

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: December 14, 2011

TIME: N/A

PLACE: N/A

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Robert Barnes
Helen Besharat (left after 3rd Item)
Gregory Borowski (Excused Item #2)
James Cheng (left after 3rd Item)
Jeff Corbett (Excused Item #1) (left after 2nd Item)
Jane Durante (Excused Item #2 #3)
Alan Endall (Excused Item #1)
Jim Huffman
Arno Matis
Geoff McDonell
Scott Romses (Chair)
Norm Shearing (left after 1st Item)

REGRETS:
Alan Storey

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	960-982 Howe Street
2.	1616 West 7th Avenue
3.	1009 Harwood Street
4.	2858 West 4th Avenue

BUSINESS MEETING

The business meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. and the Chair gave an overview of the Development Permit Board meeting on December 12th where 2699 Kingsway and 1241 Harwood Street were presented to the Board and were approved. Chair Romses then called the meeting to order at 4:20 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. The Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

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|----|---------------------|---|
| 1. | Address: | 960-982 HOWE Street |
| | DE: | N/A |
| | Use: | To permit the development of a 15-storey commercial office building. |
| | Zoning: | DD to CD-1 |
| | Application Status: | Rezoning |
| | Review: | First |
| | Architect: | Endall Elliot Architects
Alan Endall, Endall Elliot Architects |
| | Delegation: | John Scott, CEI Architecture
Randy Sharp, Sharp Diamond, Landscape Architects
Peter Arbuckle, MKT Arkle Development Management Inc. |
| | Staff: | Sailen Black and Ian Cooper |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)**Introduction:**

Ian Cooper, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for office space above retail. The proposal is located on the northeast corner of Howe and Nelson Streets. The site currently includes a Royal Bank branch and a parking lot. Mr. Cooper explained that the site is located under the Downtown Official Development Plan, Downtown District, Area H. He noted that the height is 150 feet and relaxable to 450 feet and that retail continuity is required. As well there is a view corridor over the site that limits the height to approximately 200 feet. The Green Buildings Policy for rezoning is in effect for this proposal and requires LEED™ Gold and certification.

Sailen Black, Development Planner, further described the proposal noting that it will be a 16-storey office building with retail on the ground floor. He explained that new buildings on Howe Street are subject to sun and shade analysis to ensure sunlight on the public open space at the Courthouse. Also, building on Howe Street should observe the approximate cornice line of the Sears building, although higher elements are permitted provided they are set back behind the street fronting façade.

Mr. Black described the design considerations noting that it is expected that the design of the ground floor should support the development of active uses like services, retail and a restaurant in the future. As well, view impacts to private residential units which face the site from the other side of Nelson Street should be considered.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

- Thinking of the proposed sequence of open, covered and enclosed spaces that create the public realm interface, including sidewalk widths, are there any opportunities for improvement to pedestrian level amenity in the current proposal?

- Considering the all-glass skin proposed, what do we see looking forward from the rezoning requirement for a more sustainable building, to future development stage issues of exterior expression and materiality?

Mr. Cooper and Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Alan Endall, Architect, further described the proposal noting that it was a simple building that has a priority for efficient, flexible rectilinear floor plates. He noted that what is unique about the site is that it is able to accommodate larger floor plate sizes which are currently in demand in the downtown core by several large corporations and public sector tenants. Another role of the building is that it completes the street wall along Robson Square. Mr. Endall noted that they tried to make references to the linear planted edge of the law courts. Other considerations include a roof screen to screen the mechanical equipment and elevator machine room from views from neighbouring towers. They have also tried to introduce some subtle layering of glass tints and fritted glass patterns to modulate and provide visual interest to the large façade. The southeast corner, from sunrise to late afternoon, is in full sun exposure. They found through their energy modeling that vertical shading devices had minimal benefit to mitigating heat gain. Also, the west façade is in shade most of the day because of the surrounding towers. The building is a heating dominated building so a greater concern is heat loss. They also looked at the limitation of the amount of vision glazing to insulated wall areas. They are proposing a four sided structural glazing system that is basically a curtain wall glazing system using triple glazing with an argon fill, double low-e coatings, as well as a laying of frit patterns on the second surface to assist in dealing with solar heat gain. They are also planning on 9 foot ceiling heights that will allow more daylight into the building. Mr. Endall noted that it is not a strong retail street at the moment. They are introducing retail units together with a second floor meeting space that is a common area for the building, a two storey entry foyer that is an extension of the street with multiple entry points and shuttle court. The corner entry plaza gets mid day sunlight which is complimented by a large commercial space that fronts Nelson Street. The public toilet is staying in its current location, and given the option they would like to move it into the building. They are also looking at improving the environment along the lane.

