

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: August 30, 2006

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Walter Francl, Chair
Nigel Baldwin
Shahla Bozorgzadeh
Tom Bunting
James Cheng
Eileen Keenan
Bill Harrison
John Wall
Peter Wreglesworth
C.C. Yao (Items 1 and 3 only)

REGRETS: Margot Long
Albert Bicol
Tom Bunting

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** L. Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	399 Smithe (formerly 898 Homer Street)
2.	2150 East Hastings Street
3.	1762 Davie Street

1. Address:	399 Smithe (formerly 898 Homer Street)
DE:	410541
Use:	Mixed-use residential/office with 30 storey tower and rehabilitation of heritage/SRA designated bldg.
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Gomberoff Bell Lyon Architects
Owner:	Amacon Development
Review:	First
Delegation:	Stu Lyon, David Eisenberg, Brian Beresford, Richard Wittstock
Staff:	Francisco Molina

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (0-8)**• Introduction:**

Francisco Molina, Development Planner introduced this application with mixed-use residential/office, a 29 storey tower and rehabilitation of heritage/SRA designated building on the north east corner of Smithe and Homer Streets. The property is 120 feet in depth and with a 300 foot frontage (36,000 sq. ft.) on Homer Street. The proposed development comprises an ensemble of buildings including an existing five story office built in 1974, an existing three storey heritage building built in 1912 and a new residential tower, mini apartment manse, office and retail complex to be constructed in 2007. The applicant proposes to retain the office building. This building will provide most of the 2 FSR commercial uses required for developments in the area. The office area provided by the existing building is approximately two-thirds of the total commercial are included in the proposed development. Retention, rehabilitation and upgrading of The Homer heritage building is planned with a restaurant proposed at ground level and with fifteen rental market residential units that will be secured on perpetuity through and agreement with the City. The residential tower (29 floors) is on top of residential/retail/office podium; with the proposed development reaching a height of 300 feet. A separated small residential block, including three story street oriented townhouse and three floors of apartment suites on top is planned on Smithe Street with street access to the townhouse unites and from the tower's vertical circulation core to the suites on top. Also four levels of underground parking with 308 parking spaces to be provided.

Mr. Molina asked the panel to consider the following:

- Overall massing, form and character of the proposal, taking into consideration heritage retention and heritage density bonus aspects involved;
- Response to its urban context and incorporation of buildings being retained to the overall development scheme;
- Architectural treatment, massing, scale relationships aspect regarding the various components of the proposal,
- Overall treatment of the public realm and interface area between buildings and street;
- Treatment of top of tower and extent of sculpting at NE corner to achieve tower separations and reduce shadow impacts of DCC;
- Articulation of the tower facades, especially the wide south elevation;
- Architectural treatment of lower level of The Homer; and
- Outdoor amenity space. Location, size, accessibility and programming.

• Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Stu Lyon, Architect discussed the design process. Mr. Lyon pointed out that one of the interesting challenges of the site is the retention of the two existing buildings. The

heritage building will be gutted with 15 suites added. Included in the renovation of the heritage building is a grand staircase, skylight and an upgraded and restored entrance. Parking for the heritage building will be taken into the new tower. Brian Beresford, Landscape Architect reviewed the landscape plan including the green roof treatment to the tower. The project team responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

- Concerns about the overall expression of the massing and recommendation to give further consideration to the integration of the various components of the proposal and the choice of colours for the project;
- The building expression needs to develop an architectural expression that responds to the immediate context of the office and heritage buildings;
- Consider a better placement for the amenity area and locating the indoor amenity space next to the outdoor amenity area is recommended; and
- Consideration should be given to enrich the public realm (street treatment). Look at adding street trees, street furniture;

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel did not support this application.

While there were generally no concerns with the proposed height there were concerns about the sense of density. Several members felt that the floor plate was too large. Several members also commented that relatively little was done to sculpt or shape the tower form, which would help to relieve the apparent width of the elevations, particularly the south one.

The Panel felt the six storey townhouse/apartment building although interesting didn't relate well to the street and that the floor plate may be too big given the proximity to the tower. It was suggested that some more thought should be given as to how its relationship and attachment to the tower.

The heritage character of the Homer building need to be given more respect. Some Panel members suggested that some architectural elements from the Homer building could be taken into the tower as well as the townhouse forms.

There were major concerns about the general placement of the indoor amenity area. The Panel also thought that having access to the roof on the 7th floor without any amenity didn't work. There were strong recommendations to have the indoor amenity beside the outside amenity. One panel member suggested that the amenity areas, indoor and outdoor, need to bring a sense of community to the building and needs to offer the residents a reason to go there.

It was also suggested that the Smithe Street frontage should be used as a new streetscape and public realm. Having an active ground use space for the residences or an outdoor area as an expansion of retail/commercial uses at ground level would help animate the street. The panel would also like to see more use of landscaping, especially in the lane and on the roofs.

The Panel felt the massing lacked refinement and the color choices were drab. The architectural vocabulary of the project didn't seem to relate either to the current office building and not enough to the heritage building.

