
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: July 25, 2001

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Tom Bunting, Chair
Jeffrey Corbett
Lance Berelowitz
Gerry Eckford
Bruce Hemstock
Richard Henry
Jack Lutsky
Maurice Pez
Sorin Tatomir

REGRETS: Alan Endall
Walter Francl
Joseph Hruda

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. 1010 Richards Street
2. 28 West Broadway

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| 1. Address: | 1010 Richards Street |
| DA: | 405778 |
| Use: | Residential (22 storeys) |
| Zoning: | DD |
| Application Status: | Preliminary |
| Architect: | Hancock Bruckner Eng & Wright |
| Owner: | Polygon Development 93 Ltd. |
| Review: | Second |
| Delegation: | Jim Hancock, Michael Audain, Andre Chilcott, Chris Phillips |
| Staff: | Ralph Segal |
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Senior Development Planner, introduced this application. An earlier preliminary submission was reviewed by the Panel June 13, 2001 and not supported. The concerns at that time related to the Nelson Street edge and the use on that frontage, the size of the floorplate and the perceived elegance of the tower. There were also questions about the strength of the base of the building, and whether the scheme had earned the ability to absorb the additional 10 percent density being sought by way of heritage density transfer. Mr. Segal briefly described the proposal. This preliminary application seeks an additional ten percent additional density from the heritage “bank” in addition to the 5.0 FSR of the zoned capacity of the site. The 175 ft. site, at the corner of Nelson and Richards Streets, is the smallest corner site qualifying for the maximum 5.0 FSR in Downtown South.

The Panel assembled around the model for a review of the revised proposal. Some additional height has been added to the tower and the floorplate has been reduced by about 110 sq.ft. to approx. 5,600 sq.ft. On a site of this frontage and height the guidelines suggest a floorplate of about 5,000 sq.ft. There has been some repositioning of elements and reconfiguration of the floorplate in an attempt to achieve emphasis on verticality and slenderness. With respect to the base elements, there has been a strengthening of the townhouses with a set back third storey, as well as strengthening at the base of the tower. As with the previous submission, amenity space is proposed for the Nelson Street frontage. The by-law does not require commercial/retail use although there is an issue relating to street animation on Nelson Street. As well, there is a provision in the by-law that permits a small amount of retail (up to 2,500 sq.ft.) on a corner site.

Staff response to the revisions is very positive.

- **Applicant’s Opening Comments:** Michael Audain of Polygon explained the building will be for market rental accommodation which calls for an efficient floorplate. It is not yet known whether it will be strata. Jim Hancock, Architect, was satisfied with the development planner’s description of the project. Regarding the Nelson Street frontage, Andre Chilcott explained that retail use was investigated very thoroughly but was not found to be viable in this location. Instead, the space will accommodate recreation/amenity uses for the tenants which will help to animate the street. They have also attempted to achieve “eyes on the street” by lowering the residential units.

The Panel reviewed the model and posted materials.

- **Panel’s Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application and was satisfied that all of its earlier concerns had been addressed.

The Panel unanimously supported the revised floorplate and had no concerns about it still being larger than suggested in the guidelines. The tower has been nicely sculpted to provide a much slimmer appearance and has benefited by the addition to the penthouse. One comment about the penthouse was that it could be developed further to make it a more special top to the building.

The Panel was convinced by the applicant's proposal to animate Nelson Street without retail use and agreed that the proposed amenity uses will create the desired activity at street level. It was noted the regulations do not require retail on Nelson Street and the Panel unanimously agreed that the applicant's alternative is fully acceptable and meets the guideline objectives.

The Panel found the streetwall along Nelson Street to be much improved and there were suggestions for further improvement. A comment was made that the Nelson Street landscape edge contributes little to the streetscape and actually creates a barrier between the street and the proposed interactive facade. A functional and visual relationship with the contemporary art gallery across the street was recommended, perhaps by displaying artwork within the amenity space. The step down to the street should be taken advantage of, both architecturally and in the landscaping, by reflecting the internal stepping onto the street.

The addition of the third storey to the Richards Street townhouses was fully supported. It makes for much more usable roof terraces as well as providing a much stronger massing on the street. The Panel found the podium treatment to be dramatically improved and thought it will be a great benefit to the residents of this building. It also provides some very important overlook into the entry area to make it a safe and pleasant place to enter the building.

With respect to the 10 percent heritage density proposed to be transferred to the site, the Panel unanimously accepted that it has been worked well into the project and the site can handle it. The additional density has added greater height to the building, adding to the appearance of verticality.

Comments were made about the landscape treatment, somewhat on Nelson Street but largely on the Richards Street frontage and at the corner of Richards and Nelson. Some members thought the lawn was inappropriate in such an urban setting as this. Whether the approach is hard or soft landscaping, the Panel emphasized that it should be a strong, urban statement at the corner. There was also a suggestion that the base of the tower could also play a larger role in achieving this by bringing the building out more to the corner. As well, to look at aligning the Richards Street entry to the axis of the main corridor leading down to the stairs and elevator lobby. These gestures, along with attention to the landscaping, could create a much more animated and intensified corner.

