

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** February 18, 2004

**TIME:** 4.00 pm

**PLACE:** Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Stuart Lyon, Chair  
Helen Besharat  
Bruce Haden  
Reena Lazar  
Eva Lee (excused Item 2)  
Jennifer Marshall (present for Item 2 only)  
Brian Martin  
Mark Ostry  
Kim Perry  
Sorin Tatomir (present for Items 2 and 3 only)  
Ken Terriss (present for Items 1 and 2 only)

**REGRETS:** Jeffrey Corbett

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	2876 West 33rd Avenue
2.	1402 Kingsway
3.	955/969 Burrard Street

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1. Address:	2876 West 33rd Avenue
Use:	Residential
Zoning:	CD-1
Applicant Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	Balfour & Co.
Owner:	C. Cowie
Review:	First
Delegation:	Art Cowie, Rick Balfour
Staff:	Dave Thomsett, Dale Morgan

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

- **Introduction:** Dave Thomsett, Rezoning Planner, introduced this application to rezone an RS-5 site to develop three rowhouses. The policy that allows this proposal to be considered is the City's Neighbourhood Demonstration Program, the objective of which is to promote the demonstration of different housing types that do not currently exist. Participants in the City's Community Visioning Program can then visit these demonstration projects to decide if they might be appropriate in their own neighbourhood. Demonstration projects need to meet three criteria: demonstrate a new housing form in the neighbourhood; demonstrate improved affordability; and have a degree of neighbourhood support. This rowhouse project would be Vancouver's first example of fee simple ownership. Demonstration projects are intended to be "one off" only and do not set a precedent for similar developments in the immediate neighbourhood unless determined in the Visioning Program.

Following the Rezoning Planner's brief description of the site context, Dale Morgan, Development Planner, reviewed the RS-5 zoning which typically seeks reference points taken from existing forms in the neighbourhood. Up to 60 percent of the lot area may be developed outright. Up to 70 percent is also permitted, conditional upon design conditions. This particular RS-5 lot is in a transitional area, close to mixed use and commercial developments. The proposed form for the three units is a three-storey townhouse form with partial basement. There are two wider units (1,900 sq.ft. and 2,000 sq.ft.) at either end and a narrower unit (1,400 sq.ft.) in the centre. The proposal respects existing front yard setbacks and the building depth is compatible with the RS-5 neighbours. Height is also compatible, at 30 ft. A plain, simple massing is proposed, with a flat roof. Proposed density is 70 percent of the lot area (above grade). Final material selection is still to be determined but consideration is being given to a cementitious or stucco-like finish, as well as a panel system.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- whether this is an appropriate form for this site and context;
- the general direction of the architectural expression given this is a demonstration project, the quality of the finishes, the roof form and details;
- unit configuration.

Before the rezoning application was submitted the applicant held an Open House in the neighbourhood, although the notification area used was a little smaller than typically used by the City for a rezoning application. A representative of the City's Housing Centre attended the Open House. The City's notification will proceed shortly and will cover a two block radius in all directions of the site.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Art Cowie described the history of the site and the project, and noted there has been a good public consultation process. Rick Balfour, Architect, briefly described the design rationale and the applicant team responded to the Panel's questions.

- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this rezoning application. The Panel was quite excited by this proposal and commended the applicant for the initiative. A comment was made that the key will be in achieving a larger number of units that gain greater economies of scale compared to single family homes.

The Panel considered the three-unit townhouse form to be very appropriate in this location, although a number of Panel members said they would have preferred to see better contextual analysis of the surrounding buildings to confirm the appropriateness of the setbacks, etc. Several Panel members questioned the staggering of the units and recommended that each unit be considered for its own specific design opportunities within the overall composition. The Panel recognized that the design is in the early stages and noted the need for improvement and design development as the project proceeds. In general, the Panel thought each unit should be distinguished more and it should be illustrated how individual owners might bring their own identity to the units.

