
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: February 20, 2002

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Walter Francl (Chair)
Jeffrey Corbett
Lance Berelowitz
Gerry Eckford
Alan Endall
Bruce Hemstock
Jack Lutsky
Maurice Pez
Sorin Tatomir

NEW MEMBERS (NON-VOTING AT THIS MEETING):
Helen Besharat
Reena Lazar
Stuart Lyon
Kim Perry
Ken Terris

REGRETS: Tom Bunting
Richard Henry
Joseph Hruda

RECORDING SECRETARY: Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	828 Cardero Street (1580 Robson Street)
2.	5733 Vine Street

1. Address:	828 Cardero Street (1580 Robson Street)
DA:	406407
Use:	Mixed (4 storeys)
Zoning:	C-5
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Rositch Hemphill & Assoc.
Owner:	Orca West Developments
Review:	First
Delegation:	Keith Hemphill
Staff:	Bob Adair

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-2)

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner, presented this application for a mixed use building at the southwest corner of Robson and Cardero Streets. The proposal is for one storey of commercial use and four storeys of residential above. Parking and loading access is from the rear at the lane, and the residential entry is through a lobby off Cardero Street. Exterior materials are a combination of painted architectural concrete with smaller areas of hardi panel and some areas of window wall.

There is a 7 ft. building line requirement on Robson Street. The C-5 zone permits retail and dwelling uses outright provided the dwelling units are above the ground floor level. The outright height is 60 ft., further controlled by some height angles taken from the property lines (for this site, along Robson, Cardero and the lane). The proposed development is below the maximum height of 60 ft. but seeks relaxation of the height angles. Floor space in C-5 is limited to 1.2 FSR for commercial uses and 2.2 FSR overall. This proposal also seeks a ten percent heritage density transfer, for a total density of 2.42 FSR. Heritage density transfer may be granted by the Development Permit Board provided it is satisfied that the additional ten percent density is handled in a way that does not generate additional negative impacts on adjoining sites or residents.

Planning issues relate to the building form, streetwall, the requested height angle relaxations, and the additional ten percent heritage density. Staff believe the proposed single storey streetwall is inadequate on Robson Street. It also compromises the potential for the adjoining sites to provide a two-storey streetwall. As well, the single storey streetwall results in more floor area in the upper residential component which in turn impacts the height angles. Staff also believe the relationship of the forms between the residential component and the podium is not as well resolved as it could be with the single storey streetwall solution.

The following specific advice of the Panel is sought:

- whether the proposal earns the height relaxations requested;
 - whether it deals well with the additional ten percent heritage density;
 - whether the single storey streetwall, and the relationship between the residential massing and the single storey base, are supportable.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Keith Hemphill, Architect, offered a more detailed description of the project, explained the design rationale and responded to questions from the Panel.
 - **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application.
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The Panel agreed this site can accommodate the additional heritage density being requested. There were no concerns about the minor encroachments into the height angles and some Panel members suggested the site could taken even more height. One Panel member thought the angles could be maintained with a somewhat more complex building form.

Most of the Panel's comments related to the streetwall. The point was made that this is an important project because it will set the pattern for the blocks yet to be developed on Robson Street, and for this reason the streetwall is a significant issue. There needs to be consistent treatment along this section of the street. Consideration should also be given to the impact on the adjacent site if they are also encouraged to go to two storeys. Most Panel members felt strongly that there needs to be a two-storey expression on Robson Street, although not necessarily a second floor. From an urban design point of view it was thought that the two-storey streetwall would hold the corner better. The additional height could be incorporated into the ground floor retail and provide a better retail space. Other suggestions were to explore residential use for the second storey, or a semi enclosed courtyard for the residential component. As well, a compromise solution was suggested, namely, for the eastern portion of the site to be at two storeys, stepping down to one storey at the western portion. Some concerns were expressed about how the two-storey expression would wrap around the corner, although it was thought a way could be found to handle this situation.

With respect to the relationship between the residential component and the base, it was thought that providing a two-storey streetwall along Robson Street would help the massing transition. Most Panel members found the resolution of the residential tower form and the single storey base to be awkward and uncomfortable. Architectural discrepancies between the detailing of the base and the upper component were noted, with a recommendation to tie the two together better. The roof of the residential component also needs more resolution.

One Panel member thought the residential massing was set too far back against the lane, compromising livability for residents of this building as well as future residents across the lane. The applicant was urged to consider shifting the core and the whole building northwards towards Robson Street. It was also noted by another Panel member who supported this view, that the current proposal results in smaller patios on the sunny south side and larger patios on the north side.

Some comments were made about the corner element being too small to be effective. A suggestion was made to strengthen it and repeat the element on the other corner.

With respect to the ground plane, an observation was made that the awnings along Cardero Street are over lawn, so they will not provide pedestrian weather protection. It was strongly recommended that the lawn be eliminated in favour of a more urban edge.

