

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: January 21, 2004

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Stuart Lyon, Chair
Helen Besharat
Jeffrey Corbett (present for #1 only)
Bruce Haden
Reena Lazar (present for #1 only)
Brian Martin
Sorin Tatomir
Ken Terriss
Mark Ostry (present for #1 only)
Jennifer Marshall
Eva Lee

REGRETS: Kim Perry

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1201 West Hastings Street
2.	1650 West 7th Avenue

1.	Address:	1201 West Hastings Street
	DE:	408040
	Use:	Artist Live/Work (30 storeys)
	Zoning:	CD-1
	Applicant Status:	Complete
	Architect:	Downs Archambault
	Owner:	Delta Land Development Ltd.
	Review:	Second
	Delegation:	Mark Ehman, Al Johnson, Chris Sterry
	Staff:	Ralph Segal

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-1)

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner, presented this application. The Panel reviewed the project at the rezoning stage, in April 2003. The Panel unanimously supported the application and Council subsequently approved the rezoning. Since that time, Bute Street from Cordova to Georgia Streets has been designated as a neighbourhood shopping street for Triangle West, requiring the Bute Street frontage to have a strong retail pedestrian character. Following a brief review of the project, the Development Planner noted the following areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought:

- building height, proposed at 300 ft. The CD-1 by-law permits a height of 275 ft., relaxable up to 300 ft. subject to: its contribution to the overall area; that the additional height results in minimal additional shadowing; the additional height results in the overall enhancement of the skyline; and the overall design of the building;
- interface with the adjacent C-side project to the west, especially the four townhouses facing directly into this development;
- the project's contribution to the Bute Street neighbourhood shopping street;
- relationship of the tower to the podium.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Mark Ehman, Architect, described the project in greater detail, including response to the Panel's earlier comments. The landscape plan was briefly reviewed and the design team responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application and generally found it to be a very attractive, nicely detailed building.

The Panel considered the additional 25 ft. up to 300 ft. to be well earned, in particular for the proposed amenity at the top of the building. The Panel thought the building would make a good contribution to the skyline.

The Panel acknowledged the improved relationship with the C-side development to the west, but some Panel members thought there was room for further improvement, possibly through landscaping. Several Panel members commented that the relationship to the C-side townhouses is very unfortunate and is likely remain a poor one.

The Panel thought the project made a good contribution to the new Bute Street shopping precinct. The inclusion of the urban grocery store was strongly supported. The need for further design development to the Bute Street canopies was noted, and one Panel member questioned the appropriateness of the proposed grass boulevard on a retail frontage.

Another recommendation was to avoid the stepping at the southern end of the restaurant, if possible, to provide better integration with the sidewalk. There was also a recommendation to consider incorporating heating in the overhead glazing to encourage year round use of the outdoor public space. A comment was made that, from an urban design point of view, it would have been preferable to have the café right at the corner because it is an excellent location for a very good outdoor urban space.

The Panel found the tower/podium relationship to be improved since the rezoning stage. However, it is still not perfect and could benefit from further design development in some areas. Among the suggestions were to allow the general public visual access to the proposed water element, which currently can only be enjoyed from the entry lobby. It was noted the public art feature has not been fully integrated into the project, as previously suggested by the Panel, but the developer's satisfaction with this aspect of the proposal was acknowledged. One Panel member recommended a stronger connection of the tower to grade at the corner. As well, design development to the residential entry was recommended, currently somewhat overpowered by the very large canopy. Another concern was the view of the podium from above, which could be improved through revised landscaping or a different treatment to the lower part of the tower.

The Panel generally found the tower architecture to be very exciting and dynamic. However, some Panel members suggested that the proposed uniform materials might not be showing it to best advantage. It was thought there might be opportunity to "showcase" the different planes of the building by using different materials or changes in detailing or colour. Another comment was that the rezoning submission had a sense of verticality that is somewhat diminished in the current iteration, in particular around the notch on the north side, which now seems too "busy".

The Panel considered the enclosed amenity space at the top of the building to be very successful. Recommendations were made for further design development to architecturally integrate it better with the building. A comment was made that it seems too much like an outdoor space that has been enclosed. The elevator penthouse could also benefit from better integration.

The Panel had serious concerns about the architectural treatment of the garage entrances where blank walls need to be carefully handled. Consideration should also be given to the pedestrian experience of the overhead garage door, with careful attention given to the appearance of the ceiling, and lighting.

