
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: February 5, 2003

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Walter Francl, Chair (excused Item #3)
Helen Besharat
Gerry Eckford
Richard Henry (Chair, Item #3; not present for Item #5)
Joseph Hruda
Reena Lazar
Stuart Lyon
Maurice Pez
Sorin Tatomir
Ken Terriss

REGRETS: Jeffrey Corbett
Kim Perry

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	600 Beach Crescent (1530 Granville Street)
2.	475 East Hastings Street (375 Jackson)
3.	1477 West 15th Avenue (3036 Granville)
4.	1305 Arbutus Street
5.	5025 Willow Street

BUSINESS

Outstanding Design Recognition

Ralph Segal, Senior Development Planner, referred to his memorandum to Panel members dated February 4, 2003, in which an alternative approach to the Outstanding Design Recognition is proposed.

After further discussion,

It was moved by Richard Henry, seconded by Reena Lazar, that the Panel adopt the following procedure for Outstanding Design Recognition:

- after an exceptional project receives the Panel's unanimous support, a member may put a Motion of Special Commendation to consider the project for recognition. This motion will require majority support (not necessarily unanimous) to be returned to the next meeting;
- if the motion passes by majority, at the end of the meeting (separately), a brief commentary is drafted, citing some of the particularly outstanding aspects of the scheme;
- the draft commentary is e-mailed to Panel members for their comments to bring to the next meeting;
- at the Business session of that next meeting, the Chair tables the Motion of Special Commendation, along with the finalized summary commentary, for the final adopting vote for inclusion in the minutes. This motion must be carried unanimously.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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| 1. Address: | 600 Beach Crescent (1530 Granville Street) |
| DA: | 407194 |
| Use: | Residential (two towers) |
| Zoning: | CD-1 |
| Application Status: | Complete |
| Architect: | Busby & Assoc. |
| Owner: | Concord Pacific Group |
| Review: | First |
| Delegation: | Peter Busby, Bruce Hemstock |
| Staff: | Jonathan Barrett |
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction:** Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, presented this application. The Beach Neighbourhood guidelines are very specific with respect to building locations, heights, floor plates and the broad configuration. The general concept is for towers to step down towards the water from Pacific Street. This proposal comprises two residential towers of 24 and 11 storeys whereas the guidelines suggest 24 and 10 storeys for this site. The proposed floor plate of the taller tower is also slightly larger (17 m²) than suggested in the guidelines. As well, the guidelines indicate a maximum of seven storeys along the park edge whereas the application proposes three storeys, with a modest break. The guidelines also call for continuous townhouses. The applicant has also chosen not to include a vehicular access point off Beach Crescent. Staff have identified no substantial issues with respect to this application and strongly support the applicant's intention to seek LEED silver certification for this project.

The general areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought relate to the modest increase in floor plate on the taller tower, the increase in height from ten to 11 storeys on the lower tower, and the break in the townhouses. There is also some concern about the wall between the park and this site.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Bruce Hemstock, Landscape Architect, briefly described the proposed programming for George Wainborn Park. Peter Busby, Architect, described the design rationale and responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application.

The Panel had no concerns about the increase in floor plate on the taller tower, nor with the increase in height on the lower tower. Some Panel members questioned using the identical form for both towers, also noting that the space between the buildings that results from this massing may not be the most successful. One Panel member suggested stepped buildings flanking the park on both sides would have been a stronger and more dynamic arrangement.

The massing of the base of the two buildings was an area of concern for some Panel members who thought it should be much stronger, e.g., the flimsy column on the elevations is not convincing.

The Panel liked the ingenious use of the large balconies and the modulation of the façade.

The Panel supported the proposed three-storey townhouse form as opposed to the seven storeys suggested by the guidelines. One Panel member thought that given the steep grade there might

have been an opportunity to respond with a less rigorous height, e.g. a minimum of five storeys, dropping down to three. The internal planning of the townhouses was strongly supported in terms of their broad exposure and light access.

The break in the townhouses was supported. Comments were made that it is a nice gesture to provide an opening for people to look through. One Panel member questioned whether the break should necessarily need to be at the top as well, rather to extend the townhouses across the top of the opening.

There was a recommendation to give some attention to the park edge and find a way to mitigate the high portion of wall at the midpoint of the stepped terrace. It was suggested this wall should be more than just a functional element but include lighting or some other detailing.

Parking access for the future development coming into the lower tower was supported, as was the proposed vehicular access for the taller tower which has the benefit of reducing traffic along Beach Crescent.

