

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: February 22, 2012

TIME: N/A

PLACE: N/A

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Robert Barnes
Gregory Borowski
Jeff Corbett
Alan Endall
Helen Besharat
Jim Huffman
Arno Matis
Geoff McDonell
Scott Romses(Chair)
Norm Shearing
Alan Storey

REGRETS:
James Cheng
Jane Durante

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

- | | |
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| 1. | 1751 Manitoba Street |
| 2. | 1401 Comox Street |

BUSINESS MEETING

The business meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. and the Chair gave an overview of the Development Permit Board meeting on February 20th where 520 West Georgia Street and 775 Richards Street were presented to the Board and were approved. Chair Romses then called the meeting to order at 4:20 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. The Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. **Address:** **1751 Manitoba Street**
 DE: 415422
 Use: To construct 488 residential units, 40,000 square feet of
 retail space and 12,000 square feet of daycare.
 Zoning: CD-1
 Application Status: Complete
 Review: Second
 Architect: Walter Francl Architecture Inc.
 Owner: Salim Sayawi
 Walter Francl, Walter Francl Architecture
 Delegation: Alain Prince, Walter Francl Architecture
 Bruce Hemstock, PWL Partnership
 Diana Klein, Eco-Integration
 Staff: Dale Morgan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)**Introduction:**

Dale Morgan, Development Planner, explained that the Panel had seen the proposal a year ago as a rezoning which was supported by the Panel. The site is located in the Southeast False Creek, the Shipyards sub district between Manitoba and Columbia Streets. Mr. Morgan described the context for the area noting the centre connecting mews across the site. He explained that Planning is looking for a building that has a certain visibility as it is a prominent site. The applicant is proposing three residential towers on a 6-storey podium base with retail uses at grade and a daycare facility on the sixth level. During the last review the Panel had a few concerns. They felt the overall architectural distinctiveness should be giving great emphasis, and also enhancing the west tower because of its unique location. They also had encouraged a greater use of stronger colour to reflect the adjacent projects, and there was a concern about the bulkiness of the tower. Mr. Morgan noted that the floor plates have gotten smaller. The Panel was also concerned how the daycare drop off worked. The towers have moved back on the site and the applicant has designed the towers with a similar expression. As well, they are proposing the use of shading devices and coloured panels, as well as projecting the balconies. Mr. Morgan said he was concerned that the retail frontage was a little unrelenting and that it had very little articulation. He added that there are extensive green roofs, landscape on the podium, and they have developed a mews with townhouses at grade.

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

- Has the applicant satisfactorily addressed the design conditions of the rezoning?
- Comments are requested on the retail frontage.
- Any further comments or observations are requested.

Mr. Morgan took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Walter Francl, Architect, further described the proposal noting that they have gone to more slender tower forms. They have taken a pair of colours in each tower and then borrowed one from one tower and moved it to the next so there is a rotation and animation to the facades that they feel is playful. There has been a lot of work done with the landscaping and the treatment of the mews. The daycare is now entered from the mews, with parking in the underground for the daycare and commercial uses, as well as the residents. The daycare has been reconsidered and some of the design elements have been toned down. They have celebrated the daycare space by taking a cornice line on top of the glass to frame its outdoor space. The residential entries are either off Columbia or Manitoba Streets and the mews. Regarding sustainability, Mr. Francl noted that they are two points into LEED™ Gold. They are using a combination of balconies, louvers and screens to achieve passive shading, particularly on the west elevation. The material palette is more animated with tinted glazing, aluminum louvers, a metal panel system, and Swiss pearl for some of the coloured panels.

Bruce Hemstock, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans for the project. The West 2nd Avenue frontage and the laneway are part of the SEFC guidelines. They carried the patterning from the Playhouse site right through the laneway and then into the project. The horizontal banding is a continuation of the material from that other project. They used recycled wood docks that come out of the ground plane and create an interesting element around the residential areas. There are lots of places to sit or park a bike. Mr. Hemstock indicated that they are going to be able to achieve 50% green coverage on the site. The courtyards are connected to interior amenity spaces and include recycled timber decking, open green space, community gardens, barbeque areas and fire pits. On the large roof deck there is a community garden and a place for kids to play. The daycare space has a lot of natural materials and extensive green roofs are planned on all the roof areas.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Design development to the tower framing devices to acknowledge the prominence of the corner;
- Design development to the retail frontage;
- Reconsider the unit layout in the units facing the lane;

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a significant improvement from the rezoning.

The Panel thought the project was heading in the right direction and agreed that the position of the tower was acceptable, as well as the general massing. Several Panel members had some overlook and liveability concerns in the laneway tower locations which they felt could easily be improved. The Panel thought the architectural expression and language was interesting but not unfamiliar. One Panel member noted that there have been a number of projects recently that the Panel has reviewed with framing devices, and it was noted that the framing devices of the towers seemed to be the same proportion on both towers, and could be modified to create more variety. It was suggested that one could be larger, or gets developed in a way that acknowledges the prominence of the corner. Most of the Panel agreed that the corner of Columbia Street needed a big element that ties the corner together. Another Panel member thought there was too much glazing on the west elevation and suggested improving the tower through view angles and orientation.

