
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: January 8, 2003

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Walter Francl, Chair
Helen Besharat
Jeffrey Corbett
Gerry Eckford
Joseph Hruda
Reena Lazar
Stuart Lyon
Maurice Pez (not present for vote on Item 2)
Sorin Tatomir

REGRETS: Richard Henry
Kim Perry
Ken Terriss

RECORDING SECRETARY: Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1101 West Broadway (2483 Spruce Street)
2.	Knight & Kingsway

BUSINESS

Outstanding Design Award

Ralph Segal, Senior Development Planner, made reference to the Panel's recent proposal to recognize outstanding design.

In brief, a number of concerns have been raised by the Planning Department. Applications are reviewed by the Panel at the early stages of design and there may be policy issues (not necessarily just relaxations) that prevent them from being approvable, despite the Panel's endorsement for excellent design. This applies particularly to rezoning applications.

Of secondary concern is that an award by the Panel might undermine the Panel's ultimate position on a project.

Another issue is the criteria upon which the award is made, which appear to be lacking at this stage. An Urban Design Awards Program was initiated by the Planning Department some time ago but not pursued due to lack of resources. However, it did set out some firm criteria which would avoid the potential conflict between policy and design.

Given the main proponent of the award was absent from today's meeting, it was agreed to defer further discussion until the meeting of January 22, 2003.

1. Address:	1101 West Broadway (2483 Spruce Street)
DA:	407180
Use:	Mixed, 10 storeys, 68 units
Zoning:	C-3A
Application Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	W. T. Leung
Owner:	Leeda Developments Corp.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Wing Ting Leung
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this preliminary application in the Central Broadway C-3A zone. The proposal is for a mixed used development with a small amount of commercial on the ground floor and residential use above. The site is 125 ft. wide x 115 ft. deep and has a slope of 10 - 12 ft. Access to parking and services is off the lane. Outright density and height in C-3A are 1.0 FSR and 30 ft., respectively, relaxable up to 3.0 FSR and over 30 ft. (the Guidelines suggest approx. 120 ft.). The application seeks a height of about 100 ft. Ms. Rondeau briefly reviewed the ways in which the proposal meets the criteria for earning the relaxations. One issue relates to the streetwall on Broadway where the guidelines seek a two-storey frontage and the application proposes single storey (17 ft. high) commercial use on Broadway. Other areas in which the Panel's comments are sought relate to the treatment of the 15 ft. setback, preservation of views, and treatment of the semi private outdoor space.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Wing Leung, Architect, responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application as a preliminary submission.

Given that some view obstruction is inevitable, the Panel had no concern about the proposed height. Some Panel members thought it could be higher.

There was a lot of commentary but no consensus about the height of the commercial frontage on West Broadway. Two Panel members felt strongly that the height of the streetwall should be at least two storeys noting the most successful buildings on Broadway are at least 30 ft. Other Panel members, while agreeing a higher streetwall generally makes for a better urban solution, acknowledged the dilemma of dealing with upper level commercial space that is not viable. The solution involving a raised parapet made to appear as a second storey was thought to be undesirable. Some Panel members were prepared to support the proposed single storey height but stressed there needs to be much more design development to the parapet as well as the canopies and storefronts. One observation was that single doors to the retail units are preferable to the double doors shown because they provide more show windows for the retailers and create a more pleasant experience for people on the street. Two Panel members did not believe a two-storey streetwall is effective in creating an urban feel on Broadway because it is a very wide street.

Another comment about the upper level above the commercial space was to consider some direct access to the tenants given it will be the sunniest location in the building. A suggestion was also

made to strongly differentiate the Broadway commercial frontage from the rest of the building in terms of colours and materials.

With respect to the tower, its simple, modern expression was generally supported, including the projected balcony. However, there were concerns expressed about the two different facade expressions, lack of character and the lack of a strong rationalization for the different treatments. Some Panel members thought the residential and commercial elevations should be reversed. Others thought all the elevations should have a residential expression. One Panel member supported the small balconies on Broadway as being a good addition to the street and amenity for the residents, and suggested they should be considered on the Spruce elevation as well to take advantage of views.

