

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** February 25, 1998

**TIME:** N/A

**PLACE:** N/A

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Joyce Drohan (Chair)  
Patricia Campbell (present for #1 and #2 only)  
Per Christoffersen (excused #2 and #4)  
Geoff Glotman (excused #1, present for #2 - #4)  
James Hancock  
Joseph Hruda  
Peter Kreuk (excused #1 and #4)  
Jim McLean  
Norman Shearing  
Denise Taylor Ellis

**REGRETS:**  
Sheldon Chandler  
Peter Wreglesworth

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:**  
Carol Hubbard

### ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

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|----|-----------------------------|
| 1. | 900 Burrard Street          |
| 2. | 1238 Burrard Street         |
| 3. | 1925 West 33rd Avenue       |
| 4. | 2263 Redbud (Arbutus Lands) |
| 5. | 1995 East 51st Avenue       |

**1. Address: 900 Burrard Street**

DA: 402926

Use: Hotel (23s-360)/Residential (23s-100 units)/Office (15s)

Zoning: CD-1

Application Status: Complete

Architect: Busby &amp; Associates

Owner: Good Fortune Investments Ltd.

Review: Second (First as Workshop)

Delegation: Peter Busby, Robert Lemon, Jane Durante

Staff: Ralph Segal/Mike Kemble

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-1)****Introduction:**

The Development Planner, Mike Kemble, presented this complete application, first reviewed by the Panel in December 1997, in a workshop. This L-shaped site is located just north of the Electra building and contains the heritage Dal Grauer substation. In addition to a 23-storey hotel, a 23-storey residential tower and a 15-storey office tower, the application proposes to refurbish and add to the substation. The CD-1 zoning on the site allows up to 8.148 FSR. There is also a covenant on title which indicates a maximum of 7.5 FSR which can be increased to the maximum subject to satisfactory compliance with the guidelines. Mr. Kemble briefly reviewed the site context, the history of the zoning and the key aspects of the guidelines. The principal concerns raised by the Panel in the December workshop related to the massing on Hornby Street. There was mixed response to the overall density. The main change to the scheme since that time is that the office tower has been lowered and reconfigured. Following a description of the project and proposed materials, the Development Planner noted the following particular areas in which the Panel's comments are sought:

- response to the guidelines with respect to: public views to the Electra; private views from the Electra; Hornby Street massing;
- Burrard Street entry treatment;
- landscaping and grade level street interfaces;
- whether the additional density has been successfully accommodated.

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Peter Busby, Architect, noted the project has responded to the Panel's previous concern that the buildings should reflect the two different building types. He briefly described the proposed materials. With respect to the revised scheme, Mr. Busby noted the trade-off in the response to the guidelines is to show more of the vertical character of the Electra. The additional density (from 7.5 to 8.148 FSR) is taken up in three separate locations: approximately one third in the basement, for servicing, one third in the lane behind the Dal Grauer and one third in an additional hotel floor. Mr. Busby reviewed the response to date from Electra residents. Robert Lemon spoke briefly to the heritage aspects of the proposal, and Jane Durante described the landscape plan.

**Panel's Comments:**

After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel supported this application and complimented the applicant on the general integrity of the project and choice of materials. Several Panel members commented on the thoroughness and high quality of the presentation, and a number of statements were made about it being a very

exciting proposal. A comment was also made that the proposed massing is a refreshing departure from the massing models seen to date in this part of the downtown.

There was mixed response regarding public views to the Electra building. One opinion was that the 1994 guideline massing was superior to this proposal while another felt it was an improvement that sets off the Electra quite well. The proponent for the 1994 model felt there was insufficient justification for deviating from the guidelines.

Concerning private views from the Electra, some strong concerns were expressed about the 80 ft. separation between the Electra and the office tower in terms of privacy and overlook issues. At the same time, there was the opinion offered that the 80 ft. separation is adequate and to be expected in downtown locations such as this.

Concerns were also expressed about the separation between the office tower and the new residential tower. Although the bookend concept was supported there was a question as to whether the residential and office towers should be connected in some way, either visually or through architectural means. It was considered to be very tight as proposed, noting also that an odd-shaped floor plan has resulted for some of the residential units. Two Panel members expressed concern regarding the overall composition, suggesting that a firmer corner and flanking buildings as more subordinate elements would help to resolve this.

With respect to the Hornby Street massing, some comments were made about the massing being somewhat overwhelming. One suggestion was to put more density at the corner and less at the sides. Another comment suggested there should be a lower element expressed along Hornby at the same height as the base of the Electra.

There were opposing views expressed about the Burrard Street entry. One opinion was that the diagonal wall creates a visual and physical obstacle to the entry, while another thought the setback provided a good balance to the other end of the block and also helps set off the Dal Grauer substation.

The Panel was generally very supportive of the landscape plan. Several Panel members were concerned about the impact of taxis, buses and private vehicles in the breezeway, given it will likely be very busy and congested. There was also a recommendation to carry through the urban landscape into the breezeway area rather than trying to create a different design theme. A thorough wind analysis was also recommended for the breezeway area. With respect to treatment of the Dal Grauer, it was felt greater consideration needed to be given to it being a major public amenity. It was also noted that some structural strengthening may be necessary.