- **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Lyon stated that a lot of work has been done on the project with the Planning Department. Mr. Lyon also noted that having The Homer heritage building does put limitations on the project. He thanked the Panel for their commentary.

2. Address:	2150 East Hastings Street
DE:	410386
Use:	4 storey commercial/residential with two levels of underground parking
Zoning:	C-2C1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	W.T. Leung Architects (Christiane Cottin)
Owner:	Ranjit Dharni
Review:	First
Delegation:	Wing Ting Leung, Christiane Cottin
Staff:	Bob Adair

EVALUATION: (SUPPORT 7-0)**• Introduction:**

Bob Adair, Development Planner introduced this application which is a four storey mixed-use building with commercial on the ground floor and fifty-seven residential units on three floors. The building is designed as an assembly of four building blocks.

Mr. Adair asked the panel to consider the following:

- Low ceiling heights for the retail street along Hastings Street. The maximum is 12.5' to a minimum of 10.5'. Staff will be asking for at least a foot added.
- Hastings Street elevations support the materials chosen but would like the panels' comments on the look and rear elevation.
- Height angle relaxation.

Mr. Adair took questions from the panel.

• Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Mr. Leung, Architect feels that East Hastings deserves something better which resulted in the design for this application. Because of the sloping of the street, the project was stepped and broken up into blocks of four. The project team responded to questions from the Panel.

• Panel's Consensus:

- General support for the height angle relations;
- The overall plan is well executed;
- The lane elevation is very successful;
- The building elevation on Hastings Street could be better executed; and
- Concerns about the rooftop design;

• Related Commentary:

The Panel agreed that the height angle relaxation should be granted and to add height to the retail although several of the Panel members felt it would not be disastrous to leave the ceiling height as currently planned. The Panel recognizes the difficulty of the site and asks City Staff to help the applicant to find a way to ease the problem.

The lane elevation was very successful and nicely handled although the Panel felt the Hastings Street elevation was not as strong. It was suggested that some revisions to the materials applied to the Hastings facade could strengthen the elevation. It was also suggested that the canopies on Hastings Street could be a larger and deeper.

The Panel felt opportunities for roof access should be explored.

One member of the Panel thought the package information was a little light and would like to have had more context and photos in the package.

There was a comment that more attention could be paid to sustainability and also to the public realm. It was suggested that benches would enhance the streetscape.

The Panel agreed that the liveability of the suites was better than most submissions they had seen with good access to light. The Panel felt that this was a well resolved scheme.

- **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Leung stated that the comments were well taken. Hastings Street elevation is a bit of a stumble and the reason the lane elevation is more successful is because the brick goes to the ground and it doesn't on Hastings. He is looking for a solution to bring the brick down to the ground.

3. Address:	1762 Davie Street
DE:	410421
Use:	7 storey mixed use building, 20 residential units
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Brook and Associates
Owner:	Barco Canada Developments Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Greg Borowski, Jane Durante
Staff:	Dale Morgan/Scott Barker

EVALUATION: (SUPPORT 8-0)**• Introduction:**

Dale Morgan, Development Planner introduced the application for a seven-story concrete, ceramic and glass building with mixed used and twenty residential units. The CD-1 establishes the overall form of development for this project. The project features two street-fronting retail uses, along with the principal residential entry. The project sets back at the third level to address the approximate tower alignment established by 1750 and 1770 Davie Street.

Mr. Morgan asked the panel to consider the following:

- Neighbourliness to the adjacent sites; and
- Wall treatment.

• Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Greg Borowski, Architect gave an overview of the project emphasizing the rotation of the tower to open up views from this site which gives opportunities for the outdoor space and for the owners to enjoy the air coming up from the beach. There has been thought given to all the roof areas for outdoor living with green areas for enjoyment of the people in the building and for the neighbours looking done on the roof. The materials being used include terracotta panelling and granite on the street front. Jane Durante, Landscape Architect mentioned the landscaping features including the creation of a courtyard and an entry with a water wall. The building will be using water from a cistern housed in the parking garage. The project team responded to questions from the Panel.

• Panel's Consensus:

- Minor concerns with the terra cotta panelling in the way that it would be used on this highly articulated façade.;
- Minor concerns about privacy with respect to adjacent apartment buildings; and
- The Panel complimented the applicant on the design of the building.

• Related Commentary:

The Panel fully supported the project.

The Panel agreed that a lot of thought had been given to the way the building was designed especially as seen from above.

There were some minor concerns about the detailing of the terra cotta panelling and the expression of the façade as the Panel felt there could be problems with the sills and lintels when using this type of panel system. It was suggested that the applicant try a different expression around the window openings and to consider a different material for the verticals between the windows as this would help the building relate better to the building next door.

One member of the Panel expressed some concerns about privacy but felt with a small changes to the side wall glazing, the situation could be handled without changing the building form.

The panel felt that the water wall was a wonderful feature that would also enhance the street experience.

One member of the Panel suggested that the ornamental cherry street trees be replaced if possible.

- **Applicant's Response:**
Mr. Borowski thanked the panel for their comments.