The Panel had a number of concerns about the Spruce Street edge and generally found the degree of resolution at the ground plane to be lacking. Treatment of the canopies, including the round canopy and column at the corner, was found to be needing more design development, and the stepped planters at the corner were not considered to be successful. It was recommended that the planters be of a higher quality to discourage graffiti. There were major concerns about the treatment of the residential entry which was considered to be quite weak. A suggestion was made to lower the residential entrance and amenity uses to the Spruce Street level.

The Panel generally supported the proposed 15 ft. setback which opens up the view down Spruce Street. The Panel agreed that townhouses along Spruce Street would be difficult to achieve successfully and it was noted there are no other townhouses in the immediate neighbourhood. One Panel member suggested there should still be more substantial mass at the lower levels; something other than amenity that provides animation at all times of the day. It was suggested the corner at the lane needs some reworking.

With respect to the open space, a suggestion was made to reverse the two open spaces at the lower level, with the tree-planted area is in shade and the sunnier open space at the lane. Another suggestion was to raise the rear courtyard another level to get more sun.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Leung explained the intent of this preliminary submission is to "test the waters" with respect to the streetwall height on Broadway, noting that some three-storey based buildings on Broadway are visually successful but the use has suffered because second storey retail is not very viable. The proposed double height retail space on Broadway is to try to raise the height somewhat. Comments about the commercial detailing are well taken and will be addressed at the complete stage. With respect to the two different facade expressions of the building, Mr. Leung said the dilemma is that a more commercial appearance facing Broadway causes marketing problems because potential residents see it as being the noisier side of the building whereas there are very good views to the north and a desire to have as much window as possible.

2. Address:	Knight & Kingsway
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	Rositch Hemphill
Owner:	Aquilini Investment Group
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Keith Hemphill, Chris Phillips, Radoslav Lepur
Staff:	Scot Hein, Lynda Challis

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-2)

- **Introduction:** Lynda Challis, Rezoning Planner, introduced this application, on which the Panel's advice is sought with respect to use, density and form of development. The site is one hectare in area and is bounded by three major arterial streets: Kingsway, Knight Street and King Edward Avenue. It is currently zoned C-2. Ms. Challis briefly reviewed the recent history of the site, noting the City initiated CD-1 rezoning in Spring 2002. This was approved by Council but not enacted. However, there is a no-development covenant that prevents any new development on the site without a rezoning occurring.

The current proposal is for commercial uses at grade along Kingsway and Knight with anchors at the corners of Knight and King Edward Avenue and Knight and Kingsway. It is hoped that one of the anchors will at some time in the future be a grocery store, if and when the existing covenant on the site can be removed. Office space is proposed for parts of the second and third storeys. Approximately 330 dwelling units are proposed for the residential component, comprising townhouses on King Edward Avenue, apartments on the third to seventh storeys of the midrise section and in the towers. The development also includes space for a public library, to be relocated from the existing Kensington Branch on Knight Street. Overall density is 4.11 FSR, comprising approximately 1.0 FSR commercial and 3.0 FSR residential use. Building height ranges from the 3-storey townhouses to a high of 16 storeys. The midrise portions range between five and seven storeys along Kingsway and three to five storeys along King Edward. There is also a 12-storey tower at the south portion of the site. Tower floor plates are approximately 7,000 sq.ft. at the upper levels of the towers. Four access points are proposed: off Kingsway, Knight, King Edward and the lane. The project uses the existing lane as an internal street system and includes an open space or retail mews in the central area as an additional public benefit. Underground parking for 880 cars is proposed.

