
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: January 30, 2008

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
John Wall, Chair
Gerry Eckford
Walter Francl
Bill Harrison
Mark Ostry
Maurice Pez
Bob Ransford
Douglas Watts

REGRETS: Albert Bicol
Tom Bunting
Richard Henry
Martin Nielsen

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	707 East 20 th Avenue
2.	175 Robson Street

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Wall 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.

1. Address: 707 East 20th Avenue
DE: 411703
Description: Mixed-use, retail and residential with structure parking
Zoning: C-2
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Cornerstone Architects
Owner: 167799 Holdings Ltd.
Review: First
Delegation: Scott Kennedy, Cornerstone Architects
Peter Kreuk,
Staff: Dale Morgan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-2)

- **Introduction:** Dale Morgan, Development Planner introduced the proposal for a site at East 20th Avenue and Fraser Street. He described the zoning in the surrounding area. The site has a high water table and the applicant has proposed a parking structure, part of which will be included in the FSR. There is a lane at the back of the site with an undedicated property preventing direct access to the site from the lane. The developer also owns the adjacent RS-1 site. The building envelope is prescribed in the C-2 regulations; a height of 45 feet, with setbacks at the street edges and a rear setback. There is a loading area at the back with the entry to the residential off East 20th Avenue. The mix will be one and two bedrooms units. Materials: the building is predominantly brick, with projecting bay windows and HardiePanel™ accents. Along the driveway access, sandblasted concrete is proposed with some trellis cover at the street. Landscaping: there is a two foot setback at the street edge, with a continuous row of trees and landscaping on the upper terrace.

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

- Neighbourliness: Panel comments are requested on the transition between the C-2 and RS-1 context, considering driveway access with overhead trellis, RS-1 setbacks, privacy and overlook and associated public realm treatment.
- Liveability: Panel comments are requested on the relationship between the amenity space and shared outdoor amenity space and the ground floor unit and private outdoor space.
- Material Expression: General comments are requested on the proposed colours and materials. Should the spacing of the brick piers along street frontage be closer together? Should the material treatment along the driveway access be improved to reflect a more residential side yard condition?

Mr. Morgan took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Scott Kennedy, Architect, further described the proposal noting that there wasn't an advantage to adding the RS-1 site to the project. He described the access to the residential parking and the loading bays for the CRU's. They have extended the brick to the ground and are thinking of adding more of the green colour to the façade. The amenity room opens out onto a terrace.

Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping for the proposal and noted that the landscaping along the property line is intended to provide some screening with the RS-1 neighbour.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider removing the trellis element over the lane;
 - Consider adding more brick at the retail base;
 - Design development to the amenity space for a stronger distinction between the adjacent out door amenity and private residential spaces;
 - Move the pad mounted electrical transformer from its present street location;
 - Consider adding more sustainable measures on the project; and
 - Consider softening the lower rear wall for a better transition with the neighbours.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the project.

Regarding neighbourliness, there is a clear opinion from the Panel that the proposed house on the RS-1 lot needs to be well considered as it is the transition element to the neighbourhood. There was a consensus from the Panel that the trellis element wasn't working and this edge condition is more about the RS-1 site and how it fits in with the C-2 development. Also of importance is how the property line condition and landscape treatment at that edge will be developed, as that will create a sense of neighbourliness for the rest of the street.

The Panel had some concerns with the north façade and thought a more architectural treatment should be considered.

In terms of the retail space on Fraser Street, several Panel members suggested adding more brick at the retail base as well as more design development and architectural treatment. One Panel member encouraged the applicant to locate the entrances between the brick columns.

Regarding liveability, the Panel had some suggestions regarding the unit adjacent to the amenity space and how to resolve privacy issues. They thought the best approach was to treat that unit as a ground floor unit with a direct entrance at grade with a terrace and entry stoop that faces the sidewalk. They also suggested having a proper landscape buffer between the outdoor space of the unit and the outdoor space of the amenity space. A Panel member suggested introducing some windows from the amenity space to the private lane to open up the concrete wall.

There was general consensus that an important element for liveability was making sure the electrical transformer was moved from its current location to the back of the property.

