

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: July 6, 2005

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Alan Endall, Chair
Larry Adams (excused Item #2)
Nigel Baldwin
Robert Barnes
James Cheng
Marta Farevaag
Ronald Lea (excused Item #4)
Margot Long
Edward Smith (excused Item #1)
C.C. Yao

REGRETS: Shahla Bozorgzadeh
Peter Wreglesworth

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard, Raincoast Ventures

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1133 Homer Street
2.	4375 West 10th Avenue
3.	350 Kingsway
4.	RAV (Information Session)

1. Address:	1133 Homer Street
DE:	409193
Use:	Residential (16 storeys, 193 units)
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	Hancock Bruckner
Owner:	Imperial Oil Ltd.
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Jim Hancock, Martin Bruckner, Jennifer Stamp
Staff:	Ralph Segal

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner, introduced this preliminary development application in the Downtown South. The Panel did not support the proposal when it was reviewed on April 27, 2005, having concerns about the overall massing and the relationship of the tower and the podium. As well, Planning had concerns about the scale of the development on the south side and its impact on adjacent development across the lane.

Staff generally support the fine-tuning of the overall development and the attempts to diminish the sense of scale and bulk of the massing as presented at the south property line. Staff also support the attempt to emphasize the verticality of the tower and the strong streetwall expression. The density has been slightly reduced since the previously requested 5.5 FSR to 5.34 FSR, which includes an allowable heritage density transfer. The maximum permitted density is 5.0 FSR plus 10 percent heritage density. The height of the podium has been reduced from the previous 95 ft. to 74 ft. A view cone affecting the site limits the tower height to 146 ft.

The Panel's advice is sought on the applicant's response to its previous concerns. As well, comments are requested on the expression and comparative strength of the uppermost parapet, the proximity to grade of the northwest townhouse at the lane intersection with Helmcken Street, and the need for refinement of the surface treatment of the south-facing shoulder party wall.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Jim Hancock, Architect, briefly reviewed the revisions made to the scheme since the last review. Martin Bruckner noted the improvements made to improve daylight access to the open space, and Jennifer Stamp described the landscape plan. The applicant team responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - consider doing whatever is possible to raise the entry to the westernmost townhouses at the lane and to maximize the private outdoor space of these units;
 - recommend refining the south-facing shoulder party wall by either reducing it and/or reconsidering its surface material treatment.
- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this submission and commended the applicant for the well considered response to the Panel's previous comments. The Panel found the refinements to the massing result in a much cleaner building expression. The apparent

bulk of the tower has been nicely reduced and its verticality has been emphasized. The expression of the entry is also vastly improved.

The Panel found the greatest improvement to the scheme was with respect to its relationship to the neighbour across the lane to the south and the efforts made to address shadowing on the adjacent courtyard.

Most Panel members had no concerns about the parapet as proposed and only one Panel member thought it seemed somewhat heavy. One Panel member commented that the connection between the upper parapet is a little awkward in how it meets the tower.

With respect to the westernmost townhouses at the lane, the Panel thought everything possible should be done to raise them, while paying close attention to issues of safety and security. Noting the front patio is likely to be little used given its proximity to the lane, several Panel members suggested it would be a good gesture to introduce additional outdoor open space at the rear for these townhouses.

The Panel strongly recommended some refinement to the blank wall on the south elevation to soften its impact on the podium of the adjacent building. It was suggested that it could be lowered, not necessarily by as much as two storeys, and that any exposed area at the base should be in brick rather than concrete.

The Panel strongly endorsed the applicant's proposal to relocate the indoor amenity to relate to the outdoor amenity on the 9th floor.

There were a few detail suggestions for further design development, including:

- giving a lighter treatment to the corner exit stair;
- consider some articulation at the junction of the vertical and horizontal elements as a means of further breaking down the scale of the building's long frontage;
- consider a better quality ground level treatment for the arrival driveway off the lane;
- consider providing a small amount of private open space at the podium roof for adjacent units.

