

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: July 18, 2007

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
John Wall, Chair
Douglas Watts
Richard Henry
Bill Harrison
Martin Nielsen
Gerry Eckford
Ann Kjerulf

REGRETS: Walter Francl
Tom Bunting
Maurice Pez
Albert Bicol
Mark Ostry

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	335-349 East 33 rd Avenue
2.	2239 Kingsway

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Wall called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There being no New Business the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 335-349 East 33rd Avenue
DE: Rezoning
Use: 24 residential units with 22 underground parking spots and 2 at grade in a garage at the lane
Zoning: RS-5 to CD-1
Application Status: Rezoning
Architect: Hywell Jones Architect
Review: First
Delegation: Hywel Jones, Alan Forrester, Rod Maruyama
Staff: Vicki Potter, Dale Morgan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-1)

- **Introduction:** Vicki Potter, Rezoning Planner, described the rezoning policy for the project noting that the proposal will come through the City's Neighbourhood Housing Demonstration Program. Ms. Potter described the criteria for the program adding that there aren't any design guidelines for the neighbourhood; however housing varieties should be designed to fit into the single family neighbourhood. The applicant has sponsored two open houses and received a great deal of public interest.

Dale Morgan, Development Planner, introduced the project for the site which is located on East 33rd Avenue and Sophia Street. Mr. Morgan described the style of homes in the area noting that the adjoining sites are low scale bungalows. The applicant is proposing 24 units with the density to be just under 1 FSR. Parking is off the lane and will be underground. Also off the lane, there will be some at-grade parking and a garbage/recycling area. Mr. Morgan described the architectural style for the development noting the front elevation has a very high, steeply sloped roof line. He added that there are some privacy issues that need to be dealt with by limiting windows on the side yards.

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

1. Use: Is multi unit residential use supportable?
2. Density: A total floor area of .97 FSR is proposed, and a unit density of 24 units or 43 units/acre. This compares to approximately 9-10 units/acre for the surrounding RS-1 zone. Does the Panel support the amount of density proposed?
3. Form of Development:
 - a. Urban Design
 1. Does the proposal relate well to the exiting neighbourhood context?
 2. As a housing demonstration project the proposed development will influence future development patterns and set standards for the rest of this block face. Should the proposal consider how the rest of the block face may evolve, to ensure cohesiveness to future development?
 - b. Siting
 1. Building siting has been determined by the maximum distances for fire fighting access, set at 147 ft from the street. Is this appropriate, given its unusual depth? Should fire access equivalencies, including standpipe systems be advised, to allow for the buildings to be sited differently?

2. The Panel is asked to comment on general siting principles, yard setbacks, compatibility with neighbouring yards, building depths and open adjacent spaces.
- c. Parking
 1. The applicant proposed a hybrid combination of common underground parking and guest/surface parking with common stair access from the central courtyard. Comments are requested on:
 - a. Should all the parking be underground, or is more surface parking advisable;
 - b. The central location of the open access stair;
 - c. Visibility of the open ramp at the lane; and
 - d. The proximity of garage and garbage/recycling shed to the single family house directly across the lane.
- d. Unit Types & Livability
 1. Part of the rationale for a housing demonstration project is to demonstrate a new housing type. In this instance, ground oriented, stacked units are proposed for four of the six buildings. (The notion of ground orientation has been interpreted as providing separated entries accessible at grade.) Panel's comments are requested on unit layouts, livability and privacy issues.
- e. Massing and Roof Form:
 1. Scale and height, relative to the single family context and 40 ft wide lot pattern. Is it compatible?
 2. Roof forms: do they relate well to the context and to each other? Should there be more consistency?

Ms. Potter and Mr. Morgan took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Hywel Jones, Architect, further described the architectural plans for the project. He noted that there is a lot of open space on the lane which will add a rural feeling to the development and that the project does not exceed the present zoning for the coverage of the lot. He added that some of the units will be a single level rancher at grade that could be used by seniors for one level living. Also some of the units will have two or three bedrooms and will be targeted to families or people who want to work from home.

Rod Maruyama, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans for the project noting the design allows for a more airy feeling with a dry creek bed and oval courtyard. For a stronger connection the children's play area was combined with the community garden area. He noted that a lot of the planting material will be drought tolerant.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Provide Design Development of the massing and roof line on West 33rd Avenue to better fit in with the neighbourhood context;
 - Consider expanding the front and side yard set backs;
 - Provide Design development of the side yard unit entries and provide a more legible distinction between ground level and upper level unit entries;
 - Consider sustainable design initiatives to improve liveability; and
 - Consider providing elevator and covered stair access to the underground parking.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a commendable design with a rich mixture of units. The Panel agreed that it would be the

beginning of an emerging pattern for the neighbourhood and thought it would fit well within the existing neighbourhood.

Some of the Panel members thought the front and side yard setbacks could be more generous. One Panel member suggested adding more greenery along the edges of the property for privacy and also suggested using permeable pavers on the walkways and surface parking stalls. The Panel liked the landscape plans including the concept of the dry creek and the community garden although one Panel member thought the dry creek could use a beginning and an end and suggested adding more green features. One Panel member suggested having a rainwater management plan.

