

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: February 21, 2001

TIME: 4:00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room #1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Tom Bunting (Acting Chair)
Lance Berelowitz (excused Item 3)
Alan Endall
Bruce Hemstock (excused Item 1)
Roger Hughes (excused Item 1)
Jack Lutsky
Gilbert Raynard
Keith Ross (excused Item 3)
Sorin Tatomir

REGRETS: James Cheng
Paul Grant
Brian Palmquist

RECORDING SECRETARY: Carrie Peacock, Raincoast Ventures

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	455 Beach Avenue
2.	150 Drake Street
3.	5438 Rupert Street

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1. Address: 455 Beach
DA: 405455
Use: Residential (29 storeys)
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Hulbert Group
Owner: Pacific Place Development Co.
Review: First
Delegation: Rick Hulbert, Don Gurney, Don Wuori, Fred Roman
Staff: Ralph Segal
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner, led Panel Members in a review of the proposed development model displayed at the meeting. The landscape plan for the project was discussed and the configuration of the open space areas and adjacent tower positions was indicated. Mr. Segal discussed the effect of the uniform treatment of townhouses along the crescent, and noted that the elements of the project were designed to compliment rather than duplicate each other. The developer's intent to create a special classical space while complimenting the overall neighbourhood, was conveyed. It was further noted that the design orients a sense of curvature and form generated by the road system and park, and that the towers relate well to the identical row of townhouses on both sides of the crescent. Vehicular access off Beach Avenue was reviewed. The special corner townhouse unit was identified in the model, and its complimentary and unique character was discussed.

Mr. Segal requested comments from the Panel regarding the guideline issue of orthogonal expression, in reference to the broad concept document / illustration in terms of the public realm interface. It was noted that staff is considering how the development relates to various frontages. The integrated garden / property line in lieu of a physical barrier, running through the middle of the development was identified in the model, and potential legal issues relative to the courtyard, were discussed. It was further noted, that all aspects of the development conform to the applicable design guidelines, and meet maximum allowances. Review by the Development Permit Board and their resulting approving comments were discussed.

Rick Hulbert, representing Pacific Place Developments, noted that the development is below height restrictions, meets the floor plate allowance, and consists of slightly fewer units than permitted. Parking requirements and vehicular access to the development were discussed. The applicant reviewed the bold but simple façade, and discussed the intent of the half circle design.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Rick Hulbert, representing Pacific Place Developments, Don Gurney, The Hulbert Group, and Don Wuori, Landscape Architect, Philips Wuori Long, and Fred Roman, of Concord Pacific, were welcomed to the meeting and invited to provide comments.

Rick Hulbert commented regarding the site, noting that individual architects will be focussed on individual buildings, while maintaining the objective that the buildings compliment each other. The four distinct elements of the development were identified. It was noted that the tower serves as a gateway to both the mews and the park. The intent of the gatehouse situated at the base of the tower, to tie the elements together and address the neighbourhood, was reviewed. It was

further noted that the materials selected for the tower, are intended to provide a more slender appearance.

Don Wuori, Landscape Architect, referred to the architectural diversity in the neighbourhood, and discussed exterior materials chosen for the development. The intention of the playground component of the site to provide continuity of the public realm streetscape was discussed. It was noted that the gated semi-private pathway is intended as the only division between the sites, although the area plan does not indicate it as a public walkway system.

Mr. Hulbert displayed samples of the exterior construction materials proposed for the various components of the development. Don Gerney, The Hulbert Group, referred to the complimentary placement of materials in the development, and discussed the use of the courtyard, which provides a sense of private space. Mr. Hulbert added that the development meets all design guidelines.

The panel reviewed the model and posted drawings.

Panel's Comments: Panel Members acknowledged the strong design response to the site, and added that the development has been handled well considering the space available. It was further noted that the classical design quality reinforces the open space, yet allows for some flexibility. Positive aspects of the development, including the gatehouse, ground treatments and open spaces, were acknowledged. Additionally, the position of the tower as it faces the Crescent was discussed favourably, as it picks up on the Crescent's curve. Panel Members agreed that this is generally a good project.

Some Panel Members suggested that:

- the north and east tower facades would benefit from a stronger recognition of the orthogonal street grid that would also compliment already approved adjacent towers. On this point, several Panel members felt the tower was fine as is;
- the gatehouse expression is not strong enough to hold the corner as prominently as it should;
- consideration be given to combining the mews townhouse element with the gatehouse; and
- perhaps a reduction in the number of design elements should be considered.

One Panel Member, in agreement that the north and east elevations of the tower could more closely reflect the orthogonal street grid, suggested that the tower be shifted back a few feet, as the principle façade of the tower facing the park is too close for the townhouses to read as the principle form - the height of the tower will over-dominate the townhouses. Efforts to more carefully articulate the gatehouse were suggested.

The success of the front façade as it indicates the entrance, and the appearance of the 'knuckle', was acknowledged by a Panel Member. It was suggested that the back of the building requires resolution to orient better with the street grid. Use of fewer materials in the project was suggested. Another Panel Member added that the project is well handled, goes well with the mews, and picks up the city grid.

