

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: July 20, 2005

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Alan Endall, Chair
Larry Adams
Nigel Baldwin
Shahla Bozorgzadeh
James Cheng (present for Item #2 only)
Marta Farevaag
Margot Long (excused Item #2)
Peter Wreglesworth

REGRETS: Robert Barnes
Ronald Lea
Edward Smith
C.C. Yao

RECORDING SECRETARY: Carol Hubbard, Raincoast Ventures

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	3203/29 West 10th Avenue
2.	700 Hamilton Street (CBC)

1. Address:	3203/29 West 10th Avenue
Use:	Residential (3 storeys, 21 units)
Zoning:	RS-5 to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	Robert Turecki
Owner:	Monty Simons
Review:	First
Delegation:	Robert Turecki
Staff:	Joanne Baxter, Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (1-5)

- **Introduction:** Rezoning Planner, Joanne Baxter, introduced this application to rezone the site at 10th Avenue and Trutch Street from RS-5 to CD-1. The site is currently vacant and contains surface parking. The project is required to provide parking for the restaurant across the lane to the north. There are two levels of underground parking with access from the lane, with a total of 74 parking spaces, 33 of which are for the use of the restaurant. The proposal is for 21 ground-oriented townhouses at a density of 1.25 FSR. Outright density in RS-5 is 0.6 FSR which can be conditionally increased to 0.7 FSR. As a contribution to public benefit, the applicant has offered eight of the units for guaranteed rental housing for a period of ten years, which will be secured through a Housing Agreement.

Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, noted there has been some neighbourhood opposition to the scheme, particularly with regard to issues of traffic and parking. The advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- the character and scale of the development, the relationship of the units to the street and the single family area neighbourhood, and how well the development fits in with the neighbourhood;
 - interface with the commercial lane and livability of the rear units;
 - whether the below grade public parking is adequately visible and usable.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Robert Turecki, Architect, noted that as a result of considerable neighbourhood opposition the proposal was referred to Council. Council concluded that the project should proceed through the rezoning process. Mr. Turecki briefly described the scheme and responded to questions from the Panel.
 - **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Discomfort with the requested density and suggestions that some reduction in density might provide some breathing room to achieve a form and scale of development more in keeping with the single family detached character of the neighbourhood;
 - With a reduction in density, reconsider the overall form of development to improve the setback along the lane and improve the scale and livability of the interior courtyard spaces;
 - Suggestions to provide a break in the massing along Trutch Street and allow for an improved east-west oriented open space between the lane and W. 10th Ave oriented units;
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- Support for relocating the parking entry closer to Trutch Street but noting there may be some inherent problems in doing so. The parking entrance should be more visible and generous to encourage its use;
- Consider deleting the three surface parking spaces off the lane which compromise the livability for the lane units.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel did not support this application. The Panel generally found the overall density too high and causing unacceptable livability conditions, particularly for the rear units. One Panel member thought the requested 1.25 FSR could be achieved successfully with three-storey townhouses, but not in the proposed form. The Panel acknowledged that this is a very difficult site.

The Panel had no concern with the proposed use and found it a good transition between the commercial Broadway area and the single family neighbourhood.

The majority of Panel members had no concern about the character and scale of the project on 10th Avenue and Trutch Street although some Panel members thought the 10th Avenue components should be more in scale with neighbouring single family houses.

In general, the Panel found the overall density too high for this site. While the 'L' shape of the 10th and Trutch units work quite well, the rear components on the lane are causing the overall scheme to appear much too dense and they have serious livability problems. Combined with the rear parking entry, the lane components are also compromising the livability of the interior courtyard. Suggestions were to find a solution that still allows the pro forma to work within a slightly lower density. This would give greater freedom and control over the design.

Suggestions for improving the massing and reducing the perceived density on the site included:

- relocating the parking access ramp and creating an east-west gap between the buildings to give the units more breathing room and introduce more light into the courtyard;
- move the southeast corner block further to the east;
- increase the lane setback;
- delete the three surface parking spaces on the lane;
- the westerly module should respond to the setback of the residential neighbour;
- consider using a reveal rather than a gap between individual stacked units to keep the rhythm of the building form more consistent with the neighbouring single family houses.

The Panel was not convinced that the public parking would be well used given that most people prefer street parking in this area. There were suggestions to improve visibility of the public parking and to bring the entry closer to the corner of the lane and Trutch Street. Signage will be very important to indicate the parking is clearly available for public use, and CPTED issues will need to be carefully considered as well as ensuring there is a way for public parking patrons to exit the building without disturbing the residents.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Turecki thanked the Panel for the comments which he said he will take back to his client for consideration.

2. Address:	700 Hamilton Street (CBC)
DE:	409307
Use:	Mixed-addition
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden
Owner:	Canadian Broadcasting Corp.
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Peter Arbuckle, Joost Bakker, Walter Francl , Bruce Hemstock, Barry Savage
Staff:	Ralph Segal

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner, presented this application which was not supported by the Panel when first reviewed on June 8, 2005. The application proposes a comprehensive redevelopment of the entire CBC block bounded by West Georgia, Cambie, Robson and Hamilton Streets. As well as revitalization of the existing CBC facilities, the project includes a new residential/retail component in two towers and townhouses to be developed by Concord Pacific. The proposed density is approximately 2.0 FSR for the CBC component and 3.0 FSR for the residential/retail, which is within the 5.0 FSR permitted in the DD zone. The proposed height of the taller tower is 293 ft. The zoning permits a height of 150 ft., which may be relaxed. This site is affected by a view cone which the proposal respects.

