

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: July 30, 2008

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
John Wall, Chair
Douglas Watts
Bill Harrison
Martin Nielsen
Mark Ostry
Gerry Eckford
David Godin

REGRETS:
Tom Bunting
Albert Bicol
Richard Henry
Walter Francl
Maurice Pez

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	2008 East 54 th Avenue
2.	1101 West Waterfront (Harbour Green Park)
3.	3891 Main Street

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Wall 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: 2008 East 54th Avenue
DE: 412122
Description: To construct a 4 story mixed-use development consisting of 3 storeys of residential floors on top of a commercial floor.
Zoning: C-2
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Cornerstone Architects
Review: First
Delegation: Scott Kennedy, Cornerstone Architecture
Sam Sharma, Campfire Developments
Peter Kreuk, Durante Kreuk Ltd.
Staff: Dale Morgan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Dale Morgan, Development Planner, introduced the property at the corner of East 54th Avenue and Victoria Drive. There will be commercial uses along Victoria Drive as this use is considered outright approval in C-2 Zoning and residential is considered conditional. Mr. Morgan described the zoning context and noted that under the C-2 zoning the maximum height of the building is 45 feet with a terracing building envelope towards the rear lane to enable a more compatible relationship with the adjacent single family zoning. Also a two foot setback is required along the street frontages with an additional setback of eight feet from the property line for the 4th floor. Mr. Morgan described the site context noting that C-2 stretches north along Victoria Drive.

There will be retail at grade along Victoria Drive and wrapping the corner at East 54th Avenue. The continuous canopy does not wrap around the corner. The vehicle ramp is accessed off the lane at the low end of the site. Commercial loading is located within the utility right-of-way and will be accessed from the lane for garbage and recycling and a common amenity space fronting the sideyard setback.

The residential entry will be off East 54th Avenue. The units are to be a variety of single, two and three bedrooms with two units at grade with patio areas and garden entries. A three bedroom unit is planned at the corner of the East 54th Avenue and the lane. The top floor has several large units with an extended terrace.

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

Liveability:

- Are 18 foot wide single bedrooms units liveable?
- The 2nd and 3rd floor units with a south sideyard orientation are directly above commercial uses associated with outdoor seating, a loading area, garbage and recycling. Is the window size and unit orientation towards the sideyard appropriate? Further comments are requested on the location of the common amenity space adjacent to service space.
- Comments are requested on the bedroom location, size of windows and proximity to the street of the ground floor unit along Victoria Avenue.

Materiality and Expression:

The corner treatment with the proposed glazed vertical element

- Retail frontage and treatment
- Residential entry
- Lane treatment

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Scott Kennedy, Architect further described the proposal. He noted that they struggled with a fairly tight site with a lot of restrictions to get the usual maximum FSR on the site. The only relaxation is on the upper floor to create rooms and decks to take advantage of the views. The upper decks are intended to be developed into nice outdoor rooms with a fireplace. One of the ground floor units will have three bedrooms and a larger outdoor patio. The terraces have been stepped up over the ramps and have been kept as low as possible for a transition to the adjacent residential neighbours. Mr. Kennedy noted that the loading doors will be in the middle of the building and will use the right-of-way to park the trucks. This area will also be used for a common outdoor amenity for the residents. He suggested that this area would also make a nice outdoor seating area for a restaurant. Also a coffee shop is proposed for the other corner of the retail area.

Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans noting the streetscape will have street trees. The individual semi-private patio spaces will have some hedging with foundation planting and the lane. The patio space for the restaurant will be treated with special paving materials.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to the common exterior amenity area to separate the garbage area from the patio;
 - Consider improvements to the residential entry expression by adding a canopy or other treatment;
 - Design development to the corner of Victoria Drive and East 54th Avenue;
 - Design development to the exterior façade of the ground floor residential unit facing East 54th Avenue;
 - Consider design development to provide a clear separation between the commercial base and residential units above; and
 - Consider a passive cooling strategy for the project.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal.

The Panel supported the setback on the front of the building and as well they supported the 18 foot wide single bedrooms units and thought they would be liveable. The Panel also supported the 4th floor setback relaxation and liked that the floor was stepped back from the rest of the building.