With respect to unit configuration, the Panel's concerns related mostly to the middle unit. In general the Panel found the outer unit layouts maximize the space quite well, including room for a double storey height space. The concerns with the middle unit related to the stair which breaks up the interior space. Exploration of a single run stair in this unit was recommended. One Panel member suggested that jogging walls to create some changing width within the unit might be possible. One Panel member found the unit entries, front and rear, somewhat weak and providing no transitional area between the exterior and interior space. To make these units suitable for "empty nesters" there was a recommendation to include a small elevator.

Given this is a demonstration project it was recommended that the City should maximize its exposure with an Open House, and the applicant should provide more detailed information. The importance of educating the broader community was emphasized. Several Panel members strongly urged that the highest level of sustainable design standards be sought, including one or two innovative elements. A strong commitment to sustainability should be sought at the development permit stage. It was noted the project could be used as a model to demonstrate the kinds of sustainability measures that can be achieved in single family dwellings.

With respect to the architectural expression, a concern was expressed about the quality of the materials. If stucco is chosen, it should be used in an innovative way. The Panel commented on the roof form which it thought could be clarified more as opposed to reading as a single roof covering the three units. Another comment about the architectural expression was that it looks somewhat commercial. Expressing the floor levels more strongly would help break down the scale and create a more residential character.

The Panel was very interested in the fee simple challenge and considered it to be a very innovative scheme. The applicant was encouraged to proceed with the project. Because the materials are not yet finalized for this precedent setting proposal the Panel suggested it would be appropriate for the project to be returned to the Panel at the development application stage. The applicant should provide material samples at that time. The applicant should also provide a larger scale detail model that demonstrates the relationship with adjoining properties. The Panel stressed that high quality detailing will be important to the project's overall success.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Cowie thanked the Panel for the comments. He agreed the stairs in the middle unit could be changed and said they are deliberately leaving it for the purchasers to make their own choices with respect to finishes. Mr. Cowie advised they do intend to have an elevator in the larger units.

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2. Address:	1402 Kingsway
DE:	408144
Use:	Mixed (16 storeys, 185 units)
Zoning:	CD-1
Applicant Status:	Complete
Architect:	Rositch Hemphill
Owner:	Tri Power Developments Inc.
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Keith Hemphill, Eva Lee
Staff:	Scot Hein

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-3)**

- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Development Planner, introduced this application for Phase Two of the redevelopment of Knight and Kingsway. The Panel previously reviewed this project at the rezoning stage (both phases) and the complete development application for Phase one, which was supported. Mr. Hein briefly reminded the Panel of the issues identified previously and Keith Hemphill, Architect, described this phase of the development in greater detail. After the response to questions of staff and the applicant, Mr. Hein noted the areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought:

- response to the treatment of the corner of Knight and Kingsway;
- appropriateness of the Kingsway façade expression;
- public realm - execution of the courtyard but excluding the periphery which is under review as part of a larger precinct study.

The Landscape Architect, Eva Lee, briefly reviewed the landscape plan noting the intent is to delineate the pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the courtyard using high quality materials and creating a place for people to congregate. Mr. Hemphill also noted the project includes a significant public art component.

- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel supported this application and recognized that a number of improvements have been made to the scheme.

While it was acknowledged that the form of development was determined at the rezoning stage, the Panel thought more could be done to slim the appearance of the tower. One Panel member commented that the massing on the corner above the seventh floor looks awkward, and recommended removing as much density as possible from the corner and redistributing it along Kingsway. There was a recommendation to eliminate the white window frames in favour of something darker to accentuate slimness. The applicant was strongly urged to have commercial space rather than residential on the second level under the tower. Residential use in this location could also conflict with the commercial signage.

The Panel thought more could be done to improve the clarity of the residential entrance, and strongly recommended a better secondary entrance at the east end of the building. In general, the Panel thought there should be more architectural clues about how to get into the building.