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2. **Address: 1238 Burrard Street**  
DA: 402948  
Use: Mixed (14s-100 units)  
Zoning: DD  
Application Status: Complete  
Architect: Kasian Kennedy  
Owner: The Fuyisun Group  
Review: First  
Delegation: Michael McDonald, Steven Sinclair  
Staff: Ralph Segal
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### **EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-3)**

#### **Introduction:**

The Development Planner, Ralph Segal, presented this complete application. There is an existing development permit for this site for an earlier proposal which was partially constructed but did not proceed. The current scheme proposes to retain most of the existing foundation for this new proposal which is for a 2-storey commercial base with residential above. Staff's main issue relates to the interface with the adjacent office tower (approx. 45 ft. separation). Improved lane interface will be sought, but generally staff support the proposal.

#### **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Michael McDonald, Architect, explained the previous project was built to the second level and the ground level is completely in place. He noted they have been working closely with Planning staff and the structural engineers for the building to try and fit a tower onto the existing structure without having to demolish the parkade which was completed in 1995. Mr. McDonald acknowledged that the setback from the office tower has been an issue from the onset of the project, given the constraints of fitting the tower onto the existing floorplate. He stressed the building is intended for rental accommodation.

#### **Panels Comments:**

After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel supported this application and was generally complimentary of the scheme, noting it is a considerable improvement over the earlier proposal. The intended use of rental accommodation was strongly supported.

The severe constraints imposed on this project were recognized with respect to placement of the tower. It was stressed that from a purely urban design point of view it is clearly in the wrong place and should probably be on the south boundary, if anywhere. However, given the constraints, it was felt the applicants had done quite a commendable job on the northwest and northeast units. There were major concerns expressed about the centre bachelor units, however, and a strong recommendation to consider reorienting them to have an east-west aspect, projecting them from the main facade of the building and providing a more solid expression on the north and south facades.

It was felt the landscape could contribute to the buffering between the two buildings to help separate and provide some visual relief. Given that shading is not an issue since the building will already be shaded by the office tower, it was noted that tall conifers could screen up to four floors. Additional landscaping on the roof decks was recommended for the visual amenity of the office tower. It was also suggested that the amenity area should be relocated to the south, in association with some landscaped patios.

Finally, the high profile space occupied by the mechanical room was questioned. One Panel member suggested that a habitable space at the top of the Burrard Street elevation would be more appropriate.

**Applicant's Response:**

Mr. McDonald agreed that moving the bachelor units out would be an improvement and this will be further discussed with the Planning Department. He explained the design of the mechanical penthouse is intended to provide some verticality to the building.

3. **Address: 1925 West 33rd Avenue**  
Use: Residential (2-9 storeys - approx. 750 units)  
Zoning: CD-1 Text Amendment  
Application Status: Rezoning  
Architect: Paul Merrick  
Owner: Arbutus Gardens Holdings Ltd.  
Review: First  
Delegation: John Northey, Paul Merrick, Graham Fligg,  
Bruce Hemstock  
Staff: Rob Whitlock
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### **EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-3)**

#### **Introduction:**

Rob Whitlock, Rezoning Planner, presented this application to amend an existing CD-1 zone. Amendments to the zoning were made in 1993 and 1994 to allow an increase in FSR from the existing 0.68 to 0.75 by adding a third storey to five of the existing seven apartment buildings, but this additional development never occurred. The proposed text amendment will enable the replacement of the existing 302 rental residential units with 110 rental units and up to 640 market units. This large redevelopment would take place in phases over six years, allowing existing residents to move within the project or to be relocated elsewhere, for which rental and purchase incentives will be offered. The plan follows existing building footprints as a means to preserve as much as possible of the mature vegetation and trees on the site. Over 90 percent of the existing trees will be retained. The proposed FSR is 1.45. Building heights will range from 2 storeys along 33rd Avenue and up to 9 storeys elsewhere on the site. Parking will be accommodated in two levels of underground parking with access restricted generally to existing access points around the site. A thorough public involvement process has been undertaken by the applicant. Individual phases of the project will be reviewed by the Panel at development application stage.

#### **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

John Northey briefly reviewed the project rationale, noting the existing units are now obsolete. Paul Merrick, Architect, described the proposal, stressing the value that has been placed on the established landscape on the site. Bruce Hemstock reviewed the landscape plan.

#### **Panels Comments:**

After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel supported this rezoning application and supported densification of this site. The applicant was commended for the efforts made to retain the trees and to sensitively accommodate the density within the existing building footprints.

Support for the proposed distribution of the density over the site was not unanimous. One suggestion was to move the higher density to the northwest corner, and another was to have more 5- or 6-storey buildings in order to reduce the footprints and offset the impact of the density.

The Panel had a serious concern about the lack of address for many of the units and stressed the importance of ease of access for both residents and visitors. In such a high density environment it is important for buildings to have identity on streets.

