

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: June 21, 2006

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Walter Francl, Chair
Nigel Baldwin (excused 96 East Broadway)
Albert Bicol
Shahla Bozorgzadeh
James Cheng (present for Items 1 and 2 only)
Eileen Keenan
Margot Long
Bill Harrison (present for Items 1 to 3 only)
John Wall
Peter Wreglesworth (excused Items 2 and 4)
C.C. Yao (present for Items 1 to 3 only)

REGRETS: Tom Bunting

RECORDING SECRETARY: Carol Hubbard, Raincoast Ventures Ltd.

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	96 East Broadway
2.	1155 East Broadway
3.	368 West 1st Avenue
4.	1885 Venables

The Chair noted that a report regarding code of conduct and roles and responsibilities of all Council committees and advisory panels will be considered by Council July 17, 2006. Further information may be obtained from the City of Vancouver website.

1. Address:	96 East Broadway
DE:	410288
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	C-3A
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Gair Williamson, Shane Mussan, Sonya Lindsay
Owner:	Holburn Developments
Review:	First
Delegation:	Gair Williamson, plus two others
Staff:	Dale Morgan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-2)

- **Introduction:** Dale Morgan, Development Planner, presented this application for a mixed use development in the C-3A Central Broadway District, at the southwest corner of Broadway and Quebec Street. The application seeks the maximum allowable density of 3.0 FSR as well as a slight deviation from the guidelines with respect to the massing. The application proposes a four-storey streetwall where the guidelines suggest three storeys. Mr. Morgan briefly described the proposal and the neighbouring context and noted there was a fairly good response to the scheme from notification and to a neighbourhood open house.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- whether the slight deviation from the massing and height suggested in the guidelines is appropriate;
- comments on the lane treatment in terms of privacy and overlook;
- base treatment along Broadway;
- livability;
- sustainability considerations including potential for a green roof.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Gair Williamson, Architect, described the design rationale and noted that some changes to an earlier scheme occurred after consultation with the neighbours. The landscape architect briefly reviewed the landscape plan and the applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Summary of Panel's Consensus:**
 - Strong support for the proposed height and massing;
 - Some concern about the discontinuity of the canopy;
 - Major issues concerned livability, ventilation of the units, amount and location of amenity space, and access to the roof.
- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel strongly supported this application. The massing and height was considered to be appropriate for the neighbourhood and the scale appropriate for Broadway.

There were no concerns about the proposed deviation from the guidelines with respect to the massing and height. However, it was strongly suggested that something more substantial should be given to the community in return for these considerations, noting in particular the proximity of the converted church at the rear.

The Panel considered the lane elevation to be handled very well and liked the simplicity of the trees and planters as well as the generous size of the patios. Privacy was not an issue.

With respect to the Quebec Street elevation there was a recommendation to consider eliminating the raised planters in favour of planting in the ground.

Response to the treatment along Broadway was mixed. Most Panel members did not believe the canopy should necessarily be continuous, although it was strongly recommended that it be extended to the exit from the commercial parking. It was also recommended that the canopy should turn the corner to provide some announcement and opportunity for signage.

In general, the Panel found the sustainability measures to be well handled in terms of how each façade responds to its orientation. Some Panel members recommended abandoning the proposed wood frame structure in favour of concrete which would offer much greater flexibility for responding to sustainability.

Panel members expressed some concern about the livability of the units, particularly the lack of outdoor space on the Broadway side, notwithstanding the limitations of these very narrow units. There were strong concerns expressed about the poor daylight access and ventilation in these narrow units. One Panel member suggested increasing the floor to floor height in order to gain more light, noting this likely could not be achieved in a wood frame structure.

The Panel was concerned about the proposal for the roof deck which appears to be unresolved and more like an afterthought. While it was acknowledged that a wood frame building precludes a totally green roof, common access to a larger portion of the roof was strongly recommended including the provision of planters. Suggestions also included providing larger penthouse units which utilize a larger roof deck, and to consider four penthouse units with a common amenity space at the rear. One Panel member also recommended a lighter railing material on the roof.

There was a comment that access to the commercial parking seems somewhat circuitous.

One Panel member suggested the internal amenity area should differ in some way from the typical unit layout.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Williamson agreed the issue of giving something back to the community needs to be addressed. He also agreed the canopy can be extended. With respect to the roofscape, he said they have no problem with developing the roof deck from an architectural point of view but they are limited by concerns about the height.

