

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: December 2, 1998

TIME: N/A

PLACE: N/A

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Joyce Drohan (Chair)
Patricia Campbell
Per Christoffersen
Geoff Glotman (present for Items #2 and 3 only)
Peter Kreuk
Sean McEwan
Jim McLean
Norman Shearing
Peter Wreglesworth

REGRETS:
Sheldon Chandler
James Hancock
Joseph Hruda

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:**
Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

- | | |
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| 1. | 1768 West Broadway/2527 Pine Street |
| 2. | 2855 Sophia Street |
| 3. | 5513 Victoria Drive |
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1. **Address: 1768 West Broadway/2527 Pine Street**
DA: 403769
Use: Mixed (6 storeys)
Zoning: C-3A
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Nigel Baldwin
Owner: Intergulf Development Group
Delegation: Nigel Baldwin, Joe Werner, Wendy Armstrong-Taylor
Review: First
Staff: Mary Beth Rondeau, Ralph Segal

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

Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this application. She noted there is a recently approved mixed-use application for this site which has now been reconsidered in light of changed market conditions. This new application proposes mostly commercial/retail use (1.7 FSR) with a small amount of residential. Proposed total FSR is 2.7, height less than 70 ft. at the lane, with a small portion at 72 ft. Proposed materials are brick, concrete base, glass and metal frames, with stucco at the rear. In this C-3A zone the Panel is asked to consider whether the application has earned additional FSR and height. The main area of concern identified by staff relates to the residential entrance. While Council policy for this site suggests predominantly residential development is preferred, staff consider this to be an appropriate, well resolved development for this location.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Nigel Baldwin, Architect, said they consider this is a very appropriate development, noting the C-3A guidelines stress retail continuity for the south side of West Broadway. With respect to the residential entrance, Mr. Baldwin said they believe it is in the right location, being the most residential part of the site. It is very legible and will help to animate the lane.

Panel's Comments:

After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application. It should make a very positive contribution to this particular section of West Broadway which is currently somewhat lacking in character. The Panel found this scheme to be far superior to the earlier, predominantly residential proposal.

The Panel liked the elevations which it found handsome and appropriate for the proposed use. The Pine Street elevation presents a lively face to the street and should provide the animation that the previous scheme lacked.

The Panel's main area of concern related to the residential entrance. In general, the Panel thought it should provide a more positive identity to the street. Suggestions for improvement included adding a canopy, widening it, and adding more landscaping. There was also a suggestion to shift the entry a little further to the north, if possible.

On the Broadway elevation, there was a recommendation to ensure that the signage, both for the Future Shop and the smaller retail outlets, provides an appropriately crisp image to complement the modernist expression of the architecture.

There were concerns that the entry to the second floor commercial space appears quite recessed at the juncture of the two building components. There were also concerns about the potential

viability of the upper level retail. Further design development in the area of the Future Shop canopy was suggested, particularly as it relates to the stair. It was felt that further work in this area could produce a solution that also gives some flexibility for the upper level retail in terms of marketing.

Given the lane is intended to be a residential lane it was thought that more of a residential character needed to be reflected in the lane elevation. Some cues might be taken from the project to the west in this regard, and a material other than stucco might also be considered to more easily allow vines to grow.

With respect to street trees, it was suggested the existing crab apples are not a good species for street trees and no great effort should be made to maintain them.

Overall, the Panel agreed that this project earned the additional height and density being sought.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Baldwin thanked the Panel for its comments which he said he believes can all be addressed. He questioned whether it would be possible to match the development to the west in terms of open space on the lane but agreed they can certainly increase considerably the amount of landscaping. He commented that the question of the junction/entry space is a very personal choice, noting he had considered a number of options but was ultimately satisfied with the tension and closeness of the entry as presented, describing it as a "positively awkward" building.

