

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** February 8, 2012

**TIME:** N/A

**PLACE:** N/A

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Robert Barnes  
Gregory Borowski  
Jeff Corbett  
Jane Durante  
Alan Endall  
Jim Huffman  
Arno Matis  
Geoff McDonell  
Scott Romses  
Norm Shearing  
Alan Storey

**REGRETS:**  
Helen Besharat  
James Cheng

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

---

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	955 East Hastings Street
2.	4567 Heather Street (Ronald McDonald House)

**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Romses called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There being no New Business the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

- |           |                            |  |
|-----------|----------------------------|--|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Address:</b>            | <b>955 East Hastings Street</b>  |
|           | <b>DE:</b>                 | Rezoning   |
|           | <b>Use:</b>                | Rezoning from M-1 to CD-1 for a mixed-use building including commercial, light industrial, market and non-market housing.                            |
|           | <b>Zoning:</b>             | M-1 to CD-1  |
|           | <b>Application Status:</b> | Rezoning   |
|           | <b>Review:</b>             | First  |
|           | <b>Architect:</b>          | GBL Architects   |
|           | <b>Owner:</b>              | Wall Financial   |
|           | <b>Delegation:</b>         | Stu Lyon, GBL Architects<br>Daniel Eisenberg, GBL Architects<br>Bruce Hemstock, PWL Partnership (Landscape Architects)<br>Bruno Wall, Wall Financial |
|           | <b>Staff:</b>              | Anita Molaro and Grant Miller  |

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)****Introduction:**

Grant Miller, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal to rezone an M-1 site fronting East Hastings Street. He provided some information on the land use policy noting that the site falls within the Powell Street/Clark Drive Industrial Area. In 1995, the City's Industrial Land Policies confirmed that the area should generally be retained for industrial uses with the exception of those sites fronting East Hastings Street. Mr. Miller explained that the proposal is located on a site that is described as "let go" in the Industrial Lands Policy.

In 2005, City Council provided some direction and adopted the Downtown Eastside Housing Plan. This area is referred to as the Hastings Corridor in that Plan. The Plan supports mixed-use development on this site with an emphasis on replacement housing and affordable rental. While the community is embarking in Local Area Planning Process at this time, the application is being considered in advance of the Plan recognizing the substantial housing benefits proposed. Approximately 20% of the residential units will be transferred to the City for social housing.

Mr. Miller noted that the application was originally made in November 2009 at as a result the City's Green Building's Policy requires the application to apply for LEED™ Silver equivalency.

Anita Molaro, Development Planner, further described the application and mentioned that the site fronts East Hastings Street, with Raymur Street on the east, and that there is a 25 foot height difference between East Hastings Street and the lane. The current zoning is M-1, which permits a density of 5 FSR and a height of 100 feet. Ms. Molaro described the context for the area and noted the non-market housing and the Campbell Community Centre across the street.

Ms. Molaro explained that the project consists of market and non-market housing, with approximately 282 market units and 708 non-market units. The non-market housing units have been integrated into the development on the south side with its own entry and, amenity areas on both the north and south sides of the project. The market housing is generally contained within the balance of the podium and the three towers. The towers are oriented perpendicular

to the street to allow for views, with an open space on the lower north facing terrace, and on the podium roof above the seventh storey.

On the ground floor and the two levels facing the lane is a new use called PDR which stands for Production, Distribution and Repair. PDR frontages are intended to be animated with glazing and large opening doors providing enhanced working conditions and interaction with the public. Ms. Molaro described the summary of uses under PDR. This type of use will provide alternative approaches to activating the ground plane. Many PDR spaces offer features such as high ceilings, large loading docks, and ground floor access that are not available in office or most commercial buildings. The intent is to accommodate a combination of office, manufacturing, repair and/or showroom and retail uses that are compatible with residential uses on the upper floors. The kinds of uses include: food and beverage wholesale/distribution; fashion/garment design and manufacturing; delivery services; event production and catering; construction contractors and building material suppliers; wholesale and retail of furniture equipment, appliances and furniture manufacturing; printers, designers, photographers, film producers, graphic designers and sound-recording firms; repair shops for equipment, appliances and bicycles. In this development, access for the PDR uses and loading will be provided via a stair and freight elevator to the lane through a broad opening in the East Hastings Street frontage, which will also provide a view through the development.

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

- does the panel support the urban design response developed for this site,
- form of development including:
  - buildings' siting, tower forms and massing,
  - proposed heights (100,100 and 120 ft.)
  - uses and density (6.0)
- integration/resolution of public connections through the site, including their pedestrian amenity and animation,
- open space and landscape treatments,
- LEED™ Silver strategies (based on time of rezoning application),
- preliminary comments/advice on materials.

