

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: February 16, 2005

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Bruce Haden, Chair
Larry Adams
Robert Barnes
Jeffrey Corbett (not present for Item 4)
Alan Endall
Marta Farevaag (not present for Items 2 - 4)
Ronald Lea
Jennifer Marshall
Brian Martin

REGRETS: Steven Keyes
Margot Long
Mark Ostry

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1178 West Pender Street
2.	86 SE Marine Drive
3.	1675 West 8th Avenue
4.	2520 Manitoba Street

1. Address:	1178 West Pender Street
DE:	408949
Use:	Mixed (28 storeys, 146 units)
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Hancock Bruckner Eng & Wright
Owner:	Pinnacle International Lands
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Martin Bruckner, Peter Kreuk, Michael Decotiis
Staff:	Scot Hein

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Development Planner, presented this application. The Panel did not support the proposal when it was first reviewed on January 5, 2005. The Panel generally thought the site could accommodate the requested density but had concerns about the proposed form of development, especially with respect to maintaining 80 ft. separation from The Melville. Further design development was also recommended to respond to the flatiron form, including strengthening the Bute/Pender corner, moving the tower further to the east and/or increasing tower height, improving grade level treatment, especially on Bute Street, maximizing sun access to the daycare exterior, and including outdoor amenity space for the residents.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the applicant's response to the earlier concerns, noting also that a height relaxation of about 2 - 3 ft. is now being sought.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Martin Bruckner, Architect, briefly reviewed the revisions. Separation from The Melville has been increased from the previous 61 ft.-10 in. to 79 ft.- 7 in. on the east side and 79 ft. on the west side and 80 ft. separation from the office tower to the east has been maintained. Fenestration on the south façade is spandrel glass to address privacy concerns. The floor to floor height has been reduced from 9 ft.- 7 in. to 9 ft.-1 in. and an additional two floors have been added to the tower, increasing the building height to a little over the 300 ft. permitted maximum. The west side of the tower has been pulled back 7 ft. to the east, improving outlook from The Melville, and the core has also been shifted 7 ft. to the east. Mr. Bruckner noted that moving the tower further to the east causes a separation of less than 80 ft. from the adjacent office building. The tower width has been reduced and it has been articulated on all sides, and the tower comes down to the ground at the Bute/Pender corner. The daycare and associated outdoor areas have been reshaped and each daycare floor has an enclosed connection to the elevator access. The reconfiguration of the project has also allowed the creation of some semi-private outdoor space adjacent to the residential amenity area. Following a brief review of the landscape revisions by Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect, the applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - design development to the visibility and quality of the daycare drop-off from the lane in conjunction with design development to the lane elevation;
 - consider enhancements to the stair tower including the top;
 - consider clarification and simplification of the corner treatment at grade;
 - consider special glazing treatment on the second and third levels of the Pender façade;
 - consider increasing the vertical expression of the retail units.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this submission and commended the applicant for responding so quickly to its earlier advice. The Panel now has no major concerns about the project and suggestions were offered only for further design development consideration. It was noted that the project's evolution provides a good example that the process is working well. The Panel had no concerns about the building height and strongly supported the minor height relaxation being sought. The Panel was also satisfied that this site can accept the requested FSR with the proposed scheme.

In its commentary on the revised submission the Panel noted that the reshaping of the tower has been very successfully handled to maintain a strong architectural design while also achieving the 80 ft. separation from The Melville.

The Panel also strongly supported the amenity space that has now been achieved as a result of the reconfiguration. The private residential patio on level two is a big improvement to livability. There remained some regret that the roof has not been developed for amenity.

The Panel strongly supported the improvements to the public realm and was encouraged to see that the emerging streetscape character for Pender Street is now being coordinated over several buildings.

A suggestion for consideration was to improve the quality of the glass on levels two and three of the Pender Street base to provide more special glazing between the grids. Design development at the corner in how the circular element terminates was also recommended. With respect to the rear elevation, there was a suggestion to make the stair tower more interesting and relieve its somewhat plain appearance. In general, it was thought the lane elevation needed further design development in terms of its detailed design. The Panel strongly endorsed the treatment of the lane as a secondary pedestrian street.

