
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: December 1, 1999

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room #1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Roger Hughes (Chair)
Patricia Campbell
Sheldon Chandler
James Cheng
Per Christoffersen
Paul Grant
Sean McEwan
Gilbert Raynard
Keith Ross
Norman Shearing

REGRETS: Joseph Hruda
Joe Werner

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Louise Christie

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. 1598 West 7 TH Avenue
2. 711 West Broadway (Holiday Inn)
3. 400 Great Northern Way

1. Address: 1598 West 7th Avenue
DA: 404590
Use: Congregate housing (12 storeys) SNRF
Zoning: C-3A
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Staniskis Doll Adams
Owner: Cape Development Corporation
Review: First
Delegation: Tom Staniskis, Kim Perry; Barb Tully and Edward Calb
Staff: Ralph Segal
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9 - 0)**• Introduction:**

Ralph Segal, the Development Planner, introduced this site at West Seventh Avenue and Fir Street where approval had been given to a market residential project, co-ordinated with the retention of the Seymour Medical Building. The objective of the current proposal is to retain the clinic and keep it operational during the new construction of the congregate housing. Also retained are the large maple tree in the open plaza on the corner and general massing hypotheses. The DP Board considered the previous approval met the C-3A Guidelines and this project must show how it earns its requested increase from 1 FSR outright to 3 FSR, and additional height from 30 ft. to just over 100 ft. The give-back to the community is partially fulfilled by way of the public amenity of the plaza, good urban design and architecture. The design was constrained by the requirements for congregate care, including programming, that differ from market strata condos. The massing is now wider in shoulder areas but the tower is lower by a few feet. The one storey addition to the existing clinic is the congregate common areas, such as the dining room, lounges and kitchen. Staff recommend approval at this complete stage, requesting comments on articulation of the massing; the high rise element of over 100 ft., and the way the various shoulders are all integrated with architectural treatment. To save the significant tree, the mound has been left to protect the roots, and staff would like comments on the plaza area which is to be a publically inviting space. There is commercial area at the back but lounge area for the congregate housing is inside, adjacent the plaza, and public access from bordering streets may not be adequate and could be more inviting.

• Applicant's Opening Comments:

Mr. Staniskis said the massing was a result of many meetings and consultations with the neighbourhood, and the plaza around the tree which was retained at the request of the planning department. It was a challenge to fit congregate use into the previous massing. There is approximately 12,000 - 14,000 sq. ft. of amenity area and support services which have to be accommodated. The building is approximately 100 units, 80 of which are rental, and 20 more luxurious condos on the top floor floors of the tower, so there is transition at certain points in the building. Because of catering to seniors, who like a sense of permanence and security, the materials give the impression of quality - masonry, concrete and an enamelled window system - and the articulation has been reduced. This is also to improve the building envelope quality, and overhangs have been introduced. The larger strata-title condo units are set back just above the eight floors of rental units for a mid-height element in the tower, which is the strong vertical element, separated by a gap from the existing clinic. The Seymour Medical building is architecturally notable, a bold horizontal structure, cantilevered over landscaping on the walkway, and now accented by the addition

of a fifth floor for amenity functions. The north half of the roof top is composed of games rooms, lounges, residence laundry and other areas for socialization with view potential and is connected to the large garden space on the south side. The other portion of the amenity package is on ground floor of the new structure with a higher ceiling than standard residence and oriented to 7th Avenue, looking out over the plaza. The balance of the floor plate is commercial for a coffee shop or café use for both residents and outside people to generate activity and animate the plaza space. Because of the topography of the site, the back of the amenity floor is actually below the level of the lane, so against the lane are the service facilities, workshop and staff areas. The entrance to the underground parking, where people can be dropped off under cover, will be moved next to the lobby entrance on the street. This level of parking is connected through to the level of the lane at the request of the Francophone Society who hold their summer festival and close West Seventh Avenue two days a year.

Mr. Perry explained the four main elements of the landscape plan. The roof garden, with weight constraints due to being built on the existing clinic; then the space steps down a full floor to the court yard that serves the clinic, with a stairway that links both; next, the primarily private patio spaces and adjacent landscapes for those private units; and finally the public realm, which includes the plaza with a small fountain for centrepiece. A continuous green belt is being created along the length of the lane.

The grade of the plaza is not that different from the sidewalk with the possibility to open the corner more but the maple tree's survival is important and a new wall around it will be incorporated.

- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel was very supportive of this good quality development, finding the height worthy and density warranted, especially because of the high proportion of rental units. The medical clinic, a very good example from the 60's architecture in the City, was enhanced by the additional storey. The building is articulated enough and the massing has a balanced look and comfortable feeling and is appropriate, especially next to the Granville Street ramp. Two views were expressed of the overall design - to either fully integrate the old and new, or to contrast them: one vertical - the other horizontal. The utilization of the materials could contribute to a different look. A Panel member encouraged additional window size to maximize the views and marketability, and more glass to offset the penthouse and relieve the boxy character of the building. Also suggested was the possible addition of a gazebo and planted areas to the amenity of the big roof, to enhance it for use and to create an interesting silhouette. There are issues around the location of the entrance to the underground parking garage, how convenient and effective it is, and what it creates in terms of geometry between the two structures.

