

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: February 25, 2008

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
John Wall, Chair
Tom Bunting
Maurice Pez
Douglas Watts
Richard Henry
Bill Harrison
Albert Bicol
Martin Nielsen
Mark Ostry
Gerry Eckford
Bob Ransford

REGRETS: Walter Francl

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	Burrard Bridge
2.	1695 Main Street

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Wall called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There were two items of New Business and then meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address:	Burrard Bridge
DE:	N/A
Description:	Proposal to widen the bridge sidewalk from 2.6m to 5m.
Zoning:	N/A
Application Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	City of Vancouver
Owner:	City of Vancouver
Review:	First
Delegation:	Yardley McNeill, Dane Doleman
Staff:	Yardley McNeill, Dane Doleman, Shelley Bruce

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT: (0-10)

- **Introduction:** Yardley McNeill, Heritage Planner, introduced the proposal to widen the sidewalk on the Burrard Street Bridge. Council has directed staff to develop an improved cycling and pedestrian capacity on the bridge. There are two options that best meet the City's goals. Option A threads the sidewalk through the tower and Option B threads the sidewalk on the outside of the towers with a curved railing on the outside. A new contemporary designed handrail is proposed that reflects the existing handrail. The idea is that as you drive over the bridge there will be a sense of transparency in the railings. If new concrete railings were added to the bridge, the weight of the concrete railings would mean that there would need to be support added to the bridge. The proposal is also to update the lighting on the bridge. The plan is replicate the light standards with a modern interpretation of the original lighting.

The Panel was asked to comment on the materials and the proposal that will be part of the Council Report.

Ms. McNeil and Mr. Doleman took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Reconsider the overall design strategy to provide a solution that respects the heritage structure while providing a safe cycling route across the bridge;
 - Design Development to the guardrail by providing a better material choice that represent the original heritage railings;
 - Consider following the geometry of the piers when adding the bypass, and
 - Provide a clear and consistent strategy for new light standards for the bridge.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the proposal. The Panel was concerned with the proposed renovations to the bridge as they acknowledged the bridge is a gateway to Vancouver and the structure is an important piece of heritage architecture.

The Panel struggled with this kind of intervention and suggested that the last Council had the best idea in shutting down one of the lanes on the bridge for bicycle traffic. They were also in support of building another bridge for both pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Since the Panel was asked to support one of the solutions, the majority of panel members thought the only solution that seemed to work was the “Bypass Solution” as they did not see the “Pinch Point” as a solution. However, the Panel thought the curved bypass solution does not respect the existing Juliet balcony or the geometry and expression of the piers. They also thought the solution was an engineering approach and does not relate to the heritage architecture of the main piers. Although the Panel chose the “Bypass Solution”, they felt it would be a better design solution if the bypass followed the geometry of the piers.

Most of the Panel thought the material choices for the guardrail didn’t seem to take on a modern or a heritage approach. The majority of the panel thought painted or galvanized steel was the appropriate material. They Panel said they wouldn’t support stainless steel guard rails.

Most of the Panel liked the new lighting fixtures that had been chosen. The Panel was divided as to the success of adding a few heritage lights back on the bridge and a couple of Panel members thought they wouldn’t fit with the new scheme. One Panel member recommended using LED lights to save energy and operating costs.

For the most part the Panel did not support the presented design for an extension and widening on the bridge. They thought a separate pedestrian bridge was the way to go and for the cost of upgrading the bridge a new bridge could be built.

- **Applicant’s Response:** Ms. McNeill thanked the Panel noting that their comments were appreciated. The decision will be up to Council if they decide to proceed with altering the Burrard Street Bridge. She added that there is an opportunity for alterations to the railing design.