The Panel thought the lane added an interesting component in the project with the proposed wine cellars. One Panel member thought this element could be better expressed on the interior of the building. The Panel also thought the retail frontage needed more attention, as

they thought it was rather bland and didn't make for a nice pedestrian experience. One Panel member suggested developing a retail program from a marketing standpoint. It was also suggested that some retail could be open to the lane to better enliven it. Another Panel member noted that the two buildings across from each other in the lane are very close to each other, and suggested the applicant might want to reconsider the unit layout and have the living room on the lane and not the bedrooms.

The Panel thought the roof appurtenances were more interesting at rezoning and had lost an element of playfulness. Several Panel members were concerned with only one entrance to the 400 stall underground parking. One Panel member suggested moving the parkade entrance to the middle of the site so people don't have to drive a full city block to get to the entrance.

The Panel thought the landscape plans were well done and that the mews had been well thought out and well developed. One Panel member thought the lane needed further attention to improve the pedestrian experience. The Panel supported the location of the daycare and thought the outdoor play area was well done. One Panel member thought the lane could be improved where the daycare drop off is located. Another Panel member mentioned that the north courtyard was shaded by the podium and could use something to brighten it up.

The Panel thought that LEED™ Gold was supportable. However, one Panel member noted that the City will be asking for more in the way of energy points in the future and suggested that at permitting the applicant may need more detailed work on some of the glass facades.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Francl thanked the panel for their good observations and said he was happy to work on improving the design

2.	Address:	1401 Comox Street
	DE:	RZ/413347
	Use:	To construct a 22-story residential tower providing 186 market rental units. A maximum density of 7.14 FSR and a maximum height of 200 feet is proposed.
	Zoning:	RM-5 to CD-1
	Application Status:	Rezoning/Complete
	Review:	Third
	Architect:	Henriquez Partners Architects
	Owner:	Westbank Projects
	Delegation:	Gregory Henriquez, Henriquez Partners Architects Frank Stebner, Henriquez Partners Architects Peter Kruek, Durante Kruek Landscape Architects Ian Gillespie, Westbank Projects
	Staff:	Anita Molaro and Karen Hoesse

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (10-0)

Introduction:

Karen Hoesse, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a concurrent rezoning and development permit application. The site is currently vacant as the church that was previously located on the site was demolished last year. The rezoning application proposes to increase the density and height beyond what is permitted under the current zoning. The intent is to construct market rental housing, which can be considered under the STIR (Short Term Incentives for Rental) program. STIR provides incentives to encourage development of new purpose-built market rental housing with the intent of making these projects more economically viable. Incentives available include: a reduced parking started (not requested in this proposal), waived DCLs, concurrent processing of the rezoning and development permit and bonus density.

Ms. Hoesse noted that the West End neighbourhood has been approved for a Community Planning program. An Interim Rezoning Policy allows continued consideration of rezoning applications previously received. She added that all rezonings are subject to the Greener Building Policy for Rezonings.

Anita Molaro, Development Planner, further described the proposal at the corner of Broughton and Comox Streets. The site is located in the RM-5 zone and the intent is to permit a variety of residential development with an emphasis placed on achieving development with respect to streetscape character, open spaces, view retention, sunlight access and privacy. The additional intent of the RM-5 district is to require development suited to families with children.

Ms. Molaro described the context for the area and explained that this part of the west end neighbourhood is generally comprised of low rise building with high rises on the block to the north.

The proposal is to increase the density from 1.5 FSR to 7.14 FSR. The RM-5 zone allows for a discretionary increase in height of up to 190 feet. The proposal is slightly beyond this height limit by one floor at 200 feet. Under the RM-5 Guidelines, the site qualifies for a tower of up to 190 feet provided there are no other tall buildings on the same half block within 400 feet and there needs to be a minimum of 80 feet separation to any other higher buildings.

Ms. Molaro explained that it is unusual to bring an application back to the Panel after it received support at a previous review but because of the nature of the changes, staff wanted to receive the Panel's advice. The Panel had previously supported the general premise of a tower on this site stating that it "was an appropriate form and expression for the neighbourhood". The Panel also previously supported the density and tower form, however, they saw the proposal as a massive building on a small site. The concerns the Panel raised were: to consider a smaller floor-plate and a taller tower; consider more exploration for passive design considerations; and consider the amount of space on the balconies. Ms. Molaro explained that the size of the floor is unchanged at 5,920 square feet. She noted that the applicant has made some significant changes to the design including reducing the total height from 226 feet to 200 feet. The amenity space was previously on the top of the building and has been relocated to the ground floor, and the number of residential floors has remained the same at twenty-two. In the previous proposal included a stand alone ground oriented townhouse component was located on the west side of the site that also included a community facility. This part of the proposal has changed, and the townhouses have increased from four to six units and have been incorporated into the base of the tower. This frees up the ground plane to allow for the tower to shift over, increasing the setback along Broughton Street. There is still an 80 foot separation with the Nelson Place tower across the lane. The changes allow for more daylight access onto Broughton Street and the adjacent mini park. A children's play area and community garden is planned in the setback.

