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## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

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**DATE:** February 24, 1999

**TIME:** 4.00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Committee Room #1, City Hall

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Joseph Hruda (Chair)  
Patricia Campbell  
Per Christoffersen (excused Item #1)  
Paul Grant  
Roger Hughes  
Sean McEwan  
Keith Ross  
Norman Shearing (excused Item #1)  
Joe Werner

**REGRETS:** Sheldon Chandler  
James Cheng  
Gilbert Raynard

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. 601 Canada Place Way (Phase 1)
2. 623 West 8th Avenue

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1. Address: 601 Canada Place Way (Phase 1)  
DA: 403959  
Use: Hotel (41 storeys)  
Zoning: CD-1  
Application Status: Complete  
Architect: Musson Cattell Mackey  
Owner: Vancouver Port Corporation  
Review: First  
Delegation: Mark Whitehead, Maurice Pez, Dave Galpin, Alan Endall  
Staff: Ralph Segal
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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)**

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner, introduced this application. In December 1998, City Council approved a comprehensive development agreement which is equivalent to a rezoning with a form of development and a number of design conditions attached. The site has been separated into a number of components, each of which will come forward as the equivalent of complete development applications. The first such submission is the hotel component which is the subject of today's review. Subsequent submissions will include the convention hall and associated spaces, and parking; the plaza; and the retail building. Each of these applications will be considered by the Development Permit Board.

The Panel last saw this project on January 13, 1999, in a workshop. Some of the issues identified were to ensure that the southeast corner encourages a way through that will be achievable in Phase 2; to ensure strong pedestrian connections to the Seabus; and to provide some diversity in the treatment of the arcade. The Panel considered there had been considerable improvement to the treatment of the podium. Areas in which the Panel's comments are sought on this submission relate to the roofscape, the water side treatment, treatment on the easterly edge, and the porte cochere.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** David Galpin briefly reviewed the project background and funding sources, and members of the design team described various aspects of the proposal.
- **Panel's Comments:** After reviewing the models and posted materials, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application. The applicant team was complimented on the high quality of the presentation and positive response to the Panel's previous advice.

The Panel supported the proposed massing, and found the tower massing to be particularly well handled.

There remained some disappointment that the podium roof was not accessible for the public to be able to explore some aspect of it and experience the overview of the plaza. Most Panel members felt it would still be desirable if some public access could be achieved, if programmatically possible.

There was also a suggestion that an earlier, curved form solution for the roof might have been more successful in providing some contrast between the various disparate elements of the massing on the site. While the garden is a handsome visual design that will be enjoyed by the patrons of the hotel, it could well be replaced by a more sculptural roof form that honestly expresses the large span of the ballroom.

The Panel focused much of its commentary on the pedestrian environment around the edges of the

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building. The vertical access from the bus drop-off area on Canada Place Way to the Seabus connection should be carefully considered. Every opportunity should be taken to significantly improve bus transportation for the public and to take advantage of the vertical linkages from Seabus. There was a suggestion to consider how the canopy at the entry space to the hotel could interact with the diagonal arcade, perhaps extending across it. There was also a suggestion to consider introducing a public art element to provide some celebration of this important access point to the waterfront. There was some concern expressed about the need to ensure adequate weather protection along the water's edge at the level of the "scallop". The Panel found the scalloped form of the landscaped elements which reflect the elements of the convention centre below to be very well handled. There were some questions about the termination of the arcade along the west side of the hotel and its connection to the seabus route, which it is presumed will be dealt with later as part of the seabus terminal component.

The Panel supported the porte cochere at the end of Cordova but there was some uncertainty about its scale, whether it should be larger or smaller. One Panel member also questioned the separation of buses and taxis from other vehicles and whether it would be more interesting to express it as one element and make it more legible for arrivals. There was one strong suggestion to increase the size of the fountain to give a much stronger presence to provide a balance to the predominance of buses and taxis etc.

The Panel noted the treatment of the Canada Place Way edge as seen from the city will need to be carefully handled in further design development. Given this edge will be exposed for some time it will need to be looked at carefully in its detailing. There was some concern about whether the arcade elements on the west side of the hotel would provide adequate weather protection.

It was suggested that Canada Place Way needs to be studied as an entire street to ensure continuity along the whole frontage. It was found somewhat weak and fragmented at present. Canada Place Way could give some strength as a public space with stronger treatment and the use of trees as a means of reinforcing the edge with its disparate forms. It was generally felt there needed to be greater softness on many of the edges of the project.

It was felt that a gesture should be made in the early stage at the southeast corner to give a strong indication that this is going to form part of an important connection to the waterfront in the future. It was suggested that the nature of that link should perhaps be an open link as opposed to enclosed as currently indicated.

There was a recommendation to give greater emphasis to the beacon on top of the tower, to make it very dramatic. Also, to confirm its visibility from various vantage points.

One Panel member questioned the appropriateness of locating the sports bar in the plaza, suggesting the restaurant might be more suitable.

