
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: January 24, 2001

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room #1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Paul Grant, Chair
James Cheng
Alan Endall
Bruce Hemstock
Brian Palmquist
Gilbert Raynard
Sorin Tatomir

REGRETS: Lance Berelowitz
Tom Bunting
Roger Hughes
Jack Lutsky
Keith Ross

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:**

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1295 Richards Street
2.	533 East Hastings Street
3.	7250 Oak Street
4.	1415 East King Edward Avenue (4050 Knight Street)
5.	2741 East Hastings Street

1. Address:	1295 Richards Street
DA:	405476
Use:	Residential
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Howard Bingham Hill
Owner:	Concert Properties Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Brian McAuley, John Bingham, Peter Kreuk
Staff:	Ralph Segal, Anita Molaro

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** The Development Planner, Ralph Segal, presented this application to develop the 250 ft. site at the corner of Drake and Richards Streets with a residential tower and 3-storey townhouses. In general, staff believe the application responds very well to the Downtown South Guidelines. The height of the tower is approximately 210 ft. and the floorplate is about 6,200 sq.ft. The advice of the Panel is sought on the overall massing and materials and, with respect to the townhouses, the proposal to have single storey units on the ground floor with two storey units above.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Brian McAuley, Concert Properties Ltd., advised the proposal is a purpose built rental housing project. With respect to the streetwall condition, Mr. McAuley noted that the more traditional 3-storey townhouses in this area are not affordable for the proposed rental program. Rather, they have chosen to animate the street with single storey studio units on the ground floor level. This also alleviates the need for a third floor corridor along the rear which would detract from the overlook and general livability of the courtyard.

John Bingham, Architect, briefly described the design rationale, noting the Downtown South Guidelines are quite prescriptive and have been helpful in arriving at the proposed scheme. The character of the building is contemporary, and it also draws on elements from the Yaletown area directly to the east. Mr. Bingham explained they felt able to submit a complete application (without preliminary) because the guidelines, which are very precise, have been followed very closely.

Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect, briefly reviewed the landscape plan.

- **Panel's Comments:** After reviewing the models and posted materials, the Panel provided the following comments:

The Panel unanimously supported this application. It was found to be very well executed, and the applicant was commended by one Panel member for making this a development which is not obviously a rental housing project.

With respect to the townhouses, the Panel supported the proposal to have studio units at ground level. They will provide increased animation on the street. One Panel member suggested that, if this aspect of the proposal is rejected, then the two-storey townhouses could be put on the street with the studio units above. This would enable the second floor bedroom to have a small outside patio and would help to reduce the amount of exposed concrete on the patio above. It will not alter the efficiency. As well, an outside corridor on the third floor may provide some visual surveillance to the garden.

Some concern was expressed about the livability of the unit at the busiest corner at Drake and Richards Streets. It was noted that while this is a corner building, the front entrance is treated as if it were a mid block development. The suggestion was to switch the entrance and the corner unit so that the entrance and rental office is at the corner.

One Panel member thought more work could be done on the top of the building to achieve a better resolution.

With respect to materials, some Panel members expressed concern about the proposed colour palette which was thought to be too dull and grey. There was a suggestion to use some anodized aluminum accents to give it more life. One Panel member also suggested turning the corner with full brick.

There were no concerns about the 5 ft. encroachment setback encroachment.

There was a recommendation to provide greater delineation or refinement to the 3-storey blank wall adjacent to the lane to make it more pedestrian friendly.

There were no issues raised on the landscape plan but one Panel member questioned what appears to be its arbitrary form compared to the very formal and rectilinear geometry of the rest of the project.

The proposal for the through lobby and through space was supported. However, one Panel member cautioned that such spaces often don't work very well in giving the sense of being able to move through the space, because of the security gates. It will be a challenge to develop a transparent feel at the same time as keeping out strangers.

In general, the Panel thought it was an excellent scheme and it was stressed that the comments are suggestions for consideration only.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bingham advised they are already considering flipping the office and the corner unit, as suggested. With respect to the colour palette, Mr. Bingham noted they are using an anodized aluminum for the windows, metal panels and guard rails to give the lightness suggested. The intent is to provide a strong contrast between the dark and light to emphasize verticality. The landscape geometry originated from developing the orientation of the entrance from the lane into the tower block. Mr. Bingham said they recognize there is some design development needed with respect to the through space.

