

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: July 13, 2011

TIME: N/A

PLACE: N/A

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Helen Besharat (Chair)
Gregory Borowski
James Cheng
Jeff Corbett (Excused Item #1)
Jim Huffman
Arno Matis
Alan Storey

REGRETS:
Robert Barnes
Jane Durante
Alan Endall
Geoff McDonell
Scott Romses
Norm Shearing

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1.	1050 Expo Boulevard
2.	2778 East Hastings Street
3.	3688 Inverness Street

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Besharat 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:** 1050 Expo Boulevard
DE: 414740
Use: To construct a 6-storey wood frame building with 89 dwelling units and associated amenity areas with surface parking at the above noted address.
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete
Review: Third
Architect: DYS Architecture
Delegation: Dane Jansen, DYS Architecture
Cheryl Bouwmeester, Eckford and Associates
Staff: Anita Molaro

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-1)**Introduction:**

Anita Molaro, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a public housing project. She explained that in order to meet their schedule deadline that applicant did not provide an updated model but have updated the drawings. She added that the Panel had received a copy of the previous Panel's minutes and she addressed their concerns regarding adding more density or other uses to the building. She noted that there is no program or funding to accommodate additional density on the site as that is what their budget limitations would allow. Ms. Molaro described the previous proposal noting that the site is located on a triangle site adjacent to the Cambie Street Bridge, Pacific Boulevard and Expo Boulevard. Ms. Molaro mentioned that an earlier proposal a number of years ago was for a higher concrete building and for a number of reasons that project didn't go ahead and has been reduced to a 6-storey wood frame building with 89 public housing units. Ms. Molaro described the Panel's comments from the previous review on the overall building design and character including the resolution of the elevations and their response to the various elevations given the site's special location.

Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Dane Jansen, Architect, further described the proposal and explained that the key issue on the site was the sub grade issues and as a result they weren't able to include a basement or underground parking. It is a Wood First Initiative building and will be the first one in Vancouver. He also explained that the roof's shape is to respond to the surroundings and that the key element is the arch of Pacific Boulevard and how the building could better respond. He described the design from the previous review noting the changes and how the design was reworked to better respond to the site and address the Panel's concerns.

Cheryl Bouwmeester, Landscape Architect, indicated that the response from the last review was to reorient the landscaping to the curve of the building. The fence line will be lowered on Expo Boulevard and the material will be black metal. It has been relocated from the property line and added to the retaining wall and as well will be softened with another layer of landscaping. The east façade has been softened but due to restrictions they have only been able to add a tree. As well they have added more landscaping around the entry.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Reconsider the design of the curve to make sure it will work using wood framing;
- Design development to add more screening between the building and the bridge;
- Consider finding a way to landscape the street car reserve easement.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was much improved since the last review.

The Panel agreed that flipping the prow addressed the street more effectively as it was a stronger approach. They also thought it helped to integrate the prow edge into the building. A couple of Panel members were concerned with the curve, particularly since it will be a wood frame building and they felt it might not work. One Panel member suggested flattening out the curve and making it more straight and angular. Another Panel member suggested following the curve of Expo Boulevard and recessing the lower floors to allow the upper floors to float.

They supported the materials especially on the south elevation as it had been improved by reducing the amount of brick. They also thought that reducing the number of materials was an improvement. A couple of Panel members suggested adding colour to brighten up the façade as they felt the red was a little timid. One Panel member suggested adding natural light into the circulation areas.

The Panel thought the massing along Pacific Street had been simplified and liked that the landscaping has been added to the paved area. They thought it was unfortunate that there couldn't be more screening between the building and the bridge. One Panel member suggested adding a row of trees next to the sidewalk. The Panel thought that staggering the fence was an improvement but encouraged to find another colour other than black for the fence. One Panel member said they would like to see the black fence disappear behind some kind of green edge or gotten rid of all together and just have landscaping along that edge.

The Panel was disappointed that the previous comments regarding the rail street car reserve easement area had not be landscaped. They felt it was a large piece of land that could be utilized in the interim because there wasn't a date for when the street car would be operational.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Jansen thanked the Panel for their comments as he thought they could only help the project. He noted that they have had some interesting discussions with Engineering regarding the street car easement. He added that it is not part of the project but realized that it was the only time the Panel could comment on the area and would help to further their discussions.

