

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: January 7, 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 (excused Item 2.)
Bruce Haden
Reena Lazar
Brian Martin
Kim Perry
Ken Terriss (not present for Item 1.)
Mark Ostry

REGRETS: Eva Lee
Jennifer Marshall
Sorin Tatomir

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	600 Abbott Street
2.	1475 Howe Street
3.	2201 Ash Street
4.	1030 West Broadway
5.	455 West 8th Avenue

1.	Address:	600 Abbott Street
	DE:	408032
	Use:	Mixed (6 storeys, 25 storeys, 31 storeys)
	Zoning:	CD-1
	Applicant Status:	Complete
	Architect:	Hancock Bruckner Eng & Wright
	Owner:	Henderson Land Holdings Ltd. (Canada)
	Review:	Second
	Delegation:	James Hancock, Martin Bruckner, Peter Kreuk, Hilde Heuvaerts
	Staff:	Ralph Segal

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner, presented this application. The project was not supported by the Panel when it was first reviewed on December 10, 2003. The applicant has made a number of revisions to the scheme since that time and the Panel's response to the latest submission is requested.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Jim Hancock, Architect, briefly reviewed the revisions made in response to the Panel's previous areas of concern. With respect to sustainability, he said they believe the project will achieve at least LEED certification. He stressed that the distribution of the massing is in accordance with the very prescriptive guidelines for the site. Peter Kreuk briefly described the revisions to the landscape plan, and the design team responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this submission and commended the applicant team for the quick response to the Panel's earlier concerns.

The Panel fully supported the relocation of the vehicular access away from the future school, as well as the improvements to the vehicular entry at building F2. One Panel member thought more could be done to improve the entry to F2 where the column drops down from the soffit above.

The higher canopy and commercial glazing was strongly supported by the Panel. A comment was made that the quality of the lighting details inside the parkade will be very important.

The Panel remained unconvinced that the brick allocation has been successfully resolved. Further design development was strongly recommended. Some comments were made that the switch from horizontal to vertical expression may not be appropriate because the former provides a better contrast to the verticality of the towers. Another comment was that concrete at the base might lend itself better to the more sculptural openings proposed. Some Panel members expressed concern about the faux brick paneling and suggested it might not be as successful as presented.

A comment was made that since the oval building has a very different shape and character than the rest of the development it might have been worth considering expressing it in completely different materials to provide greater interest to the project.

The Panel strongly endorsed the introduction of green roofs.

The Panel was not persuaded that the sculptural rooftop elements are appropriate. It was suggested that consideration be given to eliminating this feature, at least from the oval

tower, in favour of reallocating the funds elsewhere, in particular to relocating the electrical transformer. Comments were made that the rooftop features maybe somewhat diagrammatic and superfluous when viewed from street level. Also, that the shape might lend itself better to metal rather than the concrete proposed.

The Panel was disappointed that the Park Board requires such a clear definition between private and public open space, and the proposed fence which cuts off the park was thought to be too formal a gesture. It was recommended that consideration be given to some completely different treatment that makes the private/public domain separation much less obvious.

The Panel found the presentation materials somewhat lacking in terms of neighbourhood analysis. As well, given the existing retail space in this neighbourhood has been less than successful to date, there was a recommendation to ensure there is flexibility incorporated into the commercial space in this development. The Panel expressed the hope, however, that this development will contribute to the vitality of the entire neighbourhood.

The applicant was commended for the initiatives towards sustainability which will be a major contribution to the scheme.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Hancock thanked the Panel for its comments. He agreed they can work on the brick treatment.

