
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: December 15, 1999

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room #1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Roger Hughes (Chair)
Patricia Campbell (Excused for Item 4)
Sheldon Chandler (Present for Item 1)
James Cheng
Per Christoffersen
Paul Grant
Sean McEwan (Present for item 1)
Gilbert Raynard
Keith Ross

REGRETS: Joe Werner
Norman Shearing

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Louise Christie

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. VGH Precinct Workshop
2. 3200 East 54 th Avenue (Champlain Mall)
3. 65 West Cordova Street
4. 530 West 7 th Avenue

1. Address:	Vancouver General Hospital Precinct Workshop
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Workshop
Architect:	Civitas
Owner:	Vancouver General Hospital
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Joe Hruda, Greg Chamberlain, Grace Chan (all of Civitas)
Staff:	Ralph Segal/Tom Phipps

EVALUATION: Workshop only, therefore no evaluation.

- **Introduction:**

Development Planner, Tom Phipps, introduced this proposed development of the Vancouver General Hospital site as there is now funding for completion of the Laurel Tower and interim renovation of the Centennial Pavilion to be further utilized for about a 20 year period. This proposal would include the retention of some heritage buildings, in particular, and the staged demolition over the next four years of other structures to build 700,000 sq. ft. of leasable medical bio-technology space over an 8 year period. There will be at least 5.1 acres of public open space to serve the surrounding RM-4 area to the south of 16th Avenue, as well as hospital workers, visitors, patients and possibly the Fairview Slopes residents. The Heritage Commission has asked that the Heather Pavilion built in 1906 be retained, and consideration be given to retaining the 1908 addition of wings, the doctor's residence at 12th and Heather, the front facade of the Children's Health Centre and also the entry to the Tzu Chi Centre. Currently, there are six options and the Panel is asked to comment on what they see as the best and the worst, as the final proposal may integrate aspects of these various configurations.

Development Planner Ralph Segal, said the purpose of the investigation is to address opportunities to give the precinct an overall coherency and an identity, yet achieve the objectives and establish a time-line for the process. There must be a good fit between the building massing and the linkages, both internally and externally, with the future LRT to be injected to the north of the site, and the acreage of open space to compensate the southerly neighbourhood.

The Panel moved to view the model and the panels.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:**

Mr. Hruda gave an overview, demonstrating the size of the site in terms of pedestrian walking time, particularly in relation to the LRT, and the various locations of amenities, like restaurants, in this area where there will be eventually 7,000 to 8,000 workers. Currently, the major arterial is Heather Street, Willow Street ends, Laurel Street is downgraded, and 11th Avenue is virtually non-existent. The Park Board wants a contiguous open space and the neighbourhood would like any park space to be buffered from 12th Avenue traffic but not to be shadowed. With the future development of the LRT, 10th Avenue with its mature tree border will be an important link. The maximum height of the buildings will be ten storeys, or 140 ft.

Option A provides 5.7 acres of open space in the centre, with north-south linkage to the community and gives a strong presence on Broadway. This is the only option not encumbered by the retention of the existing Heather Pavilion, with a strong civic presence and creating a strong east-west link back to City Square. Some bio-tech is also located south of 12th Avenue which is framed by buildings of six storeys, with a transition from eight to six to four storeys. There is also a step down from ten, to eight to six storeys to 10th Avenue, an important east-west route, to keep the open space sunny. Heather Street, a wide open corridor, is a designated bike route. This scheme allows the park space at Heather

and 10th Avenue to be developed for bio tech early on.

Option B has 5.3 acres of L-shaped open space with the Heather Pavilion, situated within the park, being converted for public use on the ground floor with restaurants, etc. which the Park Board favours.

The alignment is open, with the pedestrian link through the centre of the park and buildings defining the edge of the open space, providing a sound barrier to 12th Avenue. This configuration augments the east-west axis and allows weather protection to be integrated for pedestrians, and gives the largest dimension of open space to 10th Avenue. The nurses residence is kept as part of this plan.