With respect to the storefront expression on Pender Street, there was a comment that the architecture fails to recognize that they are double height units; nor does it recognize opportunities for signage.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bruckner thanked the Panel for its input.

2. Address:	86 SE Marine Drive (Wal-Mart)
Use:	Retail
Zoning:	I-2
Application Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	Busby Perkins Wills
Owner:	First Pro.
Review:	Second (previous Workshop)
Delegation:	Peter Busby, Jennifer Stamp
Staff:	Scot Hein, Lynda Challis

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- **Introduction:** The Panel previously saw this proposal in a Workshop in April 2003. The Rezoning Planner, Lynda Challis, provided a general overview of the application and the policy background. In 2001, Council approved policies and guidelines for Highway Oriented Retail (HOR) use which focus on enhancing the quality of the public realm and encourage a high quality environmental response. The 5 hectare (12.5 acre) site, previously occupied by Dueck Motors, comprises two lots fronting on Marine Drive between Ontario and Main Streets. Surrounding zoning includes I-2 and RS-1, and C-1 at the corner of Main Street. After the rezoning application was first submitted in September 2001 a retail study was carried out and there was some public consultation. In the 2003 workshop discussion the Panel offered advice on site layout and strongly encouraged the pursuit of green initiatives.

The application proposes mixed retail and service uses, consistent with the HOR policy, and includes five buildings. The main building will contain the Wal-Mart store at the southwest corner of the site and four buildings fronting on Marine Drive, two for retail and two for restaurant/service use. The policy and guidelines require a 12 m (40 ft.) setback along Marine Drive. The remainder of the site provides surface parking for 755 vehicles, which exceeds the Parking By-law minimum requirement by over 200 spaces. Vehicular access is off Marine Drive and there are two lanes connecting to Ontario and Main Streets. Loading is along 69th Avenue as well as some smaller loading spaces associated with the smaller commercial pads. Proposed density is 0.3 FSR (0.28 FSR retail). HOR policy permits up to 0.6 FSR. A special feature of the application is its proposed sustainable design.

As well as advice on use and density, the Development Planner, Scot Hein, requested the Panel's response to the form of development, including:

- overall site planning including the campus concept (arrangement of parking and pedestrian routes and access) and location and orientation of the smaller retail pads;
 - the general form of the Wal-Mart building;
 - sustainability features, in particular the wind turbines;
 - the encroachment of three of the retail pad buildings into the 40 ft. setback along Marine Drive;
 - the amount of parking proposed, particularly as it relates to the environmental performance of the project.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Peter Busby, Architect, briefly reviewed the proposal and Jennifer Stamp described the sustainability strategy, following which the applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - design development to generally maintain the 40 ft. setback, with some minor intrusions acceptable to maintain the integrity of the grid orientation and sense of entry;
 - design development to the location of the pad buildings and the treatment of the ground surfaces and landscape to enhance the sense of campus by increasing links between the buildings, and making the pedestrian routes more visible, comfortable, efficient and direct. This design development should include consideration of links to transit;
 - consider increasing variability of the paving surface to enhance permeability and visual interest of the parking area;
 - design development to the wind turbines and their siting, with specific consideration to the acoustic impact.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this rezoning application and found it a refreshing approach to big box retail design. There was a comment that the architect has done an excellent job of recognizing the rigid formulaic requirements of a Wal-Mart store and working in an authentic way with the inherent building form it creates. The Panel had no concerns about the proposed use and density.

The Panel liked the simple elegance of the building form and thought the elements on the roof will be very visible and readily understood as a sustainability feature. All the green initiatives of the proposal were very positively received by the Panel. Given that Wal-Mart is possibly the largest property owner in North America it was suggested it could also have far-reaching positive affects beyond this site if its success sets the tone for other Wal-Mart developments.