With respect to the courtyard, one Panel member said it is essential that it be tied in visually with the future neighbouring development.

Some Panel members found that the top of the building was not to the level of the rest of the building. It was thought the roof could be more elegant, in keeping with some of the neighbouring buildings. The elevator penthouse is somewhat bulky.

One Panel member suggested that more could be done to acknowledge that this building is the western termination of the entire Concord development. It was also recommended that this project take some responsibility for the bicycle path and to work with the City and the Park Board to ensure this connection is more strongly made.

The Panel was very supportive and enthusiastic about the proposal to seek LEED silver certification for this building.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Busby thanked the Panel for its helpful comments.

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2. Address: 475 East Hastings Street (375 Jackson)
DA: 406835
Use: Residential (Seniors) (5 storeys, 51 units)
Zoning: DEOD
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Neale Staniszakis Doll Adams
Owner: City of Vancouver
Review: First
Delegation: Larry Adams
Staff: Bob Adair
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-4)

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner, presented this application for a 5-storey residential building at the northwest corner of Hastings and Jackson Streets. The site is currently occupied by a gas station. The proposal is for 51 dwelling units on the upper four floors, with kitchen, common dining area and lounge on the ground floor. The L-shape design provides a courtyard on the north side of the building. Parking access is from the lane at the rear. The building occupants will be low-income seniors, many of whom will be mental health consumers. The application proposes 3.0 FSR which is the maximum approvable in the DEOD zone. Exterior materials are brick along Jackson Street and wrapping around onto Hastings Street. The remainder of the Hastings facade is steel siding which continues around the back of the building and the lane elevation.

Overall, staff consider this to be a very skilfully designed building. The Panel's input is sought in the following areas:

- ground floor treatment and uses along Jackson Street;
 - massing at the north end of the building to minimize impact on the outdoor open space;
 - expression of the Hastings Street facade;
 - whether steel siding is appropriate for the Hastings Street elevation;
 - livability of the rear courtyard.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Larry Adams, Architect, described the design rationale, noting it is intended to be a straight forward, background building. The building will be one of the last remaining social housing projects to be funded by BC Housing out of the Homes BC Program. An earlier proposal, submitted in July 2002, included a Vancouver Public Library branch on the ground floor which did not proceed. Mr. Adams said they have attempted to design a building that is essentially "outright". He acknowledged the concerns about the use along Jackson Street; however, given that the Jackson/Hastings area is the centre for prostitution in the Downtown Eastside, any dwelling units in this location would be only 5 ft. from this activity. The Katherine Sandford Housing Society which will be operating this project believes that any units in this location would not be leaseable for this reason. Mr. Adams noted there are ways they can manipulate the parking level to be at or below the base surface in order to avoid any FSR overage. They believe the proposed height of 18.8 m has minimal impact on surrounding buildings. With respect to the Hastings Street facade, Mr. Adams noted the frontages of other larger developments along Hastings Street are not broken down to a 25 ft. rhythm. They believe their proposal responds to the site. They also believe the proposed steel siding is appropriate, noting there are other buildings in the area which use this material quite successfully. In general, the material palette along Hastings Streets is quite eclectic. Regarding the rear courtyard, Mr. Adams acknowledged it will be in shadow in spring and fall but noted this is an urban situation and there
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could ultimately be a neighbouring building up to 30 m high. They believe the form and massing of the building is very appropriate and the courtyard is usable. He stressed they are trying to develop this project to provide badly needed housing in the Downtown Eastside. Mr. Adams responded to the Panel's questions.

- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel supported this application.

There were mixed opinions about the appropriateness of this site for the proposed use. Some Panel members strongly supported it for providing much needed housing for seniors. Others suggested that seniors should not be housed in this very difficult area of the Downtown Eastside.

Some comments about the Hastings Street façade were that the treatment at grade seems weaker than what is happening above it. There were no concerns about the modulation along Hastings. It was recommended that the canopy be extended along the full façade. There was a suggestion that the small module of brick that wraps around on Hastings could benefit from another small window. It was also recommended to explore the possibility of relocating the exit stair on the lane and providing windows on the north side to take advantage of the view.

Some Panel members found the choice of materials quite appropriate. Others thought the treatment of the Hastings and Jackson façades should be reversed. It was thought the simple, brick façade on Hastings would be more in keeping with neighbouring buildings on Hastings. There was a recommendation to wrap the brick around the north edge as well as the front.