The Panel were not convinced that the common area associated with loading would work and that the residents would use the exterior amenity area that doubled as commercial garbage access. The Panel did support having bedrooms overlooking the common outdoor area noting that it would depend on the usage and how often it was used for garbage pickup. One Panel member noted that it would probably look more like a loading area than a patio over time. Another Panel member suggested adding another set of gates to have the garbage area fenced off from the patio area.

A few panel members did not support having a restaurant in the retail portion of the site as it would be challenging for the residents. The Panel noted that the bedrooms facing East 54th Avenue would be challenged with respect to privacy and noise issues. One Panel member suggested using noise attenuation to make the suite more liveable. Another Panel member was concerned with the windows facing Victoria Drive and how they were expressed on the outside as they don't seem to be connected to the bay above and needed to be better integrated into the overall residential expression. A couple of Panel members would like to see bigger windows as they felt they looked more like basement windows.

Most of the Panel thought the corner treatment at East 54th Avenue and Victoria Drive needed to be more distinctive and the separation between the commercial and residential needed to be clearer. They noted that most C-2 buildings that make a clear distinction between commercial and residential are the most successful projects. However one Panel member liked the way the building wrapped the corner noting that the building was anchored but suggested strengthening the horizontal band to make for more of a base. Most of the Panel members suggested adding an awning over the residential entry to make it more noticeable. Several Panel members commented on the lack of roof access and thought it was a lost opportunity.

The Panel did not have any concerns regarding the landscape plans for the project. One Panel member suggested improving the lane treatment by adding a six foot hedge to cover the blank wall and stepping the materials to add more richness to the area.

A couple of Panel members were concerned with heat on the south and west sides of the building noting that it was a responsibility of the design professionals to take care of heat gain in the design. The Panel would like to have seen a passive cooling strategy for the project.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Kennedy said they had struggled with the corner expression and agreed that they could do more with the design. He added that he thought the comments from the Panel were fair.

2. Address:	1101 West Waterfront (Harbour Green Park)
DE:	412233
Description:	To construct a 3-storey restaurant on this site.
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Acton Ostry Architects
Owner:	City of Vancouver
Review:	First
Delegation:	Russell Acton, Acton Ostry Architects Bruce Hemstock, PWL Partnership Landscape Architects
Staff:	Paul Cheng

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-0)

- **Introduction:** Paul Cheng, Development Planner, noted that the proposal was related to the Master Plan for the Vancouver Convention Centre Expansion Project (VCCEP). The Master Plan required seamless integration between the land belonging to the Park Board and VCCEP and included extensive landscaping improvements to the public realm and extensive public rights-of-ways on the VCCEP property. During the evolution of the Master Plan, the City and Vancouver Parks Board decided it was appropriate to build a restaurant on a portion of the Parks Board land nearby to the Convention Centre. The proposal is for a three storey, 6,542 square foot restaurant located directly adjacent to the Grand Stairs that connects Thurlow Street with the lower promenade. As such, the south elevation that faces the Grand Stair has been architecturally treated with a second skin of glazing. Staff recognize that this proposal has a very challenging program due to the dramatic change in elevation and the public right-of-way that is being provided as well as the building's adjacency to the Grand Stair. Generally, staff believe that the overall urban design issues have been settled.

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

Architecture and design of the building:

- Given the prominent park setting in that the building directly faces a major public linkage between the city and seawall, is the treatment of the coloured glass screen wall appropriate as part of the public's experience of the Grand Stair?
- How the building affects the views, if any.

Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Russell Acton, Architect, noted that it is a very constrained and oddly shaped site. There is an emergency access route to one side with a turn-around that goes into the city parkade at Harbour Green Park and then the Convention Centre at the other end. Working with a restaurant consultant helped them to decide that the functional components would be located at the back of house with seating towards the view including an outdoor seating area. The building has been staggered at the different levels. Discussions took place with the Park Board and the City regarding the trees along the Grand Stair as they were taking a significant swath off the site. Mr. Acton said they wanted to celebrate and mark the building in the landscape. The Park Board did see the site as being a bit of a marker in the landscape; a transition point between Harbour Green Park and the Convention Centre. So when they designed the building, they decided to celebrate the south side of the building with some sort of element that was going to recall the idea of foliage, the green of the park and the ocean nearby. Ultimately, they came up with the idea of the glazed screened wall and thought it would make a nice solution to celebrate the transition. Mr. Acton noted that the project is designed in keeping with LEED™ Gold certification, which is a Park Board requirement. Sustainable measures include