The necessity of benches along the street on the north side of the tower was questioned.

The Panel supported the proposal for a rental building but it was noted that buildings should be well designed regardless of whether they are intended for market or rental accommodation.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Hancock said he appreciated the Panel's comments about the corner.

2. Address:	28 West Broadway
DA:	405732
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	C-3A
Application Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	Nigel Baldwin
Owner:	Aragon Development Corp.
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Nigel Baldwin, Patricia Campbell
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this application. An earlier submission, by a different architect, was not supported by the Panel on May 2, 2001. The previous, higher, scheme caused view concerns to the neighbours to the south on 10th Avenue. The height of the current proposal is about 64 ft. at its highest point. The length of the site is 250 ft. and it slopes about 3.5 m from the corner of Ontario Street to the west. The proposal is fully retail across the ground floor along Broadway, with 3 storeys of residential above. Proposed FSR is 2.97. Outright height and density in this C-3A zone is 30 ft. and 1.0 FSR, relaxable to 70 ft. and 3.0 FSR. The advice of the Panel is sought as to whether this proposal earns the requested additional height and density.

This proposal does not include open space along the Broadway frontage. Ontario Street, currently designated a bikeway, is scheduled to be upgraded to a greenway. The applicant is working with Engineering Services and will be contributing to this upgrade by developing a rest hub at the corner with benches, drinking fountains, bike parking, etc. The adjacent site at the corner of Ontario and the lane (Wilkinson Automobilia) is not included in this proposal and the applicant seeks a relaxation of the required residential setback on this part of the site (from 25 ft. to 15 ft.). Staff have a concern about the livability of the westerly end units on Ontario Street and seek the Panel's comments, noting the adjacent site is likely to be a 4-storey wood-frame development.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Nigel Baldwin, Architect, reviewed the proposal and the design rationale. He acknowledged the proposal still causes some view blockage but noted it is significantly lower than the previous scheme. Patricia Campbell, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plan.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application and considered it a big improvement over the previous submission. Most Panel members thought the scheme worked very well as a compromise solution in the way it deals with view impact and the C-3A massing guidelines for the Broadway frontage.

It was agreed the southwest corner unit adjacent the covered loading bay is likely to be problematic in terms of livability. There was a suggestion to consider adding the square footage to the unit to the north of it and creating a two-bedroom double-width unit. Alternatively, to flip the amenity space to the southwest corner.

With respect to the rear yard setback anomaly at the "automobilia", the Panel unanimously supported

the bylaw relaxation and thought there was no real value in enforcing it. The setback as proposed is very appropriate.

The Panel supported the proposed height and found the design to be sympathetic to the neighbours to the south. The Panel also considered the project to have earned the FSR being sought, noting it will be a very positive development for the neighbourhood. One Panel member commented on the extent to which some views are considered more valuable than others and whether the views of a few homeowners should dictate future developments, noting they are some distance from the waterfront and might reasonably expect their views of the water to be compromised. Nevertheless, this project is a very good example of an imaginative approach towards dealing with the issue and finding a middle ground between the guidelines for the precinct and the southerly neighbours' views.

The flat roof does not appear to create an overlook problem although it would be appropriate to confirm this at the next stage of development.

The Panel found the ground level open space plan supportable and did not believe public open space along Broadway, especially in this location, to be particularly valuable. The addition of the greenway on Ontario Street was strongly supported. The rest hub will be a great addition not only to this project but to the whole community as a neighbourhood amenity. One Panel member suggested bringing the "green" part of the greenway down towards the corner rather than the harder urbanscape, to make the corner a bit softer and more inviting.

The majority of Panel members supported the proposal for setting residential units back with the courtyard in facing Broadway. A comment was made that it does not detract from the streetwall because at a pedestrian level the streetwall is still there. Acknowledging the guideline intent for having a stronger streetwall along Broadway, one Panel member suggested strengthening the middle lower component with some heavier material treatment or adding more height to give it more presence on the street.

With respect to the north-facing courtyard the majority of Panel members found it to be an acceptable solution. It will be a little bit dark but from a livability point of view it will be better for the residents than being right on Broadway. The north-facing horseshoe plan has a more sympathetic profile to Broadway than reversing the plan. It also allows more daylight onto Broadway and contributes to the vitality of the street. Concern about the livability and feasibility of the north-facing courtyard was expressed by two Panel members, one of whom suggested it should be flipped to be south-facing for better plant growth as well as increasing the perception and reality of the distance between this project and the upland homes.

A concern was expressed about whether the large amount of retail being indicated will be leasable and able to provide the needed street level animation.

The Panel strongly endorsed the choice of materials. The character of the project, referencing the Lee Building, was also supported. Comments were also made that taking a simple approach towards buildings these days is an important public benefit in terms of waterproofing.

The Panel was glad to see this part of Broadway being upgraded and hoped it would be a catalyst for further redevelopment in the area.

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

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