2.	Address:	2778 East Hastings Street
	DE:	414715
	Use:	STIR; New construction of 4 storey mixed use STIR rental housing development with one level of underground parking to be accessed from the lane. Retail on ground floor and 3 level of residential units consisting of 34 dwelling units.
	Zoning:	C2-C1
	Application Status:	Complete
	Review:	First
	Architect:	Jordan Kutev Architects
	Owner:	0807862 BC Ltd.
	Delegation:	Jordan Kutev, Jordan Kutev Architects
	Staff:	Garry Papers

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

Introduction:

Garry Papers, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a site on East Hastings Street west of Kaslo Street. It is a 4-storey project with commercial on the ground floor and 34 units of Short Term Incentives for Rental (STIR) housing with one level of underground parking. The rental units will be secured for life or 60 years (whichever is longer) and part of the STIR program is to expedite the review. He noted that the proposal conforms to the FSR and zoning envelope for the C-2-C1 district which is a zone that encourages neighbourhood serving commercial and does conditionally allow residential above the commercial ground floor. Mr. Papers described the context for the area noting the project is consistent with the rest of the neighbourhood.

Mr. Papers described the proposal and mentioned that the adjacent site could not be combined with this project and as a result they have included a knock out panel in the below grade parking so that the parking could be consolidated with the future development of the site next door. There is a small requirement in the district schedule for a second entry should a future tenant wants to subdivide the ground floor commercial space. Mr. Papers indicated that the landscape plans are simple and will follow the Hastings/Sunrise design standards with some planters along the back to enhance the patios for the second floor residential units.

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

- Side wall composition and materiality;
- Lane treatment; decorative metal enclosure treatment variation;
- Parapet treatment along Hastings Street.

Mr. Papers took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Jordan Kutev, Architect, further described the proposal and indicated that they wanted to use sturdy materials and have proposed aluminum windows or at least metal clad vinyl windows with hardie panel with a contemporary colour palette. The colours are grey for easy maintenance.

The applicant took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Consider additional colour or texture to the sidewalks;
- Consider adding some detail to the top of the Hastings Street façade;
- Design development to the ground floor on the lane;
- Consider design development regarding the liveability of the units including the bedrooms.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thought it made for good affordable housing.

The Panel thought it was a straight forward scheme but felt there was an opportunity to play with the colours. They thought the rationale for the parapets on the Hastings Street side made sense. Several Panel members adding a nice reveal detail across the top of the building on the front so it doesn't just end with hardie board. A number of Panel members were concerned with the painted hardie board as they felt it wouldn't hold up over the years and was not really durably visual in the long run. A couple of Panel members suggested adding skylights in the roof over the stairwells and the top floor hallway.

The Panel supported the colour palette but felt the red in the signage panels should be used elsewhere on the building as they thought it might not be retained if the retail owners wanted their own branding. Several Panel members noting the strong slope on the site which resulted in a bit too much upstand to the bottom of the Hastings windows, and thought there could be another step set into the façade.

The Panel thought the side wall treatments were appropriate with a couple of Panel members suggesting adding texture, "playfulness" or additional colour blocking.

Several Panel members thought there could be some improvement with the detailing along the lane with one Panel member suggesting having the colour marry everything together or make it more expressive. Other suggestions included reducing the amount of grill, changing the materials on the exit door or setting back the garage door to break up the façade. One Panel member suggested inseting the garage door to leave room for a car to park while accessing the intercom or waiting for the door to open. This would lesson traffic congestion in the laneway.

A couple of Panel members were concerned with the liveability of the type A bedrooms and asked the applicant to reconsider their size or consider having fully inboard bedrooms. One Panel member suggested adding small side windows into the bays to allow views down the street.

The Panel commended the applicant for reducing the parking and adding a knock out panel for redevelopment of the site next door. One Panel member suggested adding shading devices to the south façade to help animate the building and reduce the amount of solar gain.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Kutev thanked the Panel. He said they were all good comments and he would try to incorporate them to improve the building.

