

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: January 14, 1998

TIME: N/A

PLACE: N/A

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Nigel Baldwin (Chair) (excused Item #3)
Geoff Glotman
Peter Kreuk
Craig Lamb
Bill McCreery (Chair, Item #3)
Stacy Moriarty
Peter Wreglesworth

REGRETS:
Joyce Drohan
James Hancock
Jim McLean
Garth Ramsey
Denise Taylor Ellis

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:**
Carol Hubbard

UDP Awards: It was agreed to proceed with an urban design awards program. The need for flexibility was stressed with respect to the number of awards in each category, noting the quality and variety of submissions will vary from year to year. It was agreed the awards would all be for Urban Design rather than Urban Design & Architecture and Open Space & Landscape. There should be a tour of the projects. Only built (and occupied) projects will be considered. There could also be a special award for planning studies, if warranted. It was also thought there should be a publication of submissions and/or some kind of public display. Jonathan Barrett will re-draft the proposal, obtain feedback from management and return the package to the Panel for further review.

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1. Workshop: Burrard Slopes Park/Open Space
2. 1200 Hamilton Street
3. 196 Kingsway/233 East 10th Avenue

1. Burrard Slopes Park/Open Space

Architect: Perry & Associates

Owner: City of Vancouver

Review: First

Delegation: Kim Perry, Rob Barnes

Staff: Ralph Segal, Patricia St. Michel, Barbara Pringle (Planning)

Paul Pinsker, Ken Low (Engineering)

Piet Rutgers (Park Board)

Introduction:

Ralph Segal, Development Planner, reviewed the history of the site, the proposal, and the process. The Landscape Architect, Kim Perry, reviewed the analysis carried out to date.

Panel's Comments:

- it has great potential; it's a good plan; support reclaiming this land for public open space; strongly support developing the west side as well as soon as possible; the layering rationale is quite captivating;

- it is very difficult to understand, spatially; there are a number of geometries here, yet the spaces seem to be determined by the loosest geometry of the paths, the banks and the trees, and it may be too broken up;

- in terms of circulation, there maybe too much layering of heritage, desire lines, traffic, etc., resulting in the path system being too broken up; it destroys the fundamental value of a sense of expansiveness of green;

- concern about linking the two sides together in a meaningful way; perhaps more should be done with the link at 6th Avenue;

- suggest putting the traffic light at 5th Avenue rather than 6th Avenue (which will happen anyway if the 5th Avenue extension occurs); this creates an at-grade pedestrian crosswalk, eliminating the need for the tunnel which will be very expensive to realign;

- a lot of concerns about the tunnel. If it is maintained it should be straight to allow visibility from one end to the other. Also, the entry on the west side is in a hollow which makes it very difficult to defend; it seems to be compounding a lot of issues in order to keep the tunnel when it might be better to spend the money on a very elegant footbridge which really creates some linkage between the two elements. Get rid of the tunnel - replace it by a bridge or create a normal street intersection at 5th Avenue in phase one;

- many of the elements proposed are very expensive to build (e.g. the pavement and any of the solid structures): hopefully there will be sufficient funds to allow this space to be constructed properly;

- everything possible should be done to integrate the lighting as one of the strongest features of the park;

- there needs to be a convincing demonstration that the tennis and basketball courts are needed in this location because they come at a great cost in terms of loss of what small amount of green space there is in this neighbourhood that will be increasingly dense;

- mixed feelings about the designated activities; there is an awkwardness to their scale;

- spatially and graphically, the courts stand out as being not part of the theory of the whole design.

2. Address: 1200 Hamilton Street

Use: Mixed (7 storeys, 98 rooms)

Zoning: HA-3 to CD-1

Application Status: Rezoning

Architect: Eng Wright Bruckner

Owner: Trilogy Burrard Development

Review: First

Delegation: M. Bruckner, P. Merrick, A. Fediuk, C. Philips, R. Lemon

Staff: Dave Thomsett, Y. McNeill

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

The Rezoning Planner, Dave Thomsett, presented this rezoning application. Uses proposed are hotel with commercial at grade in a 7-storey building containing 98 hotel rooms and 440 sq.ft. commercial. The building would meet the height limits and requirement for property line to property line development under HA-3. The general intent of the HA-3 zoning is to encourage the retention and renovation of the existing warehouse buildings, and to promote mixed commercial/industrial and residential development. It does not provide the same incentives for proposals which do not include residential use. The applicant is proposing to import 2.0 FSR heritage density, plus an additional 10 percent (equivalent to the heritage density available in all other Downtown districts except Yaletown), for a total of 5.5 FSR. The rezoning application is being considered on the basis that it meets the objective of preserving heritage buildings (in this case, elsewhere in the Central Area).