Finally, the Panel recommended that staff consider processing the submission as a complete application given its high level of resolution. The Panel would not need to see the application again.

2. Address:	4375 West 10th Avenue
DE:	409401
Use:	Mixed (4 storeys)
Zoning:	C-2
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Neale Staniszki Doll Adams
Owner:	Saliem Development Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Tom Staniszki, Robert Fung
Staff:	Dale Morgan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Dale Morgan, Development Planner, presented this application for a mixed-use project on the north side of West 10th Avenue between Trimble and Discovery Streets. The site, which currently contains the Varsity Theatre, has a frontage of 66 ft. and a depth of 115 ft. and has a downward slope of 10 ft. from the front to the rear. Proposed density is 2.48 FSR (2.15 FSR residential, 0.33 FSR commercial). C-2 zoning permits a maximum density of 2.5 FSR. Lane access is shared with single family residential houses to the north which have garages facing the lane. The immediate context also includes mixed-use developments on West 10th Avenue. While there are two nearby buildings which have some heritage value, the Varsity Theatre has no particular heritage value and it will be demolished. Mr. Morgan briefly reviewed the intent of the C-2 zoning which encourages the provision of a wide range of uses and emphasizes compatibility of uses, livability, pedestrian interest and amenity.

The proposal is for a 4-storey mixed-use building with commercial retail on the ground floor fronting West 10th Avenue and three levels of residential above. The ground floor level at the rear also contains residential units which are approximately 10 ft. above the lane and are accessed by a common residential lobby off West 10th Avenue. All units have some form of private outdoor space, either landscaped terraces or balconies (open or enclosed). There is no common outdoor space. Parking, loading and garbage are off the lane for both commercial and residential uses. The building massing and setbacks are in accordance with the guidelines for C-2, and the 4th floor is set back above the 35 ft. level, as required. The application seeks the maximum permitted height of 45 ft.

The issues identified by staff are very minor. Areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought include:

- whether the residential entry needs better distinction from the commercial entry;
 - whether the proposed privacy screening between units is adequate;
 - whether there should be additional landscaping;
 - whether the depth of the overhang on the uppermost storey on the north side should be reduced for improved sunlight penetration.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Tom Staniszki, Architect, briefly reviewed the scheme. He noted it is a fairly modest building on a small site and the intent is to make it part of the street fabric. With respect to the issues identified by the Development Planner, Mr. Staniszki explained the residential entry treatment is intended to be natural wood, which will distinguish it from the commercial entry. There will also be signage to reinforce the difference. He said the proposed privacy screens between the units are 6'6" high prefinished metal railings with opaque glass, which they believe will be adequate. With respect to the overhang at the rear, Mr. Staniszki agreed it would be worthwhile reducing
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it somewhat to introduce more light. He noted they have worked very hard to screen the loading, garbage and parking from the neighbours.

Mr. Staniszki apologized for the absence of the landscape architect and stressed that any questions the Panel have on the landscape plan will be forwarded and appropriately addressed.

The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Suggestions for the residential entry included enlarging the entry lobby and differentiating the paving pattern and material treatment to distinguish it from the commercial frontage;
 - Increase articulation of the overhang (not necessarily reduce it) to allow more light penetration below;
 - Strong recommendation for an additional street tree on West 10th Avenue and to maintain a closer spacing of street trees if possible;
 - Detailed suggestions included having the entries relate more to the rhythm of the commercial frontages, and to consider relocating the planter guard rails on the lane to the outside of the planter;
 - Recommendation for early consideration of energy use reduction through shading devices or reduction in glazed areas.
- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this application and generally found it to be a handsome project. Several Panel members lamented the loss of the Varsity Theatre and supported retaining the Varsity name for the project as a gesture to the memory of what has been a major feature of the neighbourhood for many years.

The Panel was generally satisfied with the proposed treatment of the residential entry. One suggestion was to enlarge the entry lobby, and another to differentiate the paving pattern and material treatment at the residential entry to reinforce its distinction from the commercial frontages. One Panel member also suggested the residential entry could be tightened up to make the retail more dominant on the street.

