

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: June 18, 2008

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
John Wall, Chair
Walter Francl
Tom Bunting
Douglas Watts (excused Item #3)
Richard Henry
Martin Nielsen
Gerry Eckford
Bob Ransford

REGRETS:
Albert Bicol
Maurice Pez
Mark Ostry
Bill Harrison

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	161 West Georgia Street
2.	47 Nelson (Area 5B West)
3.	1050 Expo Boulevard
4.	555 Cordova Street

BUSINESS MEETING

Brent Toderian, Director of Planning gave a presentation on the new EcoDensity Charter. The Panel received printouts from the website at:

<http://www.vancouver-ecodensity.ca/content.php?id=42>.

Chair Wall called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm and noted the presence of a quorum. The Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

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|---------------------|---|
| 1. Address: | 161 West Georgia Street |
| DE: | 412093 |
| Description: | To construct a 23-storey residential building containing 233 dwelling units, with townhouses at grade, with five levels of parking. |
| Zoning: | CD-1 |
| Application Status: | Complete |
| Architect: | James KM Cheng Architects |
| Owner: | Concord Pacific Group Inc. |
| Review: | First |
| Delegation: | ames Cheng, James KM Cheng Architects
Norman Huth, James KM Cheng Architects
Chris Phillips, Phillips Farevaag Smallemberg
Peter Webb, Concord Pacific
Matt Meehan, Concord Pacific |
| Staff: | Ralph Segal |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-2)

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner introduced the proposal on the corner of Beatty Street and West Georgia Street and noted it was the final site in the Costco development. Originally the site was allocated for non-market housing, but in early 2008 Council agreed to remove the non-market housing requirement in exchange for some money and to convert the site to market housing. The proposal includes 233 units with townhouses at grade and no retail or commercial.

Using the context model, Mr. Segal described the surrounding developments including the Drill Hall and the form of development for the site. The lower element has changed from a stepped massing to a simpler rectangular volume. The tower is similar to what was envisioned at the rezoning with the main entrance off the corner and two storey townhouses along both West Georgia and Beatty Streets. Mr. Segal noted that the applicant has relocated the amenity space to the roof of the lower element.

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

- Change from terrace massing to rectangular massing in the lower form including architecture and public realm interface;
- How the townhouses front onto the various streets; and
- The colour treatment of the proposal.

Mr. Segal took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** James Cheng, Architect further described the proposal. Mr. Cheng stated that the reasons the proposal was not a stepped form was that at rezoning it was envisioned that the proposal would be built at the same time as the rest

of the project. Originally the site was to be social housing and as a result, the private terraces have been changed to a common amenity space. The proposal will be mid block and is being used as a scaling element; going from tower element to mid height to the Drill Hall. The colour is in keeping with the colour palette of the Drill Hall which is off white. It was decided to have a subtler colour on the project to give it an identity as it will be the first building seen at the approach to the viaduct and will form a gateway to a different part of the city.

Chris Phillips, Landscape Architect described the landscape plans. The West Georgia streetscape has a wider sidewalk and a double row of trees. The private open spaces are slightly elevated from the street to provide privacy. They are proposing adding a trellis over the parking garage to mitigate some of the views along that edge.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider adding more colour to the project;
 - Design development on the slot to improve privacy and light access; and
 - Consider other sustainable measures including a stronger passive design response for the west facing facades.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and the massing and thought it was a well executed project.

The Panel stated that the building was handsome, well massed and well executed but thought it was a repeat of past Concord projects. Several Panel members stated that the design looked like what was being done in the area 10 years ago. They did however like that it had moved away from the stepped form and thought it was a good move to put the amenity space on the roof of the low rise. Several Panel members were concerned with the deep slot from a sense of privacy and light access and suggested that it didn't need to be so deep. Another Panel member suggested adding colour to the slot for more visual interest. A couple of Panel members commented on the handicap ramp and noted that there could be a better way to handle it.