With respect to the courtyard, there was a suggestion to include a focal point, and to introduce some water to provide white noise. There was also a recommendation for more interesting plant material.

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The very long corridor on the third and fourth floors was considered to be unacceptable from a livability point of view and the applicant was strongly urged to revisit this aspect of the scheme. There were also some privacy issues noted on internal courtyard units with about 12 ft. separation between balconies. There may be ways to reconfigure windows to improve this situation and take advantage of longer views.

The Panel agreed the Kingsway façade is somewhat homogenous, although some Panel members thought it was acceptable given that in many ways this project is setting its own context. A comment was made that the somewhat relentless cornice may be making the building seem heavier than necessary. There were concerns about the height of the retail bays and the conflict with the residential units. Ways to make the glazing more residentially oriented should be explored, and greater clarity provided with respect to the retail entries. Some Panel members identified the bridge element as having the potential to break up the façade more by being more transparent. One Panel member questioned the use of fabric awnings because they are not very durable. It was suggested more diversity at pedestrian level could be created with awnings and weather protection detailing.

The Panel stressed the importance of signage around the perimeter of the building, in particular to include some strongly pedestrian oriented signage to identify the location of the library.

The Panel strongly recommended that a project of this magnitude should incorporate sustainability measures, not necessarily to LEED certification level but gestures such as storm water management and green roofs were strongly recommended. It was noted there are a number of units overlooking large expanses of roof area, where there should be at least some kind of patterning provided to relieve the appearance. The Panel was disappointed that there has been no acknowledgment of orientation of the facades in terms of solar heat gain. Given this location is well served by transit one Panel member suggested this would be an ideal site to provide some co-op cars for residents.

The Panel expressed the hope that the City will allow for some special paving treatment on its part of the project.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Hemphill agreed the lobby will be identified more strongly on the Knight Street side, possibly with a more significant canopy. With respect to the use of the second storey, until quite recently this was envisaged as commercial use but it has now been abandoned in favour of residential use. He agreed with the Panel's comments regarding this aspect of the scheme and agreed it will be studied further. With respect to sustainability, Mr. Hemphill agreed it would be useful to take the project through a LEED check list to determine what can be achieved. With respect to transit, the regional plan calls for a modern contemporary shelter as opposed to a gap. Signage direction to the mews is a key issue that will be addressed in the signage package and some of the public art funding might be used in this area. Mr. Hemphill noted that Phase One contains a water feature. Regarding the lane treatment, discussions are continuing with Engineering Services who have shown some interest in features such as texture and stamped concrete. He agreed there is a need for a secondary entrance on the east tower. The massing of this project has been fairly well determined and it meets the requirements of the rezoning. However, there is room for study of ways to make the tower appear slimmer. With respect to shadowing, Mr. Hemphill stressed the studies have indicated the courtyards will be very sunny.

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3. Address:	955/969 Burrard Street
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	CD-1
Applicant Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	Stantec
Owner:	Concert Properties & YMCA
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Alan Endall, James Cheng, Peter Kreuk
Staff:	Jonathan Barrett, Phil Mondor

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#### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-1)

- **Introduction:** Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, presented this rezoning application. The project was seen by the Panel in a Workshop in October 2003. The Panel is requested to consider the proposed form of development, Council having indicated support for the general planning strategy, the densities, usages and heritage density transfer. Mr. Barrett briefly reviewed the site context and the proposed development. The application for rezoning is for two adjacent sites (the YMCA site and the First Baptist Church site).

The urban design criteria to be considered are:

- legibility - how it fits into the city fabric;
- heritage, public and private views;
- relationship between the proposed buildings;
- shadowing on open space;
- built form and scale relationships;
- built form and character formation;
- livability relationships;
- function, quality and character of pedestrian access systems and servicing.

Mr. Barrett briefly reviewed the Panel's comments at the previous Workshop discussion of this proposal. The advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

YMCA site:

- tower height and location, referencing shadows, views and scale relationship in the neighbourhood;
- floorplate - its general shape and size;
- accommodation of the heritage component on Burrard Street;
- building character directions and intentions;
- landscape systems.