Two Panel members questioned the orientation of the townhouses at the base of the building, suggesting they could have been equally successful on the city grid.

The Panel liked the proposed terra cotta coloured aggregate concrete being proposed.

In general, the Panel thought this development should make a much greater commitment to sustainability, particularly in the area of solar heat gain and a better response to the orientation of each elevation. It was noted that sustainability features, particularly reduced energy costs, are also a good marketing tool. One Panel member did not support the application because of its lack of commitment to sustainability.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Ehman expressed his appreciation for the Panel's comments.

2.	Address:	1650 West 7th Avenue
	DE:	407884
	Use:	Residential (11 storeys)
	Zoning:	C-3A
	Applicant Status:	Complete
	Architect:	Lawrence Doyle
	Owner:	Amacon Development (Fir) Ltd.
	Review:	Second
	Delegation:	Larry Doyle, Sung Ae Sim
	Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-2)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this application. The Panel did not support an earlier submission in October 2003. The application requests the maximum permitted density of 3.0 FSR, plus an additional ten percent heritage density, and 100 ft. height. The proposal is for an all-residential tower with townhouses at the base. Ms. Rondeau briefly reviewed the guidelines and the applicant's response. It was noted the shape of the tower has been moulded in response to view impacts on the neighbouring residential tower to the southeast. The guidelines suggest a side yard width of 40 ft. and the application proposes 20 ft., which is to achieve an 80 ft. tower separation. Staff support this. As well, the guidelines suggest a larger rear yard than required by the by-law. The application proposes the 15 ft. required in the by-law, and staff also supports this. Ms. Rondeau briefly reviewed the Panel's earlier concerns and how the current submission has responded.

The Panel's comments are sought in the following areas:

- whether the project has earned the increase in density from 1.0 to 3.0 FSR and 100 ft. height, noting the additional ten percent heritage density is considered a public benefit in itself;
- the use of painted concrete.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Larry Doyle, Architect, briefly reviewed the revisions made in response to the Panel's earlier concerns, in particular covering over the ramp on the west side of the building and improvements to the elevator penthouse. With respect to materials, he noted the previous Ariscraft has been deleted in favour of face brick. Sung Ae Sim briefly described the landscape plan and the applicant team responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel supported this application and generally found that the earlier concerns had been addressed quite well. The maximum density was considered to have been earned.

The Panel found the covered ramp to be a major improvement since the previous scheme.

The Panel liked the semi private open space on the southeast corner which is now much more usable, but a comment was made that it is regrettable that it is not related in some way to the interior amenity space.

One Panel member questioned the 12 ft. setback on this development, given the commercial nature of the street.

A landscape buffer between the townhouses and communal garden was recommended.

Regarding materials, the Panel stated a strong preference for sealed architectural concrete, although possible technical considerations with respect to the building envelope were acknowledged. The introduction of brick into the project was considered a big improvement over the Ariscraft proposed previously. However, given the quality of materials is part of earning the maximum density, a recommendation was made to extend the brick treatment around to the south, at least to the ground floor, to provide definition to the other side of the tower as well and offer a better outlook for the neighbours. A comment was made that better quality materials might in some way offset the inherent bulky nature of C-3A towers.

It was recommended that consideration be given to combining the sealed concrete with some painted concrete, and to consider more reveals in the concrete elements. Design development to increase articulation at the top of the central element to the east of the main entry was recommended, as well as further consideration of the cornice treatment.

The Panel found the townhouse on the northwest corner to be a bit of an anomaly, requiring better integration into the scheme. Some Panel members recommended allowing for possible conversion of this unit to commercial or retail use at some time in the future. There was also a recommendation to consider live/work use for the townhouses.

Concerns were expressed about livability issues relating to the inside corner where the townhouses meet the tower units.

There was a recommendation to add a small kitchen window to Townhouse #2 on the south side to provide some visual access to the courtyard, which could be achieved by reducing the size of the storage room.

The Panel was disappointed with this project's lack of commitment to sustainability, and two Panel members did not support the project for this reason. The applicant was urged to at least consider the LEED checklist, without necessarily submitting an application for certification.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Doyle noted the use of uncoated concrete is a building envelope issue. Its long-term durability is also questionable in our climate. Nevertheless, it will be investigated as the project proceeds. He thanked the Panel for the comments and said they will do their best to respond.