

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: December 10, 2003

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Stuart Lyon, Chair
Helen Besharat
Jeffrey Corbett
Reena Lazar (present for Items 1 -3 only)
Brian Martin
Kim Perry
Sorin Tatomir
Ken Terriss
Jennifer Marshall
Eva Lee

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Cardew (guest Panel member for Item 1 only)

REGRETS: Bruce Haden
Mark Ostry

RECORDING SECRETARY: Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	550 Bute Street
2.	600 Abbott Street
3.	2055 Yukon Street
4.	587 West 7th Avenue

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| 1. | Address: | 550 Bute Street |
| | DE: | 407110 |
| | Use: | Mixed (42 storeys, 400 ft. Residential Tower) |
| | Zoning: | DD |
| | Applicant Status: | Complete after Preliminary (Revised) |
| | Architect: | Hewitt Kwasnicky |
| | Owner: | Wentworth Prop. (Melville) Inc. |
| | Review: | Third |
| | Delegation: | David Hewitt, Willem Doesburg, David Rose |
| | Staff: | Ralph Segal, Anita Molaro |
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-4)

Introduction: Ralph Segal, Development Planner, introduced this application, referring to the City's High Building Policy which includes a High Building Panel review to assess architectural excellence. The project will be reported to Council. The Development Permit Board gave approval in principle to the project at 400 ft., subject to a number of design conditions. That preliminary approval established that the building's overall configuration was acceptable in principle. The project has now been substantially redesigned. The basic massing configuration remains the same as the preliminary submission and should not be revisited at this time, having been endorsed by the Development Permit Board. The High Building Panel did not support the application when it was reviewed on September 4, 2003.

The Panel's advice is sought on how this submission has responded to the High Building Panel's earlier comments. In addition, the Panel should take into consideration the Council decision on the Bute Neighbourhood Centre initiative which amends the Character Area Guidelines of the Downtown to establish this section of Bute Street as a retail street with a lot of pedestrian activity. This revised scheme has responded to this amendment by emphasizing retail at the Bute Street edge, thereby reconfiguring its Bute Street interface substantially since the earlier submission. Staff consider this submission to be a substantive response. Staff also consider there has been a more substantive incorporation of the existing parkade (Accountants' Building) on the eastern portion of the site which is to be retained.

In addition to the foregoing, the Panel's comments are sought on whether the project has achieved architectural excellence, and to consider the building as a skyline element, particularly the top of the building.

Applicant's Opening Comments: David Hewitt, Architect, described the design rationale and responded to the Panel's questions.

Panel's Comments: The Panel supported this application and found it much improved since the previous submission. The Panel generally thought the applicant had made significant progress and was pleased to see the project moving in the right direction. Some concerns remained about the project, however, and the Panel offered a number of suggestions for further improvement.

The Panel liked the way the towers touch the ground and especially liked the way the vertical copper element is brought right to the ground at the entry lobby of the residential tower. Most Panel members strongly supported the copper cladding but recommended that careful consideration be given to the appearance of the tower, both at the outset and as the copper oxidizes, particularly in proximity to the green glass. Reconsideration of the glass colour was strongly recommended and a number of Panel members stated preference for the colour shown on the model as opposed to the elevation drawings. Reflectivity of the copper in the early stages should also be taken into account. The Panel general liked the elegant

curve at the top of the tower but there was a word of caution that some of the transition details on the leading edge of the building on the curved side could benefit from further study. Several Panel members thought the glass sail element should not be repeated on the hotel tower.

Some Panel members thought the elevator penthouse might benefit from some other configuration. It was found to be somewhat heavy and not coming together very well as a composition with the curved glass sail element.

The Panel strongly supported the roof garden, although thought the lack of access by the general public was unfortunate. A little less landscaping and the inclusion of some benches was recommended to take better advantage of the views on the west side of the space.

The Panel generally thought there was too much happening on the lane elevation and recommended design development to calm it down a bit, e.g., there are different kinds of canopies shown, and a somewhat service aspect next to the lobby with a gas meter and an exit stair close to the corner. Extending the more gracious edge at least as far as the lobby was recommended.

Some Panel members found the lobby on Melville Street to be a little small and apologetic in relation to the size of the tower itself.

One Panel member found the east elevation somewhat flat given it is a fairly significant elevation facing the downtown core.

The Panel supported the retail pavilions, with some Panel members recommending that they be brought out as far as possible to the sidewalk. The Panel generally liked the way the project responds to the new Bute High Street policy. There were some questions about the heavy timber elements at the retail edge, although some Panel members found it an interesting idea and thought it would work.

The incorporation of west coast materials was strongly supported. One Panel member encouraged the applicant to include some educational plaques to inform the general public of the building's sustainable features. Additional brise soleil elements were recommended on the south and west facades to address solar gain.

The Panel appreciated the more successful incorporation of the Accountants' Building into the scheme.

The Panel struggled with whether this project had achieved "architectural excellence". Not all Panel members expressed an opinion, but three members indicated they believed the definition was now meaningful. In addition, one Panel member found the arbitrary character of the tower inappropriate for the description; one found it a "competent" building but not exhibiting the highest order of architectural excellence; and one member said it is its element of sustainability that is leading it in the right direction to achieve architectural excellence.