The Panel would like to see more "zing" in the colour palette and not have it look so much like other buildings on the Concord lands. One Panel member suggested using the colour in a different way from the neighbouring Concord buildings, but still relating as part of a family of buildings. The applicant was advised to consider an elegant but substantial colour strategy.

The Panel liked the proposed height of the townhouse terraces with one Panel member suggesting consideration be given to the height of the plantings so the residents won't see the traffic on the street. One panel member thought the small amount of metal siding on the south-east townhouse facade seemed foreign to the project.

The Panel was disappointed that sustainability had not been thought about from the beginning of the design. Several Panel members noted that the south-west façade was unprotected and another Panel member suggested adding some screening or larger fins to the west facing façades as there will be a heat gain issue. One Panel member suggested a green roof on the lower roof to improve the overlook; however most of the Panel didn't see the need for a green roof with one Panel member stating that they don't have to be on every roof but that the roof should be useable and functional. The Panel suggested the

applicant incorporate some passive solar devices on the building which would not significantly change the design.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Cheng said he agreed with the Panel's comments especially concerning the colour as he also thought it looked too pale. Mr. Cheng also thought more work could be done with sustainability adding that Concord Pacific knows they have to do more. Mr. Webb noted that the conversion from non-market housing to market housing was two years in the making. He added that there are 17 non-market housing sites available that don't have funding. They are working with the Province and the City and this conversion will help to pay for one or two other non-market housing projects.

2. Address:	47 Nelson Street (Area 5B West)
DE:	Rezoning
Description:	Proposal of two mixed-use towers, one 28 storeys and one 30 storeys above a podium ranging 2 to 5 storeys.
Zoning:	BCPED to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	James KM Cheng Architects
Owner:	Concord Pacific Group Inc.
Review:	First
Delegation:	
Staff:	Ralph Segal/Phil Mondor

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- **Introduction:** Phil Mondor, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a rezoning on Nelson Street in Area 5B West in False Creek North. Mr. Mondor noted that the Panel had reviewed the project in March 2005. He emphasized the policy and guidelines that staff will be utilizing in their review of the application. Mr. Mondor gave the Panel a Statistical Chart regarding the rezoning from BCPED to CD-1 and an overview of the False Creek North Official Development Plan approved in 1990. It was initially contemplated in 1990 that the Cambie Bridgehead Precinct would be an office district and the height contemplated was low-rise. In 2001 the area was reviewed again and although it was still seen as a commercial precinct, it was decided as a result of the successful area to the west, with a more pedestrian character, a public plaza would be required in this precinct with retail and commercial uses around the plaza. The application is different from what was originally contemplated being that the proposal is predominately residential. Mr. Mondor noted that there is new urban design plan for the northeast side of False Creek which contemplates a mixed-use of residential and commercial.

Mr. Segal, Senior Architect/Development Planner described the proposal using the context model. He referenced the area from the North-East False Creek Review which includes the space between the BC Place and GM Place through to Quebec Street. Mr. Segal noted that at the rezoning stage they are looking at use, density and form of development. There has been a shift in the massing from one that pulls away from the bridge and creates open space around the ramping of the bridge deck and also under the bridge to one that faces the bridge and creates open spaces on the sides. Mr. Segal noted that the Panel was looking at an application for the west side of the bridge only. The landscape plans show the approach to how the grade level treatment and under bridge area is to be treated. Mr. Segal added the site is envisioned to be a strong gateway into the downtown area.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:
Rezoning reviews focus on Use, Density and Form of Development.

1. Use:
 - The appropriateness of the proposed mix of uses at this location.
2. Density:
 - Whether the amount of density has been successfully accommodated on this site.
3. Form of Development:
 - Whether the overall built form creates an appropriate "fit" with the surrounding context;
 - Whether the proposed massing and form reads as a "gateway" to the Downtown as seen from the Cambie Bridge;

- Whether the proposal contributes to the enhancement of the Public Realm and pedestrian experience in the area, including the under-bridge area.
4. Sustainability:
- Has there been a satisfactory response to sustainability.

