
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: December 12, 2001

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Walter Francl, Chair
Jeffrey Corbett (Items 2 & 3 only)
Lance Berelowitz (Items 1 & 2 only)
Gerry Eckford
Alan Endall
Bruce Hemstock (excused Item 4)
Richard Henry (excused Item 2)
Joseph Hruda (Items 2 - 4 only)
Jack Lutsky
Maurice Pez
Sorin Tatomir

REGRETS: Tom Bunting

RECORDING SECRETARY: Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	675 West 10th Avenue
2.	901 Beatty Street
3.	1280 Richards Street (499 Drake)
4.	2099 West 33rd Avenue

1. Address:	675 West 10th Avenue
DA:	406273
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	C-3A
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Henriquez & Partners
Owner:	BC Cancer Agency
Review:	First
Delegation:	Richard Henriquez, Jane Durante, Ivo Taller
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this development application for a new BC Cancer Research Centre at 675 West 10th Avenue, occupying the whole block between Ash and Heather Streets. The site was rezoned CD-1 in July 2001, permitting a density of 6.0 FSR. The subject proposal is the first of two phases of the project. Phase one occupies the western portion of the site facing Heather Street and West 10th Avenue. Ms. Rondeau briefly reviewed the rezoning conditions, namely: to reduce the apparent visual impact of the phase one building massing through architectural treatment and articulation; provision of retail/restaurant and commercial services and other active public oriented uses at grade on Heather Street. Staff are satisfied the application satisfies these conditions. With respect to landscaping, there is a requirement for a 3 m setback on West 10th Avenue to enhance the public realm and pedestrian amenity along this sunny, highly pedestrianized side of the street. In this respect, the Panel's advice is sought as to whether the proposal could be less architectural and softer to better meet this condition. The Panel's advice is also sought with respect to the landscape buffer against the interim surface parking.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Richard Henriquez, Architect, reviewed the design rationale and outlined the strategies used for the whole block.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application and commended the architect on a superb design that will be a landmark not only for this neighbourhood but for the city as a whole. It is very appropriate for a development as significant as the new cancer research centre. The Panel strongly supported the project's plinth concept.

With respect to the landscape buffer in front of the temporary parking, the Panel thought it was an interesting edge but several Panel members raised concerns about potential security problems associated with the voids and pockets underneath the trellises that could provide hiding places. This edge needs to be highly visible and well lit to discourage vagrants from inhabiting these spaces.

The Panel agreed with staff that there needs to be some design development to the ground plane along West 10th Avenue to make it softer and more pedestrian-friendly, especially at the corner of 10th and Heather Street where the landscaping appears weak against the very strong architecture of the building.

Some Panel members thought the 3 m setback worked well as proposed and saw no need to extend the park across the street, preferring a hard landscape solution. There could, however, be some change in the material to break up the mass and form. There was also a suggestion to extend the expression of the building to the ground plane, e.g., round planters rather than square to reflect the rhythm of the

round windows. Several Panel members also recommended eliminating the second row of trees in this location which could provide more flexibility in the treatment of this edge. One Panel member suggested there could be another tree closer to the corner on 10th at Heather.

Overall, the Panel strongly endorsed the proposal and looked forward to seeing it built. It is a very attractive composition and the articulation works very well to break down the scale of the building.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Henriquez said he appreciated the comments about the landscape and advised they will be revisiting the second row and trees and treatment next to the interim parking lot.

2. Address:	901 Beatty Street
DA:	406240
Use:	Residential (29 storeys)
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Brook Development Planning/Rafii
Owner:	Bosa Ventures Inc.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Chuck Brook, Foad Rafii, Richard Henry, Jane Durante
Staff:	Jonathan Barrett

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- **Introduction:** Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, presented this application in Downtown South. The site is long and narrow and there is no lane on this block. The proposal is for two residential towers, 28 storeys and 20 storeys, 2- and 3-storey residential around the base and a small component of commercial at the corner of Nelson and Beatty Streets. There is a previous approved application for this site which was not pursued. The mews concept of that proposal has been eliminated in the current application. The areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought relate to:
 - streetwall. The proposal is for a 2-storey base which is below the 30 ft. recommended in the Guidelines although there is a pergola above which makes it read as three storeys;
 - appropriateness of the proposed corner plaza;
 - floorplate size. The proposal is a little over that recommended in the Guidelines;
 - inclusion of a children's play area.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Richard Henry, Architect, briefly explained why they chose to alter the building massing from the previous application and described the current design rationale. The applicant team described the various aspects of the proposal.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application.

Streetwall: The Panel had no concerns with the 2-storey streetwall, raised to the 30 ft. level with a pergola. One Panel member commented that it has been very skilfully done, unlike some other examples in Downtown South. Another comment was that it will be quite elegant and help to reinforce Beatty Street as a pedestrian connection from the foot of Robson down through to Beatty Mews into Concord Pacific Place.