The Panel liked the materials but suggested more brick at the base to add visual strength. Several Panel members liked the colour palette but one Panel member thought it was being erratically applied to the façade. Another Panel member suggested that the colours be better integrated and less stringent.

The Panel had some concerns regarding sustainability as they didn't see any initiatives in the building. They suggested that more attention could be paid to the roof treatment,

ground source heating and cooling. The Panel noted that they have been charged with a mandate from AIBC to comment on possible sustainable measures in new construction.

The Panel thought the landscaping was well handled except for the back wall which could have the biggest impact on the neighbours. One Panel member suggested adding brick on the wall to soften it and another Panel member suggested an open rail rather than a high concrete wall. Also mentioned was adding screening along the property line of the loading bay. Several Panel members suggested that the applicant look at combining the adjacent RS-1 lot to the project for a better transition.

Applicant's Response: Mr. Kennedy thanked the Panel for their comments. He noted he was still working on the design for the amenity space and wasn't sure that it needs an outdoor space. Regarding a green roof, Mr. Kennedy said that there were warranty concerns and that they are still discussing the energy side of the project.

2. Address:	175 Robson Street
DE:	411173
Description:	To develop a hotel and residential tower with conference facilities, restaurant and lounge on the second level and spa and amenities on the third level with a total building height of 20 storeys.
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Relative Form Architecture Studio
Owner:	Mayfair Properties Ltd.
Review:	Second (First Review: April 11/07)
Delegation:	Abdallah Jamal, Relative Form Architecture Studio Margot Long, PWL Partnership Landscape Architects Inc. Zack Bhatia, Mayfair Hotels & Resorts Gillian Moran, Jacques Whitford
Staff:	Anita Molaro

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Development Planner introduced the proposal and noted that the proposal was a complete application after preliminary. As the site is protected by a view cone, the building has been designed for the maximum height on the site.

Ms. Molaro stated that the Panel had identified five items that needed improvement at the last review. The first item was for the applicant to address the offset set-back that was created by the Hampton Inn. At one time Engineering was seeking an additional eight foot pedestrian setback which they have now reconsidered, and as a result the site has the benefit of the eight feet. The applicant has gone back and now aligned their building with the Hampton Inn. The second item that the Panel raised was the tower massing as the Panel thought it should better reflect the infill city fabric nature of this site. The applicant has simplified the massing elements as well as the street interface and podium elements. The podium is to be a high two storey podium wrapping around to three storeys to respect the orthogonal grid and the glazed part of the building is shifted off the grid slightly to capture longer views and to get additional sun exposure into the courtyard.

The Development Permit Board (DPB) also sought further design development through two conditions. These were further design development to the tower massing to reduce its overall bulkiness and to simplify the architectural forms of the tower itself. In general the tower floor plate has been slimmed and the tower's basic forms have gone to a more vertical expression with the glass part of the tower coming down to grade along Robson Street. Another issue the DPB identified was that there needed to be further design development regarding the visual quality of the porte-cochere to maximize its lightness. The DPB also asked the applicant to address the podium landscaping and the treatment of the blank wall. The applicant has addressed the issue of the blank wall with some lighting features.

The third item the Panel sought further development on was the material choices. The proposal is now for precast concrete in a flushed mullion detailed window wall system. The fourth item was for more design development on the CRU's interface with the street as well as the building entries to achieve an animated streetscape. In the previous scheme the applicant had designed an internal stair that came up from the lobby of the main floor to the second floor restaurant. That has been moved away from the window and is now part of the lobby sitting area. Overall the resolution of the streetscape and the materiality has

been addressed and the entrances to the hotel and residential will be combined with separate access. The other item that the Panel wanted the applicant to consider was sustainability strategies.

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

- Resolution of the massing response to better reflect the infill, city fabric nature of this site.
- Materials - pre-cast concrete and flush mullion window walls
- Landscape
- Sustainability considerations
- Quality of porte-cochere
- Podium landscape
- Any other comments that the panel would like to provide.

Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Abdallah Jamal, Architect, further described the project noting the materials planned for the building. In terms of the glass tower the details will be in the form of shaped mullions as well as coloured glass. Also, there is a number of water features planned for the project. In terms of sustainability strategies, Mr. Jamal noted that they have engaged a sustainability consultant. He added that the building will be served by a heat pump system and the owner has been testing to see if a geo-thermal exchange can be used. The results of the test have been positive and owner is yet to determine the long term pay back benefits. He added that they are planning to add a system that will monitor energy consumption in the hotel rooms and the system will be able to turn down the energy use in rooms that aren't occupied.

Margot Long, Landscape Architect, noted that the landscape plans have not changed very much from the previous review. One of the driving designs of the project is the seamless relationship between the indoor and outdoor spaces. There are two oak trees at the entrance to the porte-cochere that will be retained. The intent is to collect rain water for irrigation with a high efficiency irrigation system. A green roof is planned for the fourth floor.

Gillian Moran, Sustainability Consultant, noted that she was retained to give an assessment of the sustainable attributes of the project. Ms. Moran described the process and the results of her assessment. She noted the energy efficiency of the building, water efficiency, site selection and building orientation.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider adding solar shading to the southwest side of the building;
 - Design development to the balconies on the upper half the building;
 - Consider more design development to the bridges to provide increased transparency and lightness;
 - The projecting lounge needs further refinement and some strength and character; and
 - Consider adding some of the whimsy back in the landscape porte-cochere as seen at the first review.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel unanimously supported the proposal and thought the application was very supportable and that the success of the project would be in the detailing.

The Panel thought the massing was generally acceptable and going in the right direction. Most of the Panel liked the way the building meets the ground and how the different facades come together with the off axis of the tower. One Panel member struggled with the heritage character of the solid elements in opposition to the modern elements and suggested continuing on with the modern expression. However, another Panel member liked the duality of the two elements, the glazing and the substantial base that reflects a heritage character and pays respect to the neighbourhood.

The precast concrete work will require a lot of detail including relief, depth and line work to achieve a high quality resolution. One Panel member suggested using the precast concrete around the windows to give them a decent depth. Another Panel member liked the terracotta pieces and suggested adding them at the base of the building too, as it would be interesting on the street.

One Panel member thought the horizontal projection and staggered vertical window expression on the Robson Street façade should continue down the building to increase sun shading and provide a higher degree of refinement in the mullion detailing. A couple of Panel members suggested that the façade might benefit from solar shading and help modulate the glass facade.

Several Panel members didn't like the way the balconies on the residential floors project as they barely clear the glass and suggested they come forward more, and be clearly stated on the building façade.

Several Panel members thought the crank on the entry projection and the fountain at the corner was not visually gratifying. It was suggested that it be squared off to normalize the orthogonal entrancing into the lobby. One Panel member thought the beacon at the corner was a very important piece and suggested that it needed to go further and perhaps should have a curve roof to reflect the roof at the back of the project.

One Panel member had some concerns regarding the glass on the lower portions of hotel. Most of the Panel thought the glass connections on the bridges needed to look elegant and not look like residential glazing. They also thought the detailing of the bridges would be very important so that they read like light bridges between buildings.

Several Panel members liked the way the landscaping worked on the roof areas and thought it would be a beautiful space for guests to enjoy. However, a couple of the Panel members thought the landscaping on the podium and the porte-cochere worked better in the previous scheme as it had more exuberance, that it presented an oasis where it now looks rather spartan. They also thought that the landscaping didn't come out to the lane as well as in the previous scheme. Most of the Panel members agreed that all the roofs should be green roofs as they will be appreciated from above. One Panel member was concerned with the landscape space around the hot tub and suggested adding an outdoor fireplace to make it more useable and more interesting. The Panel liked the flexibility in the landscaping and thought it was well done.

Regarding sustainability the Panel encouraged the applicant to bring in the ground source heat recovery system and the ground floor heat pump system as it will be a valuable asset to the building. One Panel member suggested the applicant look at using heat exchange

for waste heat in the building. The Panel also appreciated the applicant hiring a sustainability consultant for the project.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Jamal, Architect, thanked the Panel for their comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.