner, Architect, noted the Panel was concerned at the rezoning stage that it looked too much like a Yaletown building. The issue related to achieving a Yaletown expression in an obviously modern building. He briefly explained the rationale for the current design, and Ken Larson reviewed the landscape plan.

Panel's Comments:

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

The Panel supported the general direction this project is taking and unanimously supported the application. Panel members liked the character of the building and thought it would be an excellent addition to the streetscape.

With respect to the issues raised by the Planning Department, the Panel found the recessed windows satisfactory as proposed. The Panel agreed there is potential to lower the parking entry to bring it more into scale with the rest of the elevation and improve its appearance from the street. The change in the rhythm of the structural bays from the various elevations was considered a positive contribution to the project.

The Panel strongly recommended extending the corner canopies down both streets to provide continuous weather protection. With respect to the Davie Street frontage there was a suggestion to extend the brick to the street instead of the proposed metal columns. There was also a recommendation to strengthen the cornice band at the second storey level. One Panel member felt there was an opportunity to extend the green colour to the upper level of the building.

The applicant was commended for the proposal to include flowers in the planters on the building.

Applicants Response:

Mr. Bruckner thanked the Panel for its comments and said he felt they can be addressed in a positive way.

2. **Address: 1138 Melville Street**
DA: 403460
Use: Retail/Office
Zoning: DD
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Architectura
Owner: Peterson Investment Group
Review: First
Delegation: Alan Hartley, Jane Durante
Staff: Mike Kemble
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EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (0-5)

Introduction:

The Development Planner, Mike Kemble, presented this application. The site is in a transition block between the Central Business District and the emerging Triangle West area. It is an interior site with a frontage of 160 ft. on Melville Street. There was an earlier approved proposal comprising a 39-storey hotel on the subject site and a 26-storey residential tower (the Orca) immediately to the west. The residential tower was completed but the hotel tower was not pursued. The entire parcel is subject to a single site covenant which limits the overall density to 7.0 FSR. The height limit is 300 ft. The current proposal is for a 16-storey office tower with its main entry off Melville Street and a small restaurant area at grade. Proposed height is 230 ft. The amount of density on this parcel is approximately 173,000 sq.ft. Parking entry is proposed off Melville Street, next to the parking entry of the Orca building. Pedestrian walkways and plazas are proposed on both sides of the building. Loading is off the lane. Floorplate size is approximately 11,400 sq.ft., with no lane setback. An 80 ft. separation is maintained with the Orca, and 55 ft. with the adjacent office building.

Areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought include the quality of the architectural treatment and the general massing response to neighbouring buildings; interface with the pedestrian realm on Melville Street; and the open space and landscaping.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Alan Hartley, Architect, described the proposed parking access arrangements. Jane Durante briefly reviewed the landscape plan and how they have dealt with the various geometries affecting the site.

Panels Comments

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

The Panel had major concerns about the proportions of the proposed building on this site and was unable to support the application.

The Panel acknowledged that the building is intended to accommodate a particular program; however, from an urban design point of view it needs to be taller and slimmer. As proposed, it is pushing the envelope too far, on all sides. There were concerns about the tight separation between adjacent buildings, and the zero setback at the lane was also found to be unacceptable.

Panel members were disappointed in the generic, somewhat dated expression of the building, notwithstanding the fact that it is not intended to be "high end". Panel members would have preferred to see some reference to its more modern neighbours. The Panel also felt that the streetscape established by the base of the Orca should have been acknowledged in some way with a continuation of the horizontal element at the 2-storey level.

There were two dissenting opinions expressed with respect to location of the parking entry. One agreed that access off Melville would be appropriate in this case since the lane is already seriously congested. Another felt that access off Melville would be at the expense of pedestrians and every attempt should be made to ensure the lanes are kept for their intended uses.

Given this building would be overlooked by its neighbours, the Panel recommended landscaping on the roof. One Panel member cautioned against the use of dark glass.

Concern was expressed that the rear open space (the smoking area) will be in shadow in the early afternoon, and it was suggested that consideration be given to shifting it to the west.

The landscape plan was strongly supported, in particular the extension of the pedestrian connections.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Hartley explained that while they are sympathetic to generating activity on the street, unfortunately the retail and restaurant uses both on the west side of the Sun Life Building and the Orca Building have been marginal to date. Another issue relates to height and size of floorplate acceptable for the intended program.

3. Address: 65 Water Street

DA: 403392

Use: Mixed

Zoning: HA-2

Application Status: Complete

Architect: Paul Merrick Arch. Ltd.

Owner: Harco Building Ltd.