Mr. Mondor and Mr. Segal took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Joyce Drohan, Architect further described the rezoning proposal. She noted that they believe in the ODP comment about making the site a gateway to the city. They wanted a unique building form to have a landmark quality different than other tower forms in the general area. They have chosen to go to a purer form that might be iconic in terms of its read in coming over the bridge. There is significant public realm in both schemes. The huge difference between the two schemes is that the 2005 scheme embraced the public space in the centre with the bridge running through it. They felt it was more important to embrace the public space at the corners of the site where it could benefit the neighbourhoods. One other aspect of the form in terms of liveability was that the original scheme put a lot of units facing towards the bridge and they felt this wasn't reasonable for such a dramatic site. The new scheme puts many more units on the site that will enjoy spectacular views. Ms. Drohan described the unit layouts noting there are a number of live/work units planned as well as some retail around the ground floor. In terms of amenity spaces, they are trying to consolidate them on the third floor with a swimming pool, changing rooms and party rooms. From a sustainability point of view, they are targeting LEED™ Silver for the building and would like to take it further. They are attempting to create moveable screens for all of the units to temper the solar gain. They are also investigating the use of photovoltaic glass, as well as some photovoltaic panels on the roof.

Chris Phillips, Landscape Architects noted that it is a unique site and they are looking at making it more of a social space by making the site permeable and including public art as a way to invite people to the site.

James Cheng, Architect added that hopefully this was the new generation of Concord's buildings.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider a less formal response for the massing and form of development of the building.
 - Consider less massive bridging elements between the towers.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought there was an improvement over the 2005 scheme.

The Panel appreciated some of the changes to the scheme including the use of the plazas and thought the site would be a good example of a complete community for living, working and playing. They also liked the use of office space being included. The Panel agreed that the site could read as a gateway to downtown but that they didn't see that at this time. One Panel member noted that the gateway condition was dependent on what happens on the east site. The Panel also agreed that flipping the plaza was the right thing to do. One Panel member was concerned about moving so much commercial space away from the site and suggested adding a destination retail space as well as a grocery store, restaurant or liquor store. Another Panel suggested that the character of the retail would be important

and that the applicant needed to make sure the right mix was there to ensure that the space is under the bridge is attractive to the public and well used.

One Panel member thanked the applicant for providing such a high level of information for a rezoning as it gave a good feeling as to where the project was going.

The Panel thought the density worked and that the form of development fit into the neighbourhood. One Panel member noted that the location calls for a dramatic response to the building form. The strongest element is the bridge and on-ramps and that the building form should respond to the sculptural nature of the bridge. A couple of Panel members were excited by the curved form and encouraged the applicant to consider relaxing the curve to create a more responsive solution that relates to the site context. Most of the Panel liked the idea of the sliding screens but one Panel member suggested looking for alternatives.

Most of the Panel thought the public realm was going in the right direction. One Panel member thought the swimming pool was not in the best location.

The Panel thought the sustainability concerns were important to deal with at the beginning of the design and encouraged the applicant to try something remarkable.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Cheng thought the Panel was perceptive and had offered some good suggestions. He said he was looking forward to the next round.

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3. Address: 1050 Expo Boulevard
DE: 412190
Description: Social and Supportive Housing
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete
Architect: DYS Architecture
Owner: Terra Housing Consultants
Review: First
Delegation: Dane Jansen, DYS Architecture
Gerry Eckford, Eckford & Associates Landscape Architecture
Julian Pattison, Eckford & Associates Landscape Architecture
Staff: Anita Molaro
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EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (2-3)

- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a social and supportive housing project at the intersection of Expo Boulevard and Pacific Boulevard at the west side of the Cambie Street Bridge. Using the model, Ms. Molaro noted that the proposal was for a nine storey building with below grade parking and will consist of eight floors of subsidized rental housing with amenity spaces on the main floor. Ms. Molaro described the site layout, the zoning and guidelines as well as surrounding developments. Ms. Molaro noted that landscaping is a major factor for the Nelson precinct and the public realm.