Option C provides 5.7 acres of sunny open space and give a high value for civic presence. Heather and Willow Streets are incorporated into the grid. The wings on the Heather Pavilion are kept with a footprint of approximately one acre in the park, which centres on 12th Avenue. The bio-tech use is concentrated on Willow Street. An east-west pedestrian colonnade would pass through the pavilion on the 11th Avenue corridor. This configuration allows retention of the doctor's residence.

Option D creates 5.7 acres of internal open space and is closest to the original plan. Willow Street becomes a pedestrian greenway through the site and there is a strong east-west pedestrian link along the 11th Avenue corridor to the hospital, and through that complex to Oak Street. There are four pieces of open space which relate to each of the new buildings with a cul-de-sac off of 12th Avenue with new internal spaces being addressed there. The park is bermed to 12th Avenue.

Option E has 5.25 acres of open space and it is looked at as bio-technological space rather than hospital. The park stretches from City Square right through to the hospital, with entries oriented to 12th Avenue. There are strong links through the site to the LRT off of Broadway. This version allows for redevelopment of the nurses residence. The bio-tech space is very dispersed and in 20 years, the hospital building would be totally integrated. Both Heather and Willow Streets become pedestrian green spaces.

Option F has 5.1 acres of open space, increasing eventually 5.9 acres, located mostly off of 12th Avenue in a east-west linear park which benefits the patients, workers and visitors to the site. This is a totally different approach with the buildings stepping down from the tower of the hospital and the bio-tech consolidated in six to eight storey structures around a quadrangle. The buildings frame the open space.

- **Panel's Comments:**

As this was a workshop, the Panel's comments were solicited but there was no vote. Panel members commented on various aspects of the six different analyses of this are which will be intensely used, with some members expressing no preference. One member suggesting that there is a kit of parts and the difficulty is how to decide on the underlying philosophy of priorities and parameters which will then make decisions clear. He particularly liked the forecourt on 12th Avenue and said things like consideration of the grade from 10th Avenue up to 12th Avenue is one aspect that will influence the overall plan, as will the different characters of each street. Access was seen as a main consideration, incorporating transit and the future LRT, with some members expressing that keeping the city grid open and connected for vehicles and pedestrians in this mega-block was important to integrate the precinct. Especially unique would be an east-west link right through from City Square to the hospital and eventually Oak Street, enhanced with transparent covered walkways, using steel and glass. A few panel members thought a large park would not be used unless it had a purpose, yet visually it could be very important. Any open space should be as public as possible. All parking should eventually be underground. Demolition should be phased over a longer term. Financially, retaining heritage was a more viable option, as both the doctor's and nurses residence had a lot of potential to be adapted for reuse.

Option A is stronger with a north/south precinct, including the heritage building, because of the feeling of spaciousness of the large open park. The plan should give more direction to the character of the open space so that the Park Board does not pre-empt park area for something like a ball diamond, unless that is desirable. This scheme reinforces the relationship to the neighbourhood and the buildings are in a more compact form, which accentuates the park space within the precinct.

One member expressed preference for Options B and E, with sizable open space in the central portion which puts the Heather Pavilion in the park and gives the feel of a campus. Option B was seen as the most successful as 12th Avenue becomes a front face of the sector, the urban approach, sharing the same address with the hospital, and giving it a streetwall with low mid-rise buildings. As the park opens on 10th Avenue, this gives much friendlier pedestrian realm, and putting building mass adjacent to hospital allows the park to sit apart with a better quality of significant open space.