The Panel supported the orientation of the pad buildings but the majority of Panel members thought encroachment into the 40 ft. setback should be avoided. There was a comment that encroachment into the green boulevard also seems contrary to the sustainability goals of the project, and it should be possible at this low density to maintain the orientation of the pads without intruding into the setback. However, it was acknowledged that the siting of two of the pads does announce the entrance. Reflecting the main building's form and architectural expression in the smaller pad buildings was very positively received and supported.

In general, the Panel thought more could be done to create a sense of campus on the site, in particular the connections between the buildings and between the retail pads and the main store. Further work is needed to better respond to pedestrian desire lines and to deal with some incomplete connections and pinch points, particularly the Marine Drive approaches. The Panel acknowledged, however, that this is predominantly a vehicle oriented place and there may be little pedestrian traffic between buildings. One Panel member recommended that, as a minimum, it should be comfortable for pedestrians to move from the two corners of the site and from the bus stop to the main entry.

The Panel was intrigued by the proposed wind turbines and will be interested to see if they can be made to work in this location. There was concern expressed about possible noise impacts and further study was recommended at the development application stage. There was a variety of opinion about their best location on the site and a strong recommendation that they should not have branding colours on them. Given that many of the sustainability features of the building might be too subtle for the general public to readily perceive, the wind turbines could become an interesting iconic feature of the site.

The Panel had no concern about the amount of parking being proposed. The applicant was strongly urged to reduce the overall amount of asphalt, however, possibly providing an area of "grass-crete" or similar alternative treatment that may function as something other than parking in off-peak periods. There should also be some pedestrian-friendly areas within the parking area itself, at least in the east-west direction for ease of wayfinding. There was also a suggestion that the access from the lane to Main Street might be better oriented to the drive aisles as you enter the main parking area.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Busby thanked the Panel for the excellent critique. He stressed that any encroachment into the Marine Drive setback would be much less than 7 m.

3. Address:	1675 West 8th Avenue
DE:	409080
Use:	Residential (10 storeys)
Zoning:	C-3A
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Nigel Baldwin
Owner:	Intra Corp Pine Street Dev. Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Nigel Baldwin, Tom Miller, Bruce Hemstock
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (3-4)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this application. The site is located at Pine Street and West 8th Avenue in the Burrard Slopes C-3A zone. The site has a frontage of 250 ft. and a depth of 110 ft. Parking access is from the rear lane. The application seeks the maximum permitted density of 3.0 FSR, plus a ten percent heritage density transfer. With respect to height, the guidelines suggest 100 ft., which the proposal exceeds by about 7 - 8 ft. at the rear. The proposal also varies from the guideline massing recommendation at the back of the site. The proposal includes public open space at the corner and an unspecified public art feature. Materials include brick, concrete and glass.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- whether the application earns the density being sought;
 - variation from the guidelines with respect to height at the rear;
 - treatment of the lane;
 - treatment of the semi-private open space;
 - corner plaza beside the townhouses.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Nigel Baldwin, Architect, briefly described the design rationale and Bruce Hemstock reviewed the landscape plan. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
 - **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - design development to reduce the apparent scale and mass of the building above the townhouse levels, particularly on the north elevation;
 - consider the integration of the indoor and larger outdoor amenity space while improving sun access to the outdoor amenity space if possible;
 - design development to the lane wall to reduce its visual scale;
 - consider integration of the corner open space with the entry if possible and/or design development to the walls of the flanking townhouses.
 - **Related Commentary:**

The Panel did not support this submission and generally thought the overall composition needed to come together better. While not a high rise, the project has a massive appearance which some Panel members thought may be suffering from trying to push the building envelope to the limits. It is resulting in a building form that does not allow for articulation, particularly at the upper levels of the centre piece, and seems aggressive as a result.

The Panel expressed concern about the north elevation which was thought to need greater articulation and interest to reduce its apparent scale and somewhat monolithic expression along the lane. There was also a suggestion that the building might benefit from richer materials, perhaps less painted concrete. Introducing one or two stronger vertical elements on the north façade was suggested.

With respect to the lane treatment, the Panel thought the unbroken expanse of wall needed some attention to reduce its apparent scale. Creative lighting might help to articulate it.