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

- Overall building design/character including resolution of the elevations and their response to their various orientations, including
 - View of building from the bridge
 - South face and its particular orientation
 - Roof treatment
- Liveability of the units
- Use and quality of the proposed materials including their interface relationships
- Design of the open spaces and street edges
- Including the proposed loading area location

Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Dane Jensen, Architect, further described the proposal noting the sustainable measures which will include heat recovery, good natural light in the units and operable windows. He noted that they are still looking at the energy system and the economic advantages in terms of the LEED™ Gold standard. Mr. Jensen described the layouts for the amenity spaces and their use as well as the architecture in the rest of the project.

Gerry Eckford, Landscape Architect described the landscaping plans for the proposal. He noted that there will be a street car coming down Pacific Boulevard in the future but it is not clear yet what the configuration or alignment will be for the line. There is a required bridge treatment and a small building under the bridge ramp which will be screened. Julian Patterson, Landscape Architect further described the landscape plans. He described the garden layouts, privacy screening and fence line for security.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to improve the south façade by providing shading devices; and
 - Design development the overall façade treatment with particular attention paid to the bridge interface and the view from the Nelson Street on-ramp.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the proposal and acknowledged that although the project was a necessary addition to the city some design development was required.

The Panel thought the biggest difficulty with the design wasn't the material but the non-responsiveness of the orientation of the building. They noted the louvers on the west façade gave some protection from westerly heat gain but that the south façade was unprotected except on the bottom floor which will have some protection from the trees. Most of the Panel thought the south elevation was a natural consideration for a solar shading strategy. They noted that the south facing received lots of light but the units would likely be hot and uncomfortable. The Panel thought most of the shading was going to the west corner units.

Also the Panel thought consideration was needed for design development of the north façade as it's seen from the Nelson Street on ramp to the Cambie Street Bridge and is very visible with one Panel member being concerned with the seating area near the bridge. The Panel thought it was important that the building represent a stronger reference back to the city and Yaletown.

One Panel member was concerned with the south-east side of the building where the brick ends at the corner and doesn't express itself as a three dimensional element. Several members noted that the actual shape of the building was powerful and dynamic and could be enhanced with robust detailing and simple material choices. Another Panel member thought there was a genuine attempt by the applicant to resolve the conflicting geometrics and that the success of the massing of the building was as a simple form.

The Panel felt that the massing worked well and that the strategies used to deal with the difficult challenges appeared to be working well and that the scale and size of the building seemed about right. Most of the Panel members thought the choice of materials (brick and metal) would work and commended the applicant for designing the building for longevity.

The Panel agreed that the integration of the amenity spaces on the ground floor was well done and liked the animated core. They also agreed that the unit layouts were well done.

The Panel liked the landscaping in the ground plane and open spaces and thought it would be exciting. They also thought the loading and parking was in the right location for the site.

A Panel member noted that the bar had been set high on the other social housing project that had been seen by the Panel with one of the proposals being voted and exemplary project as well another one that should have also been voted exemplary. Those projects were considered to be some of the best projects the Panel had ever seen and had a playfulness and material sensitivity in the architecture. There was also concern from the Panel members that those projects might come in over budget and value engineering would reduce some of the design elements. One Panel member noted that the success of social housing buildings was that they didn't look like social housing or institutional buildings.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Jensen said he appreciated the Panel's comments on the solar shading on the south façade and that they were still working on a solution. He added that he was clear as to where they needed to go next. Also, they were trying to manage where they spent the money in the project.