2. **Address: 2855 Sophia Street**
Use: Congregate Seniors Housing
Zoning: CD-1 Text Amendment
Application Status: Rezoning
Architect: Hywel Jones Architect
Owner: Kevin Plaza Holdings Ltd.
Review: First
Delegation: Hywel Jones, Gillian Watson-Donald
Staff: Lynda Challis, Scot Hein

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)**Introduction:**

The Rezoning Planner, Lynda Challis, presented this application to amend the text of an existing CD-1, to add the use Special Needs Residential Facility - Congregate Housing, to allow the development of a 130-unit congregate housing complex. The site is located on Sophia Street between 12th and 13th Avenues in the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood at the northern edge of the RM-4/4N district. The site consists of two parcels, the south parcel containing the former Edith Cavell Hospital (now vacant), and the north parcel a vacant one-storey building previously occupied by Hodgson Orthotics. The site is located along the proposed Mount Pleasant Wellness Walkway which is intended to connect health care facilities in the area. The site was originally rezoned from RM-4 (south site) and RM-4N (north site) in November 1996, with the intent of replacing the Edith Cavell Hospital with a multi-level care facility. The hospital had contained 62 beds and the multi level care facility proposed 57 beds. Approved density was 2.75 FSR and a height of 61 ft. on the south and 72 ft. on the north site. Following the rezoning there was a change in the provincial government's health care policy which resulted in loss of funding for the multi level care facility. The 1996 CD-1 by-law only permits a multi level care facility.

The proposed congregate care facility is for seniors and would provide meals in a shared dining room. The facility would exclude care but would include services such as laundry, housekeeping, social programs, and 24-hour emergency monitoring. Proposed maximum density is 2.75 FSR, lower in height and with a smaller footprint than the previous proposal. The development would include two buildings connected by a single-storey bridge at the third floor level. The north building would contain the dining room and other shared amenities, accessed by residents in the south building either via the bridge or the lane. Underground parking for 29 vehicles is proposed under the south building.

Staff support the proposed use but have concerns about the density which is much higher than the adjacent RM-4 zone which permits a maximum of 1.45 FSR. 2.75 FSR was considered acceptable in the proposed multi level care facility by way of the public benefit of the use and to ensure the viability of such a facility. There are no public funds available for congregate care housing. This application is also seeking higher density to provide more moderately priced below-market rental units. The project is being reviewed by the Real Estate Services and the Housing Centre. Staff are currently working on standards for congregate housing to ensure livable developments with adequate facilities. The Panel's comments are sought on the proposed density, the landscape treatment along 13th Avenue and Sophia Street, the pedestrian connection between the two buildings and the treatment of the lane.

Scot Hein, Development Planner, briefly reviewed the urban design issues and sought the Panel's feedback on: the massing of the north building; the height and front yard setback of the south building; the lane interface; proposed landscaping opportunities; and architectural character.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Hywel Jones, Architect, noted there is as yet no design for the proposed Wellness Walkway. He briefly described the proposal which he noted has received the support of the neighbourhood. Gillian Watson-Donald described the program.

Panels Comments

Following a review of the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application. It was seen as a considerable improvement over the previous proposal.

The proposed density was supported and there was very strong support for the proposed use, as long as it is guaranteed. The applicant was commended for the efforts made to ensure this congregate housing project works. Given the increasing need for this type of housing, the City was urged to investigate how more such projects can be facilitated.

With respect to the architectural expression, the Panel thought the strong urban character would be a good precedent for the neighbourhood and could be a catalyst for some much needed revitalization in the area.

The Panel agreed that the crisp, modernist approach to the massing is very appropriate here and that there would be very little benefit to be gained from stepping either of the buildings. There was one suggestion to consider greater articulation at the top of the building, and two Panel members thought the 12th Avenue elevation might be given greater consideration. The setback on 13th Avenue was considered unnecessary, and even undesirable given that the larger setbacks of the adjacent buildings contribute to security problems in the area.

Lack of a firm design for the proposed Wellness Walk made it difficult for the Panel to comment on how it might fit into this project, although it was noted it appears as if it can be easily accommodated. The large front yard on 13th Avenue was noted as having potential for contribution to the streetscape.

There were concerns about the security aspects of the outdoor open space. A greater sense of enclosure was urged for the outdoor spaces, as well as ensuring they have as much sun access as possible. Solar access should also be considered for the indoor amenity areas. There were thought to be an excessive number of entry points that may prove difficult to monitor and control, and consideration might be given to shifting the entry to the south building further south, away from the lane, not unlike the north building entry. The number of doors that open directly onto the lane were also of concern, for safety reasons.