2. Address:	533 East Hastings Street
DA:	405510
Use:	Mixed Commercial/Residential (5 storeys, 12 units)
Zoning:	DEOD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Davidson Yuen Simpson
Owner:	City of Vancouver
Review:	First
Delegation:	Dane Jansen, Gerry Eckford
Staff:	Bob Adair

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** The Development Planner, Bob Adair, presented this application comprising two social service centres on the first three floors and two levels of housing above, to be operated by the YWCA and funded by BC Housing. The FSR is approximately 2.3. There are two separate open spaces on the second floor level, providing separate supervised activity areas for pre-school and school-age children in the daycare facilities. Parking access is from the lane. The two social service centres, Crabtree Corner and Sheway, provide daycare, counselling and other support services to a variety of low income clients, centred around mothers and children and dealing particularly with those at risk for fetal alcohol syndrome. The site is City-owned and in February 2000, Council reserved this site for these users.

Issues for the Panel's consideration include:

- **Streetwall.** The ODP calls for a minimum 3-storey building height (11 m) in this area and the proposal is 8.6 m. This requirement may be relaxed by the Development Permit Board but Planning staff have some concerns about the impact of the lower height.
- **Livability.** While it is acknowledged that the proposed facilities are urgently needed, there are concerns about the proximity of this site to the chicken processing plant across the lane.
- **General expression and detailing,** particularly the free-standing element at the front of the building and treatment of the west-facing side wall.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Dane Jansen, Architect, noted Crabtree Corner and Sheway are agencies which already operate in the area, in substandard space. With respect to the streetwall, Mr. Jansen explained they need to put a daycare with open space on the second floor and have attempted to balance the need for streetwall while providing light penetration into the open space. With respect to concerns about the impact of the chicken processing plant, Mr. Jansen noted there are already a number of housing projects in this mixed use neighbourhood. The mechanical systems in the building will have to be relied upon to deal with the conditions. The Landscape Architect, Gerry Eckford, reviewed the landscape plan and described the programming of the outdoor spaces being provided for the children.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel reviewed the model and posted materials and commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application.

There were no concerns about the height of the streetwall. It was felt that an appropriate scale had been achieved, particularly in the higher of the two buildings. A comment was made that it is quintessentially Hastings Street.

The Panel liked the approach of having the development read as two separate buildings to keep it in scale with the neighbourhood. One Panel member would have preferred there to be greater difference between the two buildings to make them read more strongly as two separate elements. Another suggestion was to consider locating the entrance in the slot between the two buildings. With respect to building expression, concerns were expressed that it needs to be more urban and less like Whistler, calling for another look at the palette of materials at the base. One Panel member questioned the use of wood knee braces on the ground floor.

The Panel had no concerns about livability in regard to the neighbouring chicken processing plant, noting that other housing developments in the area have come to live with this condition. The benefits of the program were seen as a reasonable trade-off for an unavoidable situation. A suggestion was made that perhaps the focus should be on enforcement of the ventilation requirements of the processing plant.

With respect to the west wall, there was a suggestion to consider introducing a corridor to push some elements of the residential to the east. Several members commented on the complexity of the east façade at the upper levels, calling for some streamlining in this area.

Concerns were expressed about locating the infant play area on the north side, with no sun access at all. It was suggested a glass roof providing rain protection would make the space more usable. Suggestions were also made to push the building back to the lane and move the infant area to the front, while still achieving the required separation between the infant and toddler play spaces.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Jansen said he appreciated the comments. They will take another look at the west wall. With respect to the wood knee braces, he noted that Crabtree Corner and Sheway are First Nations agencies and they were requested to integrate some of that character into the building. However, they can also take another look at this aspect of the design.

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3. Address: 7250 Oak Street
Use: SNRF (Special Needs Residential Facility)
Zoning: RS-1 to CD-1
Application Status: Rezoning
Architect: Graham Crockart
Owner: Sunrise Development Inc.
Review: First
Delegation: Dan Zemanec, Brian Barber, Gerry McDevitt, Patricia Campbell
Staff: Rob Whitlock, Eric Fiss
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** This proposal was presented by Rob Whitlock, Rezoning Planner. The application seeks to change the zoning from RS-1 to CD-1 to develop 92 sustained living units. FSR is 1.1, height 48 ft. The use will be formally classified as Special Needs Residential Facility (SNRF). The site is located on the northeast corner of 57th Avenue and Oak Street. It is proposed to subdivide the 2.5 acre rezoning site into two equal parts. The northerly portion is to remain occupied by The Homestead, owned and operated by the Salvation Army, and the existing Maywood Home will be demolished. Mr. Whitlock briefly reviewed the context. The site is included in the Oakridge/Langara Policy Statement and is in a Reserve Sub Area. Staff have indicated the FSR should be between 0.8 and 1.0, with consideration for a further 20 percent for the provision of a City-desired public amenity. Consistent with the Plan, height recommendations have been in the order of 30 ft., with consideration for greater height if it produces better design and retention of more of the significant landscaping on this site.