Several Panel members thought the primary access point for the 6 units along the pathway was not generous enough and suggest narrowing the houses to increase the setback. One member suggested converting the stairs to a ramp style for wheelchair access. Another Panel member suggested an elevator might be needed to get wheelchair access to the underground parking. The Panel supported the underground parking noting that it would be a benefit to the project. One Panel member thought there should be a covering over the stair access and should be integrated into the landscape.

The Panel found the massing on the units on West 33rd Avenue a bit imposing and thought the two storey gable roofs were too big and would have negative impact on the neighbouring properties. Most Panel members felt the massing on 33rd should be broken down and have a scale that is similar to the typical lot divisions of the neighbourhood.

Several Panel members suggested adding a second storey to the garage that could be used for a workshop or amenity space for the complex.

The Panel agreed that they would like to see the project again at the development permit stage.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Jones thanked the Panel for their good comments. He agreed to bring the project back to the Panel at the DE stage. He added that the neighbours hadn't brought up any problems with the setbacks.

2. Address:	2239 Kingsway
DE:	411405
Use:	4 storey mixed use with rear, lane level townhouse units on split zoned sit; old London Guard site; part of the Norquay Neighbourhood Centre Study Area
Zoning:	C-2
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Cornerstone Architecture
Review:	First
Delegation:	Scott Kennedy, Peter Kruek, John Skinder
Staff:	James Boldt

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-3)

- **Introduction:** James Boldt, Development Planner introduced the proposal for a four storey mixed use building on Kingsway. The site comprises a large split zoned site; zoned C2 along Kingsway and RS1 on Galt Street. Currently the application will seek development of the C-2 portion of the site. Mr. Boldt noted that the property frontage is 300 feet and is a shallow lot with the building height at the maximum allowed in C-2 zoning. Two storey townhouses are proposed at the back of the development with a country lane planned. The development will contain retail frontages on Kingsway with three levels of residential above. Mr. Boldt noted that staff concerns relate to the issues around massing, the breaking up of the massing and dealing with the access through the site which includes safety and security issues along with outdoor amenity areas and how they might function. Mr. Boldt read the C-2 guidelines for context on the zoning for the proposal and described the plans for materials and colour to break up the massing. Mr. Boldt asked the Panel for their comments on liveability, materiality and landscaping.

Mr. Boldt took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Scott Kennedy, Architect further described the architectural plans for the proposal. He noted the proposed "country lane" fronting the townhouses. The passage way through the project was a way to link the neighbourhood as the block is quite long. Mr. Scott further described the massing for the building noting the colour choices and materiality.

Peter Kruek, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans for the project.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider design development to the façade of the building to better differentiate between the two expressed masses on Kingsway;
 - Consider a stronger townhouse identity and expression that breaks down the scale of the continuous two storey podium along the lane;
 - Consider having roof top access;
 - Consider design development to the breezeway for better access, more open and lighter architectural expression, improved access to shared amenity, and improved CEPTED; and
 - Consider adding more sustainability measures to the project.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal.

The Panel liked the approach to the “country lane” and thought it would increase the livability and create front yards for the townhouses. The Panel had no concerns with the quality of landscaping on the project and thought it was a simple, clean design.

The Panel had some concerns regarding the deep suites and thought the window sizes were too small and would not allow much daylight into the master bedrooms. The Panel thought the townhouses were the best part of the project.

The Panel thought the length of the building along Kingsway was a concern regarding possible CPTED issues. A couple of Panel members thought the Kingsway frontage looked like the back of the building and suggested softening the pedestrian experience perhaps by adding more street trees. One Panel member suggested breaking up the continuous two storey podium on the lane to lessen the length of the building.

One Panel member suggested the breezeway between the two buildings needed to be stronger and the architectural expression of the adjacent masses should be differentiated to make for a stronger building. Several Panel members had concerns about CPTED issues in the breezeway although they liked the concept. One Panel member suggested the use of a gate which could be closed at night. Another Panel member suggested opening the breezeway and using a glass bridge to adjoin the buildings to allow for more light into the space.

Several Panel members thought the brick worked on the east side elevation but were not convinced with the western approach. The Panel felt the colour palate was appropriate for the building although a couple of Panel members thought the townhouses could be stronger to read as individual homes.

Several Panel members expressed concern regarding the amenity space and felt it was not well integrated into the project. Several Panel members suggested moving the amenity space near the breezeway. Also they were concerned about the lack of outdoor space. A couple of Panel members thought it was a lost opportunity to not have access to the roof.

Several Panel members suggested the applicant explore the benefit of a green roof and other sustainable measures like geothermal heating and using the LEED™ checklist.

- **Applicant’s Response:** Scott Kennedy thanked the Panel for their comments. He noted that it would be a financial penalty to the developer to give up the suites over the breezeway. He agreed to look at the colour of the brick adding that the rhythm of the building dictated the brick on the façade. He agreed to look at livening up the pedestrian realm with some large planters. The amenity space wasn’t considered as important in the building because of the coffee shop and people would sit in the courtyard and it was thought that the amenity space would only be used for strata meetings. Mr. Kennedy also agreed to look at adding a gate in the breezeway and added that he was prepared to go to Council in order to get roof top access. Also he agreed to lobby the developer for geo-exchange in the project and would look at other sustainable measures such as solar shading.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.