green roofs, double-wall construction at the south-facing façade, high efficiency mechanical systems, low energy lighting, and high performance glazing systems. Mr. Acton described the material selection noting that the feature double-wall screen will be developed by an artisan using coloured and patterned glazing that will be hung off the primary façade.

Bruce Hemstock, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans for the project. He noted that a couple of the roofs on the project will be extensive green roofs with another part of the roof being planted with ornamental grasses. Ground plane treatment will borrow from some of the ground plane elements of the Convention Centre. Basalt paving will be used with large unit sizes on the patio and smaller unit sizes on the entry. The seawall treatment was important as there is a lot of activity as it is used as a service-way and bike-way. Mr. Hemstock describes the materials and planting that will be used in the landscape.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to the area with the canopy to either make it an entry or not; and
 - Design development to the 'prow' of the restaurant to reduce glare and heat gain.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and commended the applicant team for a nicely animated structure. The Panel also commended the applicant on the high level of detail in their presentation.

The Panel liked the way the architect had made a reference to the row of trees on the Grand Stair with the coloured glass panels and were not concerned that the trees would be replaced by the glass structure. They thought the glazing system would be really interesting especially at night and suggested the applicant fully explore the lighting of the structure. One Panel member noted that there might be some glare from the glass wall, which could be a concern. Another Panel member thought the treatment should capture the notion of the trees and wondered if there was a way to reflect the spacing and capture the rhythm of the trees. Some of the Panel had some concerns regarding safety issues noting that people are going to want to touch the glass wall.

The Panel thought the area at the top of the structure with a canopy made reference to an entrance that doesn't exist and suggested the applicant review that area. A couple of Panel members noted that this was a natural area for an entry and if there wasn't going to be an entry then the language of the building needed to be changed.

One Panel member thought the scheme seemed to have two massing elements or anchors on the sea wall and would like to see the roof on the prow and over the stairs on the front of the building have the same expression and that they need to relate or be more distinctive. One has a projecting roof and the other has a flat roof.

The Panel had some concerns with the corner element (the prow) noting that it was south-west facing and the shades would be closed during the prime time when people would be there and this might block views. One Panel member noting that dealing with the heat and glare with louvers wouldn't be enough and that exterior shades might be necessary.

The Panel liked the simplicity of the landscaping but one Panel member was concerned with the choice of paving materials at the lower level as they seemed to be going in all directions and suggested the pattern could be simplified. Although the Panel liked the

stacks and thought they were fun, they noted that the stack to the north seemed crowded into the building. One Panel member suggested lowering them to make them less visible.

The Panel thought the views had already changed along this part of the waterfront and will become part of a new precinct and didn't have any concerns with the project changing the view.

A couple of Panel members were concerned that it might be difficult to achieve LEED™ Gold from an energy point of view.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Acton thanked the Panel adding that they would take everything they said into consideration.

3. Address: 3891 Main Street
 DE: 412088
 Description: To construct a new British Columbia Professional Fire Fighters' Burn Fund building which includes the following uses: eight (8) resident units that will provide short-term/respite accommodation for burn survivors or burn survivors' families, an interactive multi media educational area (Fire Zone), a resource component and a research facility for clinical trials in burn and wound healing, and office space for personnel working for the BC Professional Fire Fighters' Burn Fund and conducting the charity work. The nature of these uses is deemed similar to a social service centre under Section 3.2.Z of the C-2 District Schedule.
- Zoning: C-2
 Application Status: Complete
 Architect: Bunting Coady Architects
 Owner: BC Professional Fire Fighters Burn Fund
 Review: First
 Delegation:
 Staff: Paul Cheng

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-0)

- **Introduction:** Paul Cheng, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for the British Columbia Professional Fire Fighter's (BCPFF) Burn Fund building on Main Street. Mr. Cheng noted that institutional uses are conditional under the zoning. The site is located on the northwest corner of East 23rd Avenue and Main Street. Main Street is comprised of mostly 1 and 2 storey commercial use buildings. A good portion of the building uses will be located underground in the first basement. The second basement will include the parking level. Mr. Cheng described the intention of the setbacks as noted in the guidelines.