The Development Planner, Eric Fiss, reviewed the form of development, which is a 4-storey concrete frame building. The basic expression of the building is a 3-storey brick clad base with a set back, articulated fourth level. Typical floorplates in this L-shaped building are about 17,000 sq.ft. Low brick retaining walls are proposed on the property line, with retention of the mature trees on Oak Street. Parking access is from 57th Avenue, with two curb cuts, one leading to a landscaped courtyard and porte-cochere, the other to underground parking. Areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought include:

- use;
 - overall siting including setbacks, compatibility with the Oak streetscape and relationship to neighbours;
 - height;
 - density and massing on the site;
 - parking, both the porte-cochere and entry court as well as the surface parking and access to underground parking along the property lines;
 - landscape proposal including the retention of trees;
 - architectural expression; appropriateness of the overall architectural character.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Dan Zemanek briefly reviewed the history and philosophy of Sunrise, noting it is an operating company and not a development company. Gerry McDevitt, Architect, briefly described the design rationale. The building is an L-shaped configuration with the massing far from the corner, which allows for a comfortable entry and retention of trees. The emphasis has been on creating residential character, minimizing height and bulk. Patricia Campbell, Landscape Architect, reviewed the landscape plan.
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- **Panel's Comments:** After reviewing the model and posted materials, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application for rezoning. The applicant was commended for the high quality of the presentation materials.

The Panel supported the proposed use and density.

There were a few minor concerns about the apparent height of the building which begins to feel a bit institutional. The Panel strongly endorsed the need to emphasize the residential character of the building and suggested ways to further architecturally mitigate the height, including taking another look at floor-to-floor heights and creating greater transparency at the fourth floor by pulling it back a little further, particularly at the two pinnacle elements on the corners. Anything that helps bring down the perceived vertical scale of the building and reinforce the residential expression would be beneficial.

One Panel member cautioned the applicant to ensure the porte-cochere is high enough to accommodate emergency vehicles.

There were no concerns about parking.

The landscape plan was strongly supported and the applicant was commended for the proposal to retain much of the existing mature vegetation on the site. There was a recommendation to thin out some of the trees to improve light access to this currently rather dark corner. The Panel agreed strongly with the benefits of providing a complete circuit pathway in the outdoor open space. A recommendation was made to continue the pathway system to link the outdoor porches. A suggestion was also made to look at ending the pathway that runs parallel to Oak Street so that it terminates in a gazebo or garden rather than continuing into the service areas.

In general, the Panel was very supportive of the proposal and a comment was made that it looks like a classy hotel. It was stressed that the facade elements should be kept simple. A recommendation was made to include shadow diagrams at the Public Hearing stage, to confirm the amount of sun that will reach the garden space at the northeast corner.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. McDevitt said he was encouraged by the Panel's comments. He acknowledged they are grappling with an all brick facade or introducing another material.

4. Address:	1415 East King Edward Avenue (4050 Knight Street)
DA:	405309
Use:	Church and Education Centre
Zoning:	C-2
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Rositch Hemphill
Owner:	Vancouver Chinese Baptist Church
Review:	First
Delegation:	Keith Hemphill, Lena Chorobik
Staff:	Eric Fiss

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Eric Fiss, Development Planner, introduced this application. The site is located at the Knight/Kingsway/King Edward intersection, on the northeast corner of Knight Street. The site is currently occupied by a flea market, a former Safeway site. The site does not include the surface parking area at the corner of Knight and Kingsway. The proposal is for a regional church/education centre and is governed by the Church Guidelines. Church is a conditional use in this C-2 zone. Areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought are:
 - appropriateness of the use;
 - siting and setbacks;
 - height. The proposal is generally three storeys, to 45 ft., with the sanctuary extending to 61 ft. at its highest point;
 - density, massing, proposed roof form;
 - landscape;
 - architectural expression;
 - circulation systems;
 - appropriateness of the religious symbolism and expression of the corner of the building.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Keith Hemphill, Architect, noted there has been extensive dialogue with the general public with respect to this project, including the Kensington/Cedar Cottage group which has been involved in the City Visioning process. He briefly described the proposal which contemplates a regional church and includes a large amount of Christian education facilities and a hall. He then reviewed the design rationale and Lena Chorobik, Landscape Architect, briefly described the landscape plan.
- **Panel's Comments:** After reviewing the model and posted materials, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application. The use was fully supported.

The Panel also supported the proposed height. A number of Panel members thought even greater height could be warranted in return for revisiting the form and material of the roof. Given its prominence on this corner of the city, the roof will need to be executed very well. It is incumbent upon the designer and the church to make a positive statement for this building, and if greater height is necessary to do this, the Panel would be supportive.