With respect to the building expression on the West 10th Avenue frontage, there was a recommendation for the four pilasters to be the same width to reinforce the rhythm of the three bays, and to have a retail entry door in each bay. Similarly, it was suggested the top floor units could be reversed so that the rhythm of the three bays could also extend to this level.

The Panel had no concerns about the proposed screening between units.

With respect to the overhang on the north side, the Panel generally thought it should be left to the decision of the architect. There was an observation that there may be an opportunity to open it to the sky to introduce some light below.

The Panel strongly recommended introducing another centrally located tree on the West 10th frontage, noting the gap was likely in response to the theatre use. Likewise the three concrete planters were probably related to circulation around the theatre entry and they should be removed if possible. There was also a strong recommendation to consult with the City with respect to general streetscape improvements.

A further suggestion for landscape improvement included better resolution of the treatment of the planter at the lane, relocating the guard rail to the outside of the planter to relate the planting more to the patio rather than the lane. There was also a recommendation to consider more substantial planting than grasses for the patios.

There was a recommendation to give early consideration to sustainability issues, noting it could also be a strong marketing tool for the building.

Finally, the Panel questioned the current policy for all C-2 projects to be reviewed, suggesting it is only necessary for the Panel to comment on those which have areas of concern.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Staniszki acknowledged the Panel's comments about the guard rail at the rear. He said they have considered the issues and concluded that the glass is better located on the inside, as proposed.

3. Address:	350 Kingsway
DE:	409433
Use:	Mixed (13 storeys)
Zoning:	C-3A
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Acton Ostry Architects Inc.
Owner:	350 Kingsway Development Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Mark Ostry, Russell Acton, Shendoor Japavji, Don Vaughan
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-1)

- **Introduction:** The Development Planner, Mary Beth Rondeau, pointed out some minor differences between the application drawings and those in the presentation booklet. The changes relate to the design of the public open space as a result of relocating the lobby, and deletion of the curved top of the building and the townhouses.

Ms. Rondeau briefly described the site at Kingsway and East 12th Avenue in the core Mount Pleasant area. Staff recognize that this site offers some very good opportunities given it is also at the highest point of Mount Pleasant and highly visible from many parts of the city. It was noted the historic Lee Building at Main and Broadway characterizes the period architecture of Mount Pleasant, and aspirations for the area include a strong streetwall presence. The C-3A zoning allows an outright height of 30 ft., relaxable to an unspecified maximum height. The guidelines suggest a height up to 70 ft. to respect the height of the Lee building which is about 78 ft. However, in considering the height and massing in the area, Staff conclude that the Lee Building is more of a streetwall building and that it would add prominence to this fast-evolving neighbourhood to allow greater height than suggested by the guidelines. A number of other developments have recently been approved above the recommended guideline height. Ms. Rondeau briefly reviewed the height of nearby buildings and noted that significant height is anticipated at the core of Mount Pleasant.

The proposal is for a car dealership along the base on Kingsway, with market residential above. The application requests an increase in density from the outright permitted 1.0 FSR to the maximum 3.0 FSR. Proposed height is 126 ft. The proposed site is currently two sites and the scheme includes a corner public open space that will connect with the emerging Wellness Walkway in the area. It is proposed that the lane which currently bisects the two sites will be purchased from the City and closed. However, the existing services beneath the lane will be protected by a right-of-way agreement, allowing for it to be better integrated with the project without being built upon.

In addition to the main question of whether the proposal earns the requested height and density, the advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- Whether the general layout and design of the open space triangle at the 12th and Sophia intersection meets the challenge of providing a very usable public outdoor space while providing an appropriate private residential entry and access to parking for the residential and commercial uses;
- Overall massing resolution, in particular the streetwall presence and continuity of the massing on Kingsway, including axial views to the north and south;

- Whether the proposed 126 ft. height contributes to the overall success of the form of development;
 - Continuity of street level animation and character, in particular the character of the retail at street level and the relationship of the retail uses to the street;
 - Overall architectural character, particularly the residential components and the townhouse expression and orientation.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Mark Ostry, Architect, addressed the key elements of the scheme and stressed the major distinction between this location and the central node of Mount Pleasant at Broadway and Main is its completely different character because of the orientation of the streets. He noted that a number of different forms and massing orientation were studied before they concluded that the proposed scheme is optimal, particularly with respect to residential livability.

