

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: February 13, 2008

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
John Wall, Chair
Walter Francl
Douglas Watts
Richard Henry
Bill Harrison
Albert Bicol
Martin Nielsen
Mark Ostry
Gerry Eckford (excused Item 1)

REGRETS: Maurice Pez
Tom Bunting
Bob Ransford

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1098 Richards Street
2.	1700 Manitoba Street
3.	Eco Density Presentation from Brent Toderian

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Wall called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There being no New Business the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 1098 Richards Street
DE: 411788
Description: 18-storey and an 8-storey residential building, including the relocation of two character homes.
Zoning: DD
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Lawrence Doyle Young + Wright Architects Inc.
Owner: Aquilini Investment Group
Review: First
Delegation: Larry Doyle, Lawrence Doyle Young + Wright Architects Inc.
Stuart Lyon, GBL Architects
Gerry Eckford, Eckford + Associates Landscape Architecture
Ian Kent, Interform Investment Inc.
Staff: James Boltd/Sailen Black

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (3-4)

- **Introduction:** Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for an 18-storey high rise with an 8-storey base which includes two-storey townhouses on Richards Street. There are a pair of character houses that will be relocated from mid block and protected through a Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA). There is to be a thirty foot setback on the lane and a twelve foot set back on Richards Street. The lower plates of the tower are a little larger than average at 6,800 square feet.

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

- Streetscape interface along Richards Street
- Proportions and massing of the base and tower within the view cone parameter.
- Interface of entries, walls and landscape along the lane.

Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Larry Doyle, Architect further described the proposal noting the townhouses are to have terraces at their front doors onto Richards Street. A vehicle drop-off is planned on the lane with lots of plantings including trees. The amenity space is planned for the rear of the property with access to the green space and screening in front of the units that face the amenity space terrace. The two houses will have a walkway between them that connects Richards Street to the lane. Also, the houses will have underground parking in the development. An amenity space is planned for the roof of the low rise with a garden plots and a children's play area.

Gerry Eckford, Landscape Architect described the landscaping plans for the proposal. The street frontage is the standard treatment and will have stepped planters. The amenity space will have benches and a security fence on the top of the wall on the lane. There will be a walkway around the perimeter of the podium and garden plots and a children's play area. A cistern will be located in the parking garage to collect rain water that will be used for irrigation.

Corin Flood, Sustainability consultant described the sustainable measures that are planned for the development. He noted that consideration has been given to individual controls in each unit. Regarding, energy, Mr. Flood noted that the design is not developed enough for them to know what systems will be used.

Stuart Lyon, Architect, described the tower massing, solar aspects and the drop screen on the outside of the building that will help cut the sun at certain levels. He further described architectural details of the development noting that the building has been stepped down to acknowledge the lower height of the heritage houses.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development of connection of the tower to the podium on Richards;
 - Consider having a two storey penthouse expression on Richards;
 - Consider some design development to the podium in terms of materials and cornice lines;
 - Design development to the area between the heritage houses and the building;
 - Design development to the tower entrances;
 - Design development to improve the lane treatment; and
 - Consider other sustainable measures in the project.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the proposal.

Some of the Panel members thought the view cone restricted the resulting massing which they thought was somewhat uninspiring. Also they thought that forcing 5 FSR on the site with a restricted envelope had resulted in a bulky massing. The Panel thought a higher level of design excellence was needed so that the building fits into its context and the neighbourhood. The Panel thought the tower massing would be more successful if there was a two level penthouse on Richards Street.

Some of the Panel noted that the base is half the height of the tower and thought the two building forms needed to be more strongly defined with a clear separation. Right now there is sort of an inconsistent treatment in the way some of the brick elements and some of the glass elements meet. Most of the Panel thought there was confusion on the general detail massing of the townhouse expression and the podium cornice line and suggested some design development in terms of materials and massing.

Most of the Panel thought the streetscape on Richards Street was well handled and liked the landscaping. In fact the Panel thought the landscaping was the best part of the proposal and congratulated the applicant. Another Panel member questioned the circulation around the outside of the podium roof although the Panel did like the urban agriculture and children's play area. A Panel member suggested adding green roof planters on the podium.

Several Panel members had concerns regarding the circulation and accessing the amenity space. They thought the back of the heritage houses were unfriendly and not sure that the area was useable. One Panel member suggested putting the smaller heritage house to the outside and the bigger on the inside. Several Panel members didn't like the access to the parking from the heritage houses thought the building.

Several Panel members thought more attention could be given to the entrances of the building especially the entry on Richards Street. Most of the Panel thought the entrances to the townhouses were well done.

Several Panel members thought the treatment of the lane was a bit severe and that the planter wall was probably too high and made for an unfriendly lane. One Panel member suggested that the planter wall could use one step in it or a refinement of the materials. Another Panel member suggested adding a landscape element, canopy or porte-cochere at the rear tower entry to mark the entrance and provide more definition for the drop off in the lane. Some of the Panel also thought there could be CPTED issues in the lane and thought the entry could benefit from some weather protection. The Panel supported the general approach and the generous vehicle drop-off that's created at the rear entry.

One Panel member thought the applicant had not addressed the energy needs of the building noting that the projecting slab would not be an effective shading device on the windows. The Panel was concerned with the lack of sustainable measures in the proposal and suggested the applicant look at the southwest and southeast facades to improve their passive solar performance. It was suggested that sustainability starts with the architecture and that the applicant work with mechanical engineers to make the building environmental responsive. The Chair noted that AIBC has asked all Design Panels in the Province to look at sustainability as a point of consideration for all projects that are reviewed.