It was stressed that Robson is a very important street and its streetscape ground plane treatment needs to have the same importance as Georgia Street. The applicant and the City were encouraged to come up with some more interesting elements for the street in terms of street furnishing and finishing.

Disappointment was expressed about the landscape plan. The plants selected are not particularly urban and do not lend any urban character to the space. More design development is needed to delineate patio spaces and create privacy. More planting can be added to enhance privacy and livability of the units.

There were some concerns about the retail on Cardero and how successful it would be, particularly the end two units beyond the residential entry. Some Panel members found the residential access was not well integrated or friendly. One suggestion was to move the entry further to the south, making it more generous and with better daylight access.

One Panel member suggested greater attention be given to the livability of some of the units which are very deep on the north side. Another Panel member questioned the small size of the units. It was noted that garbage access for the residential is unresolved.

With respect to materials, one Panel member questioned the use of hardi panel, suggesting it is too suburban for a street as important as Robson Street. Panel members also recommended that the applicant be more specific about the type of architectural concrete being proposed, noting that detailing will be important for the success of the streetscape. The use of the railing was questioned, especially on Robson Street.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Hemphill noted the Planning Department encouraged the building to be pulled back from Robson Street. With respect to the streetwall, one of the difficulties of simply raising it to increase the height of the retail is that it exacerbates the height angle issues. Mr. Hemphill said he did not disagree with the notion of raising the wall with something behind, to give the appearance of a two-storey streetwall at street level. With respect to the architectural concrete, he stressed it will not be bare concrete but will be carefully coated which allows it to be properly finished. He agreed the corner "icon" could be stronger and consideration will be given to repeating this element on the other corner. Mr. Hemphill apologized for the absence of the landscape architect. He agreed with some of the comments about treatment of the streetscape itself and agreed a lot can be done to improve the treatment of the sidewalk. With respect to the retail use on Cardero, Mr. Hemphill commented that Robson Street is one of the areas where retail down the side streets is very successful.

2. Address:	5733 Vine Street
DA:	406329
Use:	Mixed (4 storeys)
Zoning:	C-2
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Rositch Hemphill & Assoc.
Owner:	H.Y. Louie Co. Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Keith Hemphill, Bruce Hemstock
Staff:	Eric Fiss

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- **Introduction:** Eric Fiss, Development Planner, presented this proposal and briefly explained why C-2 projects are brought to the Panel, to ensure a high standard of architectural design and to review height relaxations over 40 ft. As well, Mr. Fiss noted a study of the C-2 zone is being undertaken and is nearing completion. He briefly reviewed the context for this proposal, located at the corner of Vine and West 41st Avenue, at the western end of the Kerrisdale commercial district.

The application proposes a 4-storey mixed use building - a concrete commercial base with wood frame residential above (34 dwelling units). The residential entry and lobby is off Vine Street. There is an internal courtyard and 1-1/2 levels of underground parking. A building line on West 41st Avenue is a constraint on this site. The 5 ft. crossfall on the site allows consideration of a relaxation of the 40 ft. maximum height. Marginal increases above 40 ft. are being sought. Materials are brick, architectural concrete and some accent areas of siding.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the following aspects:

- residential livability;
- architectural quality;
- materials;
- height relaxation;
- landscape design.

Keith Hemphill, Architect, described his design rationale, with further input from Bruce Hemstock, Landscape Architect, on the landscape plan.

- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application and generally found it to be a very attractive project.

The Panel supported the height relaxation.

The Panel had no concerns about livability and was confident the courtyard will work quite well. One Panel member recommended treating the bedroom windows facing into the courtyard so that they are partially screened or blocked. There were some concerns about the "floating bridges" rather than a more typical galleria courtyard because they will never be gathering spaces where residents can look down onto the courtyard below. They also have a negative impact on the courtyard in terms of shadowing. On the plus side, this arrangement does avoid the interior corridor and provides for more livable floor plans and allows for cross ventilation in the units. One Panel member suggested looking

at having two lobbies which would reduce the amount of corridor space crossing the courtyard. One Panel member questioned whether the trees in the courtyard would actually achieve the size being portrayed. There was a recommendation to consider mosaic paving in the courtyard.

The applicant was commended for achieving one unified space for the retail space so that it can be used functionally for one tenant.

Some Panel members questioned the number of different colours and materials being used, suggesting simpler would be better.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Hemphill assured the Panel the courtyard will be very well lit, as is the experience with a similar courtyard project. He added, locating the walkways in the centre is very deliberate, to avoid people walking directly beside bedrooms. As well, particularly at the upper levels, it provides a transparent but obvious separator. The light from the courtyard also makes a significant difference to the light within the interior of the units. He stressed, the intent was not to achieve a highly livable courtyard, rather an alternative to a double loaded corridor arrangement.