A Panel Member noted that although the elevations may not meet guidelines, it is compatible with the adjacent neighbourhood. It was suggested that the:

- corner house could have more character;
- mews could be improved by dealing with the driveway and drop-off differently; and

- pavement treatment or orientation should be varied to encourage pedestrian use, as the current design focuses on vehicular use of the loop.

It was suggested that consideration be given to using darker colour glass on the façade, for evening appearances, and further suggested that mechanical screening in the project is weak.

The Acting Chair summarized generally supportive comments provided by Panel Members including the strength along the crescent side, and the handling of the development, considering the site difficulties. Mr. Bunting reviewed the panel's suggestions that:

- the appearance of the north and east elevations appear slightly 'jumbled', and although it is unclear as to which grid they are on, it would not be difficult to get the orthogonal grid back;
- the northeast corner requires strengthening;
- the mews is not terminated strongly enough into the public realm. This might be addressed with paving from the mews being the dominant pattern, while the autocourt being subordinate; and
- perhaps too much is happening between the gatehouse and the entry.

Applicant's Response: Mr. Hulbert expressed gratitude for the compliments and suggestions provided by the Panel regarding the project, and reviewed the reasons for the site plan design including recognition of sunlight access. As the project evolves, Mr. Hulbert agreed to consider the notions expressed by the Urban Design Panel.

2. Address:	150 Drake Street
DA: 405573	
Use:	Elementary School
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Davidson Yuen Simpson
Owner:	City of Vancouver
Review:	First
Delegation:	John Davidson, Rob Way, Harold Neufeldt, Sarah Baker, Brenda Ng.
Staff:	Eric Fiss

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-1)

- **Introduction:** Eric Fiss, Development Planner, introduced this application, and referred to the model, illustrations and photographs displayed at the meeting. The site location was identified, and existing CD-1 zoning was discussed. The locations of the neighbouring existing daycare, David Lam Park, Columbus Tower and Townhouses, and the Beach Neighbourhood Seawall were indicated. The intent of the proposal for a two storey K-7, twelve-classroom elementary school was discussed and potential occupancy and elements surrounding the facility were reviewed. The proposed gym height was discussed, and minimal window proportion of the development was reviewed. The Vancouver School Board's (VSB) public consultation process, which included neighbouring residents, was reviewed. Applicable bylaws and guidelines relative to the exterior finishes of the development were discussed. Staff requested advice from the Panel regarding the:
 - a) overall form and integration with the daycare;
 - b) landscape design and relationship to Drake Street, David Lam Park and the Seawall Walkway (chain-link fence on timber cribbing is proposed);
 - c) architectural design: including composition, details, finishes, colours and materials (i.e. metal siding vs. brick); and
 - d) roof treatment (including the gym and light monitors).

John Davidson, Architect, noted that the outdoor area would be defined with a low enclosure. It was further noted that access to the school's interior facilities would be coordinated through VSB, and that public access to the outside area, would likely be restricted.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** John Davidson, Architect, Davidson Yeung Simpson, Rob Way, Downs / Archambault, Harold Neufeldt, Landscape Architect, and Sarah Baker and Brenda Ng, Vancouver School Board were welcomed to the meeting and invited to provide comments.

John Davidson, Architect, noted that the daycare was built prior to the school being funded. It was noted that although circulation and services will be shared, they will be operated by separate entities, and will have separate identities. Mr. Davidson added that the school has utilized the maximum allowable footprint on the one-acre site, and that the community consultation process has prompted a commitment for a two-storey maximum building height. Economic constraints placed on the project by the Ministry of Education were discussed.

Mr. Davidson referred to the large outdoor play spaces at David Lam Park. It was noted that the gymnasium is the largest single space in the building, and that trusses have been raised above the second floor roof to create interest from above and to shield adjacent residents from the noise of the air-handling units concealed in the overhang units to the west. Mr. Davidson added that the roof colour was chosen to reduce reflectivity from the area.

It was noted that there are four precincts in the area, and that the school will be situated in the David Lam precinct. Mr. Davidson added that the project's exterior materials and colours were chosen to assist in the transition between adjacent sites. The strong but muted colours were chosen for the school to identify it as an important building in the community and create visual interest in the neighbourhood - the colours were considered 'refreshing' by the majority of the neighbours during the public consultation process.

The potential second phase of the project, anticipated to be a maximum two-storey four-classroom expansion situated in the location of the existing daycare parking lot and capable of accommodating another one hundred students, was reviewed. Mr. Davidson noted that the pathways are designed to acknowledge and relate to walkways on the adjacent site, and the masonry walls with metal picket fences will be compatible with neighbouring facilities. Simple landscaping plans for the site intended to provide adequate screening were discussed. It was noted that the baked enamel finish of the building's exterior is considered a less porous material and easier than some materials to remove graffiti from.