- **Applicant's Response:** Lawrence Doyle thanked the Panel for their excellent comments and that they would take them into consideration.

2. Address:	1700 Manitoba Street
DE:	411797
Description:	Mixed-use development
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Howard Bingham Hill Architects
Owner:	Pinnacle International (West First) Plaza Inc.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Howard Bingham, Howard Bingham Hill Architects Robert Duke, Howard Bingham Hill Architects Peter Kreuk, Durante Kreuk Ltd. Vito De Cotiis, Pinnacle International
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, introduced the proposal, a complete development application after rezoning. The application is the second of three parcels with the Panel having seen Parcel 2 on West 2nd Avenue on January 16, 2008. This application is for Parcel 1 with Parcel 3 just starting the enquiry process.

The proposal will be all residential with the exception of the westerly building at the ground floor which will include retail. The plaza has changed since the rezoning with the road being reconsidered. The plaza is part of the whole linking plaza on Manitoba Street north of the Salt Building. The public realm is still evolving as the roads have yet to be designed. The public art contribution is planned for the plaza area.

The open space and circulation will flow with the property across the lane to create an open courtyard. Ms. Rondeau noted that it was acceptable to add an additional storey to Building A and should have no additional shadowing impacts on the Salt Building plaza.

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

- Additional part-storey on the West Building A; and
- Has distinctive character of SEFC been addressed in this proposal.

Ms. Rondeau took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Howard Bingham, Architect, further described the project noting one of the site planning characteristics was to follow the original shoreline. Part of that process is in the ground floor plan and helps to define some of the access paths.

Robert Duke, Architect, described how the building materials evolved. He also described the uses in each of the buildings noting the indoor and outdoor amenity spaces as well as the use of coloured glass and exterior solar elements.

Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect described the landscape plans for the project. The lower courtyard presents itself to the lane and is fairly public. On the roof of the low rise there is to be a children's play area and urban agriculture which will also include composting opportunities. He noted that the plaza is still in the planning stages and as well they are working with several artists to develop the Public Art.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to the lane elevation of buildings A & C to improve their architectural treatment;
 - Design development to the corner plaza to allow for a simple hard surface open space and simple landscape strategy to allow people to linger and socialize.
 - Consider further design development to the solar shading strategies for buildings A & C to maximize their effectiveness and clarify the overall architectural composition of the shading elements.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel unanimously supported the proposal and agreed that the distinctive character of SEFC had been addressed though the project's appropriate level of informality and variety that captures the character of the site's industrial past. They also thought the addition of the part storey on Building A was supportable as it improves the building massing.

The Panel thought the project was sophisticated and skilfully handled with a balance between the buildings as they have the appearance of three separate and different buildings that relates with the colour palate. Several Panel members thought there was a slight issue with the angles on the upper floors of building A as there are several slight changes in angle that would probably be imperceptible from street level. Some felt it was slightly disjointed and not all together an organized façade while others like the ad hoc character. Several Panel members thought the townhouses were successful and liked the accent colours.

The Panel generally considered Building A to be very well handled. One Panel member suggested taking the screening elements and expressing them more. One Panel member liked the treatment on the angled west façade but thought the south façade could use some work regarding solar gain. The overhangs seemed short whereas the overhangs on the east will not be as important as the morning sun does not cause much solar heat gain. It was suggested that the applicant transfer all the overhangs on the east façade and put them on the south façade on the east tower to improve the project's overall solar cooling performance. Several Panel members had an issue with the mullions and the amount of glazing as the U value seemed a little on the low side. They suggested that the applicant be clear with why they want a large array of mullions. Several Panel members thought the lane elevation was a little bare and utilitarian with a lot of service doors. The Panel suggested that the lane elevation would benefit from further design development and should be treated in a more architectural manner.

The Panel felt the treatment of the corner plaza was really important and suggested it be playful and respond to the transit stop, the Salt Building and other nearby public spaces. Several panel members thought the proposed design was completely wrong and should allow people to gather on the street corner and that the organization of unwalkable elements needed further thought. Another Panel member suggested using the industrial history of SEFC in the Plaza design.

The Panel liked the landscape treatment and thought the project integrated well with the project across the lane. They also liked the notion of the original shoreline of False Creek as a functioning element in the project.

The Panel liked the outdoor amenity spaces and the integration of the pool with one Panel member suggesting the applicant give more attention to the area to make it more habitable throughout the year.

Several Panel members commended the applicant for the solar panels, but thought they should be celebrated and more artful in their design and detailing. Some of the Panel suggested using solar tubing which they thought was more efficient and would be more architecturally pleasing. Another Panel member suggested celebrating them with a trellis of solar tubes. The Panel thought the project communicated its intention about sustainability openly although they also felt more could be done that would improve the architecture and the quality of the buildings.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bingham said he appreciated the comments from the Panel and would take them into considerations. He noted that they had commented on some elements that need to be improved and that the design is an ongoing process. Regarding the plaza, Mr. Kreuk added that he had gotten the response he needed in order to improve the design.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

The Director of Planning presented the EcoDensity initiative to the Urban Design Panel; after the presentation and discussion the Panel passed the following resolution:

The Urban Design Panel supports the EcoDensity Draft Charter and the Draft Initial Actions plan and recommends Council's approval.

This initiative will provide the Urban Design Panel with much needed Council approved policy, so that all projects reviewed by the Panel can be evaluated using clearly-defined best practices for sustainable building and community design. The EcoDensity charter will enable the Panel to challenge and encourage the development community to pursue a high level of excellence in sustainable urban design.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.