Option C was preferred by a few members for its clarity. Maintaining the orthogonality of site was an appropriate way to lay it out and the park accentuates the heritage building. Bringing the park across 12th Avenue opens up the space and allows the opportunity to break the park into smaller activity units that would be more usable, especially by the residents. Maintaining Willow and Heather Streets as normal links gives a rare opportunity to absorb the precinct back into city fabric. The grid must be reinforced and enhanced to encourage pedestrian activity, ensuring the buildings relate to people at the ground level. If heritage is to be retained, the purpose must be clear but maintaining 11th Avenue through is more important than retaining the 1908 wings. One member thought that a strength of Option C was that the hospital kept to itself, most of the bio-tech was in another slot going north-south, and the heritage building is in the park. This scheme gives the park back to the neighbourhood. Heather and Willow Streets run through the site, reopened to traffic, and giving those buildings an address.

One member thought that Option D sets off the heritage building and makes it visible from 12th Avenue.

One member preferred Option E because the Ambulatory Care Centre is brought closer to 10th Avenue, developed in conjunction with future transit station; which is good rationale for use and access. The east-west connector is important as an organizing tool. The centre of the site could be opened up with as much southern exposure as possible and the park space is buffered from 12th Avenue.

Two members preferred the fascinating Option F, the 'string of pearls'. With smaller landscape spaces that would allow for more urban edges in the landscape scheme, it would be a very urban place, allowing movement from building to building in the exterior sense in a meaningful way. Integrating the smaller nodes, ensuring sun exposure, and linking through the site would combine both passive and active uses to enhance viability and livability. The phasing aspect might also work out better and street character is the best here. It is beneficial for the integration of the Bio-tech, putting a more human face on the hospital, which become an identifiable form in the city in point of view of entering from the exterior. This scheme presents the heritage building in a flattering light. Lastly, there is an opportunity to incorporate a richness to this district by encouraging retention of the heritage buildings. But one member thought this option was a campus without a heart.

- **Applicant's Response:**

The applicant noted how difficult it was to come to decision with wide varieties of possibilities and that all the applicants chose different options.

2. Address:	3200 East 54 th Avenue
DA:	403146
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Hewitt Kwasnicky
Owner:	Champlain Properties Inc.
Review:	Third
Delegation:	Paul Kwasnicky, Jane Durante, and B. Lee
Staff:	Eric Fiss

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4 - 2)**• Introduction:**

The Development Planner, Eric Fiss, explained that this project was unanimously supported at the preliminary application stage. This is the first phase of development, the commercial part, and changes have been made in response to the conditions. As previously, the library is moving from the basement up to the main floor, including double height space. The rehabilitation of the retained building is no longer an internal mall, but is now more extroverted with outdoor covered areas. There are three new commercial buildings. The two facing Kerr Street are one storey and the one on 54th Avenue is two storeys, and three facing the mall. One significant change is that the pad building #1 has been moved north to reinforce the corner at 54th Avenue and Kerr Street. The Panel is asked to comment on the design development for the rear facade, the additional seating for seniors, the general condition of open space and landscaping, and the architectural expression of the commercial components, as well as the relocation of the pad building. Sometime in the new year we hope to come back with application for the second half.

• Applicant's Opening Comments:

Mr. Kwasnicky said pad building #1 had been relocated to the north of the main access road which has shifted to the south and this strengthens the corner presence of the commercial as well as reinforcing vehicular access to the site and improving circulation. The architecture is that of a village, given the context of the surrounding residential character, with the scale and function of the buildings remaining the same. Attention has been paid to the back of the building facing the residences, with the addition of stepped planters to reduce the overall bulk, as well as landscape trellises which introduce a shadow line and break up the scale of the back facade. Through public consultation, it was found that there is a large seniors component in the neighbourhood which uses the mall as a community centre so the food court has been retained and ten seats have been added in the informal gathering area. Also, there is a community oriented meeting room and the library has recently approved a direct connection to the main mall.

Ms. Durante addressed some of the landscaping issues, the relationship to the housing development being very important for livability. The diversity of the hard surface treatment using three different paving materials will give the whole area more of the feel of a village. Tree grids; lights, benches and garbage cans will be coordinated. The existing vegetation on the site is quite mature and will be inter-planted. Pedestrian entrances ways will be green and the plaza will be a gathering space used by the community.