Review: First

Delegation: Paul Merrick, Roger Bayley, Jon Stovell

Staff: Mike Kemble

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (3-1)**Introduction:**

Mike Kemble, Development Planner, presented this complete application, noting that staff would have preferred to see a preliminary submission in this instance. There are no FSR limitations in the Gastown HA-2 zone and the height limit of 75 ft. is relaxable under certain conditions. This interior site is in the centre of Gastown and has a 231 ft. frontage on Water Street. The site includes the existing Malkin Building (132 ft. frontage), a 33 ft. lot on its westerly side and a 66 ft. lot to the east. The Malkin building is a 'B' category heritage building that is proposed to be retained. To the north of the property is a narrow (12 ft.) lane which is a CPR right-of-way. Mr. Kemble briefly reviewed the immediate site context, noting the only buildings currently approved above 75 ft. are two recent residential buildings at Cordova and Carrall Streets. Current policies suggest a possible height limit of 120 ft. on the Port Lands to the north. A feature of this project is the possibility of a pedestrian linkage to the future Port Lands development through the atrium which forms part of this proposal. Mr. Kemble noted that pedestrian connections between Gastown and the Port Lands would likely be supported at mid-block locations such as this rather than at street-ends. He briefly reviewed the policies with respect to height in Gastown, noting that concerns have been expressed about Gastown developing out to the 75 ft. limit and the horizontal, unmodulated skyline that might result. He also reviewed the Planning Department's advice to the applicant during the development of this project.

The proposal is for a mixed use development comprising additions to the top of the Malkin Building - 2 storeys on the front and 3 at the rear with a courtyard between, and new residential development on the easterly lot (total of 90 market residential units). On the 33 ft. westerly lot a small amount of retail and restaurant is proposed on the first and second floors but is primarily an access route to the elevator core and potentially to a pedestrian connection to the Port Lands. Proposed density is approximately 7.0 FSR. Two levels of underground parking (66 spaces) is proposed, with access from the lane. Following a description of the project, Mr. Kemble noted the following areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought:

- massing and requested height relaxations of the residential additions; setbacks and height;
- streetwall character of the new additions;
- the atrium - the use and publicness of the space and its usability in the future;
- private open space treatment and landscaping (courtyard areas and roof decks).

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Paul Merrick, Architect, noted they have been working on this project for over a year. It has been submitted as a complete application because they felt there was enough information to have it reviewed as a firm proposal. Jon Stovell briefly described the history of the building and their objectives for the future. Roger Bayley described the rationale for the project. In summary, he said the design maintains and enhances the turn-of-the-century character; it is responsive to the

building, the streets and the view corridors. It also goes a long way to improving the amenities in the area, which is extremely important to the business and residential community.

Panels Comments:

Following a review of the model and posted materials, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel supported this application. It was acknowledged that it will likely generate some debate about what constitutes an appropriate form of development in a heritage district. The Panel generally felt that such a well crafted intervention would be a very positive addition to Gastown.

The Panel generally supported the concept of framing the existing Malkin building with glass inserts as a means of strengthening its historic character. It also supported the rationale for the varied height of the proposal, both conceptually and in terms of the public benefits being provided - the atrium/galleria, the heritage retention, provision of parking, and the quality of the façade treatment - all of which it was felt earned the relaxations being sought. One Panel member questioned whether the additional height was warranted, but the majority supported it and thought the impact would be very minimal. The Panel agreed that "table-topping" at the 75 ft. level would be very regrettable.

The atrium was considered a potentially interesting urban space that would be a positive public amenity provided it functions as a truly public space and draws people in as intended. Strong markers should be included to indicate that people are clearly welcome to enter and move through the area. One Panel member suggested consideration should be given to locating the atrium to the east of the Malkin building rather than the west because the greater width of the easterly lot would allow for more animation and increase the likelihood of its success. It was also recommended that consideration be given to the landmark quality of this end of the development, as viewed from the waterfront. As well, a suggestion was made that the character of the Water Street elevation of the easterly building might also be reflected on the waterfront side.

Response to the landscape treatments was very positive. It was recognized that the deep lightwell to the east of the project will be very dark and somewhat problematic, but the Panel felt it could be a successful and useful space with careful selection of materials and detailing. The use of the rooftops was strongly supported, as were the balconies on the north side which were considered very urban and quite appropriate, albeit small.

The façade treatment along Water Street was strongly supported, and the concept of opening up the façade in lieu of balconies considered quite refreshing.

With respect to the front mass above the Malkin building, a much greater sense of transparency was recommended, especially the corner of the set back component. It was suggested that the use of opaque glass would not be appropriate here. Setting back farther was not considered necessary.

Overall, the Panel found it to be an exciting project that will set the standard for future development in Gastown.