Randy Sharp, Landscape Architects, described the landscape plans for the project. The linear concrete and stone paving of Robson Square extends along the retail and into the large lobby with a number of basalt outcrops. The stepping planters of Robson Square are reflected in the 2nd and 3rd levels and again at the 12th and 16th floors. A vertical green screen wall with evergreen climbers shades and protects the lane side of the building. Sustainable water management is integral to the project, and rain water will be collected into a large underground cistern and recycled for non potable uses. A water feature is planned at the entrance lobby.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Integrate the existing public toilet into the building;
- Refinement of the public realm interface at the corner;
- Engage a public art consultant at this stage of the design;
- Consider simplifying the interior corner on Howe Street;
- Consider integrating a photovoltaic system into the exterior finish.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was an elegant office building for the downtown and was respectful to the law courts.

The Panel thought the proposal fit the guidelines for the area and was clean in its simplicity with a strong horizontal line expression. They thought it made a great backdrop building and supported the height and density. They also acknowledged the rarity of these kinds of floor plates and appreciated the use and size. The Panel also thought it responded well to its context by virtue of its massing strategies, but thought the retail frontage on the west elevation needed to be developed. A number of Panel members thought there should be some design development of the public realm at the northwest corner.

The Panel suggested the roof top element be highly developed and more distinct and inventive as a way to end the building as it goes into the view cone. One Panel member suggested it was an opportunity to create a spark of delight at the top of the building that will be highly visible.

The Panel noted that the glazing is the biggest element on the building and at the development permit level they expect to see a full materials board as well as a more detailed presentation of the skin. They said they will want to see how the frit gets deployed around the four sides of the building. A number of Panel members suggested the applicant bring a large scale mock up or other means to that will demonstrate the skin of the building. Also, several Panel members suggested adding a photovoltaic strategy to the skirt integrated with the frit.

One Panel member was concerned about the energy strategies considering the amount of glass on the building, and suggested the applicant bring an energy model to satisfy the engineers on the Panel when they come back for another review at the development permit stage. Another Panel member thought the shading devices should respond to the building's orientation.

The Panel agreed that the public toilet should be integrated into the building better. Also, some of the Panel members suggested the applicant consider the public art component sooner rather than later in the project, since it could be a significant part of the project expression and identity.

The Panel liked the landscape plans and the geological metaphor being proposed. However, some of the Panel thought the landscaping at the front entry needed work as the big basalt blocks might be a problem for pedestrians cutting across that part of the sidewalk. The mixture of intensive and extensive green terraces was supported as well as the rain garden.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Endall said he appreciated the Panel's comments. He acknowledged their comments regarding the detailing of the skin and their intention is to follow through on energy modeling.

Mr. Arbuckle said he appreciated the Panel's comments and thought they were positive and thoughtful. Also he stated that the glass portion of the building had not been resolved totally and that they have room to maneuver on how they use the frit. He added that they will work on the design and looked forward to bringing it back at the development permit stage.

2.	Address:	1616 West 7th Avenue
	DE:	415127
	Use:	To develop an 11-storey residential building with underground parking off the rear lane.
	Zoning:	C-3A
	Application Status:	Complete
	Review:	Second
	Owner:	Solterra Developments
	Architect:	IBI/HB Architects
	Delegation:	Jim Hancock, IBI/HB Architects Senga Lindsay, S.L.A. Landscape Architects Craig Marcyniuk, Solterra Development
	Staff:	Pat St. Michel

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-2)

Introduction:

Dale Morgan, Development Planner, introduced the proposal noting that the Panel reviewed the proposal in October and it was not supported. He described the form of development noting the property is located in the Burrard Slopes area. The proposal is for an 11-storey residential building with two levels of underground parking and 46 dwelling units. He noted that the applicant is seeking a discretionary increase in height. The Panel at the last review was concerned with the changes in materials, and the applicant revised the design to make the changes in the material where there is a change in the massing. The upper massing has been simplified and made it easier to express the change of materials. Mr. Morgan noted that the massing in the upper floors has been better resolved and have made for a more useable roof terrace. Some sun shading devices have been added to the east elevation. Regarding sustainability, the applicant has extended the slabs on the south elevation and has added horizontal shading devices. The glass has a rating to make it more solar efficient in terms of heat gain. The landscaping has been improved with a simplified entrance plaza and the urban agriculture has been eliminated and replaced with clean ornamental plantings. Mr. Morgan noted that the colour palette has changed.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Jim Hancock, Architect, further described the proposal noting that they have put the elevator on the outside with a glass enclosure to make it more interesting. The slab extensions have been added on the back to give some solar shading. Mr. Hancock reminded the Panel that they had supported the relaxations being sought at the previous panel submission. He noted that it has been a challenge to get the parking to work because of the slope and small size of the site. He reminded the Panel that there are five parking spaces off the lane.

Senga Lindsay, Landscape Architect, indicated that last time the Panel wanted to see a simplification of the entry plaza and reconsidering the urban agriculture. She added that they have removed the urban agriculture component from the front entry plaza area and simplified the area to make it a more open plaza. There is now a place for a bike rack. Greenery has been added to the back of the garage area to soften the expression.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Design development to simplify the massing;
- Consider lighting up the colour palette;
- Design development to improve the outdoor amenity space at grade;
- Consider reintroducing urban agriculture at the ground plane.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thought it had improved since the last review.

The Panel appreciated the efforts of the applicant to respond to the comments of the last review. Most of the panel thought the massing had been improved but a couple of Panel members thought the top two or three floors still needed some work. They thought the stepping didn't relate to any of the floors below them.

Being that it isn't a tall building most of the Panel members thought it didn't need a lot of articulation and could be more simple in its expression.

The Panel supported the change in the painted concrete to white but felt there was still a lot of grey colour, especially on the facades facing the bridge ramp. One Panel member suggested using the darker colour here and there on the building.

The Panel thought the slab projections were helping the project but would like to see them get more articulated elsewhere around the building to unify the overall building expression. One Panel member suggested the applicant should do a thermal break for the slab extensions to avoid the cold bridge.

Most of the Panel thought the west patio still seemed a little cavernous and suggested adding some green screens or something that would animate the area and make it more private and habitable. Most of the Panel thought the entry stairs added too much bulk near the amenity area and suggested turning them. The Panel liked the roof decks on the top of the building and thought they were a great way to hide the elevator and stairs. Several Panel members suggested reintroducing the urban agriculture on the ground plane.

Regarding sustainability, one Panel member noted that the LEED™ checklist was only showing one energy credit which won't meet the development/building permit requirements.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Hancock said they would take the comments under consideration. Craig Marcyniuk stated that the way the building is articulated is to capture the views to the northwest that will make the project marketable. They want to have as many views as possible for as many homeowners as possible. He added that they need to have a commercially viable building.

3.	Address:	1009 Harwood Street
	DE:	415277
	Use:	To develop a 17-storey residential tower with ground floor commercial over 5-storeys of underground parking.
	Zoning:	CD-1
	Application Status:	Complete
	Review:	Second
	Owner:	Amacon Development
	Architect:	IBI/HB Architects
		Martin Bruckner, IBI/HB Architects
	Delegation:	Jennifer Stamp, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects Robert Vrooman, Amacon Development
	Staff:	Anita Molaro

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

Introduction:

Anita Molaro, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a proposal on Harwood Street following a rezoning. She reminded the Panel that they had reviewed the proposal in March. Ms. Molaro described the context for the area. The proposal is for a 17-storey mixed-use tower with a double height retail component at grade fronting Burrard Street and providing retail continuity. The residential portion will provide 121 dwelling units with the lobby accessed from Harwood Street. The site is restricted by a view cone limiting the building height to approximately 153 feet. There is a substantial grade change on the site so the parking will be accessed off Harwood Street and not on the lane. An indoor amenity space will be provided on level 3 facing Burrard Street. As well an outdoor amenity with a children's play area will be provided on level 9.