There was mixed response to the rear courtyard. Some Panel members found it quite appropriate in this very urban setting and agreed that some shading is inevitable. There were some recommendations to explore raising the courtyard somewhat to improve light access. It was also recommended that the City ensure the neighbouring property is sensitive to maintaining afternoon sun on this courtyard when that site is redeveloped. Other Panel members found the courtyard unacceptable, noting the outdoor space will be very precious to the residents of this building. Several Panel members recommended exploring having the parking underneath a raised courtyard.

The Panel agreed with the applicant's rationale that the mature trees already shadow the neighbouring co-op building.

The most serious issue for the Panel was the use at grade along Jackson Street. There were comments that this project's response to its unsavoury environment is actually contributing to sustaining it. At the very least, it was recommended that the above ground parking be built in such a way that future development of a more appropriate use might occur, e.g., providing removable exterior wall panels. It was suggested there are better ways to deal with the wall, perhaps a combination of solid and grille and interior lighting to animate it more. One Panel member suggested the ground floor space might be occupied by a community police office or volunteer organization. For some Panel members the preference was for residential use in this location.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Adams thanked the Panel for its input. Regarding the suggestion to move the stair, he noted there are hydro transformers against the property line which preclude having windows in this location. With respect to the courtyard, he noted this is a five storey building and it will get sun in the summer. The question of whether this project can on its own address the social problems in the area is interesting. Ideally, there would be residential units along Jackson Street but empty residential units are no better than the proposed solution. Screening of the parking garage raised CPTED issues. Mr. Adams said they can address many of the issues raised but the economics of the project is also an important consideration. They did

explore putting the parking underneath the courtyard but it was found to be unfeasible. Other uses along Jackson Street were considered, including a gallery and social service agencies, but there was no interest in taking the space.

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3. Address: 1477 West 15th Avenue (3036 Granville)
DA: 407015
Use: Mixed (Retail/Residential) (5 storeys)
Zoning: C-3A
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Walter Francl
Owner: 4354 Investments Ltd.
Review: First
Delegation: Walter Francl
Staff: Scot Hein
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-1)

- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Development Planner, presented this mixed-use application in the C-3A zone. The site is located at the northeast corner of 15th Avenue and Granville Street and currently contains two "B" listed 3-storey heritage buildings which will be renovated and retained. The application does not seek additional density for heritage preservation. An outright height of 30 ft. is permitted in C-3A, with unlimited relaxation, and the guidelines reference 6- to 7-storey height as the upper maximum. However, in response to concerns expressed by residents of Hycroft directly south, the applicant has accommodated the density in four storeys at approximately 47 ft.

The proposal is a fully integrated mixed-use development including the introduction of underground parking for the heritage buildings. The scheme comprises ground floor CRU's fronting Granville and 15th, three storeys of residential above (42 units) in a courtyard configuration with residential entry between the heritage buildings fronting 15th Avenue.

The Heritage Commission saw this proposal as an inquiry and had no major concerns.

Staff seek the Panel's advice in the following areas:

- whether it earns the maximum 3.0 FSR, noting the heritage exercise as the public benefit;
 - general form of development/courtyard configuration and how the residential entry is handled in the context of heritage/height noting view concerns;
 - integration of the heritage components and how they are distinguished from the new construction with respect to both the Granville streetwall and the penthouse components.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Walter Francl, Architect, briefly described the project. In response to concerns raised by the neighbours regarding view blockage, an earlier, higher scheme was redesigned. Mr. Francl noted that the scale of the deciduous trees between this site and Hycroft is such that the view of this property from Hycroft will be totally blocked in summer. He briefly described the proposal to renovate the heritage buildings, including alleviation of the current non-conformity with respect to parking. He noted they have sought to make a strong differentiation between the heritage buildings and the modern addition. They have also taken the opportunity to use the gap between the two heritage buildings as a primary residential entry. The architect responded to the Panel's questions.
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- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application and, with one exception, Panel members thought the project has earned the maximum FSR. The applicant was commended for the public consultation process in resolving the height.

The Panel generally thought the heritage component had been handled very well and supported applying the modern elements to it. There was general support for the gap between the two heritage buildings which makes an interesting residential entry, with some suggestions for further design development to the entry around the canopy. A number of concerns were expressed about the integration of old and new elements, with suggestions that they should be more clearly differentiated. Some Panel members thought a more modern penthouse expression should be wrapped around the top to bring the two forms together rather than using a language derived from the heritage buildings. One comment about the Granville Street frontage was that it appears somewhat of a collage at present, with a lack of clarity about where the heritage ends and the modern begins. One Panel member hoped the subtle chamfer on the corner would be retained. With respect to the corner of Granville, there was a suggestion to return it to the more traditional way of bringing the brick down and reinforcing the upper character of the building.