The Panel's principal concerns were with the treatment of Hamilton Street including the townhouses on Hamilton Street which were not supported. There were also questions about the treatment of the corner of Georgia and Hamilton Streets, and whether the internal arcade was being over emphasized at the expense of maintaining pedestrian activity on the street. The success of the grand staircase onto Robson Street was also questioned.

Considerable revisions have been made in response to the Panel's previous comments. The townhouses on Hamilton Street have been deleted and density transferred to the lower of the two residential towers. The courtyard has been entirely opened up to Hamilton Street and a water feature added. The front door and main CBC entrance has been pulled forward on Hamilton Street and the Georgia/Hamilton corner has been redesigned to provide greater pedestrian interest. The interior arcade has been somewhat downplayed as a primary pedestrian route through the site although it remains in its architectural prominence and exits by a revised stair down to Robson Street. Sustainability measures are now more clearly expressed in the project.

Staff consider the revisions to be substantial, contributing to much greater permeability of the site which was also an area of some concern to the Panel. The revisions made to Hamilton Street now make it a much more public edge and it responds well to the proposed Hamilton Street Historic Trail.

In addition to general comments on the proposal, the specific advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- revisions to the Hamilton Street frontage; whether it will provide sufficient pedestrian interest on the street as well as attract people into the precinct;

- programming of the streetfront elements on Hamilton Street and the internal arcade, particularly with respect to the proposed community use at the arcade level;
 - whether the courtyard space will be successful as a usable public space;
 - whether the proposed revisions to the Georgia Street frontage will be successful;
 - comments on the revised stair from Robson Street up to the arcade.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Peter Arbuckle, Arkle Development Services for CBC, said they are very pleased with the revised scheme and believe it makes a better project. Joost Bakker, Architect, briefly reviewed the revisions which he agreed have resulted in a much better scheme. Walter Francl, Architect, described the sustainability features and Bruce Hemstock, Landscape Architect, reviewed the landscape plan. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
 - **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - consider options for reducing the scale and modifying the form and expression of the Robson Street townhouse massing in order to allow for better daylight access, use and visibility to the upper courtyard area;
 - consider modifications to the stair access next to the courtyard to de-emphasize it as a means of access from Hamilton Street to the upper arcade in favour of a more obvious, gradual approach by way of the landscaped courtyard;
 - street trees on Hamilton Street should be retained and reinforced.
 - **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this submission and commended the applicant team for the thoughtful response to the Panel's previous concerns. The design has been developed to a much more rational urban design solution that also responds more appropriately to the existing building on the site and takes cues from it in a very positive way.

The Panel strongly supported the revisions to the arcade. It has sufficient frontage to be very public and is well animated. One Panel member commented that it has the potential to be very successful in a "Paley Park" (New York) way. Another comment was that it may be a good opportunity for galleries and assembly space so that it is more of a destination than just circulation.

The deletion of the townhouses on Hamilton Street was unanimously endorsed. Given that Hamilton is never likely to be a vibrant retail street and the barren aspect of the back of the library across the street also contributes little to it, the Panel supported the proposed "necklace" concept along Hamilton Street. The Panel urged, however, that the street trees should be maintained and reinforced along Hamilton, not necessarily in a straight row. There should also be as many trees as possible at the corner of Hamilton and Georgia Streets.

The Panel supported the concept for the precincts and noted that programming of the spaces will be crucial to its success. The Panel fully supported the proposed community use of the space.

The scale of the revised stairway on Robson Street was thought to be much more appropriate.

There was a concern expressed that the townhouses on Robson Street seem to dominate the retail expression. One panel member suggested that consideration be given to removing these townhouses and transferring the density to the lower tower in order to strengthen the retail character along Robson and to improve daylight access and visibility to the upper courtyard. Alternatively, the townhouse form should be reconsidered because it is a module that does not appear anywhere else in the scheme. The five-storey height on Robson Street (three storeys on courtyard) is also compromising the public open space.

There were no concerns about the treatment along Georgia Street, which is largely the application of the Georgia Street design guidelines.

With respect to the residential towers, there was a question about the rationale for the vertical element on the southwest tower which does not appear on the other tower and seems a bit out of place.

The Panel strongly supported the landscape plan, in particular the water feature and the slope of the landscaped area.

The Panel looks forward to seeing the resolution of the relationship between the CBC building and the adjacent residential tower.

With respect to the corner of Georgia and Cambie Streets, one Panel member stressed the importance of the aspect of the chamfered edge in the approach down Cambie Street and recommended that it not be obscured with planting.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bakker thanked the Panel for the positive feedback and commented that they considered the first Panel review as a workshop session that has produced in a much better solution. He stressed it is an enormously challenging project and they are committed to make it work. Mr. Francl also expressed appreciation for the Panel's commentary.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6.15 p.m.