2. Address:	1475 Howe Street
Use:	Mixed (29 storeys, 168 units)
Zoning:	CD-1
Applicant Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	Rafii Architects
Owner:	Qualex Landmark
Review:	First
Delegation:	Chuck Brook, Foad Rafii, Rolbert Kleyn
Staff:	Jonathan Barrett, Alan Duncan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- **Introduction:** Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, presented this rezoning application for one of the few remaining sites in the FCCDD zone. The Granville Slopes Policy Plan is applicable, which suggests a density of 4.5 FSR and 210 ft. height, and primarily residential use. The guidelines also include a massing diagram for the site. The proposal is for a 30-storey residential tower (151 units) at about 290 ft. and 4.95 FSR. The increase in density over that suggested in the policy is achieved by importing heritage density from the heritage "bank", which is appropriate to consider for this site. The tower has a 4-storey base opposite the park and a 3-storey townhouse base along Howe Street. Setbacks are as required in Downtown South. The tower is sited slightly further south (about 25 - 30 ft.) than indicated in the policy diagram, and the tower is taller and slimmer with a floor plate of about 5,600 sq.ft. as opposed to the more typical 6,500-6,800 sq.ft.

The advice of the Panel is sought in the following areas:

- whether the height of the tower is appropriate in relationship to the immediate context and the surrounding 'family' of buildings;
- whether the location of the tower is appropriate;
- whether the overall form can accommodate the additional heritage density;
- whether the 4-storey base facing the park is appropriate, noting the policy suggests six storeys;
- landscape setbacks and provision of semi private open space.

The application will be returned to the Panel for further consideration at the development permit stage.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Chuck Brook provided some background information and Foad Rafii, Architect, described the design rationale. It was noted the intent is to seek LEED certification, possibly bronze or silver level. Following a description of the landscape plan the applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application.

The Panel considered the tower to be well located on the site and had no concerns about the proposed height. There were suggestions that the tower could be even higher and some Panel members indicated a preference for slimmer, higher towers. The setbacks were considered to be appropriate, and the additional heritage density well handled.

The Panel liked the modern expression of the building.

The Panel thought the townhouse base needed a lot more design development and looks forward to seeing greater resolution at the development permit stage. With respect to the townhouses facing the park, the Panel supported the townhouse form in this location rather than a higher apartment base. Provided the same setback is provided, the Panel saw no need to continue the height of the base of the neighbouring development.

With respect to the townhouses on Pacific, a suggestion was made that it might be appropriate to deviate from the plan somewhat and consider deleting them on this site, especially noting the site immediately to the east will be unlikely to achieve townhouses beneath the on-ramp. The Pacific townhouses were thought to be the least successful of this project.

Some Panel members stated a preference for the tower to be expressed down to the ground and eliminating the four townhouses at its base.

The provision of semi private open space was considered to be acceptable. The Panel very strongly supported the proposed "sky gardens" and urged that the applicant not be penalized by including them in the FSR calculation. They were considered to be a very good amenity, both for the residents of this development as well as for the neighbourhood in general given their visibility from the Granville Bridge on-ramp. There was a suggestion that it might be better to have one large sky garden, or several small ones, rather than the two proposed. Another comment was that they might be more usable if they are oriented a bit differently. It was recommended that the provision of the sky gardens be included in the rezoning conditions.

Careful attention should be given to the relationship between this development and the existing development to the west.

The applicant was commended for the proposal to incorporate public art on this site. However, several Panel members thought it would be more appropriate to locate it on the south side facing the public park. In this way, the northeast corner would be more solid, which is more typical of corner treatment in this neighbourhood. It was also recommended to explore other ways to incorporate public art into the scheme, possibly through significant enhancement of the lane. Given its location next to a public park, consideration should be given to upgrading this lane to street standards. One Panel member suggested that the sky gardens could also be part of the public art contribution.

As the project proceeds, attention should be given to livability issues with respect to the balconies of the middle north units and east units.

The applicant was commended for the goal to seek LEED certification on this project. However, it was noted that at present there is little in the architecture that acknowledges issues of sustainability, i.e., response to the orientation of each elevation and incorporation of elements such as brise soleil to address solar gain on the south and west facades. The Panel will look for greater commitment to sustainability at the development permit stage.