4. Address:	555 Cordova Street
DE:	Rezoning
Description:	Transportation Hub
Zoning:	CWD/DD
Application Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	City of Vancouver Planning and Engineering
Owner:	City of Vancouver
Review:	First
Delegation:	N/A
Staff:	Anita Molaro/Matt Shillito/Steve Brown

NON VOTING SESSION (WORKSHOP)

- **Introduction:** Matt Shillito, Planner, Major Projects Group gave a background on the Hub Study. The City has been working on the study for about a year trying to convene a vision for the area around Waterfront Station. The study area extends north from Cordova Street over the rail tracks and encompasses the Sea Bus Terminal, the water lot between the Sea Bus Terminal and Canada Place. It also includes the Granville Square complex and the current parkade on the corner Granville and Cordova Streets. There are two reasons why the study has been undertaken. Firstly is a recognition that a really unique spot within the region in terms of its transportation role. It's a place where numerous different transportation modes converge. There is the Sea Bus, West Coast Express, SkyTrain, future Canada Line at Waterfront Station, numerous bus lines and a heliport near by. Currently there is no real sense of a coordinated transit hub. Facilities for transit users are poor. Basic things like public washrooms are lacking. There is an opportunity to create a grand transit hub worthy of the city that creates a grand civic space, celebrates transit, creates a sense of arrival and integrates all the transit modes together much better. The second objective is to do with urban design and city building and that recognizes another missed opportunity in the area which is that the city in this particular part of downtown is held back from the waterfront primarily by the CPR rail yards which is north of Waterfront Station and also by the Sea Bus Terminal and the surrounding vacant lots. There is an opportunity to reconnect the city with the waterfront in this location and to bring people out to enjoy the views, to get access close to the water and to improve the edge of the city. As well, to recognize some new development opportunities in the downtown particularly commercial uses. Mr. Shillito noted that the study is still in a conceptual stage. The study is intended to create a framework for future rezoning applications in order to provide guidance for urban design, land use, transportation, etc.

Anita Molaro, Development Planner, noted that a number of different options were explored on how we extend this part of the city. Ms. Molaro described the different options that staff looked at previous to the completion of the current study.

Steve Brown, Transportation Engineer, Strategic Transportation Planning noted that there will be some pull back of the railroad yards and they are working with the rail company for a long term solution. There is a future rail passenger platform planned which will be accessed from the upper level concourse. In terms of the streets, Mr. Brown noted that it was a challenging area in terms of circulation. There are a number of one way streets and Granville Street is a bus only street and there is a lot of congestion when the cruise ships are docked. There is not a lot of curb side space for buses to stop at the station area. Mr. Brown described the proposed circulation and street uses.

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

- Overall structure plan
 - Street network including Granville Street Extension
 - Resulting new development site
- Transportation Hub Facility
- Proposed uses
- Proposed building heights/scale/massing
 - Towers
 - Interface with Gastown context/200 Granville/CP Station/Waterfront edge
- Open Space
 - With or without the building at east end of CP Station
- North of Canada Place extension (waterside)
 - Opportunities

Staff took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel Commentary:**

In general the UDP were positive in their discussion on the HUB concept. Some key commentary was:

- Need more public open space
- Development site at east end of station doesn't work - this area would work much better as a public space to act as a forecourt to the transit HUB
- Shape of development site behind Landing is challenging and would seriously affect views from the Landing
- Interface of proposal with the port lands north of Canada Place extension needs more work - there are greater opportunities that could be explored and the view of this edge from the water needs to be carefully considered
- Very supportive of the Granville Street extension - city needs to fix the end of one of our most important streets
- Overall the street network seems to work quite well
- Heritage retention of the CP Station and its integration with expanded HUB facilities will provide a focus to the downtown
- Transit hub concept is positive step forward in fixing the poor circulation of the existing facility
- Extending development over the track to the east needs to work with Gastown
- Need to make sure it's a vibrant area - not just office - look for uses that add vitality through the evening and weekend
- Recognized that the building footprints are large for office - proportionally they would work better if the buildings were taller
- Massing strategy of higher buildings stepping down to Gastown and water's edge is the right approach
- Architecture and imagery of the area will be very important

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.