Ms. Molaro reminded the Panel that at the time of rezoning they supported the proposed massing and provided commentary for improvement in three areas. This included the blank wall on the shared property line and the Harwood Street entrances.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

- Does the panel support the detailed architectural response noting the following:
 - Resolution of the residential entry/parkade ramp and public realm treatment including air intake vent location
 - Resolution of the parkade wall with adjoining property
 - High quality material treatments
 - Detailed resolution of the open space and landscape treatment

Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Martin Bruckner, Architect, further described the proposal noting that they felt they had a good massing strategy at rezoning and have worked to reinforce the good features. It is a long façade broken into two parts with coloration and materiality to distinguish the two parts. As well there are places for accents such as Juliette balconies. They are planning to also use coloured glass to add some visual interest to the building. The two tower pieces are tied together with a vertical concrete fin with a louvered detail. The concrete wall at the property line will be architectural concrete using iridescent recessed panels to add a visual affect. As well planting material is planned to grow over the wall to soften its impact to the neighbour.

The residential entry has been made distinctive with a metal canopy. The recessed entry for the parking is the same colour as on the walls and the soffit.

Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans. They are planning to use the Burrard Street Guidelines for the public realm along Burrard Street with a double row of street trees. Most of the landscape is in keeping with the architecture with a rigor in the patterning. Level 9 has a children's play area with logs and boulders. Level 17 has some geometric landscape planters.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Design development to calm down the overall expression;
- Considering reducing or removing the large concrete 'eyebrow' above the retail;
- Design development to open up the entrance to the parkade;
- Consider using a higher grade of materials on the lower levels of the project.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal as well as the massing, materials and finishes.

The Panel agreed that the mass was appropriate and the expression of the balconies on the south façade was successful. They also thought the two massing components on the tower were clearly articulated. One Panel member noted that there was a little bit of fun introduced at the podium with the diagonal patterning.

Most of the Panel thought the south façade was the most successful and though the north façade still needed some work. One Panel members suggested wrapping the balconies around the corners in the tall tower component to the north façade. As well it was suggested that the punched window patterning need to be cleaned up. Several Panel members suggested the applicant relocate the window in front of the transformer pole. A number of Panel members suggested that the eyebrow on the retail was too heavy and could be reduced or removed.

Most of the Panel liked the colour scheme but some of the Panel thought it was distracting from the over all scheme of the building and suggested the elements, or colour, could be calmer. It was suggested that the colour doesn't need to be deployed so evenly across the project.

Several Panel members thought the entrance to the parkade needed to be opened up. One Panel member suggested carving the wall away from the garage entrance to add more light and to make for a better pedestrian experience. They thought the yellow canopy gave a fun expression to the building, and accentuating the entrance.

Most of the panel thought there was a lot of painted concrete, with one Panel member suggested the applicant could add some reveal lines or patterning to add another level of detail. They had some concerns regarding the painted concrete, and how it would look over time, particularly at the lower levels. They suggested a higher quality material could be introduced on the lower levels.

Most of the Panel liked the landscaping on the blank wall, but were concerned as to how it would be maintained. Some Panel members thought the residential entry could be improved but encouraged the applicant to retain the excitement. One Panel member suggested landscaping the bike lane.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Bruckner said he hopes to relocate the transformer. He thanked the Panel for their comment and thought he had heard a lot of good ideas.

4.	Address:	2858 WEST 4TH AVENUE
	DE:	415209
	Zoning:	C-2
	Application Status:	Complete
	Review:	First
	Owner:	Redekop (4th Avenue) Homes Ltd.
	Architect:	GBL Architects
	Delegation:	Andrew Emmerson, GBL Architects Daryl Tyack, Eckford Tyacke and Associates
	Staff:	Marie Linehan

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

Marie Linehan, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for in the first block west of Macdonald Street. The site is currently occupied by three rental apartment buildings, one of which also has some retail space at the street front. The C-2 zone is not included in Council's residential 'Rate of Change' policy, so the demolition of these units is not a policy issue in this application. Ms. Linehan noted that portions of the block, including the neighbouring site to the west, have already been developed with mixed use projects. Other portions, including the neighbouring site to the east, have single storey commercial development. Across the lane to the south is duplex and similar development, zoned RT-7.