• Panel's Comments:

The Panel reviewed the material and reconvened. Some members had not seen this previously and one suggested that they were commenting on details when the whole is not there. Another member could see improvement from the previous application. A main issue of concern revolved around the library being tucked in behind. One member felt the mall was not efficiently laid out and a key is the interface between the residential area and the shopping mall, and circulation could be reinforced. Considering the large parking lot, the landscaping comments were that the street trees should be backed up by another row of trees, and along 54th Avenue, which should be accentuated as an entrance to the library, there was a need to buffer the residential neighbourhood. Also, the aisle that forms access to the loading bay could be another location for planting, as the landscaping was perceived as generally minimal and could be augmented with coniferous trees for year round green. With respect to the architectural character, there has been a shift to the better but perhaps some simplification of details would create a stronger expression. Another member thought a well detailed covered walkway might make it a more successful development.

- **Applicant's Response:**

The applicant responded that this development has been in the design stage for well over two years and a lot of issues have been raised at the preliminary stages. There is a large Community Amenity Contribution package that addresses a number of issues as well. Similar comments were made at the Preliminary Development Permit stage concerning connecting the mall through to the residential on the east side. There has been a shift in the concept into an extroverted type of mall. Dealing with the Extra Foods people, this configuration is what they want to see and what works best at this location for them. Dealing with the Vancouver Public Library, this plan is the one they are supporting most adamantly, seen as a strong link to the residential area on the east. Again, at the PDP stage, it was identified that the scale of the overall centre needs to be kept down, with the rooves as low as possible without comprising the architecture at the pedestrian level. The applicant said they will try to incorporate the Panel's comments into the project.

3. Address:	65 West Cordova Street
DA:	404686
Use:	Social Housing Co-op (8-storeys, 106 units)
Zoning:	HA-2
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Henriquez & Partners
Owner:	City of Vancouver
Review:	First
Delegation:	Gregory Henriquez, Shawn Strasman
Staff:	Mike Kemble

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6 - 0)**• Introduction:**

Development Planner, Mike Kemble, introduced this project on a City owned site, currently used as a parking lot. The location is in the Gastown Historic Area and the neighbouring one and two storey buildings to the west may be able to transfer density in the future and remain low. The proposal is to develop an eight storey structure with 106 units of low-income housing in two buildings separated by a courtyard, plus three levels of underground parking. There are two separate vehicle entrances, as the one for the public parking to be run by the City is off Cordova, and the residents' parking entrance is off the lane. There are plans for a street car line along Cordova Street so the applicant had initially been encouraged to develop a recessed arcade across the front but planning staff feel this is not a good idea and that the amenity area windows should be brought out to the property line. The unit sizes range from bachelor units at 365 sq. ft., up to the two bedroom units at 750 sq. ft., but most units are 550 sq. ft. one bedroom. There is private open space of 15,000 sq. ft. being provided, with amenity areas adjacent to the landscaped terraces. The configuration has protected the lightwells in the adjacent building. The masonry finish picks up the character of the surrounding historic area and the interior facade is concrete. Staff feel it is generally high quality for social housing and ask the Panel to focus comments on the arcade area which may be converted in future to retail, the height limit of 75 ft. as there may be an overage of about six feet which would have to be relaxed, the fit of the building in its historic context and its massing, and the double level of the interior courtyard and the landscaping treatment.

• Applicant's Opening Comments:

Mr. Henriquez continued the presentation. The building has two elevators and the challenge was to keep it accessible if elevators break down so there are housing limitations. The site slopes a meter down to the back and the railing for the roof-top terrace was originally not in the height calculation but now it is. The applicant would appreciate the Panel's support for any necessary height relaxation. There is a right-of-way that exits from the courtyard to the lane. The two structures have been designed to allow as much light in as possible to the interior courtyard and terrace spaces and to the neighbouring building's lightwell. There will be a visual vista onto and through the courtyard for the residents and neighbours. The stained architectural concrete on the interior courtyard facades is a light colour.