Mr. Miller and Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

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

Stu Lyon, Architect, further described the project. He talked about the integration of the uses in the building and the history of the design. He explained that when the City came up with the PDR uses they thought it would integrate well in the building given there is a 25 foot drop across the site as a lot of the density was going to be below Hastings St. grade. The height of the building has some limitations in order to be consistent with what is already in the neighbourhood. Mr. Lyon mentioned that the non-market housing is 20% of the residential density. The PDR will break down into potential 20-30 spaces, so they thought it was important to have a central collection point, so they created a way through the site that connects down to the lane where the loading freight elevator will be located. He added that a lot of the PDR users will be facing the lane.

Daniel Eisenberg, Architect, mentioned that it was a challenging project, but fun as well. They have used the surrounding area for design references, and were inspired by the forms and colours of the industrial harbor. They incorporated a reference to shipping containers that gave some movement and variety to the form. In terms of the elevations, the north has a fully glazed façade to allow for views to the harbour and the mountains. The east and west walls will have limited openings in a punched wall configuration, and fully clad in metal. The south side being on East Hastings Street is a mix of punched wall and window wall integrated with spandrel panels. The slab extensions and balconies will provide shadow for the units in the

summer, and low sun to enter the units in the winter. At the street level the robust active nature of the PDR use is celebrated by wide openings with windows and folding doors.

Bruce Hemstock, Landscape Architects, described the landscaping and mentioned that they were excited by the project. The idea that the landscape could embrace an industrial feel and also relate to the affordable housing was exciting. They expressed the containers in the landscaping with the arrangement of the planting beds and other elements. The non-market housing will have two outdoor spaces opposite the corridors, and also an amenity room with a play area and urban agriculture. On the eighth floor are the two spaces that relate to the market housing. There is a side for children with a play area, and as well, urban agriculture and a water element is planned. The roof expresses the sustainability goals with a green roof component. They are considering a green screen under the stairs on the laneway, and as well, trees on East Hastings Street. Some work still needs to be done at the entry, however they are looking at some images of rail tracks that might work into the way the benches are formed.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

**Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

- The Panel had no substantial aspects needing improvement.

**Related Commentary:**

The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a great development largely because of the PDR use.

The Panel thought the area was ideal for this type of development and supported the use, massing, height and density. One Panel member mentioned that it seemed to be a very dense project, but given the mix of uses, thought it was appropriate and would work well. They liked the vernacular of the containers and the colour scheme that relates to them. A number of Panel members said they hoped that the project didn't lose any of its excitement as the design was developed. Several Panel members mentioned that they liked the sliding at different heights. One Panel members suggested there be some flexibility to add more mezzanine space in the double height volumes.

They noted that putting the staircase and open space down into the back lane would work. One Panel member suggested making it a "waterfall" stair so it relates stronger to the lane and people don't have to double back. They liked the way the spaces were being developed with a couple of Panel members wanting to see some artists work space located in the PDR use. The Panel supported having the market housing and rental housing together.

One Panel member thought the beginnings of the outdoor space treatment was heading in the right direction. A couple of Panel members liked the public connections through the site and thought it was well handled but had some concerns regarding security and CPTED issues. However, a few other Panel members thought it might still need more texture and animation.

The Panel supported the sustainability strategy. One Panel member suggested using triple glazing to mitigate any industrial noise and as well to potentially reuse the metal container cladding as a way to achieve the container look.

A couple of Panel members suggested that the developer make a disclosure to potential purchases regarding the waterfront and industrial activities in the area.

**Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Lyon thanked the Panel for their comments.

<b>2.</b>	<b>Address:</b>	<b>4567 Heather Street (Ronald McDonald House)</b>
	<b>DE:</b>	DE415382
	<b>Use:</b>	To develop a 4-storey building for the British Columbia Ronald McDonald House at the south east corner of the Children's and Women's Hospital site all over one level of underground parking accessed off the Hospital's Ring Road. The building consists of 75 suites with common space, kitchen and laundry facilities, dining area, library, office and amenity areas.
	<b>Zoning:</b>	CD-1
	<b>Application Status:</b>	Complete
	<b>Review:</b>	First
	<b>Architect:</b>	MGB Architecture
	<b>Owner:</b>	Ronald McDonald House BC Michael Green, MGB Architecture
	<b>Delegation:</b>	Justin Bennett, MGB Architecture Margot Long, PWL Partnership (Landscape Architects) Richard Pass, Ronald McDonald House BC
	<b>Staff:</b>	Sailen Black

---

#### **EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-1)**

##### **Introduction:**

Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the proposal which was previously seen by the Panel as a part of a rezoning application for a Child Day Care Facility and a Community Care Facility (Ronald McDonald House). At rezoning, the proposal was described as "designed as a series of small buildings, making the scale more akin to domestic architecture. The buildings range from three to four storeys, with the Heather Street elevation appearing as a 2-storey structure."