2. Address:	1695 Main Street
DE:	411865
Description:	To develop a 172 unit residential/commercial development consisting of a multiple building ranging in heights of 2 to 13 storeys.
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Chris Dikeakos Architects
Owner:	5265 Investments Ltd.
Review:	Third (First - April 26, 2006 - Second - Sept 13, 2006)
Delegation:	John Clark, Chris,
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (4-6)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, introduced the proposal which had been to the Panel previously at the rezoning. At the rezoning, the Panel generally liked the lay-out of the site with the separate building on Main Street, a mid block massing and the higher element on Quebec Street. Ms. Rondeau described the development in the area noting the future street car line. Adjoining the site is a curved rail spur on a private piece of property that will become a public lane. The proposal is all residential with the exception of retail on the ground floor on Main Street.

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

1. Architectural Distinctiveness related to the character of the Southeast False Creek Neighbourhood and High Quality Architectural Materials and Treatments.
2. Response to Passive Design.
3. Interface with North Site (across the future lane).
4. Retail frontage response of Punched Retail Windows.
5. Townhouse response on Quebec Street.

Ms. Rondeau took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** John Clark, Architect, further described the architectural plans for the project. He noted that they varied the heights of the buildings to create open areas which will increase the amount of light into the units. Some of the original 1910 foreshore elements have been mimicked in the ground plane and the design of the façade facing Main Street will express the historical elements of the area.

Rod Maruyama, Landscape Architect described the landscape plans for the project. The urban agriculture and green roof component will be added on the tower and the low rise building which is a requirement of the SEFC guidelines.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Reduce the apparent bulk of the west tower and provide a much stronger urban townhouse expression and an improved public realm treatment along Quebec Street;
 - Design development to the Main Street building to improve the architectural expression of the retail base, the overall material expression and the building's cornice treatment;

- Provide a stronger passive solar design response and generally consider more integrated sustainable measures for the project; and
 - Consider a stronger response in the overall architectural expression to the emerging context and the established design principals of the SEFC neighbourhood.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the proposal but did strongly support the over all massing on the site and the general organization of the forms.

The Panel recognized that the centre block was well handled and was the piece that best represented the SEFC character and aspirations of the whole community. The Panel thought the interface with the north property across the lane was a good response.

Several Panel members thought the west tower appeared bulky with a suburban appearance rather than an urban, simplified form and thought it didn't look in proportion to the other buildings. It was suggested that the tower base ended abruptly at the street level and several Panel members thought Quebec Street should have a strong two storey townhouse form. One Panel member suggested highlighting the doors to the townhouses to make a stronger relationship to the street and improving the general public realm interface. The panel noted that a better response to passive solar design is needed on the south and west facades and ideally should help generate the architectural expression for the west tower.

Several Panel members thought another problem area was the architectural treatment of the Main Street building. The use of brick veneer was supported but the way it was applied and the use of painted concrete walls on the floors above it was questioned. The top glass canopy did not appear to provide shading and does not compliment the brick Main Street expression. The building should be further setback on the new curved lane to provide a better interface with the future development to the north. The ground floor punched window expression were thought to be problematic for encouraging good retail display and should relate better to the typical Main Street Context with more massive brick piers that come to ground and retail windows set within the brick frames. Another Panel member suggested expressing the heritage vernacular in the awning.

One Panel member felt that the architecture and the landscaping were not telling the same story. Also it was suggested that the streetscape along Quebec Street needed to be more urban and to look like the front door of the development. One Panel member thought the loading area off the rail spur lane was going to be a messy place and suggested it be more effectively screened. Also one Panel member thought the heavy timber expression on roof top "A" seemed off and suggested using another expression. A couple of Panel members were concerned with the plantings in the courtyard as they thought they might not survive. The Panel liked the public realm interface especially the cut-outs and the salmon panels but thought they should be vandal proof.

Regarding passive design, the Panel felt although there were some moves for shading such as deep balconies but that the design didn't go far enough and lacked an overall integrated strategy. They thought the design of the facades should respond the different orientations with one Panel member commenting on the use of low e glass and suggesting that it didn't replace shading devices.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Clark thanked the Panel for their constructive criticism. He added that he didn't see anything that had been offered as comments that couldn't be achieved, and thanked the Panel for giving more direction on what still needs to be completed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.