The proposal is for a 4-storey mixed-use development, consisting of ground floor retail fronting onto West 4th Avenue, with three levels of dwelling units above. There are also some dwelling units at ground level fronting on the lane, behind the commercial. The residential entry lobby faces West 4th Avenue and access to the parking and loading is from the lane. Two levels of underground parking is also proposed. Ms. Linehan noted that the project will contain a total of 50 dwelling units and 79 parking spaces.

Ms. Linehan described the architecture and mentioned that the commercial base will be expressed with a brick frame motif. The second and third floors will be clad with vertical elements of glass, cedar and cementitious panels. These materials are to be repeated on the rear elevation and the side walls will be painted concrete.

Ms. Linehan indicated that the proposed development is generally consistent with the provisions of the C-2 regulations and Guidelines. There are some technical issues with the size of some of the smaller units at the lane, as well as some enclosed balcony proportions.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

- comments on the overall façade expression of the building, and on the materials and detailing proposed.
- other aspects of the scheme the Panel would like to comment on.

Ms. Linehan took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Andrew Emmerson, Architect, further described the proposal. He noted that it will be a fairly typical double-loaded corridor building with ground oriented units on the lane side of the building. The parking access for the commercial spaces will be on level P1 with a ramp to come up making for a unified entry for both the commercial and the residential uses. The recessed

residential entry has a retail unit opening into this area. There is a small lobby space with a centralized elevator core. Since there is a significant grade drop across the site, the units off the lane are accessed from the lobby with stairs. The building is stepped back at the penthouse level and has larger decks. Mr. Emmerson described the architecture and explained that they wanted to improve the lane façade with a bit of a break at the ground floor and in the middle section with a composition of materials. They used “bar code” vertical banding with some cedar cladding. They also used cedar for the soffit treatment on the upper level as well as the balconies.

Daryl Tyack, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans noting that there is no planting at grade other than street trees. They are proposing a high quality basalt paver from the property line with LED lighting on the columns. There will be strip lights at the entry. On the lane there will be a continuous planter and trees. Currently there aren't any plans for a green roof or access to the roof.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Design development to the residential entry;
- Consider giving access to the planters on the lane for maintenance;
- Design development on the screens between units to allow for more privacy;
- Consider addressing sustainability in the design.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a clever use of a simple design.

The Panel congratulated the team for a different approach to a C-2 building. They liked the units off the lane and thought it was a nice approach. One Panel member noted that the generous decks would be well used and would look great once they were landscaped. Several Panel members thought the entrance was not well resolved. They noted that the one of the vertical elements seemed to be hanging in space and needed to be anchored as it looked unfinished.

The Panel liked the material palette but had some concerns regarding the cedar and how it would last over time. One Panel member suggested adding it to the vertical portions on the 4th level. The Panel liked the “bar code” concept for the design, and thought it was innovative, with one Panel member suggesting it be added to other areas of the design.

Some of the Panel thought the signage concept needed to be developed. Several Panel members noted that the separated drive way between the residential parking and the loading zone would work well. One Panel member suggested the applicant look at the loading area to see if there is enough room for trucks to maneuver in and out of the space.

A couple of Panel members noted that the planters along the lane should have tenant access as it was an opportunity for urban gardens. One Panel member would like to see the glass railings made crisper. As well, a number of Panel members mentioned that good detailing of the building would be crucial for its success. A Panel member mentioned that the translucent glass screens might look messy with the resident's stuff piled up against it and suggested add some wood screens up to a height of four feet and then glass above that.

Most of the Panel was disappointed with the lack of a sustainability strategy. Although there isn't any requirement under the zoning, they would like to see the applicant address sustainability in the building. One Panel member suggested adding sun shades on the south façade.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Emmerson thanked the Panel for their comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.