The Panel found that pushing the limits of the building envelope has also affected the semi private open space on the site which is quite minimal and in less than optimum locations for sun access and connection to spaces within the building. It was suggested the north-facing open space will serve only as a visual amenity. Ideally, it was thought there should be a shared roof deck amenity either on the building shoulders or at the top of the building.

The Panel supported the public plaza at the corner as a commendable gesture to the community but found it lacked animation and connection to the building. Some Panel members thought it should have a stronger relationship to the building entry. One Panel member urged that it should be clear that this is a public space and not private amenity associated with the adjacent townhouses.

The provision of public art was encouraged.

One Panel member expressed concern about the townhouse expression, particularly as it turns the corner on the street. It was suggested the townhouse expression along 8th Avenue might be stronger if the landscape treatment and walls were more consistent. As well, the merit of varying the setback of the townhouses was questioned given the zero lot line expression of the adjacent Fircrest building.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Baldwin acknowledged the Panel's advice about bringing the parts of the project together better. He said he did not believe the north elevation needed much work but agreed it needs greater refinement in the way the decks are articulated. Further detailed work will be done to improve the corner plaza to provide a sense of some semi private overlook of the public space, and there will be less concrete on the building than currently shown. Mr. Baldwin thanked the Panel for its comments.

4. Address:	2520 Manitoba Street
DE:	408554
Use:	Mixed, 7 storeys
Zoning:	C-3A
Application Status:	Complete after Preliminary
Architect:	Downs Archambault
Owner:	677002 BC Ltd.
Review:	Third
Delegation:	Al Johnson, Alan Shatwell, Pawel Gradolski
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-2)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this application which was not supported by the Panel when it was reviewed on February 2, 2005. Ms. Rondeau briefly reviewed the Panel's earlier concerns and requested the Panel's advice on the applicant's response. The concerns related to the expression of the easterly building component, the corner streetscape treatment, and the amount and location of outdoor amenity space. The proposed density remains unchanged at 2.85 FSR.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Al Johnson, Architect, noted they have focused on improvements to the east wing in the clarity of materials and massing to better tie it in with the 5-storey element. He described the revisions made in response to the previous concerns and responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - consider design development to the amenity space to improve its usability, or its deletion in favour of enhancing other public spaces in the building such as the lobby, if possible;
 - consider enhancing the livability of Unit D.
- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel supported this submission. In general, however, the Panel preferred the original 7-storey proposal and reiterated earlier concerns that the reduction in height in response to some private views has been at the expense of a successful urban design solution that benefits the public at large. It was also questioned whether most of the neighbours on West 10th Avenue will benefit from the revised massing. Nevertheless, the improvements to the scheme since the last review were acknowledged. The Panel found it a handsome building and thought the project was going in the right direction. The Panel endorsed the improvements to the easterly massing.

While the Panel previously had expressed concern that the streetscape at the corner was too complicated, there was a comment that it may now have been over-simplified. Better alignment of the street trees on Broadway was recommended. There was also a suggestion that the rounded weather protection on the ground floor might be better with a more modern approach. As well, deletion of the uppermost open balcony at the corner and relocating it to Unit C to the east would be a stronger solution and achieve a better corner transition.

Concerns were expressed about the livability of Unit D. As well, the blank wall of the second bedroom of Unit C is very visible on Broadway and might be something richer than painted concrete.

The Panel remained disappointed with the amenity space and considered it quite inadequate for a building of this size. The applicant was discouraged from adding a water feature to the open space at the rear given the associated interior space is quite small and likely will be little used. There was a suggestion to delete the interior amenity in favour of creating a larger lobby, possibly also including an interior water feature in the lobby.

One Panel member urged that the applicant be allowed to keep the concrete "eyebrow" that projects beyond the property line given the need to consider energy efficiency and prevent water penetration.

There was a general comment made that while this particular project is able to maximize the allowable density on the site and the architect has been very inventive in making it work, particularly given the height constraints, there is an underlying concern that on many sites achieving the maximum makes it very difficult to produce livable and workable unit layouts.

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