First Baptist Church site:

- relationship of the proposed form, both within the site and with the neighbours;
- building height and shadow impacts;
- landscape system.

If this proposal is supported at the Public Hearing the Panel will be requested to review the project at the development application stage, which will likely be two separate applications.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Alan Endall, Architect, reviewed the response to the Panel's previous comments and described the design rationale. He asked for the Panel's support not only for the overall form of development but also a clear direction on the tower height, floorplate size, and density. James Cheng, Architect for the First Baptist

Church site, noted there is a forecourt at the corner of Nelson and Burrard which was the starting point to repeat the scale of Nelson Street. He described the proposal for the church site and Peter Kreuk described the landscape systems. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application and thought it was progressing well since the last review.

The Panel strongly supported the location of the YMCA tower and generally thought the site could support the floorplates indicated. The Panel also supported the placement of the tower on the First Baptist Church site.

Comments/advice with respect to the YMCA tower included the following:

- tower height strongly supported and several Panel members thought it could be higher;
- the tower belongs to the ceremonial scale of Burrard Street rather than the West End;
- the tower needs to "embrace the ground" at its base on the lane and Barclay Street;
- design development is needed to the top to conclude it in a more satisfying way;
- the flat west façade gives the appearance of the back of the building;
- question whether this tower should be subordinate to the Wall Centre;
- strongly urge that the tower meet the High Building standards - the Panel expects considerable design development and will hold it to the highest level of design excellence;
- the upper floors could take some sculpting; maybe reconsider the elevators, perhaps reducing them on the upper floor and having banks of elevators which do not all extend to the full 40 floors;
- the height is appropriate in relation to Wall Centre and Electra.

One Panel member found the tower too big because, being set back from Burrard Street, it impinges too much of the smaller scale of the West End.

Integration of the heritage component:

- headed in the right direction;
- like the way the Y building is handled in the way the glass adjacent is celebrating the heritage character of the Y;
- some concern that it creates a sense of a modern monolith overwhelming the scale of the smaller building;
- acknowledge the successful resolution of dealing with the functional requirements of the YMCA;
- commend the early involvement of the heritage consultant;
- there could be a contemporary element on the front of the building which would bring the scope of the project through to Burrard Street at the pedestrian level - possibly incorporating modern canopies;
- entry canopies should be included off the lane;
- the climbing wall needs more breathing space around it;
- the top of the atrium is unresolved and needs some design development;
- there needs to be a strong gesture to detailing and materials on the Burrard façade, otherwise the expression of the elegant elements shown will be lost;

With respect to the lane, the Panel urged that the treatment of the lane be extended to the end of the block to make a better connection to the park.

The Panel generally found it difficult to comment on the First Baptist Church site, given this project is much less well developed than the neighbouring site. However, the location and height of the tower were strongly supported and several Panel members thought it

could be slimmer and higher as opposed to relating it to the Vancouver tower. One Panel member strongly recommended improving the overlook by carefully addressing the appearance of the mechanical and including roof landscaping. Two Panel members commented on the church courtyard but had differing opinions as to whether it should be conceived as one space or broken up, as proposed.

The Panel urged that at the next stage of development these projects should have a very strong commitment to sustainability. A project of this size needs to be to at least LEED silver standard. There was also a recommendation to include a sky garden somewhere in the building.

One Panel member was concerned about the loss of the Y accommodation and questioned whether opportunities for retaining it, either on this site or elsewhere, could be explored.

The Panel noted that this application has benefited considerably from being reviewed first in a workshop and stressed it is an important component of the review process for large, important sites such as this. The applicant team was commended for the excellent quality presentation and very comprehensive analysis of the design rationale which the Panel found very convincing. A few Panel members, however, expressed some discomfort with reviewing and voting on two distinct projects that are being presented in very different forms and level of development.