

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: July 7, 2004

TIME: 4:00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall (4:00 p.m. to 5:25 p.m.) and
The Ballroom at the Plaza 500 (5:40 p.m. to 8:22 p.m.)

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Bruce Haden, Chair
Larry Adams
Robert Barnes
Jeffrey Corbett
Alan Endall
Steven Keyes
Ronald Lea
Margot Long (departed 7:00 p.m.)
Jennifer Marshall (departed 7:00 p.m.)
Brian Martin
Mark Ostry

REGRETS: Marta Farevaag

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Vivian Guthrie, Raincoast Ventures

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	2775 Laurel Street
2.	1055 Canada Place Way

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Haden called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum.

New Business

1. Development Permit Board Meeting, July 6, 2004

Jennifer Marshall reported in regard to her attendance as UDP liaison at a recent Development Permit Board meeting. Ms. Marshall reviewed the projects that were under review. She noted that a recommendation of the UDP that approval of the West Georgia Tower application be predicated on its being a sustainable building was not applied to the permit. Further, Ms. Marshall recommended that the City of Vancouver recompense UDP representatives to the DPB meetings for their time and extraordinary effort; and, that this be made a matter of record.

2. UDP Minutes Format

The Chair took note that the Development Permit Board had expressed concerns regarding the clarity of UDP minutes and advised that this would be considered in future minute formats.

3. Applicant's Conduct

Discussion ensued regarding the concerns expressed by an applicant regarding language of a previous UDP discussion. Members considered appropriate responses.

1. Address:	2775 Laurel Street
DE:	408554
Use:	Ambulatory Care Facility, 11 storeys
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Henriquez & Partners, IBI Group
Owner:	Access Health Vancouver Partnership
Review:	First
Delegation:	Richard Henriquez , David Thom, and Ivo Taller of Henriquez Partners / IBI Group
Staff:	Scot Hein, Development Planner

EVALUATION: UNANIMOUS SUPPORT (10 - 0)

- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Development Planner, emphasized the site location as an important corner that announces the entry to the emerging VGH precinct. He noted that the current application is significantly different from the previously approved development permit of July 1991 as it pursues the scale of an FSR of approximately 2.6. It was further noted that the design attempted to reflect the scale of neighbouring buildings while meeting the functional programme of the building.

Staff requested that the panel provide advice on the following aspects of the proposal:

- Overall form of development and massing, noting the important site location near underutilized RM-3 apartment zoning; the general street condition at 12th Avenue;
 - The Oak Street frontage, including landscape setbacks;
 - General quality of the proposed development, paying attention to detailing materials and colour in mitigating scale; and
 - The landscape response, noting the emerging precinct and 12th Avenue frontage, which recalls the original high school.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Richard Henriquez, Architect, advised that the project commenced one year ago and that research involved visiting clinics in the United States to better understand medical planning standards for building modules and use. It was noted that one of the guiding principles was to provide waiting areas with plentiful light to create a high level of comfort and quality to the space in which people waited. A further principle was to balance clinical, academic and research needs.

Members were apprised of efforts to meet budget constraints with a focus towards effectively managing building scale. The design incorporated distinctive massing/form responses to neighbouring buildings. It was noted that the scale of the 12th Avenue frontage reflected that of existing and future RM-3 zoning apartment towers. In an effort to retain street trees, it was noted that the natural grade slope would be maintained along the Oak and 12th Avenue frontage. The plaza would be set four feet below the Oak Street level and that any transition in floor level would be achieved within the building. As well, it was noted that the natural slope afforded handicap access to the project on Oak Street while better mitigating automobile noise.

Mr. Henriquez added that rain protection had been provided around the building by a series of arcades and a large canopy at the drop-off point, and that the atrium (a major light source) was an incomplete oval, which was completed by an outdoor canopy. It was noted that the façade was pre-cast concrete with punched windows and incorporated coloured (painted) panels. In a tribute to the history of the original Vancouver high school building,

a surface pattern in the public realm had been created. It was noted that the original stairway and portions of the stone walls would be incorporated into the landscaping.

- **Panel's Recommendation** (items considered important and with a strong degree of consensus):

Chair Haden summarized the recommendations as discussed by Panel members.