Mr. Ostry briefly described the proposal. He noted that considerable effort has been given to incorporating the lane into the project in order to be able to create a more meaningful open space which ties in with the wellness walkway. He also stressed that the owner/developer has a major commitment to the site and intends to maintain a big presence for the long term. He noted the provision of increased sidewalk width on 12th Avenue, as well as a street widening dedication. The project also proposes high quality materials and design, and significant sustainability features. Mr. Ostry added there is also a possibility of giving up some of the currently proposed car display windows for smaller retail units to improve the grain along Kingsway.

Don Vaughan, Landscape Architect, briefly reviewed the landscape concept and the applicant team responded to the Panel's questions.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Further consideration should be given to the handling of the public open space at the southwest corner of 12th Avenue and Sophia. It needs to be reconsidered at a very conceptual level in terms of how it sets up the residential entry and resolves everything that needs to be taken into account;
 - Greater attention should be given to the overall streetscape including continuity of street trees along both 12th and Kingsway.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel strongly supported this application and had no major concerns about the overall height and density increases. In general, the Panel was confident that the increases can be earned provided the design of the landscape components and detailed resolution of the corner public open space can be proven out.

In general, the Panel thought the overall massing and siting of the elements on the site were very well handled. The massing moves were acknowledged to be somewhat unorthodox but rational and successful nonetheless. The Panel considered the slab building to be very handsome architecture. It was also agreed that this intersection is distinctly different from Broadway and Main and it was noted that additional height at this high point will also contribute to a more interesting city skyline.

The Panel's main concerns related to areas below the podium level, in particular resolution of the residential entry and relationship to the open space on the corner. The residential entry seems weak and hidden, needing to be expressed more clearly and better integrated with the residential above, possibly bringing the residential expression down to ground level to clearly differentiate the residential from the commercial podium. The Panel generally found the corner open space to be too complicated. The Panel was not convinced by the small sign at the corner of 12th and Sophia. It was recommended that people should be encouraged to linger and sit down in the open space. There were some questions about the berm which, together with the trees clustered in front of the residential entry, could raise CPTED issues. The addition of a water feature might also be considered to provide a white noise buffer from the traffic. Some Panel members also suggested reconsidering the nature of the lane, possibly reintroducing a driveway which could contribute to creating a stronger residential forecourt and provide for access to the garage. It was strongly recommended that the whole approach to the corner open space be reconsidered, including greater consideration of pedestrian desire lines. It was noted the space could be both public and serve the residents but it should first be perceived as an entrance to the residential.

Some Panel members also suggested reconsidering the nature of the lane, possibly allowing it to remain as a paved surface to create a stronger residential forecourt as well as allowing its use for access to the garage and reduce the overall amount of paved area.

The Panel generally liked the massing of the townhouses on Kingsway, with some concerns. There was a suggestion to use a more vertical and residential expression to improve the long, low motel-like appearance. One Panel member also thought the townhouse windows were less successful than those on the tower because they seem to be hidden behind the masonry element. There were also concerns about access to these townhouses which is somewhat awkward and circuitous. Consideration should be given to at least providing some weather protection, or consider relocating the access off Kingsway, with some private space added at the rear. There was also a concern expressed about how the corner component relates to the townhouses with a suggestion that moving it up might improve the relationship.

With respect to the streetscape there was strong recommendation for continuation of the street trees, both on 12th and Kingsway. Street trees should take precedence over signage, and any signage should be integrated with the architecture. The existing street trees should also be retained if at all possible. The possibility of including small retail units on Kingsway was seen as positive by one Panel member although another Panel member did not believe it to be very important given there is little pedestrian traffic on Kingsway. However, a comment was also made that while Kingsway is currently a harsh vehicular street, it will hopefully not remain that way and every opportunity should be taken to enhance the streetscape. The applicant was urged to liaise with the City on an appropriate streetscape program. As well, one Panel member stressed that the road dedication area should not be more asphalt.