Colours chosen for the site were reviewed, noting that blue was chosen to acknowledge nearby False Creek, green was chosen for the roof to reduce reflectivity, and ochre was chosen to compliment the other colours. Regulatory requirements for emergency exit locations were reviewed, and the Ministry of Education's requirement for 10% maximum glass use on walled areas of the school, was discussed. It was noted that children's bounds of movement are clearly defined, and will be monitored closely by VSB staff. It was noted that the existing daycare play area would not be integrated with the school play area. Sarah Baker, VSB, noted that requirements for the second phase of the school are not anticipated for many years.

The Panel reviewed the project model, posted drawings and illustrations.

Panel's Comments: Concerns were expressed regarding the choice of exterior materials, as a similarly finished facility in the False Creek area has not weathered well. It was further questioned if the design works well in the context presented. A Panel Member noted he is not against the design, considering economic constraints placed on the project. It was suggested that further consideration be given to the wall facing the bike walk and the water, as it appears blank and is visible from the seawall.

Panel Members; suggestions included:

- due to the unique location of the building and significant public presence, the wall facing the seawall walkway requires enhancement, perhaps with additional landscaping;
- the east façade facing Columbus, needs articulation through planting or metalwork, as it is also an important face;
- a higher quality of material (i.e. minimum of a concrete wall) was suggested for the timber wall along the bikeway; and
- the landscape architect should be adventuresome in planting, and should consider planting along the seawall as an extension of David Lam Park.

It was further suggested that:

- the flat portion of the roof could be an eyesore in the neighbourhood, and that an alternate treatment could be considered, although some members thought it was handled well;
- an alternative be considered to the chainlink fence around the school yard, facing the seawall;

- the general quality and appearance of materials requires more thought, as more friendly environment is required;
- paving at the back should include higher quality paving materials, in the context of the neighbourhood;
- the blast wall in front be shaped differently and softened in appearance; and
- the B.C. Hydro kiosks should be buried, if possible.

The proposed land use and the site location was supported by some Panel Members, as the development will enhance the neighbourhood. Many Panel Members expressed frustrations towards the constraints imposed by the Ministry of Education on the School Board and the community, suggested that additional funding be sought for increased openness, and also suggested the maximum 10% window regulation be relaxed.

The Acting Chair added that the compatibility with the adjacent daycare appears successful. Key concerns indicated by the panel regarding the proposed materials, and secondly the proposed colours, were recognized. Further comments provided by the Panel were noted including that:

- the project appears devoid of adequate windows;
- more attention is required to develop a varied landscape using higher quality materials;
- the chain link fence proposed is inappropriate for the site;
- consideration be given to the appropriate location of playing fields adjacent to the project; and
- the presentation did not include adequate contextual material.

Applicant's Response: Architect noted that the site has been designated since 1993, and agreed to consider the Urban Design Panel's suggestions regarding the project, including concerns expressed regarding the durability of exterior materials.

3. Address:	5438 Rupert Street
DA:	405240
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	C-2
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Andrew Cheng
Owner:	Hungston Development Ltd.
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Francis Yau
Staff:	Bob Adair

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner discussed changes to the proposal since the Urban Design Panel's previous review of the project, and added that the Planning Department believes that the applicant responded well to the Panel's suggestions regarding the Kingsway and Rupert Street facades, and the building's exterior finishes. It was noted that the strength of architectural expression could still be improved, particularly at the corner. Comments were requested from the Panel regarding the height stepping of the building and additional building height.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Francis Yau, Architect, Andrew Cheung Architects, reviewed additional changes from the initial design including the incorporation of the landscaped area into one of the ground floor units. The proposed exterior materials and colours were discussed, Mr. Yau confirmed that the proposed brick is full-dimension, and added that one step was included in the building's corridors to accommodate the stepped building design.

The Panel reviewed posted drawings and material samples.

- **Panel's Comments:** A Panel Member suggested that the applicant has addressed the Panel's concerns relative to exterior materials and the Kingsway elevation, recognized that the project's height has been minimized, and suggested the portion above 45 feet could be considered an appurtenance. Panel Members recognized general improvements to the project's design, and supported the proposed height. It was suggested the windows could include typical brick detailing above and below to provide character, and suggested the cornice line be enhanced and strengthened.

Most Panel members felt that stepping down of the third bay, closest to the corner, was not necessary. The exterior materials, brick details, and window details were discussed. It was noted that the façade needs a sense of thickness in materiality, more substance and detail. Although the colour is improved, it was suggested that it may be too near to being all brown, and colour variations should be used to reduce the monolithic quality.

The Acting Chair summarized that the Panel recognized improvements in the development and made suggestions regarding the nature of the materials used to be explored more fully. It was further noted that although the colour has shifted to darker colours, an opportunity for contrast should be considered.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Yau suggested that the colours may not be clearly interpreted in the drawings displayed, and noted that the rendering also doesn't clearly indicate the building's
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window setbacks, and balcony setbacks. Comments and suggestions of the Panel were acknowledged.