• Panel's Comments:

The Panel reviewed the model and posted drawings and reconvened. They were totally in support and the architect was congratulated. One member commented that the proposed project not only fits into context but expresses well on the street, even though the front facade has a different character. The design of curving the building to allow light in from all directions was very well executed. Most members of the Panel thought the arcade should be closed in by bringing the glass to the property line

as the residents do not want to support illegal street or loitering activities. The height relaxation was supported. The roof top landscape, being a much more valuable space than a balcony, and the forms of the elevators were seen as exceptional. One member thought it would be fun to live there but that the courtyard space needs to be enlivened with colour and another thought there should be lighting at night. The two tower concept was found to be a fascinating solution for a site of this size.

4. Address: 520 West 7th Avenue
 DA: 404665
 Use: Social Housing (4-storeys, 49 units)
 Zoning: C3-A
 Application Status: Complete
 Architect: Gomberoff Policzer Bell Lyon Architects
 Owner: Porte Industries Ltd.
 Review: First
 Delegation: Tom Bell
 Staff: Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5 - 0)

• **Introduction:**

Development Planner Mary Beth Rondeau introduced this project of housing for low income urban singles (LIUS). There are By-law relaxations requested for FSR from 1.0 to 3.0, and a height increase to 44 ft. from a 30 ft. outright. As well, the guidelines suggest moulding the massing above 30 ft. so that it steps inward to allow sunlight and relieve views but views are not an issue in this area and, at the 40 ft. height, the building does not overshadow the sidewalk at the solstice. All the units are residential. There is special ventilation to each because of the noxious fumes from the auto-body shop nearby and nuisance noise and odours from fast food and bakery outlets adjacent. Staff would like the Panel to comment on the relaxation of height and FSR in the C-3A area and if the proposal is earning the additional FSR and height requested.

• **Applicant's Opening Comments:**

Mr. Bell explained that there are two strong walls of ground face masonry block running north-south appropriate to the location because of the lane on the east and Summer's Autobody to the west. Pulling the masonry walls back and the corner-turning windows express a strong edge as a building that will stand on its own and relate to the residential units across the street. The main material is corrugated siding which is durable, bright and good for maintenance. The colour palette is pulled from light grey, blue and charcoal. There is a light-well on the west side for light to the centre of the building. The lower residential units on 7th Avenue are stepped back 2 ft. for a total of an 8 ft. setback, and the six units on the lane are set back five feet. The addition of planters, railings and patio for these units, creates a pleasant pedestrian environment in front and gives a buffer from the lane in the rear. The frontage of the units is small at nine ft. but there is a large seven ft. window to provide light and air, and they are flanked by vertical fins to provide a privacy screen. The roof overhangs three feet and there is also a visor to provide weather protection for each unit.

• **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel expressed support for the height, massing and FSR relaxations, saying that in terms of height and location the project was well executed. The set back on the third floor was seen by one member as not really necessary, given the openness around the building. The Panel suggested the vertical sunscreen elements should have a hard edge such as a rolled steel channel and the eyebrow at the roof could have the same rolled steel element, along with a smaller scale eyebrow at the windows, which would be very attractive. One member liked the three ft. overhang and the durable finishes on

all four sides that will look good in 20 years and another said the overall mass and height, with the light wells on the side, does not seem out of context with the surrounding area and the footprint is small, even with the increase. The clean and simple design fits in the neighbourhood and will act as a catalyst, and the addition of eyes on the street with doors on the street is positive.

- **Applicant's Response:**

The applicant said the Panel's comments relating to the outer finishing touches reflected precisely their intent and they are committed to working on the details to ensure it is achievable within budget, for a quality building that fits the urban/industrial setting of the area.