The Development Planner, Scot Hein, briefly reviewed the Panel's comments from the previous workshop when a number of options were considered for the site. No single option was identified as a strong preference and a number of different approaches were suggested. The applicant has attempted to respond to the Panel's advice. Mr. Hein also noted that an economic analysis to determine bonus density attributed to a new library had not been completed and, as such, the Panel should focus its comments on the proposal's urban design performance given the density proposed.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Keith Hemphill, Architect, described how they have responded to the Panel's previous advice. He reviewed the project in greater detail and responded to the Panel's questions.
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- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel supported this rezoning application and thought the applicant had responded quite well to its earlier comments. There was unanimous support for the proposed uses and mix.

There was support for the residential character of this development with some design development. It was noted the residents of this development will themselves contribute to the success of the commercial retail uses.

With respect to the density, several Panel members were uncomfortable with the proposed 4.11 FSR and suggested something between 3.5 and 4.0 FSR would be more appropriate. There were a number of concerns relating to the distribution of the massing on the site and some Panel members did not believe it was workable in its present form, particularly referencing the second tower. A comment was made that it is unfortunate this developer does not have control of the entire site at this time.

There was unanimous support for the massing at the corner of Knight and Kingsway although some concern with floor plate size. An icon building in this location is very appropriate, and some Panel members suggested it could be higher. One Panel member found the curved glass base of the corner element unsuccessful with the tower component set back from the base and suggested a better integration with the podium.

The Panel had major concerns about the tower element on King Edward Avenue, both its location and form. One comment was that it should be more symmetrical in response to the gateway beneath it. Most Panel members failed to see the rationale for the 12-storey tower on King Edward Avenue and thought there was an uncomfortable relationship between the tower, the portal and the townhouses. The transition to the park and existing single family houses is also an important consideration. Some Panel members thought the townhouses should be deleted in favour of ground oriented units or something that integrates better and makes a stronger portal building. Several Panel members suggested the massing from the 12-storey tower should be redistributed elsewhere on the site, particularly to the tower at Knight/Kingsway.

The Panel agreed that the courtyard retail and restaurant spaces will be a major challenge. A comment was made that the geometry of the courtyard has remained quite strong in its plan but this has not been reflected very strongly in the geometry of the buildings. The Panel agreed the courtyard concept should be retained and liked the intimate urban space it will provide, away from the busy surrounding streets. However, there was concern expressed about the viability of the cafes in this space and the amount of blank wall and loading in this area. One Panel member suggested consideration be given to reducing the size of the courtyard in favour of just a widening in the street if the viability of the retail is in question. Much more work is required to achieve a successful pedestrian environment.

Several Panel members commented on the street elevations. Attention should be given to proportions of openings along Knight Street and Kingsway in terms of the expression of uses, and on Kingsway the architectural vocabulary needs more resolution. One Panel member found the Knight Street elevation to be the most successful. Some members strongly supported the 5 - 7-storey massing and urged that it not be lowered. More effort to reduce the perceived "scale" of the development is required.

A concern was expressed about the proposed fabric awnings which will not be very durable. It was suggested that a project of this size and calibre needs to have a plan for permanent weather protection

in the form of substantive canopies, which could also be a means of linking the different elements on the site.

One Panel member was concerned about traffic congestion, particularly at the main parking access off Kingsway. The access to King Edward Avenue was also not understood, with some members questioning whether it will be required, and a suggestion that the project needs a complete traffic analysis.

Attention should be given to the residential entrances and how the buildings are addressed. It might be more appropriate for the main residential tower entry to be off a main street rather than at the rear. As well, some of the other residential entries are very close to commercial entries.

Two Panel members commented on the complexity of constructing the whole project at the same time and recommended some thought be given to a phased development.

- **Applicant's Response:** With respect to the concern about viability of the courtyard spaces, Mr. Hemphill cited the Bread Garden at Park Royal is an example of a very successful café located at a busy main intersection. Much of the neighbourhood response has indicated there is a lack of places to go, with great interest being expressed in the internal-oriented commercial spaces as destinations. Mr. Hemphill added, they believe the library is an essential and significant part of this development that is much wanted by this community. He stressed this is very much a community-driven project. Mr. Hemphill acknowledged there is much opportunity to massage the massing, adding they would be very pleased to see the tower at the Kingsway and Knight corner increased in height.

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