Another Panel member suggested a streetwall height of three storeys was not enough, given the Yaletown characteristic of 4-, 5 and 6-storey bases. There was also a concern expressed about the monotonous and diagrammatic nature of the form of development that is emerging in response to the Downtown South Guidelines.

There was an observation that the market component of the lower rise streetwall seems lacking in its architectural treatment while the rental component seems much stronger in its low rise expression so that the townhouses associated with the market tower read more as if they are associated with the rental tower. Further design development was recommended to remove some of this ambiguity.

Corner plaza: With one exception, the Panel supported the proposed corner plaza and found it an interesting approach. There was one suggestion to make it a little more public in its expression and another to include a large specimen tree in the plaza to help define the corner. One Panel member found the corner plaza inappropriate and thought the corner should be reinforced.

Floorplate: One Panel member was somewhat concerned about the size of the floorplate of the rental building although the majority of the Panel had no problem with it and found the tower placement to be appropriate. There was a suggestion that the colours on the model may be making the rental tower appear squatter than it actually is.

Mews: Some Panel members expressed regret that the earlier mews has been eroded to the point where it is more like a private walkway. Unfortunately, in its present scale it creates more problems than it solves, particularly in terms of security. The consensus was that it should become totally private for the use and benefit of the residents. A comment was made that it takes significant energy away from Beatty Street which should be strengthened as the primary pedestrian route. Eliminating the mews will also provide an opportunity to include a children's play space, which the Panel also fully supported.

Landscape: Comments about the landscape were that the courtyards are really nicely handled with clean, simple expressions. The water feature was supported and it was thought the rooftop terrace areas will be very successful.

General Comments: One Panel member found the massing more successful than the previous application in its relationship to surrounding buildings. There were no concerns about the height or the siting of the two towers relative to the view and shadowing impacts. There was endorsement of the rental tower being a background building, architecturally and, as such, it has been very nicely handled. There was also support for locating the autocourt in the parkade which was thought to be a very appropriate urban approach. There was one negative reaction noted to the dark colour palette of the rental building.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Rafii thanked the Panel for its comments. With respect to the corner plaza, Mr. Rafii said he appreciated the comment about reflecting the strong corner across the street; however, there is a 12 ft. setback from the property line and whatever is done it will not line up with the other side of the street. For this reason, they emphasized the corner recess. Mr. Rafii acknowledged some Panel members' concerns about the centre townhouses. Mr. Henry added his appreciation for the comments.

-
3. Address: 1280 Richards Street (499 Drake)
DA: 406223
Use: Residential
Zoning: DD
Application Status: Preliminary
Architect: Brook Development Planning/Wiens-Suzuki
Owner: Grace Residences Ltd.
Review: Second
Delegation: Karen Wiens-Suzuki, Eva Lee, James Schouw, Chuck Brook
Staff: Scot Hein
-

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-4)

- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Development Planner, presented this application. The proposal was first reviewed by the Panel on November 14, 2001 when it was not supported. Mr. Hein briefly reviewed the areas in which advice was sought and the Panel's response at that time. The Panel was generally satisfied with the proposed 70 ft. high podium and the variety it will bring to the area in this respect. The Panel endorsed the proposed siting of the tower. With respect to tower height and slimness, the Panel suggested some of the massing could be redistributed from the podium into the tower but was generally appreciative of the benefits of slim towers. There were no major concerns expressed with respect to open space. Two major issues were identified in the last review: (1) the transition in massing to the adjacent Canadian Linen development (the Metropolis) from podium to podium and (2) architectural expression. Mr. Hein noted that this site now qualifies for the 5.0 FSR with 300 ft. frontage. This may be earned through staff's evaluation of the guidelines, zoning compliance, the input of the Panel and neighbourhood response to notification. The guidelines are silent on architectural expression and style, rather they allow for a range and variety of approaches to be taken. In applying the guidelines, staff therefore do not become the arbiters of taste or expression and it is left to the Panel to offer that advice to the Development Permit Board. Mr. Hein noted the application will be reviewed again by the Panel at the complete stage, should the Development Permit Board approval in principle. He also noted the Panel had mixed response to the architectural expression. Staff will be seeking, as conditions of preliminary approval, further design development to ensure the execution and quality of materials are well handled.

The comments of the Panel are again sought on the podium transition to the Canadian Linen building specifically as well as any general advice to the applicant should the project to proceed to the complete stage.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Karen Wiens-Suzuki, Architect, briefly reviewed the revisions made with respect to the podium transition, noting there has been some redistribution of mass from the podium to the tower, increasing tower height by one storey. The proportions of the tower have also been adjusted with the transition in massing occurring two thirds up the tower. With respect to the streetwall, Ms. Wiens-Susuki noted much of the streetwall is below 70 ft., being 4 storeys adjacent to the Metropolis, 5 storeys closer to the tower, and 5-6 storeys at the corner of Drake and Richards. With respect to open space, the amenity area on the 5th level is now associated with a large outdoor open space. James Schouw showed some examples to illustrate what they intend to achieve in this building's quality.