3.	Address:	3688 Inverness Street
	DE:	414783
	Use:	To construct a 4-storey mixed-use building with retail and residential on the ground floor, three storeys of residential above and two levels of underground parking.
	Zoning:	C-2
	Application Status:	Complete
	Review:	First
	Architect:	Neal Staniszki Doll Adams Architects
	Owner:	0889550 BC LTD.
	Delegation:	Derek Neale, Neal Staniszki Doll Adams Architects Ron Rule, Ron Rule Consultants, Landscape Architects Payam Imani, Imani Development
	Staff:	Paul Cheng

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

Introduction:

Paul Cheng, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a building with retail on the ground floor and three storeys of residential. There are also residential units at the rear of the building. The location is the Knight Street and Kingsway Neighbourhood Centre. He noted that it is an irregular shaped site. With the C-2 zoning there are certain requirements for setbacks for the rear of the building. In this case the first floor is setback as well as the 4th floor. The applicant is requesting a relaxation for the 4th storey. Mr. Cheng indicated that Staff supports the relaxation. The applicant is proposing stucco for the second and third floor and interspaced with some cement board cladding where the bay windows are projecting. He added that a relatively new material is proposed for the cornices that is composed of extruded Styrofoam in a cement-based coating.

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

- Does the requested relaxation to the building height located at the rear of the proposed building unduly affect the private and public properties located to the north of the site?
- Do the proposed exterior cladding materials and detailing achieve a visual richness and a sense of durability that is suitable for this prominent site on Kingsway? In particular, commentary on the proposed stucco, cement-board cladding and EIFS-based cornices is sought.
- Should the top storey be treated with more transparency from the rest of the building to achieve a stronger visual reading as the top of the building?

Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Derek Neale, Architect, further described the proposal and indicated the area of the building where they are looking for a relaxation. He noted that they looked for a material that would contrast the windows. They have set up the top storey with a combination of windows and a narrow dark red wood siding. A steel and glass canopy is proposed for the entrance of the building. The residential entrance is accessed from Inverness Street.

Ron Rule, Landscape Architects, commented that it is a unique corner and there are some nice residential homes in the area so they wanted the landscaping to be similar. He described the plan noting the opening on the corner of the lane with a large pine tree to visually connect to the existing trees. There are also some existing maple trees on the street. A hedge is planned along the edge of the building to define the triangular open space. A planter will be added to the edge of the slab on the second floor.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Consider a more modern or contemporary design approach;
- Consider more articulation to the detailing of the cornice lines.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was an interesting site and seemed better developed than most C-2 projects.

The Panel supported the relaxation and thought that it improved the building's design. They also supported the setbacks. The Panel liked the proposed materials and thought the cornice defined the building from the third floor to the top of the building. They also liked the colour choices and that the applicant had chosen a different material and colour for the top floor. One Panel member mentioned that they thought the wood was probably stronger than glass for the fourth floor.

Most of the Panel thought the stucco was durable and evoked a more residential quality. They also thought the mahogany would be handsome against the stucco on the third floor. Several Panel members would like to see a more modern design to the building, and one Panel member suggested the architectural expression be more rigorous. A couple of Panel members commented that the cornice line between the third and fourth storeys was successful where it starts to break and that perhaps some articulation might improve the detailing. One Panel member thought the top cornice line was too linear. Another Panel member thought that the overall residential/commercial components were not well-knitted together visually.

The Panel also thought the layout was well planned with the residential entrance off Inverness Street. Several Panel members mentioned that the location of the transfer/gas meter was unfortunate. One Panel member suggested there be access to the stairs from the residential lobby.

The Panel thought the landscaping was simple and straightforward and was appropriate for the site.

One Panel member was discouraged to see that solar gain and energy absorption were not addressed in the architectural expression and as well encouraged the applicant to add some natural light into the circulation areas, including a more modern vocabulary on such an important corner site.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Neale said he appreciated all the comments. Regarding the staircase he said they were struggling with dead end corridors because of the shape of the building. Mr. Rule commented that they are keeping the landscape planting low at the corner on the lane for better visibility from vehicle traffic.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.