Only one Panel member responded to the impact on the skyline, stating that the glass sail will add to the skyline. Another comment was that images of the building from various view cone locations would have been helpful to assess its impact.

While the Panel appreciated the applicant's response to its earlier criticism that the design had not gone far enough, some Panel members suggested the scheme may now be trying to do too much and recommended pulling back a notch.

2. Address:	600 Abbott Street
DE:	408032
Use:	Mixed (6 storeys, 25 storeys, 31 storeys)
Zoning:	CD-1
Applicant Status:	Complete
Architect:	Hancock Bruckner Eng & Wright
Owner:	Henderson Land Holdings Ltd. (Canada)
Review:	First
Delegation:	Jim Hancock, Hilde Heyvaerts, Jane Durante, Martin Bruckner
Staff:	Ralph Segal

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (3-6)

Introduction: Ralph Segal, Development Planner, presented this application for Block F of International Village. The project comprises low, mid and high rise massing. The Panel's advice is sought on the following:

- streetscape enclosure;
- street edge detail and materials;
- pedestrian and vehicular access along the edge with particular consideration for the Abbott Street vehicular entrance;
- tower orientation;
- treatment of the above grade parking;
- architectural treatment of all towers;
- public and private landscape;
- project phasing especially with regard to the interim use prior to a school being realized.

Applicant's Opening Comments: Jim Hancock, Architect, briefly described the project, noting it generally conforms to the guidelines. Martin Bruckner, Architect, described the above grade parking arrangement and Jane Durante reviewed the landscape plan. The design team responded to the Panel's questions.

Panel's Comments: The Panel did not support this application.

Some Panel members were not convinced the project should take its cues from Paris Place, which is not a very successful development. It also fails to respond to Chinatown's rich materials and pedestrian character. Concerns were also expressed about the project's lack of response to the viaduct and the LRT and that it fails to recognize its role as a gateway to the city.

The Panel generally supported the way the above grade parking has been handled. It was strongly recommended that the retail frontage be emphasized, possibly increasing the height of the canopies and incorporating some retail frontage in the high space at the leading edge at the second level of the parkade.

The Panel was strongly opposed to the location of the parking ramp next to the future school. It was stressed that this access needs to be as minimal and friendly as possible.

The Panel generally liked the streetscape and the street edges, with one recommendation to give further consideration to the harsh nature of Expo Boulevard.

The Panel was concerned about the phasing of this project, noting there is no guarantee that the school and the daycare will be built. Since the surface parking is likely to remain for

some time, the applicant was urged to provide a more fully landscaped parking lot and add some articulation or fenestration to the wall.

With respect to materials, the Panel suggested increasing the amount of brick at the ground floor and reconsidering the narrow bands of brick. More brick on the 6-storey component as a more appropriate response to the guidelines was recommended by one Panel member.

There was mixed response to the rooftop elements and a concern expressed that they may appear gratuitous. It was strongly recommended that they should do more than collect water, possibly extending the penthouse units under them.

Several Panel members were disappointed at the project's lack of response to sustainability issues. There was a suggestion to simplify the rooftop elements in favour of enhancing the building elsewhere, and it was noted the project facades fail to address orientation in terms of solar gain. Another suggestion with respect to sustainability was to consider seeking Council support for reduced parking and/or the inclusion of co-op parking spaces.

Other comments and suggestions for improvement included:

- consideration should be given to opening up the joint between the oval tower and the low rise building;
- the oval tower might look a little more elegant without the rectangular component added to it;
- recommend larger entries on buildings F2 and F2, and deletion of the column in front of F2;
- the south elevation of F2 should respond better to the viaduct with a less residential character;
- the money spent on large amounts of bicycle parking, which will likely not be well used, could be better spent elsewhere on the project;
- the long canopy on Abbott and Keefer needs quite a bit of design development;
- consideration should be given to landscaping the low roofs to improve the overlook;
- there may be an opportunity for greater variety between the buildings.

Applicant's Response: Mr. Hancock said the comments are good and will be taken under advisement.

3. Address:	2055 Yukon Street (400 West 2nd Avenue)
DE:	407823
Use:	Artist Live/Work (9 storeys)
Zoning:	C-3A
Applicant Status:	Complete
Architect:	Hancock Bruckner Eng & Wright
Owner:	Yukon Crossing Prop. Ltd.
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Julie Hicks, Jim Hancock, Kim Maust
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-1)

Introduction: Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this application. The project was reviewed and supported (4-3) by the Panel on October 1, 2003. Since that time, two issues were resolved: a reduction of 5,000 sq.ft. density bonus and the elimination of family Artist Live/Work Studios. The ALW units are now typical studio units. The site is fairly prominent and visible from all angles. At the earlier review, the Panel generally had no concern with the massing and supported the retention of the Nye building (Kirmac Collision). The project comprises two adjacent sites, including the Nye building which will be heritage listed and preserved. The project proposes 81 ALW studios at 3.0 FSR over both sites. The sites will remain separate with shared development rights under a single site covenant.