The applicant is proposing an optional public realm improvement (that is not directly linked to the RZ/Development application). They propose the "greening" of Broughton Street, between Comox Street and the lane to the north of the site, by closing the street and adding more green space. Ms. Molaro explained that staff are still reviewing the vehicular implications around this option and requested the Panel's advice.

She added that since this proposal is a concurrent application, both a rezoning and a development permit application, this would be the last time the Panel will review the proposal.

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

Rezoning application attributes:

- distribution of the density, massing and height including (noting UDP commentary and support on previous proposals), taking into consideration the following:
 - height (reduced height of 200 ft.)
 - density (reduced density of 7.14)
 - overall building massing within the neighbourhood context
 - view impacts from nearby tower(s)
 - tower shift and shaping to minimize shadow impacts on the Broughton Mini Park

Development application attributes:

- overall architectural expression within the neighbourhood context
 - proposed materials quality
 - sustainability attributes (LEED Silver)
 - detailed landscape treatments
- including quality/integration of the 8.8 m landscape setback on Comox Street as public open space
- wall (property line) interface with adjacent existing building

Advice from the panel on the proposed optional ‘greening’ of Broughton Street, between Comox Street and the lane to the north of the site, by closing the street and adding more green space (note that this option is not directly linked to the Rezoning/Development Application):

- are their other urban design issues that should be considered

Ms. Hoese and Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

Applicant’s Introductory Comments:

Gregory Henriquez, Architect, further described the proposal and explained to the Panel the history of the proposal. He noted that the building has increased setbacks on all sides and that there is now a green space that will be sensitive to the building to the west and an increased public open space on Comox Street. In terms of the expression, daylight access has been increased on the mini park with the shaping of the tower. The tower has an architectural concrete frame on the north and east facing facades. They have extended the balconies and overhangs to deal with some of the solar gain on the south and west façades. Mr. Henriquez added that they have worked with their mechanical consultants to make sure they perform to a LEED™ Gold energy target instead of Silver. In terms of the height, they eliminated a large element on the roof, which was an amenity space, and have added an under-slung elevator to help reduce the overall height of the building.

Peter Kruek, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans. He mentioned that the landscape is all on the ground plane and divided into two distinct areas, with the more public side and the semi private/public areas. Along Comox Street a children’s play area is proposed, along with a community garden and benches along the walkway. Along Broughton Street there is a transition to the townhouse patios. There is also a garden space with community space that will be shared with the patio spaces.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Consider extending the red fin to the ground;
- Consider a more detailed expression on the guard rail or upgrade the material choice;
- Conduct a traffic study to determine if Broughton Street can be closed;
- Design development to connect the entry to Comox Street;
- Design development to improve the solar shading on the west façade.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thanked the applicant for giving a history of how the project was developed.

The Panel supported the height, density and massing and most of the Panel would have supported the previously proposed higher height. Most of the Panel members thought the shaping of the building was more important than the height for shadowing on the park which they felt had been improved. They also thought the overlook condition was much better with the amount of green space planned around the tower base, giving the project a “tower in the park” feel complimentary to the West End. The Panel thought there were some interesting architectural moves on the project. One Panel member thought the expression was strong at the top of the tower and suggested that could be expressed at the base. Most of the Panel supported the material and colour palette especially the coloured tiles as they thought they would maintain their brightness over time. They particularly liked the use of the stain glass windows from the church that was previously on the site. However, a number of Panel members thought the red fin that stopped on the 4th floor should come to ground.

The Panel supported the plans for in-suite bike storage, and thought it was an innovative solution.

A couple of Panel members thought the design might be too close to a 1960's or 1970's rental building expression. They suggested that the guard rail component could be detailed differently or upgraded to bring in a more detailed contemporary expression. One Panel member suggested the applicant find a way to bring some delight into the railings as they were an important architectural element.

The Panel supported the landscape component and thought the greening of Broughton Street was exciting and was a fantastic amenity for the neighbourhood. Some of the Panel did not support closing Broughton Street to traffic. They suggested that a traffic analysis needed to be done. One Panel member thought the Comox Street side did not have a strong relationship between the entry and the street, and thought the front door could reveal itself and step down through the garden as it needs either a more physical or visual connection. Also, urban agriculture has a winter condition and needs to have plantings that offer a green edge in winter. It was also suggested that on the southeast corner some seating be included as this is a space where people will congregate.

The Panel supported the applicant applying for LEED™ Gold. A couple of Panel members were concerned that the balconies weren't doing much for solar shading on the west façade but worked better on the south. A couple of Panel members suggested reducing the percentage of window openings on the west.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Henriquez thanked everyone for their comments and said he was willing will do something more with the railings.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.