Mr. Black noted that the development is generally consistent with the overall Master Plan for the wider site, including a 17 meter setback intended to provide a transition from the site to the Heather Street bikeway, and the single family area to the east. Mr. Black noted that the requirements of the rezoning included consideration of design development conditions related to the building materials, massing and setback area.

The proposal will provide accommodation for families who travel from outside the Lower Mainland to get treatment for their children at BC Children's Hospital. The facility will contain:

- private suites for 75 families (2-5 persons)
- communal kitchen, laundry facilities, recreation rooms
- administration and public office for RMH - BC
- public office open Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
- 16 staff members to serve these families and supervise volunteers
- central courtyard and some outdoor play areas
- central courtyard enclosed by the building to minimize impact on neighbourhood and mitigate noise
- noise from outdoor play areas will also be mitigated by landscaping buffers incorporated into the design

Mr. Black noted that the architecture goals included retaining a residential character in contrast to the institutional nature of the hospital, and creating a community oriented environment.

He concluded by noting that the proposal would be required to apply for LEED™ certification.

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

1. Design of Heather Street setback as play area with sculpted and structured portions:

- Does it strike the right balance between public benefit, visual or otherwise, and the amenity needs of the facility?

2. Expression of buildings facing onto Heather Street:

- Does it reduce the abstract or formal aspects of building massing?

Does the materials palette, roof forms, detailing and other elements reinforce a residential character and avoid an institutional character?

3. Legibility and flow of the main building entry facing the road:

- Does the landscape and building design create an appropriate entry for this site?

Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Michael Green, Architect, further described the proposal noting that the facility is oriented to the ring road as they won't be able to make a direct connection to Heather Street. The idea was to bridge the development with the residential across the street. There are four modules that will serve eighteen families. There are shared spaces, such as kitchens on the ground plane with some large courtyard and shared open space. There will be play structures allocated in various areas of the site, which will be for the use of children in the facility. The massing has been broken down into domestically shaped forms incorporating a series of dormers. The material palette will be brick on an innovative wood structure. Sunken courtyard spaces on the ground floor are proposed, along with roof decks on each floor. There are plans to build three play structures with architectural students from UBC, with the intention to have them address different age groups staying at the facility. From a LEED™ perspective, they are planning a high performance envelope, heat recovery, and a car share program.

Margot Long, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans noting that there are some very large mature trees existing on the site that will be saved. The idea was to have a variety of different play areas with a zen garden, courtyards that are accessible from the living areas, water features, urban agriculture and a series of landscaped decks. There will also be open lawn areas that will have a variety of uses. The main courtyard will have a drop-off area and parking using permeable paving. There are berms and hedges rather than fences to keep the views more open across the site.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

**Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

- Design development to improve the entrance and make it more legible;
- Consider lightening up the colour palette, particularly the brick;
- Consider a pattern or colour on the central roof to improve the overlook from units above.

**Related Commentary:**

The Panel supported the proposal noting that it was an important facility.

The Panel thought the Heather Street expression had been improved since the last review, but some thought it still could use some more work to better integrate the facility into the residential neighbourhood. A couple of Panel members thought the architecture should be more residential in its expression. The Panel felt that the entrance wasn't legible enough, and needed to be improved. One Panel member suggested the entrance should be more inviting to the families using the facility, as many are under a lot of stress. Another Panel member noted that the entry canopy was too low. A Panel member suggested that since there is a large tree at the entrance the canopy could be removed to let the tree stand in the space.

Most of the Panel members were concerned that the material palette was a little too dark, especially the brick, and thought it seemed a bit oppressive. Several Panel members thought a little fun or playfulness should be incorporated into the architecture. One Panel member suggested adding some colour in the play structures or the frames of the windows.

The Panel supported the landscape plans and particularly liked the snakes and ladder area. One Panel member thought the outdoor space by the cafeteria needed some work and wanted to know if it would be accessed by the users of the cafeteria.

Most of the Panel thought it was a shame that the green roofs had been removed from the project and suggested the applicant might want to improve the overlook by treating the gravel roofs with colours or a pattern.

Applicant's Response: Mr. Green thanked the Panel for their great comments and said he appreciated the feedback.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.