There was support for the roof deck, with a recommendation to include more planting.

The applicant was urged to give careful consideration to sustainability issues, noting the large amount of glazing which is energy inefficient and the black colour which produces radiant heat. One Panel member suggested an attempt should be made to design a building that has no greater consumption of energy and utilities than the existing site. LEED certification should also be the goal.

Finally, a suggestion was made that adjustments are made to the model to ensure it is the correct scale and the details are added before the project is reviewed by the Development Permit Board.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mark Ostry thanked the Panel for the very good comments. He said there is no question that they will be incorporated into improvements to the project. Shendoor Japavji also thanked the Panel for its positive comments. She stressed that they are part of this neighbourhood and intend to stay.

4. Address:	RAV
Use:	Transit Line
Application Status:	Information Briefing
Owner/Applicant:	RAVCO/In Transit
Review:	First
Delegation:	Edward Leflufy, Chris McCarthy, Allen Parker
Staff:	Anita Molaro, Lon LaClaire

Anita Molaro, Planner, Richmond-Airport-Vancouver Transit Office, introduced this information briefing session to bring the Urban Design Panel the most recent information in the evolution of the RAV project. Ms. Molaro also acknowledged the presence of two members of the Development Permit Board Advisory Panel who were invited to this session.

Ms. Molaro briefly outlined the City's role in the project which is to provide advice to RAVCO and InTransitBC on issues relating to the alignment, stations, station entries and connectivity. As well, each of the station designs will be taken through a Design Advisory Process, which is the typical major development application process of review by the Urban Design Panel and the Development Permit Board, but for advice only rather than approval since the stations do not require a development permit. In addition to the Design Advisory Process around each of the stations, City staff will be undertaking a precinct planning exercise to ensure appropriate bicycle and pedestrian access, and dealing with traffic, parking and other issues in and around the stations. Some of the stations will also trigger a more intense review of land use, e.g., 2nd Avenue Station, City Hall and ICBC Marine Drive.

The three principal City objectives are:

- good connectivity for transit users and pedestrians;
- to achieve station entries out of the street right-of-way, i.e., within existing or future developments; and
- where the alignment affects the Cambie boulevard that there will be no net loss of green space.

Edward Leflufy, Consultant to RAVCO, referred to the presentation material and provided some background related to transit design and the Design Advisory Process that will commence this Fall. The procurement process (financial close) is expected to be completed at the end of July 2005, at which time RAVCO and InTransitBC will be fully in effect to begin their work to design, build, operate, maintain and partially finance the RAV line. Mr. Leflufy briefly reviewed the alignment of the Vancouver portion of the RAV line, below ground from Waterfront to approximately 63rd Avenue and thereafter elevated across Marine Drive to an elevated station at Marine Drive and thence on a bridge over the Fraser River.

Mr. Leflufy briefly described the roles of the various bodies involved in the project. TransLink is the lead agency which created RAVCO as a wholly-owned subsidiary to manage the procurement process through the design period to opening day in November 2009, providing oversight of InTransitBC's work to ensure they meet the terms of the contract. InTransitBC is a wholly-owned subsidiary of SNC-Lavalin which will design, build, maintain and operate the system.

The station design process was then briefly outlined including the alignment, station design principles and system design and station identity, as described in the presentation booklet. Mr. Leflufy stressed that the access agreement between the City and RAVCO included a commitment to public consultation and a series of public open houses was recently completed. InTransitBC has identified six prototypical stations at a functional level: elevated side platform, elevated centre, elevated single platform, underground side, underground centre,

and underground stacked. Of these six only four apply to the Vancouver section: the elevated centre, underground centre, underground side and underground stacked. Over the next two months the intent is to determine the functional plan for each station. This will be followed by overall system design elements and station architecture, at which time the project team will return to the Panel for further consultation.