Much of the Panel's commentary related to the courtyard, with differing opinions as to whether it can be livable and successful. Some found its very narrow width created serious privacy issues. Others suggested its intimacy will help to generate a sense of community for the residents. There were suggestions for ameliorating the situation with angled windows, increased articulation and more landscaping. Several Panel members found the courtyard very austere at present. The involvement of a landscape architect was strongly recommended. One suggestion was that a "green wall" would work quite well in this courtyard and might help deal with privacy issues. Several Panel members recommended deleting the glass cover and a suggestion was made that it might exacerbate acoustic problems in the courtyard. Careful attention should be given to choosing materials for sound attenuation qualities.

There was a suggestion from one Panel member that the City consider relaxing the rear yard setback requirement in order to add a few more feet to the width of the courtyard.

One Panel member suggested this might not be the best solution in terms of the type of housing proposed, suggesting consideration be given to maisonettes with 2-storey units above which would avoid much of the walkway system and mitigate some of the problems with rear facing bedroom windows.

There was a recommendation for further development of the roofscape to ensure an attractive overview, especially in winter. Another comment was that the service area on the rear elevation could benefit from more articulation.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Francl acknowledged that greater attention needs to be given to the courtyard.

4. Address:	1305 Arbutus Street
DA:	407191
Use:	Multi-Use/Restaurant
Zoning:	RS-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Anthony A. Robins
Owner:	Vancouver Park Board
Review:	First
Delegation:	Tony Robins, John Hemsworth, Jim Lowden, Jane Durante
Staff:	Scot Hein

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (3-6)

- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Development Planner, presented this application for the Kits Beach Restaurant. He noted a project of this scale would not normally be reviewed by the Panel. However, due to the level of public interest with respect to use and traffic and parking impacts, the application will be considered by the Development Permit Board. The input of the Panel is typically sought by the Board on all applications it considers. Mr. Hein noted that Staff have no concerns with respect to the architectural quality of this project. In addition to the new restaurant the application will replace the existing buildings on this site providing concession and lifeguard functions. The proposed building will be accommodated more or less within the footprint and siting of the existing building and Staff believe there may be opportunities to further reduce the size of the footprint. The proposed building comprises concession and lifeguard functions at the ground level and restaurant functions on the upper floor with 120 inside seats. There is also an outdoor deck, oriented on the beach side, which will accommodate an additional outdoor 60 seats.

RS-1 zoning permits food service delivery in a park setting as an accessory use and allows a density of 0.6 FSR because of the very large site associated with the beach and the park. 0.02 FSR is proposed. RS-1 typically allows 30 ft. height, relaxable to 35 ft. The proposed building is the same height as the existing structure at 29 ft.-10 in. The only relaxation this application will seek relates to yards, similar to that required by schools and churches in RS-1 given the size of the sites.

The architectural expression is very contemporary and takes advantage of an iconic reference to the lifeguard tower. Staff have no significant concerns with the project. Engineering Services is heavily involved in the parking and traffic analysis and will be reporting the impacts that may be attributable to this project to the Development Permit Board.

Given the neighbourhood concerns, the Panel's advice is sought on the appropriateness of the restaurant use being introduced in addition to the historical concession and lifeguard uses on this site. The Panel's comments are also sought on the siting, general arrangement and orientation of the program on the site, noting that, apart from the restaurant, it is essentially replicating the existing program. Comments on architectural expression would also be appreciated, as well as on the landscape quality and integration with the sea wall, and screening of the loading functions.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Tony Robins, Architect, briefly reviewed the design rationale. He noted the design has been through a number of changes in response to public input. The massing of the building is a product of moving the turret and the restaurant away from a certain view corridor. Mr. Robins noted the Park Board intends this to be a flagship building for environmental sustainability and LEED silver certification has been achieved for the project.

Jim Lowden, Vancouver Park Board, explained the RFP specifically sought a two-storey structure in order to limit the liquor license to the second level. For this reason, the architect was asked to reconsider his initial submission for a 3-storey structure. He briefly reviewed the history of Park Board concessions and facilities in City parks and beaches and described the current philosophy for delivery of these services.

Jane Durante, Landscape Architect, briefly reviewed the landscape plan and noted it will be very minimalist landscape treatment.

The applicant team responded to the Panel's questions.

- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously and enthusiastically supported the proposed restaurant use for this site. In general, the Panel strongly encourages more uses and amenities along the waterfront and considers this location to be very appropriate for a restaurant. One Panel member, while indicating personal support for the use, suggested it is a broader issue that the community and the City should decide.

The Panel agreed unanimously that the architecture has been very nicely handled, and admired the sculptural, contemporary expression of the building. Some Panel members were comfortable with the modern expression in this location and found it a refreshing departure for the Park Board; others, however, while acknowledging its attractive architectural quality, did not believe it was appropriate for this site. There were questions about the design rationale and how Vancouver's evolving identity is interpreted in this building. Comments were made that it seems too light and airy, and too commercial and industrial. Some Panel members thought the earlier, 3-storey proposal would have been more appropriate.

Some Panel members expressed disappointment that there is no public access between the two building components. There were also concerns about the location of the works yard which blocks the view to the beach.

It was noted the beach facade is much more highly resolved than other elevations and there were concerns that there should be no obvious "back of the building". In particular, the east elevation is very austere. Questions were raised about the use of materials and how the galvanized panels will weather. A suggestion was made to introduce other materials to this facade. As well, there were concerns about the longevity of the mechanical screens in front of the building. One Panel member recommended expressing the fireplace in the building, and to give greater emphasis to the stair in terms of its proportions.

The Panel had no concerns with the height of the building but some Panel members questioned the rationale for siting it precisely on the footprint of the existing building. While some Panel members thought the approach was appropriate because it creates the least disturbance, others suggested this could have been an opportunity to re-think the location and configuration of some of the elements. A suggestion was made that the restaurant could be located behind the tennis courts where it would be totally screened. The other facilities could be dealt with differently,

organizing them such that they create less visual impact between the neighbourhood and the water. One Panel member found the lifeguard penthouse to be an anomaly, and recommended that the same care and attention be given to this feature as the rest of the building.

With respect to the widened driveway between this building and the tennis courts, a suggestion was made that careful attention should be given to the corner of the building of the building that first comes into view from this driveway.

The Panel was unable to support the application at this time.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Robins thanked the Panel for the comments and said the building will continue to be improved. Commenting on the rationale for keeping the washrooms and restaurant components together, Mr. Lowden noted the Park Board attempts to put as few buildings as possible in parks: the preference is to have one consolidated building as opposed to having a number of structures on a site. There is also the very important programmatic consideration of parents not wanting these functions separated so that good surveillance of their children can be maintained. He also stressed that this location has the greatest demand for washrooms facilities.

5. Address:	5025 Willow Street
DA:	406997
Use:	School Addition
Zoning:	RS-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Grant & Sinclair
Owner:	Vancouver School Board
Review:	First
Delegation:	Patrick R. May, Henry Ahking
Staff:	Anita Molaro

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-1)

- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Development Planner, presented this application for an addition/renovation to Eric Hamber Secondary School. The application will be considered by the Development Permit Board because of neighbourhood concerns. The application seeks a minor height relaxation to a maximum of 9.77 m. The zoning permits 9.2 m outright, relaxable to 10.7 m. Proposed materials are a combination of concrete at the lower floor and metal panel on the upper floor addition.

The advice of the Panel is sought in the following areas:

- height relaxation;
- view impacts;
- the general form of development in terms of how it fits in with the existing school program;
- proposed materials;
- loss of existing trees and relocated parking for staff.

Mr. Molaro noted the school has significant drop-off and pick-up problems along Willow Street.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Patrick May, Architect, described the project rationale and responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application and had very few comments.

The requested height relaxation was unanimously supported. There were no concerns with the general fit of the addition and the proposed materials.

The Panel also had no problem with the loss of the trees. However, it was suggested that this project might take the opportunity to give some attention to an overall landscape plan.

A comment was made that it is unfortunate that some rooms will lose their exterior windows, and a suggestion made to revisit the concrete reveals at the base of the building and possibly incorporate another window in the corner. Some Panel members commented that better integration of old and new materials typically would be sought, but in this instance it may not be appropriate. The circulation on the site seems to work well.

The Panel noted the main issue with this project relates to traffic. Some Panel members recommended exploring an interior service road parallel to Willow Street to bring the driveway/drop-off onto the site. One Panel member felt strongly that site planning was a major problem with the project, noting there is no congregating space for the 1,700 students of this school. An overall planning exercise was recommended rather than a piecemeal approach. Another suggestion was to consider staggered class schedules to alleviate traffic congestion.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. May acknowledged the biggest concern relates to traffic, drop-off and parking. He also noted there are budgetary restrictions to be considered.
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