Much of the Panel's commentary focused on the treatment of the lane. There will be a lot of pedestrian traffic between the two buildings, as well as a fair amount of vehicular traffic in the lane. Several Panel members strongly urged the applicant to work with the City to get the lane closed off (except for emergency access) or re-routed. It would allow the ground floor connection to work to its full potential and possibly allow the creation or more open space. Local area traffic control measures might also be considered for Sophia Street.

With respect to the bridge element, there were suggestions to expand its use to be more a part of the building and to have a presence on Sophia Street. Expanding it vertically as well as horizontally should be looked at, to achieve as many connections as possible between the two buildings.

Overall, the Panel found the proposal to be an exemplary approach to the congregate style of living and one which will be an asset to this neighbourhood

3. **Address: 5513 Victoria Drive**
DA: 403675
Use: Mixed (80 units, 4 storeys)
Zoning: C-2
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Timothy Ankenman
Owner: 422270 BC Ltd.
Review: First
Delegation: Tim Ankenman
Staff: Scot Hein

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (3-5)**Introduction:**

Scot Hein, Development Planner, presented this application, noting Council's recent directive concerning aspiring to higher quality architecture and urban design in the C-2 zone. The application proposes a mixed use development at 39th Avenue/Victoria. Following a review of the immediate site context and a description of the proposal, Mr. Hein noted the following areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought:

- density, noting it is marginally above the 2.2 FSR called for in the guidelines
- Victoria frontage with respect to the perceived length/break at the midpoint
- corner expression
- RS interface
- interface with the adjacent 2-storey CD-1 development
- general architectural expression and quality

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Timothy Ankenman, Architect, reviewed the project rationale.

Panel's Comments:

Following a review of the model and posted drawings, the Panel provided the following commentary:

The Panel did not support this application. The issues of FSR and height were considered negligible.

While the Panel had no problem with the proposed density per se, there were serious concerns about the number of units that this application is trying to achieve, and the resulting unit layouts. The Panel felt strongly that there needs to be further design development or planning on the configuration of the units. There was a particular concern about bedrooms facing Victoria Drive. Illustrations of furniture layouts are helpful and should continue to be provided so that unit livability may be readily assessed.

The Panel strongly recommended that the residential entry be located in the middle of the Victoria Drive elevation, possibly losing some of the CRU space on Victoria. The Panel was unanimous in the opinion that the 220 ft. long, 5 ft. wide corridor is unacceptable. Relocating the residential entry would also serve to break down the Victoria façade somewhat. As well, there was a suggestion that some additional height at a centrally-located entry point might be worthwhile to give it some prominence.

The Panel thought the project had the potential for achieving a good quality architectural expression. The applicant was complimented on the rhythm of the façades which adds some richness. Careful attention should be given to canopy detailing.

There were mixed opinions regarding the corner treatment but the majority of Panel members thought the proposed treatment was satisfactory, without any extra emphasis required. There was, however, a suggestion to consider some diversity, given the length of the building.

With respect to the interface with the adjacent RS zone, the applicant was encouraged to further sculpt the corner and soften and enhance it as much as possible as an entry to that neighbourhood. Some additional landscaping at the lane edge would also help to buffer the neighbours.

A concern was raised about potential privacy problems between units at the decks over the parkade, particularly until the plant material gets established. Plant species should be carefully selected to ensure the green buffer is achieved as quickly as possible.

The simultaneous development of the adjacent London Drugs site was seen as providing a good opportunity to achieve some of the aspirations that have been voiced by this neighbourhood in the recent "Visioning" process. To this end, the Panel encouraged the City to ensure that the London Drugs public space will benefit both projects as much as possible. Potentially, the two projects combined will make a significant contribution to the area.

Concerns were raised about the completeness of the presentation and it was stressed that the materials at this stage need to be appropriate to this stage of review.

Applicant's Response:

With respect to furniture layout, Mr. Ankenman noted that a number of revisions have already been made. He said he was not sure how to avoid locating bedrooms on Victoria, noting it is a situation that occurs with units on a major artery. He added, they will be paying close attention to acoustics.