The landscaping is well developed, but the plaza could have more of a connection to the adjacent streets to be more welcoming to the public. One panel member expressed that the water feature will help baffle noise and public art could be considered as an attraction. The applicant was complimented on a detailed presentation..

- **Applicant's Response:**

The applicant thanked the Panel for their very useful comments. The biggest issue would be the access point to the ramp and, although the tree may be damaged or die, there is the legacy space, and planting with a new young specimen could be symbolic.

2. Address:	711 West Broadway
DA:	
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	CD-1 (358) text amendment
Application Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	Davidson Yuen Simpson
Owner:	Holiday Inn
Review:	First
Delegation:	David Simpson, Dick Stout, Gerry Eckford and Barb Tulley
Staff:	Mark Holland

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7 - 2)**• Introduction:**

Mark Holland, Development Planner, introduced this project, a re-iteration of the Holiday Inn along West Broadway, and development of the surface parking lot on the north side at 700 West 8th Avenue. The proposal is for a rezoning for a text amendment to the current CD-1, to include a mixed use expansion, primarily focussed on six storeys for the hotel itself, nine townhouses of 2- to 3-storeys; a community amenity space of 2,600 sq. ft. with a \$500,000 endowment for operation; underground parking and upgrades to the Broadway facade of the Holiday Inn. The terrain slopes strongly to the north and the size of the site, Site B (the parking lot) is approximately one half acre. The surrounding context is C-3A zoning, with Vancouver General Hospital and its future expansion to the south, and the FM-1 zone of small multi-family townhouses for Fairview slopes to the north. In the 1970s, the site was built out with the current Holiday Inn, and the parking lot had no density left on it. In the mid 1990's, the applicants came forward and received rezoning to put an additional 2.5 FSR of residential there, with a community amenity space for the whole neighbourhood. The over all site density rose to 4.7 FSR, with the hotel itself close to 6.0 FSR. Today's proposal is to take the majority that Council approved for residential (2.35 FSR dropping to 0.32 FSR), and turn it into hotel uses (from .0 FSR to 2.02 FSR for the sub-site), with a very similar form of development, the massing being slightly less but including a banquet conference facility at grade. The community space stays roughly the same size. Staff would like the Panel's comment on the significant change of use to hotel; the courtyard area and the interaction with hotel patrons and townhouses, the noise impacts of the hotel, to be lessened with French balconies, and issues of privacy for the townhouses and their roof top terraces. Also, the quality of the public realm on Broadway is considered very important by staff and the contemplated changes of upgrades to lights, canopies, etc. which could include rain protection. Staff also ask for comments on the integration of the old with the new, being remedial or bold, including the proposed curve of the roof. The applicant did studies and research in the neighbourhood and took their comments into consideration in designing this preliminary stage.

• Applicant's Opening Comments:

David Simpson talked about the impact on the neighbourhood, with the access to the hotel from Broadway, with the exception of units at ground, which are to help reinforce the residential character and compliment the area across the street. The landscape portion is a buffer and the townhouses have private access and a semi-private walkway through the courtyard to the amenity space. Barb Tulley explained that, in the previous proposed application, the Park Board was willing to accept cash in lieu of a public amenity but the community wanted a space that they could identify as their own for a variety of programs, with an operational endowment. This site is somewhat unique, without a lane

separating it, so entry to parking and community centre is off of Heather Street. The underground parking for the hotel, community space and residents has had 118 spaces added.

- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel supported the change of use and the increase in density had been approved by Council but also noted that the agreement is very beneficial to the applicant. There were concerns expressed about the impact of noise and shadow, lack of privacy and setback issues, with the hotel expansion overlooking the residential area. One member requested a complete shadow study, including the existing structure. Members commented that the nine townhouses were seen as a token gesture with their livability questioned, and also that they blended curiously with the street level hotel units. It was suggested they be given more bulk, architectural expression, greater height for the roof terraces, and be set-back from the street, which would enhance privacy issues. One member felt that added height would detract from the views from the hotel and another thought they could be set back, their face on the courtyard blank, and that could become a shade garden for the hotel. Concerns were expressed about the placement of the community space and it being in the shadowed, sunken plaza, which should be raised to grade or it could become problematic.

The Panel said the Broadway and Heather Street frontages both needed major reworking from the ground up. On the major arterial, an urban feel should be developed, with serious attention paid to the separation of vehicular traffic and pedestrians, the integration of the small commercial spaces and the hotel entrance. Treatments could include landscaping, higher quality materials, and transparency, which would be consistent with the Broadway streetscape. A panel member suggested a model bus shelter could be part of the contribution to the public realm. A couple of members suggested the roof top of the parkade be transformed into a terrace for hotel patrons use and to benefit the views from surrounding buildings. There were many suggestions concerning the integration of the new expansion, with its different materials and curved element, and the old, unique concrete structure. How the two buildings are attached needs to be clarified, and a strategy developed in regards to materials, articulation and scale to either accentuate the difference or harmonize.