- The following comments were provided relative to the overall form of development with particular attention to street and corner relationships including Oak Street frontage:
 - Retail project development to enhance visibility to Oak Street and ensure continuity of weather protection; and
 - Explore the opportunity for Oak Street frontage to be innovative, more welcoming and animated - a form of announcement to the street.
 - Design development of roofs to minimally remove the stripes to make it more accessible or green and preferably both;
- The following comments were provided relative to materiality and execution:
 - Replace façade painted strips with an architecturally distinct durable colour material.
- The following comments were provided relative to general landscaping and ground level public space:
 - Design the development to enhance public links at grade along 12th Avenue, including potentially widening the path and stairs while ensuring the protection of the trees; and
 - Re-examine the relationship to the Jack Bell Building including its landscape edge, reflection of the formal language of the building, and general design development with respect to the northwest corner.
- **General Comments from the Panel** (items considered of secondary importance or without a strong degree of consensus):

The Panel recognized the pressure of budgetary restrictions, and expressed hopes that the high quality of building standards, such as those obtained by the Cancer Building, would be possible.

The following comments were provided relative to general form and massing:

- For a project of this scale and size there could be an inherent danger of being monolithic - this design has taken what could be a severe mass and attempted to manage it's scale;
- Generally, this is an example of successful massing with sophisticated contextual strategy in response to modularity;
- The building responds contextually well with neighbouring buildings.

The following comments were provided relative to the Oak Street frontage:

- While Oak Street is not a retail street, joining the retail area as part of a sunny corner plaza would be a positive decision; and
- The Oak Street elevation would benefit from relocating the stairway on the exterior of the building.

Several members provided comments regarding the north side of the building:

- There seems to be no acknowledgement of view from the north side of the building to the north shore; and
- The wall on the north side is too solid and is not pedestrian friendly.

Differing opinions were expressed regarding the exterior materials:

- The extent of single coloured pre-cast concrete is not entirely mitigated with the painted coloured panels; the addition of more horizontal or vertical glazing strips might assist;
- The 'glassiness' of the façade helps to lighten the building; and
- There could be an opportunity to explore use of additional materials to further break down the building's scale, given its size. As this will be one of the largest buildings in the city, it could use additional glazing, colours, and detailing.

The following comments were provided relative to landscaping issues:

- An overview of the Master Plan would have been helpful to better assess the landscape;
- An Arborist should be consulted in this design;
- Existing trees and pathways should be considered when designing pedestrian routes;
- The pedestrian section has been designed to its full advantage; and
- An echo of the old Vancouver High School contributes a subtle layer to the overall design that adds a quality of lightness to the project. It could be helpful to provide a public announcement regarding the footprint.

The following comments were provided relative to interior spaces and the provision of private spaces for patients, employees and staff:

- A more generous atrium space could provide an amenity from the noisy street; where the exhaust expels into the street some sort of mask (a sculpture) could be provided;
 - Interior space benefits from an atrium, lends public interest, but affords no private space for visitors, students or staff; and
 - Consideration should be given to the healing aspect inherent in such a facility. The only opportunity for a healing, more private and intimate garden space is on the roof.
 - Pursue green roofs that are accessible.
- **Applicant's Response:**
Mr. Henriquez offered his appreciation for the comments and assured Panel members that they would be reviewed.

5:25 p.m.

The meeting recessed to facilitate a change of venue.

5:40 p.m.

The meeting reconvened in the Ballroom of the Plaza 500.

Address:	1055 Canada Place Way
DE:	408490
Use:	Convention Centre Expansion
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	Downs Archambault
Owner:	VCC
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Bruce Hemstock DML, Ken Grassi VCCEP, Jim Brown LMN Architects
Staff:	Ralph Segal, Rob Jenkins, Anita Molaro

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (5 - 3)

- **Introduction:** Rob Jenkins, Assistant Director of Current Planning, was present to provide clarification in regard to the steps of the processes at the city.

Ralph Segal, Development Planner, noted that although it was only a Preliminary Development Permit (PDP) application, the Convention Centre project was at an advanced design development stage. Excavation in the fall or early winter is intended. The application would be reported to the Development Permit Board on September 13, 2004.

In addition to their reaction to responses to previous Panel workshop commentary, Mr. Segal requested the Panel's feedback regarding the following five aspects of the scheme in respect to the Council-approved Guidelines:

- the roof;
- extent of covered walkway / bikeway on the north edge;
- Burrard Street-end / 'front door';
- Canada Place Viaduct: building edge; and
- the "Master Plan" / waterfront uses / connection to water.