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

- The proposal requests the conditional permission for reduced front yard, side yard and rear yard setbacks and for increased building height. Taking into consideration the intent of these regulations, would be reduced setbacks and increased height.
- Does the interface between the lane and the rear portion and the building detract from the liveability of the low-scale residential properties across the lane?
- Give that this is a corner site, is the interface with the public realm acceptable for the elevation facing East 23rd Avenue.
- As an institutional building on a street that is primarily commercial and residential in nature, does the proposal address the prevailing scale of the existing streetscape?

Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Mr. Bunting further described the proposal. The first floor is what the BCPFF Burn Fund calls their retail level. The main focus is to promote the cause of burn survivors. There is also a series of work spaces and offices located in the building. The second floor will be used for hospice for family members of burn survivors and the top floor will contain a small research lab. Mr. Bunting noted that they were asked to design a building that would stand out and not look like a fire hall although it should have some reminiscence. The building is targeting LEED™ Gold, however Mr. Bunting noted that they are a couple of points into LEED™ Platinum. Sustainable measures include high performance glazing, a concrete structure, solar hot water, a roof garden and green walls.

Mr. Baillie, BCPFF Burn Fund, noted that they have been supporting the burn unit at Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) and also at Children's Hospital. The new facility will be a place for family members from across the province to stay while their family member receives care. Everything about the building is about the mental health and recovery of the burn survivors and their families. The new facility will be close to VGH and Children's Hospital. Mr. Baillie noted that they are planning to work with Worker's Compensation which is a new partnership.

Gerry Eckford, Landscape Architect, noted the landscape had been designed for the specific needs of the occupants. The design focuses on the second and third level patios, street plantings and includes both a green wall and a green roof. Part of the sustainable measures will include storm water management, planters and pervious paving. Rain water will be stored in an underground cistern and then recycled for irrigation. Mr. Eckford noted that one of the more important features will be the use of water to buffer any street noise. Plantings have been chosen for their fragrance and colour to add to the healing nature of the facility.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider adding operable windows to the residential units facing Main Street.
 - Clarify that sun shading elements will be provided for the west facing residential units.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought the project was a great precedent for Main Street and will add a lot of diversity and character to the street.

The Panel thought the project was appropriate for its location and the changing character of Main Street. A project like this gives a lot back to the neighbourhood and relates to the scale of the old city hall building further down Main Street. The Panel thought it was a positive move and will add to the quality and diversity of Main Street.

Several Panel members thought it was an absurd requirement to ask the applicant to provide more than eight parking spaces. One Panel member noted that parking access could have a negative impact on the neighbourhood by having cars wait in line for the lift in order to access the underground parking. Another Panel member noted that there could also be considerable conflicts with service vehicles and garbage trucks in the lane. The Panel noted that there are other modes of transportation available including the Main Street bus, SkyTrain on Broadway and the B-Line along West 41st Avenue and didn't think more parking spots were necessary.

A couple of Panel members were concerned that the residential units on Main Street would not have operable windows and thought that in the long term that might not be the best solution. They suggested the applicant find a way to provide windows that could be locked out. Another Panel member suggested that through detailed design there could be some consideration to control privacy and fresh air for the tenants facing Main Street. A couple of Panel members thought the façade on Main Street should have a more residential expression.

There was strong support from the Panel for the laneway treatment; that it is an appropriate stepping to the neighbouring context. There was also strong support for the south elevation on East 23rd Avenue but the Panel thought there were some opportunities for public art along that façade. One Panel member suggested the façade could be

improved by using stamped words or a mural and was a lost opportunity to leave it as a blank concrete wall.

The Panel thought the landscaping was well done and applauded the inclusion of the water feature. They also thought the sustainability strategy was commendable.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bunting thanked the Panel for their comments and suggestions.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.