3. Address:	2201 Ash Street
DE:	407961
Use:	Residential (35 units)
Zoning:	FM-1
Applicant Status:	Complete
Architect:	Ankenman Marchand
Owner:	Nystar Developments
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Francois Marchand, Nicolas Santorelli
Staff:	James Boldt

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-2)

- **Introduction:** James Boldt, Development Planner, presented this application. The Panel reviewed the project on November 12, 2003 when it was not supported. The Development Planner briefly reviewed the FM-1 zoning regulations and noted the City will consider an all-residential development provided a 12 ft. setback is provided along 6th Avenue, given the harsh environment of this street. The proposed density is about 1.48 FSR, reduced slightly from the previous submission. Outright density in this zone is 0.6 FSR, conditionally relaxable up to 1.5 FSR. Mr. Boldt briefly reminded the Panel of the concerns raised previously, and the applicant's response in this revised submission.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- general massing and expression of the building, including the nature of the townhouse expression on Ash and 6th Avenue given the inward-looking nature of the development in response to the harsh environment along 6th Avenue;
 - livability of the units and outdoor amenity; and
 - materials and colour.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Francois Marchand, Architect, described the revisions made to the scheme since the Panel's previous review.
 - **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this submission and thought there had been significant improvements made, particularly to the exterior courtyard spaces which are now a much more useful amenity for the building.

The Panel acknowledged the restrictions on this site, including the 25 ft. height limit at the lane and the additional setback requirement along West 6th Avenue. Nevertheless, most Panel members thought the proposed massing had handled the issues reasonably well in order to achieve the proposed density.

The Panel did not consider it necessary to have an identifiable townhouse expression around the edge of the project, particularly on West 6th Avenue which is a very urban street.

One Panel member suggested the courtyards could be further improved by reducing the middle block from six to four units to achieve better light penetration to the west courtyard. Another suggestion was that the rectangular planter in the easterly courtyard may not be necessary.

While most Panel members found the livability of the units improved since the last review some concerns remained and two Panel members still found the livability unacceptable. Suggestions for further improvement included increasing the number of skylights and

increasing the size of some of the windows. It was also suggested that poor livability may be the result of some rooms being misidentified, with a recommendation to consider some use other than bedroom, possibly home office.

The Panel generally supported the proposed materials and colour scheme and stressed that the success of the project will depend largely on how well it is detailed. The Panel reiterated its earlier appreciation for the refreshing, modern approach taken with this building.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Marchand thanked the Panel for the comments.

4. Address:	1030 West Broadway
DE:	407719
Use:	Mixed (12 storeys, 72 units)
Zoning:	C-3A
Applicant Status:	Complete after Preliminary
Architect:	W. T. Leung
Owner:	Tom Peng
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Wing Ting Leung, Lena Chorobik, Bob McGilvray, Mehdi Sadeghi
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this C-3A application. An earlier Preliminary submission was not supported by the Panel on August 20, 2003, with concerns expressed about the proposed massing and the provision of semi private open space. The project has now been revised and is submitted as a Complete Application.

The proposal is for a 12-storey residential building containing 73 dwelling units, and an adjacent dance studio with retail on the ground floor. Vehicular access and loading is at the lane which improves pedestrian amenity on the Broadway frontage. The lane is 17 ft. higher than West Broadway. The application seeks the maximum permitted density of 3.0 FSR and a height of 114 ft. (maximum permitted is 120 ft.), and is slimmer than the massing suggested in the Central Broadway C-3A Guidelines. Proposed materials include painted concrete and glass.

The advice of the Panel is sought on whether the proposal has earned the requested 3.0 FSR and whether the shadowing created on the north Broadway sidewalk is acceptable.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Wing Ting Leung, Architect, briefly described the project and the design rationale. The landscape plan was briefly reviewed by Lena Chorobik and Bob McGilvray, Architect, provided some further details about the project, and the design team responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this submission and commended the applicant for responding so well to its previous comments. The proposed rental units and the dance studio were considered to be great assets. Several Panel members suggested this proposal could set a new precedent for Central Broadway.

The Panel confirmed that it believes the project earns the requested FSR, and the height and slenderness of the tower was considered to be a great advantage. The marginal shadowing it causes on the northerly sidewalk was thought to be insignificant and quite acceptable. The Panel strongly supported the tower coming right to the street and did not believe a 30 ft. streetwall was necessary in this location. The Panel also strongly supported the vehicular entry at the lane.