Staff seek confirmation that the Panel still considers the scheme to have earned the maximum allowable in the C-3A zone. Comments are also sought on the reduction of 5,000 sq.ft., whether the proposed height of 97 ft is appropriate, and the allocation of the brick.

Applicant's Opening Comments: Jim Hancock, Architect, briefly reviewed the changes to the project since the Panel's previous review and Julie Hicks described the landscape plan. The design team responded to the Panel's questions.

Panel's Comments: The Panel strongly supported this application and remained persuaded that it had well earned the height and density being requested. The Panel found no adverse impact resulting from the 5,000 sq.ft. floor space reduction since the previous scheme.

The Panel strongly supported the retention and preservation of the Nye Building which is considered to be a significant piece of this area's heritage.

With respect to the extent of brick, with one exception, the Panel thought the brick allocation was appropriate and a reasonable transition from the Nye Building.

The Panel supported the large, angled wall on Yukon Street, with some Panel members recommending a different material (not brick), particularly on the vertical piece as it drops down to the corner.

Other comments/suggestions were:

- unlike the previous submission, the size and layouts of the units are now very appropriate;
- suggest lightening the concrete colour;
- suggest including some solid pavers in the outdoor amenity space;

- nicely proportioned project;
- the use is excellent;
- question the two-person occupancy limit on the ALW units;
- encourage the owner to keep the Nye Building industrial for as long as possible because it is one of the things that distinguishes this area;
- the walkway access has been made a very positive feature because it is south facing and the windows look into semi public space in the units;
- suggest deleting the antenna;
- commend the applicant for the proposal to seek LEED certification; the addition of brise soleil elements on the south façade will help in this regard;
- design development recommended on the canopy detail.

4. Address:	587 West 7th Avenue
DE:	407888
Use:	Residential (8 storeys, 35 units)
Zoning:	C-3A
Applicant Status:	Complete
Architect:	Jan Timmer
Owner:	587 W 7th Holdings
Review:	First
Delegation:	Frits Huckriede, Jan Timmer, Jane Durante
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

Introduction: Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this application. The context of this site, just west of Cambie Street, is quite varied. The site has a 100 ft. frontage and has 50 ft. sites on either side. There is no lane. However, the applicant has negotiated a right-of-way through the site to the west which will serve as combined access for underground parking for both properties from Ash Street. The applicant's attempts to negotiate acquisition of neighbouring property have been unsuccessful, which results in this "lock-in" lot. This is not typically permitted unless there is proof that neighbouring property owners have been made an adequate offer to purchase.

The application proposes 29 residential units to a height of 80 ft. and 3.0 FSR. Ms. Rondeau briefly reviewed the guidelines with respect to how the maximum height and density may be earned in the C-3A zone. The advice of the Panel is sought in the following areas:

- whether the application earns the requested height and density;
- appropriateness of the massing and character of the building given its existing and future context;
- streetscape and townhouse expression on West 7th Avenue;
- semi private open space provision.

Applicant's Opening Comments: Jan Timmer, Architect, described his design rationale and responded to the Panel's questions.

Panel's Comments: The Panel unanimously supported this application and considered it had earned the requested height and density.

The Panel acknowledged that this is a very difficult site and thought that it had generally been very well handled. The Panel found the screening to the north by locating storage areas at the rear to be very successful. A comment was made that it is unfortunate the neighbouring property owner has chosen not to be part of this development and the project has handled a difficult situation very well. The efforts to achieve the right-of-way were applauded.

With respect to semi private open space, the Panel agreed the only location for it would be on the roof, and probably one of the lower roofs in order to provide handicap access. Since this would likely compromise livability of one of the suites, consideration might be given to an amenity room associated with the semi private open space. Provision of an amenity room for strata council meetings would not be unusual for a building of this size. Some Panel members suggested that since every suite has its own private outdoor space, common semi private outdoor space is not essential and may not be well used.

Other comments and suggestions for improvement included the following:

- design development to the lobby entry to relocate the exit door;
- further consideration to the balcony edges, the shape of which may be exacerbating the "box-like" character of the building;
- suggest the entry be redesigned so that the townhouses are more continuous and the entry reduced in scale;
- concern about the deep, shaded spaces on the north side which will have no sun access;
- more attention could be given to privacy issues relating to overlook onto the roof deck;
- the streetscape is a little "busy", with too much going on; suggest locating the bike racks on one side and the seating on the other. The seating could be simplified by eliminating the benches and widening the wall; more greening;
- there may be an opportunity to acknowledge the relationship to the bikeway/green along the 7th Avenue frontage.

The Panel generally found the project carefully thought through and detailed virtually to working drawing level. Several Panel members commended the applicant for seeking LEED silver status for this small project. A comment was made that this is a calm building in a very diverse neighbourhood.

Applicant's Response: Mr. Timmer said he would pursue the suggestion of responding to the bikeway which might be a better contribution to the general community rather than the provision of semi private open space.