Mr. Segal stressed that none of these areas identified challenge the basic Convention Centre programme or basic location to Convention Centre components on the site. The fundamental Convention Centre and public realm elements and their positions on the site are, staff believe, appropriate. Staff are talking more about some important shaping of certain pieces. With respect to the "Master Plan" which identifies a number of non-Convention Centre uses to be pursued by others, staff believe there is a need to advance the schematic design of specific elements, such as water-based and westerly commercial uses and their associated infrastructure, such that these necessary elements will occur in an integrated way that properly finishes the overall development. Mr. Segal clarified that the PDP application did not include the "Master Plan" elements for which VCCEP has indicated they would pursue a future RFP process.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Ken Grassi, VCCEP, discussed the final implementation plan and referenced financial constraints in regard to the scope of the project. The schedule imposed by the anticipated completion date of mid-2008 was emphasized.

Jim Brown, Architect, provided a PowerPoint presentation describing the main design development that had been in response to the April 14, 2004 workshop. He commented on the idea of integration into the context of park and cityscape.

Key principles were reviewed including the development of the project as an icon, and the creation of an inside / outside experience. Mr. Brown addressed planning and design rationale of the application including:

- Sustainability goals (especially the living roof system);
- Horizontal and vertical site relationships to physical forms of the urban fabric, landscape and water; and
- The provision of an intersection of activities between the Convention Centre, street life (commercial retail of approximately 45,000 square feet) and public open space of approximately 390,000 square feet.

The presentation provided information relative to view corridors, the engagement of street edges with retail use, implications of leaving the park edge free, innovative approaches to the provision of parking. The development of the roof design was detailed, and the 'Gateway Fold', a glass element at the building entry, was introduced. Also described was the active space provided along the north waterfront walkway edge and the interior wood finish and wood structure following the folds of the roof planes, providing an experience of exterior form from the inside. The presentation concluded with reinforcement of how the 'iconic signature' quality of the building would provide a spectacular foreground to the city and would weave into the park, water and urban fabric.

7:00 p.m.

Margot Long (due to a conflict, as PWL are landscape architects), and Jennifer Marshall departed the meeting.

- **Summary of Panel's Key Issues** (items considered important and with a strong degree of consensus):
 - Roof design development needed to increase the dynamics of the roofscape overall; consideration should be given to a higher height, especially at the northeast corner, increasing typical slopes of the various planes and increasing roof overhangs;
 - Design development to enhance the visual strength of the southeast (Burrard Street-end) corner;
 - Design development of facades ("skin"), including a full-scale mock-up of glass wall assembly;
 - Design development to increase the public quality of the north walkway to enhance its variety, including consideration of a substantial portion of it not being under cover;
 - It was recommended that the City of Vancouver staff identify a list of those components of the Master Plan requiring approvals from other jurisdictions (i.e. the elevator down to the marina requiring approval from Department of Fisheries and Oceans) and that these approvals be part of the PDP package.
- **Panel's General Comments** (items that support key issues above and/or items considered of secondary importance or without a strong degree of consensus):

The following comments were provided relative to Roof Design:

- There was general consensus that the folded roof design should be retained;
- The inherent power of the form, however, is being eroded, as it passes through detailed design considerations;

- The roof form is not creating a sufficiently dynamic and iconic statement;
- There is iconic value in the experience of the project, as it is of a scale that demands an iconic image;
- The northeast and southeast corner edges of the proposal are getting bent down and softened;
- The folded plates needed to rise up more from the western edge of the building to the east, as if they were growing up from the southwest corner of the project;
- A richer pattern reaching a crescendo at the northeast corner would be a powerful statement from the pedestrians' viewpoint as well as from the buildings overlooking the roof;
- Some improvement is needed at the northeast corner in regard to awkward geometries at the corner, where the project should soar and could be a more dynamic, notable point;
- Further details of green (plantings etc.) are required
- The storm drainage concept was successful; consider carrying the expression from the point it hits the ground and through to the landscape;
- Financial or mechanical restraints have caused a loss of dynamics to the design; the added folds were at the expense of clarity and strength;
- From the pedestrian scale, it appears as a flat roof and is not an iconic experience;
- The first principles were closer to the ideal and have been lost. From the iconic image the folded roof form has become a flat roof; the one place it met the grade (on the southwest side) was the most dramatic image;
- The first idea behind the folded land form was to raise the public plane; there is no longer an experience of public access or occupation. This would be nearing a spectacular experience if some public occupancy was given to the roof;
- The folded landform design may never have been intended to be the signature of the project; the interesting architectural or structural experiences include the huge glass walls around the edges of the building. The scale of the Canada viaduct space as presented was enormous (three stories); the next level of detail needs to be on the façade;
- The uniqueness of the building was the iconic folded roof, but only from a distant western vantage-point;
- As the folded roof is pushed down at the edges, the building is being 'turtled'; the design needs to maintain stronger gestures;