**Applicant's Response:** Mr. Galpin noted that many of the Panel's comments relate to areas outside this particular application. Regarding the experience of overview of the plaza from the hotel roof, Mr. Galpin noted it is anticipated there will be an opportunity for an overview of the plaza from a publicly accessed roof of the retail pavilion that will provide the same view opportunity. It will be an equally dramatic view looking down on the plaza and to the harbour beyond. The Canada Place Way will be studied and is intended to be treated as an urban edge. It will have a fully landscaped edge, similar to the treatment of the Cordova connector to maintain visual continuity. The south side of Canada Place Way is the south edge of the parking structure and will form part of one of the future applications. It will be dealt with as a visual edge to the project itself. There is a substantial public art budget of just under \$1 million that will be distributed through the project and will be clarified in the future. The east end, particularly the pedestrian experience, will be dealt with in phase two. It is anticipated that

the pedestrian experience will be allowed to continue down to the water's edge and terminate at the Cambie Street level on grade. The entire north edge of the facility is public realm, including the floating walkway, and direct pedestrian linkages from the east are being considered and will be built into the project. Weather protection, particularly that throughout the colonnade, will be the subject of further exploration and will form part of future applications, likely culminating with the plaza application showing the colonnade in its entirety.

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2. Address:	623 West 8th Avenue
DA:	403940
Use:	Residential (3 storeys/64 units & 7 storeys/62 units)
Zoning:	C-3A
Application Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	W. T. Leung
Owner:	Anchor Club Development Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Wing Ting Leung, Andrew Rozen, Peter Kreuk
Staff:	Bob Adair

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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-2)

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner, presented this application. The proposed development comprises two building components, a 3-storey lowrise facing West 8th Avenue and a 7-storey midrise at the corner of 8th Avenue and Ash Street, containing 67 and 76 units, respectively. The two components are connected by a 1½-storey common lobby. There are specific guidelines which were applied to this site when it was rezoned from FM-1 to C-3A in 1995. These guidelines restrict the height to a maximum of 30 ft. on the westerly 200 ft of the site. A public open space plaza is proposed between the two buildings, with access from it to the central lobby. The majority of units are one-bedroom, with some studios and one-bedroom+den. High quality materials are proposed, primarily brick and concrete with some accent in Renaissance stone and granite. Outright height and density in C-3A are 30 ft. and 1.0 FSR. Relaxations are being sought for a height of about 86 ft. for the midrise building and 2.72 FSR. The proposal was changed considerably during the inquiry process, from congregate seniors housing (Special Needs Residential Facility) to multiple dwelling.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the requested relaxations, noting that increases in height and density have to be “earned” in the C-3A zone. In addition, the Panel’s comments are also sought on the relationship of the ground floor areas to the street in terms of its pedestrian interest, on the massing of the midrise building, impact on the views down Ash Street, and on the overall massing of the development with respect to its internal proportions and massing.

- **Applicant’s Opening Comments:** Wing Ting Leung, Architect, explained that at present the project is intended to be a rental building although there is a possibility it could again revert to a seniors independent living complex, depending on financing. With respect to the proposed public plaza, Mr. Leung said it is not unlike the plaza at the corner of Broadway and Fir, which provides some urban green and park benches.
- **Panel’s Comments:** After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel supported this application.

Panel members generally supported the overall massing of the project and particularly liked the articulation of the upper floors with the introduction of the strong element at the fifth level. There were, however, some concerns that the east and west elevations are too complex and over articulated.

They seem out of character when compared with the rather classic simplicity of the north and south elevations.

The Panel found the choice of materials to be excellent although it was emphasized that close attention will need to be paid to the detailing. It was felt that the ultimate success of this building will depend heavily on the detailing of the metal panels in particular. One comment was that the lowrise massing suffers from an appliqué of the metal portions of the building.

There was consensus from the Panel with respect to the street edge treatment along 8th and Ash in that there needs to be a strong sense of identity to the building entries at street level. Separate at-grade entrances would definitely contribute to animation at street level. There was also strong consensus about the viability of the plaza in its location and form. The Panel did not believe it would function as a public plaza and noted generally a lack of clarity with respect to what is public and what is private space. Some suggestions were that the plaza would benefit from having a wider frontage, more open to the public, and a stronger definition of where the private space begins, possibly using some structure that clearly defines what is public and what is private. It was also thought that the fountain is located such that it actually reinforces the street edge and creates a barrier rather than inviting the public into the space. A strong suggestion for the landscape treatment was to consider reinstating the “landscape legacy” of Fairview Slopes with some strong form and urban linear landscape, together with the plaza, that could become an attractive theme and identity along 8th Avenue. The Panel felt strongly that this is clearly an area that needs much more study.

There was concern expressed about the location of the entries to the two building components, with suggestions to reconsider the centralized common entry point. Some Panel members recommended a direct entry for the tower either off 8th or Ash, especially since this is now a rental building as opposed to the original program for seniors congregate housing. It was felt the single entry off the courtyard reduces ground level animation of both buildings.

Further analysis was also recommended at the southeast corner of the tower, at the point where there are two units coming right to the property line. It was suggested there is an opportunity to extend the landscape along 8th and Ash, encircling the building with a stronger sense of greenness and publicness along that edge.

There were concerns about security at the lane edge in terms of access to the private patios of the sunken units at the back.

The Panel generally found it to be a handsome project but were concerned that it meet the guideline criteria with respect to the quality of the open space.

- **Applicant’s Response:** Mr. Leung noted that many of the issues discussed by the Panel are areas they have also been considering since the project program was changed from congregate to rental housing. He agreed that, as a rental apartment unit development, it is necessary to introduce the street level entrances because they will animate the street front edges. He also agreed there is a natural entrance to the tower on the south elevation. The plaza also needs to be reconsidered, and the intent is to achieve a plaza similar to that at 8th/Fir.