

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: December 7, 2005

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: 101 West Cordova Street, Woodward's Building

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Larry Adams, Chair
Nigel Baldwin
Robert Barnes
James Cheng
Ronald Lea
Margot Long
Edward Smith
Peter Wreglesworth
C.C. Yao

REGRETS: Alan Endall
Shahla Bozorgzadeh
Marta Farevaag

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** D. Kempton

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. 101 West Cordova Street (Woodward's)
-

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Adams called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

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| 1. Address: | 101 West Cordova Street |
| DE: | 409942 |
| Use: | Mixed |
| Zoning: | DD |
| Application Status: | Complete |
| Architect: | Henriquez & Partners |
| Owner: | City of Vancouver |
| Review: | First |
| Delegation: | Ian Gillespie, Gregory Henriquez, Greg Smallenberg |
| Staff: | Scot Hein, Michael Flannigan, Phil Mondor |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Development Planner, introduced this application for development on the existing Woodward's site. Mr. Hein described the site context and reviewed the site history and Council approved urban design guidelines. He also noted that the Hoburn lands which are immediately to the west of this site will be formally integrated as a specific sub-area to the Downtown District via a Council process in early 2006. Staff are assessing the development permit application submission based on the assumption that these lands will be formally integrated into the sub-area.

Mr. Hein highlighted two important aspects of the design guidelines which are: a requirement for a strong design response to the prevailing qualities of this important historic precinct (Hastings Street corridor/Gastown/Victory Square/Chinatown) and that additional height/tower form may be considered in response for architectural excellence.

Mr. Hein stated that a challenging and intense use program is being proposed with many separation and circulation issues that the applicant team has had to address which has resulted in the siting/location of the various programme components. A Council approved Community Advisory Committee has been established and as a mechanism to ensure appropriate involvement, as well as a steering committee at City Hall to assist in key decisions, including budget, timeline and significant design considerations.

The areas in which Panel advice are sought include:

- Comments on the proposed overall design concept with respect to the location of uses, open spaces and entries;
- The design approach taken to the distribution of proposed density (four distinct building components), noting scale and contextual considerations;
- Specific to the west tower, comments regarding the encroachment into the view cone of 11'6";
- Building character and expression given the historic precinct context;
- Comments on the west tower architectural expression, specifically the north elevation;
- Open space configuration noting the programming considerations presented in the landscape architecture materials;
- Comments regarding ensuring the viability of the proposed landscape systems, specifically the proposed roofscape, and vertical "greenscreen" systems on the west tower;

- Comments on the proposed vehicular circulation noting the interface with the public plaza and future Cambie Hotel outdoor space.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Gregory Henriquez, Henriquez & Partners, provided a PowerPoint presentation which followed the same format as the materials which were distributed to the Panel. He discussed the community response and input into the proposal; noting that job creation is included in the proposal. Mr. Henriquez described the project in detail and asked the Panel to provide comments on the proposal to keep the existing areaway which the Engineering Department would like to have filled in.

Greg Smallenberg, Landscape Architect, reviewed the landscape plan noting that the project is trying to achieve LEEDS silver certification. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - the Panel expressed some reservations regarding the green systems and the ability to make them work and last long term. It was felt that the building would have to look good without the greenwall in the event that it is not successful;
 - further design development to the open space configuration, address permeability and the public nature of the space. Some concern that the public space is simply a food and drug store entrance/exit;
 - give further consideration to the Cordova Street interface and the possibility of adding street trees;
 - concern regarding the legibility of the Cordova Street axis. Consider adding another entrance through the space or opening up the Abbott Street section;
 - consider extending the atrium roof to make it larger and possibly adding more glazing connections at grade for more permeability.
- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this application and commended the applicant team on their thorough presentation. The Panel acknowledged the complexity of the application and the work that has taken place to respond to the community needs and the City's Guidelines.

With respect to the overall design concept, the Panel was supportive of the direction the project has taken. The Panel did not express any concerns with the proposed density distribution and they offered strong support for the view cone encroachment. The Panel was also supportive of the building expression and character as well as the north elevation on Cordova Street. The Panel was supportive of exploration of the areaways if they are authentic.

From an energy conservation perspective the green systems will create many positive benefits; however the Panel expressed concern about the viability. It was suggested by several Panel members that the applicant team investigate the feasibility of the proposed trees on the roofs.

One Panel member suggested that if pedestrian animation on the street is trying to be achieved then a second floor connection from the parkade might be re-considered to bring as much pedestrian activity down to the street. It was also suggested that through lobbies for the west and Abbott towers could bring more people through the courtyard and add animation.

Applicant's Response: Mr. Henriquez thanked the Panel for their excellent comments and said that he felt most of the Panel suggestions could be achieved. Mr. Henriquez concluded by stating the applicant team's commitment to making this project work.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.