The following comments were provided relative to the extent of the covered walkway / bikeway on the north edge:

- Some members do not object to a covered walkway/bikeway; other members find it preferable to experience the weather and retain what is considered to be a global image of the legendary Vancouver seawall;
- Some members consider the covered walkway to be a relatively unfriendly, disjointed space, especially for retail, in regards to visibility and viability;
- As the walkway is challenged to be an animated space, some variety in cantilever, different shapes, materials, trees, etc. would provide enhancement. Consider articulation to the edge (i.e. moving or varying the distances out) to alleviate darkness.
- Consider providing vertically slanted glass screens as wind and weather protection;

The following comments were provided relative to the Burrard Street end/'Front Door':

- The Burrard Street end demands a more soaring experience;
- The mini- Burrard Inlet space was left orphaned; issues relating to water space and the treatment of the edge as a terminus of one of the most celebrated streets in Vancouver, remain unresolved;
- Lower level eyebrows, canopies, umbrellas might provide a sense of invitation:

The “glass fold” did not read as a grand entrance or effectively mark an entryway but rather as an object that deflected arrivals into the front door. The “glass fold” is not considered compelling enough;

- The sense of arrival could be improved;
- A large scale element would be essential for this entry;
- The glass entry was a great idea considering the vestibule was significantly understated, however, it encroached too far out, and was too short as it met the parent building;

The following comments were provided relative to Canada Place Viaduct - building edge:

- The south face works well with the break in the façade for rain cover canopy, and offers an attractive edge on the waterfront road;
- The width of the walkway is generous and complimentary, however where it emerges at the public road, the public space is under-animated as opposed to the western entry.

The following comments were provided relative to Master Plan / waterfront uses / connection to water:

- The applicant has done a lot of work to identify priorities and principles in order to develop the design. The uses surrounding the Convention Centre would be affected by decisions made early in the planning stages;
- Plan now to ensure the uses outside the Convention Centre compliment and support the intended uses;
- The lower connection to the waterfront is critical to this project; the design should fit into the envisioned program;
- The Convention Centre needs a commitment to the public component; Pedestrian scale elements need to be developed even though they are currently not part of the project;
- If the Master Plan is not in hand, it could become an impediment to the success of the project;
- Members generally agree that there should be inclusion of waterfront usage.

The following additional comments were provided:

- With respect to plaza space:
 - The city lacks urban paved areas; perhaps these could be incorporated at the Thurlow plaza; and
 - The largest component of the project was the public space, however no planting has been proposed;
- Consider that the screening on the east edge below the walkway (loading dock access) may not be necessary, and that the exposed work spaces do not detract from the building;
- The use of wood as an interior finish should be commended;
- Clarification regarding the skin treatment is required; it should be determined whether the specification would be structural glazing or a curtain wall;
- Consider a variation of mullion patterns, as it is presently ubiquitous and requires colour or more design;
- It could be advantageous if the lobby space totally surrounded the perimeter of convention centre;
- The weakest points are out of the applicant’s realm (i.e. restaurant, plaza, retail uses etc.) and require consideration; and
- There needs to be more of a sense of inside/outside; it could also be opened at the convention level.

- **Applicant's Response:**

Jim Brown responded to the comments and questions presented, and noted that the Design Team had been working on the project for over 18 months and that it had been an incredibly inclusive process. It was further noted that the Design Team was aware of many recommendations from different realms of interest, and given economic restraints had endeavoured to respond to as many concerns as possible. The meeting was informed that while the building was unable to be 'all things to everybody', the objective of the Design Team remained to create an iconic building for the city. Mr. Brown expressed appreciation for the comments and evaluations provided by the UDP. It was noted that the comment from the panel "that it was the entirety and uniqueness of the building that was the icon", exemplified their vision. The Panel was advised that input regarding the roof treatment, skin and surface would work towards achievement of the project's vision. Mr. Brown expressed confidence in the end result being an internationally renowned and remarkable building.

It was further noted that the Design Team would review the Panel's comments with the client and determine how to approach the recommendations. Chair Haden clarified broad consensus of the Panel, that it was very important that the roof not be perceived to be flat from any angle, including from ground level.

The meeting of the Urban Design Panel held July 7, 2004 concluded at 8:22 p.m.

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