Suggestions/comments included:

- design development to the dance studio roof;
- consideration for tying in the elevator penthouse with a connecting element between the roof appurtenances;

- provide a sense of volume to the dance studio and offer a sense of what is happening inside from the street;
- it may not be necessary for the north and south elevations to be identical in their resolution;
- consider adding some solar shading to the south elevation;
- consider adding a little height on the Broadway frontage by increasing the floor to ceiling height of the front units;
- the courtyard should be carefully detailed, both for the benefit of the residents and pedestrians looking in from the street;
- consider eliminating the glass pavilion;
- suggest re-orienting the living room of unit 307 away from the dance studio;
- question the necessity for the elevator element at the corner.

The Panel congratulated the applicant for this response to the Central Broadway Guidelines which the Panel believes are long overdue for review.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Leung thanked the Panel for its input. He noted the design of the dance studio is not yet finalized and, with respect to the courtyard, having the front door facing the street is necessary to meet fire regulations. Mr. McGilvray added, it is interesting to note that some of the nicest developments on West Broadway have not met the guidelines.

5. Address:	455 West 8th Avenue (2300 Cambie)
DE:	407357
Use:	Mixed (6 storeys, 80 L/W units)
Zoning:	C-3A
Applicant Status:	Complete after Preliminary
Architect:	Nigel Baldwin
Owner:	Ryan Beechinor
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Nigel Baldwin, Ryan Beechinor, Jane Durante, Janet Smithson
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this complete application. The preliminary submission was approved in principle by the Development Permit Board on May 12, 2003 and strongly supported by the Panel. Ms. Rondeau briefly described the proposal for this site which comprises the full block bounded by Cambie Street, 8th Avenue, Yukon Street and 7th Avenue, noting the major issues with respect to massing and view impacts have been resolved. An urban gourmet grocery store is proposed along 7th Avenue (30-40,000 sq.ft.) and small scale retail units on the Cambie Street frontage with larger retail space behind. The proposal meets the guideline for a 25 ft. setback on Cambie Street and an art feature is also proposed for this setback area. This revised submission now proposes two residential entries on 8th Avenue, providing access to the 92 artist live/work studios above the commercial. In this sub area of the C-3A zone purely residential use is not permitted. LEED certified level is proposed.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Nigel Baldwin, Architect, briefly described the project and Jane Durante described the landscape plan and the proposed art feature. The design team responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application. The Panel found it to be an excellent response to the urban design issues and noted major improvements to the scheme since the preliminary stage. The Panel acknowledged that it is a major challenge to develop a full block with such a program and commended the architect for an exciting response to dealing with large retail tenant spaces without creating large blank walls.

The Panel liked the simplicity of the central open space for the ALW residents and found it very appropriate. There was a recommendation to consider the relationship of the amenity room to the green space to the south and to avoid the step if possible. A comment was made that it is unfortunate the space fails to have a view to the north. The Panel believes the courtyard will be very well used by the tenants and recommended including electrical outlets and gas lines to enhance its usability. One Panel member commented that the walkways feel somewhat tight and suggested reallocating some of the central green area to increasing the space between the units.

The Panel noted that while the ALW component represents about a third of the whole project, the residential entrances on West 8th Avenue are rather diminutive, making the units appear to be quite disconnected from the ground. The Panel recommended strengthening these entries to provide greater street presence.

Several Panel members were not convinced that the proposed colour scheme will be successful, finding the grey too dark and overwhelming. It was suggested there may be

opportunity for some variation in colour with a full block development such as this and to introduce warmer colours.

The applicant was commended for the serious commitment to sustainability.

Other comments included:

- the retail corners dominate the project;
 - the West 7th Avenue elevation could be less rigorous;
 - the least successful corner is 7th/Yukon with the diagonal glazing;
 - the edge treatment of the AWL decks will be very important;
 - hope the signage will not dominate.
- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Baldwin thanked the Panel for the input. With respect to the suggestion to incorporate more playfulness, he commented it is a very large project and if it is broken down too much it begins to look even bigger and chunkier.