- **Panel's Comments:**

Transition to the Canadian Linen Building (Metropolis): Most Panel members thought there was some minor improvement in the transition with the Canadian Linen Building and it was acknowledged to be a difficult transition to deal with. There was one comment that failure to step the building along its principal street frontage was working against achieving a better transition. Another comment was that there needs to be some acknowledgment of the building lines of the Canadian Linen Building; also that it need not be a "book-end" to the component already under construction on the south side but could be different.

Architectural Expression: As with the previous review, much of the Panel's commentary focussed on the architectural expression. Comments included:

- it does not respond to Yaletown at all;
- more thought should be given to how it meets the public realm;
- it could be a very urban, very hard, Yaletown expression that is very simple and straight forward but still allow the building to have a very un-Yaletown look to it;
- there is some opportunity to deal with the architectural expression in a more neighbourly way;
- there has been some minor adjustment to the tower proportions which are a little bit better;
- the architectural expression fails to show any discipline or integrity;
- there is not enough development in creating a prevailing and clear architectural language which has some historical roots or foundation;
- there are too many details clustered together - such rich detail needs more room to make it work;
- there needs to be a depth of understanding and a discipline to really pull this off;
- support the different style and hope the details can be carried through within the budget.

Landscaping: The Panel had serious reservations about the courtyard. While it is colourfully portrayed, a good portion of it is under cover and unlikely to thrive. The rear landscaping would be better without the small entry driveway. With respect to the private terraces, there seems to be some ambiguity as to what is private and what is public. The street front could also be simple and more urban, with less fussy detailing.

A number of Panel members commented that they looked forward to seeing how this project can be pulled off and will look closely at its execution at the complete stage.

- **Applicant's Response:** Chuck Brook stressed this is a preliminary application. He acknowledged the Panel's indication that the project is moving in the right direction with respect to the transition to the Metropolis. Regarding the architectural expression, Mr. Brook said he felt the main message - apart from the strongly negative comments - that provided it is handled consistently and carefully then there is a real opportunity to do something special. He added, they do appreciate that the challenge will be to bring back a well developed submission at the complete stage that meets those expectations for quality.

4. Address:	2099 West 33rd Avenue
DA:	406281
Use:	Residential
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Gurney Halkier
Owner:	Polygon Dev. 104 Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Rene Rose, Cam Halkier, Chris Stary
Staff:	Eric Fiss

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- **Introduction:** The Development Planner, Eric Fiss, presented this application which is the fourth phase of the Quilchena Park development (formerly Arbutus Gardens), at the southwest corner of the site. The proposal follows fairly closely to the form of development approved at the rezoning stage, with some subtle variations. The proposal contains 102 units at 1.25 FSR. The proposal meets the 4-storey height limit and has some 2 - 3-storey elements at some of the edges as envisaged in the rezoning. A major goal is to increase housing and approximately double the amount of housing will result when the whole site is completed.

The areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought are:

- whether the proposal meets the intent of the rezoning;
 - appropriateness of the massing particularly at the edges and its relationship to adjacent buildings;
 - roof form and details;
 - relationship of the proposal to open space;
 - vehicular access;
 - appropriateness of the overall architectural character and materials;
 - whether this proposal meets the standards achieved in the previous approvals to date on this site.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Cam Halkier, Architect, reviewed the project and Chris Stary described the landscape plan.
 - **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application.

Some Panel members commented on the stand-alone townhouses, the massing of which it was felt could have been distributed into the main building. It was suggested these townhouses seem out of character and scale with the rest of the building.

The Panel questioned the rationale for the entry location, given the landscape design reinforces and invites entry through the courtyard rather than the corner as proposed. Another comment about the entry was that it seems a little understated and small, especially internally where it seems more of a corridor to the elevator than a lobby.

With respect to building character, the Panel liked some of the detailing but missed the theme of the previous phases with the chimneys creating vertical elements to break down the scale of the

mass of the roof. It was felt that some of the richness and texture of the earlier phases was somewhat lacking in this project. There was a suggestion that, rather than a blanket one storey brick plinth around the base, that the brick be extended with some vertical elements. Also, one Panel member thought the corner of 33rd and Arbutus should be bolder and stronger as it is very much a focal point of the entire development.

There were no concerns expressed about the roof forms.

One Panel member expressed concern about light access to some of the suites, particularly on the easterly side of the building.

The Panel strongly supported the landscape plan. There was a recommendation to soften the wall next to the parking ramp - perhaps a planter at the bottom for planting material to grow up the wall.

It was recommended by one Panel member to look at the relationship with the building to the north, noting that the north end of the long element of the building seems to be quite a bit higher than the adjacent building immediately north and could be crowding its neighbour.

- **Applicant's Response:** Rene Rose, Polygon, stressed it is not the intention to diminish the level of quality and detail in this project. They want it to be a first class development and will continue to work on that. She thanked the Panel for its comments.

Q:\Clerical\UDP\MINUTES\2001\Dec12.wpd