Yardley McNeill, Development Planner, reviewed the discussions concerning the design. The proposal meets the requirements of the HA-3 District Schedule with regard to outside exterior materials, fenestration and pattern of walls, and is supported by Planning staff. It has been supported by the Vancouver Heritage Commission, with a request that the exterior detailing and finishing make it clear that the building is contemporary and not historic. The Panel's comments are sought on how the building fits within the Yaletown character.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Martin Bruckner, Architect, reviewed the proposal. Paul Merrick, Architect, noted it is a contextual building, relatively small in scale. Materials are brick and concrete enhanced with stone bandings or rosettes. Robert Lemon, Heritage Architect, addressed the historic values of the project, and Chris Phillips, Landscape Architect, briefly reviewed the landscape plan.

Panels Comments:

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

The Panel unanimously supported this application and was also appreciative of the excellent quality presentation. There were no concerns about the proposed use, form and density. The increased FSR was considered warranted and supportable.

The Panel's main concerns related to the building expression. There was a desire to see it go strongly in one direction or the other in terms of either emulating an historic building or taking on a more contemporary character. There were concerns that there is some ambiguity at present. One Panel member thought the scale was too residential and more like Gastown than Yaletown. The Panel indicated, however, that the design could be improved considerably with refinement, with a contemporary form expressed more effectively. The Panel indicated it would wish to see the application again at the Development Application stage.

3. **Address: 196 Kingsway/233 East 10th Avenue**
DA: 402844
Use: Mixed (4 storeys, 125 units)
Zoning: C-3A
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Nigel Baldwin Architect
Owner: Townline Homes Inc.
Review: First
Delegation: Nigel Baldwin, Rick Ilich, Chris Phillips
Staff: MaryBeth Rondeau
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-0)

Introduction:

The Development Planner, MaryBeth Rondeau, presented this complete development application, located at Kingsway,/East 10th Avenue/Watson Street. Mount Pleasant community groups are interested in upgrading Watson Street, which currently operates more like a lane, and this work is ongoing with the Engineering Department. The existing commercial properties facing Broadway do not form part of this development. Underground access to these properties for loading and garbage is being provided by this development off Watson Street. The proposal is for retail at ground level along Kingsway with three levels of residential above. Proposed FSR is 2.7 and a maximum height of 50 ft. at the highest point. The Panel's comments are sought on the residential treatment on East 10th Avenue, in particular with respect to the zero property line. Brewery Creek is an important historic landmark of this neighbourhood. Reference to the creek is indicated along Watson Street, which was approximately its original route. The Panel's comments on this response are requested, as well as on the relationship to the commercial properties on Broadway.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Nigel Baldwin, Architect, described the design rationale. The intent is to create a modest 4-storey development to provide affordable market housing. The proposed form of development fully meets the guidelines which call for building to the property line and creating an incremental form that emulates what previously existed. There is a history of 4-storey buildings in this area, much of which is similar in scale to this proposal. The proposal also satisfies the requirement to respond to Brewery Creek, noting the primary response has been to provide a good, livable streetscape on Watson Street. With respect to the 10th Avenue frontage, Mr. Baldwin said he does not believe a setback is necessary in this location. With respect to the existing commercial properties on Broadway, he noted they have provided for fire escape, garbage handling and loading for the two "locked in" sites. The most westerly site has access off Watson Street. The building is predominantly 40 ft. high and reaches 50 ft. only at the north end of the Watson Street façade. Rick Ilich explained they were unable to acquire the commercial properties on Broadway. Chris Phillips, Landscape Architect, briefly reviewed the historic reference to Brewery Creek.

Panel's Comments:

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

The Panel unanimously supported this application. The character, scale and massing, and the heritage cues were considered appropriate. The project also makes a positive contribution to the area by providing affordable housing in a good variety of livable units.

Most of the Panel's comments related to the East 10th Avenue frontage and the livability of the ground level units. With livingrooms so close to the sidewalk there were concerns that even with the landscaping there may be opportunity for invasion of privacy. Greater demarcation was recommended. One Panel member suggested doing townhouses on East 10th, to avoid having living areas at grade.

The stepping up of the units on Watson Street was considered to be a good response and was strongly supported. It was thought the masonry along Watson should be suitably textured. It was agreed the heritage reference to Brewery Creek is a difficult challenge. One Panel member felt it was a token effort best avoided. Others encouraged the attempt but stressed that its ultimate success will depend on the level of detail applied. The choice of vegetation will also be very important to make it an attractive edge. A suggestion was made to consider a simple system of cisterns for conveying water from the roof for irrigation use.

One Panel member thought the Kingsway elevation was somewhat repetitive. It was noted the service corridor for the Broadway commercial properties is a bit tight but it was agreed this is a difficult interface to deal with.

Several Panel members commented that the drawings show a much finer texture and level of detail than depicted on the model, which may not be doing the project justice.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Baldwin explained the model is depicting the massing and form; the level of detail proposed is shown on the elevations. With respect to the units on 10th Avenue, the arcade is not intended for people to walk through but for a series of private courtyards. With respect to Watson Street, the façade will be heavily rusticated. Mr. Ilich noted the subtle response to Brewery Creek is in keeping with advice received from the historical society.