- **Applicant's Response:**

The applicant wanted the Panel to know the community had input as to the placement of the amenity space and he will definitely see what can be done to enhance it. He appreciates the stimulating discussion and commentary on the design issues at this preliminary stage.

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3. Address: 400 Great Northern Way
DA: 404544
Use: Elementary School (St. Francis Xavier)
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Raymond Ching
Owner: St. Francis Xavier
Review: Second
Delegation: Raymond Ching, and Barry Diamond
Staff: Anita Molaro
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EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (2-7)

• **Introduction:**

Last spring, the panel saw this proposal as part of its rezoning for a text amendment to permit a church, elementary school, daycare facilities and related uses, to be developed in two stages. The site is between Great Northern Way and 5th Avenue, and the first phase, the school at west end of the site. The second phase, the church and underground parking is at the east end of the site. To the north across Great Northern Way is the Finning site which is being rezoned to a high tech business park. To the south and east is RM-4, the Mt. Pleasant neighbourhood with a component of affordable housing. This is a high crime area which generates a high level of complaints concerning drugs and prostitution.

At the rezoning, the use was supported but the form of development was not. The Panel's previous concern was the location of the school and church which should be reversed with the landmark building at the west end of site, that the gym should have a strong relationship to the church, and the project should integrate with the neighbourhood, and access to the site should not be restricted along 5th Avenue. Street end views and particularly the views down onto the site from the surrounding apartments and the future high tech offices, should also be given consideration. In attempting to address these concerns, the applicant has since explored several other site configurations, with regard to views, traffic patterns and building mass, and staff give their support to the project as proposed, as did Council at the public hearing for the rezoning.

The site is very challenging with significant grade changes. Further work is being completed on Finning site, and the SkyTrain route may align with Prince Edward Street there. The school is 3-storeys on Great Northern Way, and perceived as one storey from 5th Avenue. The majority of the play area is off of the second floor in conjunction with the parking area being provided, and a smaller area between the main school and the library. In the smaller 'pavilion', a library at the lower level and multi-purpose room above will be featured. By maintaining the existing podium structure, the parking of 41 spaces for school and the play area will be provided. In Phase 2, the play area will be on top of the underground parking. The applicant was asked to respond to the Brewery Creek neighbourhood on the western edge of the site. East 5th Avenue, where it intersects with Brunswick Street, will become an important pedestrian link across Great Northern Way to the Finning site.

Given the 734 ft. length of the site, staff would like the Panel's comments on how the mass of the two buildings are integrated with the neighbourhood and the street end views, including the distinct element as you come down the curvature of Great Northern Way. In response to neighbourhood concerns, there is no southerly access to the site or the buildings off of 5th Avenue, except at the very

westerly end of the site, where the neighbourhood has access to the multipurpose room for their use as part of the public benefit. The drop-off for students is currently limited to Great Northern Way. When Phase 2 moves forward, there will be further review of the accessibility onto the site. Staff also request comments on both the structures' relationship to the grades around and in the site, and the surrounding street edges, and also on the use of the materials, mainly brick and stucco, with additional remarks on the anticipated Phase 2 in two to five years time. The client wants to do an interim solution that is responsible but not a financial burden

- **Applicant's Comments:**

Mr. Ching said that the development planner had adequately covered the various aspects of this proposal.

- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel Chair summarized the comments but stated that the scheme was still backwards and, although the site is challenging, ways to address the Panel's main concerns could have been found for this was an outstanding opportunity. Though one Panel member commented that the form of development had been approved by Council, the Panel's general opinion was that the design of the school, with stucco and brick, was seen to harken back to the past, which one member thought was comforting. The Panel proposed several variations on ways of articulation the brick materials, fenestration and articulation of the roof line, to enhance the project, yet keep it simple. Two members pointed out the cost of excavating and pouring further cement when, because the CD-1 height would allow it, the building could be raised, giving rise to other possibilities.

The Panel considered the street end views, especially Guelph Street that faces the blank facade of the school, and those from overhead, which see only the large flat roof top with mechanical boxes protruding. Panel members suggested landscaping treatment, and/or a skylight down the centre over the hallway, and special design of the mechanical outlets to make it a pleasant feature to possibly coordinate it with the landmark 'pavilion'. The arched element on 5th Avenue was an enigma. The Panel thought the main access should be at the east end of the school, directly facing the church, and that there should be access from 5th Avenue also as it will become a drop-off point. CPTED issues will have to be addressed concerning the light wells which do allow in much needed light to lower levels, and although the applicant has provided fencing, a more active 5th Avenue was seen as safer, rather than problematic. The building is very close to that property line. The Panel also anticipates that Great Northern Way will develop into more of a pedestrian street and the current proposal will cause congestion around the parking lot/drop-off area as the street becomes busier.

- **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Ching explained that the school makes a conventional statement as parents today want more structure and discipline for their children. The applicant appreciates the comments on the drop-offs for the students but said a traffic consultant had provided written statements that the current design would work, and a City of Vancouver traffic engineer had accepted it. The applicant also thought they would consider a higher building and treatment to the roofscape.