The Panel felt there needed to be some kind of community focus or "heart" in this very large site which is almost a neighbourhood in itself. A shared amenity such as a recreational facility was suggested by several Panel members and there was one suggestion for an open space focus. As well, a recommendation was made to consider collaborating with other developments in the area

to look at a shared neighbourhood recreation facility. It was also noted that a site of this size could well be broken down into precincts. The Panel cautioned that the architectural treatment, despite the variety of heights, could become somewhat relentless without some differentiation of character.

**Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Merrick stressed that this proposal is intended to portray only use, form and density at this stage and the Panel will have the opportunity to review each phase at development application stage. Regarding the distribution of density on the site, he acknowledged there may be some justification for considering greater density further north. The apparent lack of addresses may be the result of insufficient information. He explained there are essentially seven groupings on the site, each of which has its own address. With respect to amenity, the intent is for a common space within each increment of the project, which is in response to the wishes of the current residents.

**4. Address: 2263 Redbud (Arbutus Lands)**

DA: 402993

Use: Residential (4 storeys - 77 units)

Zoning: CD-1

Application Status: Complete

Architect: Downs/Archambault &amp; Partners

Owner: Greystone Properties

Review: First

Delegation: Barry Downs, Renee Rose, Al Johnson, Chris Stary, Bob McKay

Staff: Eric Fiss

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)****Introduction:**

Eric Fiss, Development Planner, presented this application in the Arbutus Lands Neighbourhood. He briefly reviewed the history of the site, noting it was the subject of an extensive planning process over a number of years. An important aspect of this neighbourhood is the greenway which follows the former 11th Avenue right-of-way and many of the buildings front both on the greenway or new public and private streets. Permitted FSR for this site is 2.1 with bonuses for amenity space in a central link area on the ground floor. Maximum permitted height is 50 ft. Areas in which the Panel's comments are sought relate to: how this proposal responds to the form of development illustrated in the CD-1; size and quality of the semi public courtyard and gardens on the south side of the site; and livability of the units, how they relate to grade and the relationship of the building edge to the street.

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Renee Rose, Greystone Properties, provided a brief overview of the context of this development. The building will comprise large, one level suites with a major focus on common amenities (lounge, kitchen, fireplace, meeting room, exercise room, etc.). Barry Downs, Architect, added the central entry garden will be an important feature of the project. The intent is for a subtle, garden oriented development.

**Panels Comments:**

After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application and congratulated the applicant on a very well worked out scheme.

There were only two minor concerns noted. Firstly, the roof form over the amenity building might be reconsidered in terms of its replicating the adjacent cornice element. Secondly, with respect to the added constraints that this project has placed on the courtyard, although it is well worked out and will be a successful, sunny space, it is much smaller than originally envisaged in the master plan.

Overall, the Panel was very complimentary about the project and looked forward to seeing it built.



5. **Address: 1995 East 51st Avenue**  
DA: 402801  
Use: Mixed (3 storeys - 11 units)  
Zoning: CD-1  
Application Status: Complete  
Architect: DCYT Architect  
Owner: Teemway Seafood Company Ltd.  
Review: First  
Delegation: Douglas Chung, Keith Hui  
Staff: Mary Beth Rondeau
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#### **EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (0-7)**

##### **Introduction:**

Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this application. The site is located on Victoria Drive at 51st Avenue. The proposal is for commercial on the ground floor and two storeys of accessible residential units above. The Panel saw this proposal twice at the rezoning stage when it was not supported. Ms. Rondeau briefly outlined the main conditions of the rezoning.

##### **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Douglas Chung, Architect, stressed that the residential units are accessible to disabled and senior residents, which is a major benefit to the community. He described the project and the changes made since the rezoning. He explained they have simplified the form and noted that good articulation and detailing will help the design of the project.

##### **Panels Comments:**

After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel did not support this application and generally felt that the comments and suggestions made at the rezoning stage still applied.

The Panel remained concerned that the building is over articulated and suffers from a combination of different architectural vocabularies. The Panel was concerned about the number of projections on the roof and the false fronted peaked roof elements. A more neighbourly response to the adjacent single family neighbourhood was strongly recommended. Expressing the lower two storeys separately from the top storey of the building would go some way to mitigating the impact. The response on the lane side of the building is not satisfactory and still requires significant simplification. A much more residential character is called for.

The Panel was also seriously concerned about the appropriateness of the materials chosen for this project, both in terms of the neighbourhood context and for their long term durability. Given its fairly high profile corner location and proximity to a residential neighbourhood, materials that are much more neighbourhood friendly would be more appropriate. Adjustments to the materials and some of the decorative elements could be done without significant cost and could result in achieving a good building.

##### **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Chung said he appreciated some of the Panel's comments but felt the building had been simplified in response to the Panel's previous concerns. With respect to materials, Mr. Chung explained the difficulties of achieving a viable project which will be marketed for senior and disabled residents. Vinyl siding was selected as a means of reducing cost without sacrificing the architecture.