Concern was expressed by a Panel member that the building seems to slam into the sanctuary on the Knight Street elevation. The roof seems somewhat crowded by the third floor of the office component

at the rear of the site. It was felt there was potential for a clear expression of two buildings - the sanctuary with the hall behind and the ancillary uses in between. Creating a more distinct break between the two buildings and allowing the sanctuary roof to stand free would be beneficial. There was a recommendation to make the roof a slim, shell-like form.

A comment was made that this building will be seen as a free-standing object from all sides, so the lane elevation is just as important as the other elevations. The suggestion was that if the building could be pulled back a little bit at the lane to give it a few more feet of breathing space, it would allow some landscaping as well as help the traffic situation. One Panel member thought the building entries were somewhat obscured from the corner and needed to be amplified.

The Panel had little to say about the streetscape. The setbacks were generally agreed to. A number of concerns were expressed about the lane to the north and the potential traffic problems that will occur, particularly when the site at the corner of Knight and Kingsway is developed. It was felt a better way should be found to access the underground parking, and the City was strongly urged to look at widening this lane to ease traffic congestion.

Few comments were made about the landscape plan except to encourage street trees on Knight and King Edward to enhance the pedestrian realm. Another suggestion was to avoid too much landscape on the corner so that there is clear visual access to the building.

Concerns were expressed by a Panel member that some of the proposed materials may not stand up very well in this highly urban location, and that the ground level architectural concrete will attract graffiti artists.

Overall, the Panel thought the applicant had done a very good job of squeezing a lot of program into a very compact and dense site.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Hemphill said he shared the concerns expressed about the roof and this area will be explored further, noting no commitment has yet been made to the structural system. With respect to materials, Mr. Hemphill noted he shares concerns about building envelope success and long term durability and maintenance issues. The material chosen is very durable and tight-grained and absorbs almost no water. Parking access was fully discussed with City Engineering before arriving at the proposed scheme. He stressed the congregation will develop patterns of use and any problems can be dealt with as they occur. The traffic analysis indicates the only time when real congestion is likely is the peak Sunday service hours. Mr. Hemphill added, widening the lane would require much more discussion and he is not sure how it could be achieved. He thanked the Panel for its constructive comments.

5. Address:	2741 East Hastings Street
DA:	405483
Use:	Mixed Retail/Residential (4 storeys, 34 units)
Zoning:	C-2/C-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Robert Ciccozzi
Owner:	The Aragon Group
Review:	First
Delegation:	Robert Ciccozzi, Gerry Eckford
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this application for ground floor retail with three levels of residential above. Maximum permitted FSR in this zone is 3.0. The application proposes 2.58 FSR. Maximum permitted height is 35 ft., which may be relaxed to 40 ft. when views and shadowing are taken into consideration. The application is seeking a height relaxation up to 40 ft. The advice of the Panel is sought on the height, the side wall treatment, as well as comments on the residential units at the rear which are substantially below grade.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Robert Ciccozzi, Architect, noted the height at the rear is almost at the 35 ft. allowable maximum. He said they have purposely provided a lot of relief at the front to break down the scale of the mass as much as possible and reduce its impact on the street. However, given this will be the first project of its kind in the area there will be an impact until the neighbouring sites are redeveloped. With respect to the four units in the rear, Mr. Ciccozzi noted it is on the north side and there will be some sun in the late afternoon/evening in the summer. They believe it provides a fairly livable outdoor area. Gerry Eckford, Landscape Architect, added, in acknowledgment that it is a north-facing area they have chosen to make it more of an urban, patio space.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel reviewed the model and posted materials and commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application. The Panel had no problem with the additional height being requested. It clearly makes the project more viable and work better overall.

The Panel's main concern was with the livability of the rear units, especially the unit on the left. Questions were raised about whether these units are even furnishable. Furnishing layouts would have been beneficial. A suggested solution for these units was to pull them back to have two or three units instead of four - shallower and wider to allow more light penetration. Reducing the depth of the commercial unit was also suggested. One Panel member suggested creating an atrium at the rear, similar to those seen in London. The proposed solid fence at the lane was questioned, with a recommendation to consider something partially open, or glass blocks.

With respect to the side walls, given this building may stand exposed for some time, the applicant was strongly encouraged to provide some colour or patterning to relieve the monotony until the neighbouring sites are redeveloped.

One Panel member commented that the front façade shows a lot of promise and is headed in the right direction. The applicant was commended for the brick over the residential entrance as opposed to the more usual additional half bay treatment.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Ciccozzi said he agreed with the comments about the rear units. The only solution would be to reduce the number of units and achieve greater light access. An atrium would not be workable. However, he agreed they can look at pulling the units back as suggested.