Chris McCarthy, Manager of Fixed Facilities, InTransitBC, reviewed the projected timeline for the process for a typical station. This process is expected to begin in August 2005. Construction of the alignment will begin this Fall and the main cut-and-cover construction will begin in 2006. The goal is to complete the design process on the critical path stations by the end of this year so that the excavation work can begin. The detailed design will proceed while the main excavation is being completed. There will be further public consultation on the critical path stations in mid to late September 2005, followed by further input from the Urban Design Panel.

Mr. Leflufy advised that a schedule of packages will be developed this summer, in preparation for returning to the Panel with more than one station at a time, with the goal of completing the Panel's input within the tenure of the current members. Mr. Leflufy noted there is also a community and business liaison program which also provides input into the design process but focused more on construction and traffic management issues.

There was some discussion about whether the Panel would have the opportunity for a further review of the whole line. Mr. Leflufy said it was not the intent but if the Panel wanted a further overview, this could be discussed with staff.

In discussion about the bridge over the Fraser, the project team agreed to provide information to the Panel on its design. It was noted, however, that the bridge design is quite advanced and is part of the work that begins this Fall. The constraints with the bridge involve river navigation and air traffic. Ms. Molaro added that Marine Drive is a challenging station with respect to the portal and impacts on the Cambie Street median. It is also the only elevated station in Vancouver. She agreed it may be worthwhile to bring this component to the Panel early in a workshop session as opposed to a design conclusion.

In the question period that followed, the points and questions from Panel members included:

Q: What was the criterion for selecting the location for the Broadway/City Hall station?

A: RAVCO is working with the City to refine the functional plan. The City is intending to demolish its property on the north side of Broadway and the objective is to locate the station entry at the southeast corner of Broadway and Cambie for future integration with redevelopment of the site.

Q: What is the intended process for the stations proposed to be integrated with future development?

A: Some may come forward as part of an integrated development, or clearly set up to be part of an integrated development. Any commercial development that is part of or in association with a station is subject to the City's conventional development process. It is only the transit facility that falls under the Design Advisory Process.

Q: Is it intended to have an architectural review of the elevated guideway supports and can the guideway supports for RAV be improved over the Skytrain? There must be a way to make them not just appear as being expedient.

- A. There is no question that some of the vertical profile and drainage decisions made in the pre-build section of Skytrain (Terminal Avenue) were less than satisfactory. The Urban Design Panel's comments would be very helpful around the portals of the RAV line and some of these items could be brought to the Panel for advice in the Fall.
- Q: Is RAVCO able to meet the City's goal of no net green space loss on Cambie boulevard, and how will the vents be expressed in the landscape? Are there sustainable features apart from the sustainability aspect of the transit line itself?
- A: RAVCO has committed to obtain heritage alteration permits. RAVCO commissioned a broader evaluation of the corridor from heritage, landscape and urban design perspectives and have prepared the first draft of a statement of significance that would guide the heritage alteration permit process. No net loss is very achievable on the Cambie corridor. The approach to tunnel ventilation is to have grilles at the sidewalk level which have minimal visual impact. Stations themselves do not lend themselves to a LEED-type accreditation process. Sustainability will be considered for the stations, noting that except for the ancillary spaces, they are not heated or air-conditioned.
- Q: Is there any opportunity for energy conversation in the tunnels, e.g., supplying geothermal systems to neighbouring buildings?
- A: The re-use of water in the tunnels has not yet been part of the strategy. One of the opportunities that might exist could be to re-use the water for irrigating the median.
- Q: Is there a reason for so many stacked platform type stations, noting the CPTED issues of this type? It requires really good design to make them work well.
- A: The decision related to urban fit and protection of the boulevard, noting the stacked tunnels result in a tighter footprint. Side-by-side platforms result in a larger, less efficient station and footprint.
- Mr. Leflufy thanked the Panel for the discussion and said some of the issues will be further reviewed with staff.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8.45 p.m.