2. Address:	1155 East Broadway
DE:	410322
Use:	VCC King Edward Campus Expansion
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Stantec
Owner:	Vancouver Community College
Review:	First
Delegation:	Rainer Fassler, Chris Phillips, Peter Wreglesworth, Larry Waddell
Staff:	Anita Molaro

EVALUATION: SUPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Development Planner, presented this application for phase one of the proposed development of the VCC campus. She briefly described the site context and the history of the project to date. A policy statement which set the objectives was approved by Council in 2004 and the rezoning was approved in 2005. In January 2006 the proposal was reviewed by the Panel in a workshop because the scope of the project had been reduced as a result of a funding shortfall.

Ms. Molaro provided some background on the main objectives under the policy statement for the campus plan, and briefly reviewed the objectives under the policy for phase one. She also reviewed the changes in the proposal from the rezoning scheme and noted a further change which has occurred since the January workshop, to reintroduce the daycare component. In the January workshop the Panel sought greater animation on 7th Avenue, stressed the importance of the Glen Drive elevation, and noted the expression of the spine is minimized by the narrowness of the atrium. The Panel also requested exploration into the expression of the building in an east-west direction, and articulation of the building mass in plan and section to reduce the overall scale and bulk.

Staff believe the project has been very much improved and support its design evolution and direction. The Panel's feedback is sought on the response to the conditions of the rezoning, namely:

- Scale and massing, particularly on Glen Drive;
 - Pedestrian interface and visual interest;
 - The importance of 7th Avenue as an entrance;
 - Presence on Broadway;
 - Roofscape;
 - Public realm treatment;
 - Materials.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Rainer Fassler, Architect reviewed the evolution of the scheme and the phase one objectives. He also stressed the important recent addition of the daycare to the scheme. The sustainability aspects were briefly reviewed and Chris Phillips, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plan and proposed enhancement of the Broadway frontage. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
 - **Summary of Panel's Consensus:**
 - Unanimous support for a strong parti and successful massing strategy.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this application and appreciated the progress that has been made to date.

The applicant was complimented on a very clear presentation which makes the building parti and massing strategy easily understood, although there was a comment that the material palette strategy is less understandable in terms of how it relates to the existing building and how it was generated.

Some Panel members questioned the misalignment of the bridge to the atrium space. Suggestions were to have the bridge come off the same alignment as the major space in order to make it clear how to proceed to the existing building.

There was a question about the amount of glass on Glen Drive by the bookstore in relation to the corner entry plaza, and a suggestion to extend and simplify the glass and the plaza to create a more substantial gathering space in this location instead of the terracing and planters as shown. There was a recommendation for further design development to the detailed solution at the 7th Avenue entrance. One Panel member also questioned the relationship of the patio at the L2 level to the landscaped terraces at grade with a suggestion to explore introducing stairs at the northwest corner of the patio to connect the two spaces.

With respect to the façade materials, it was noted the "lantern" is very flush with the skin, with a suggestion that where the lantern and skin join might be articulated more to make the two parts read more strongly. In general, the Panel had no real concerns with the materials but it was stressed that the success of the development will come with the details, both in the building and the landscaping.

The Panel appreciated the improved articulation of the two "boxes" but noted the split does not read beyond 7th Avenue and might be improved by change of material to reinforce the strong parti. The Panel thought some good effort had been made to reduce the institutional scale of the building although some members remained concerned about its massive appearance, albeit handled very well. One Panel member was particularly concerned about the institutional appearance of the south façade when viewed from the Broadway plaza. There was a suggestion to consider wrapping the stair towers in the adjacent materials and allow the horizontal banding to be the connecting material. Also, to consider some architectural elements that emphasize the spine.

One Panel member was concerned about the integration of the new development with the existing building and the connection from Broadway down Glen Drive. The applicant was urged to include streetscape improvements next to the existing building.

A comment was made that the window wall portion on the east side of the north façade appears to compete with the active corner and it might be improved with simplification and allowing the corner to become the interesting social animator of the building.

There was a suggestion that the smaller roof garden on the fifth floor might be better located on the north side of the building to take advantage of the view.

There was concern expressed about the lack of animation on the Glen Drive elevation and a comment that the street level seems quite divorced from the building, although some Panel members found this façade quit well animated.

The proposed treatment for the Broadway plaza was considered to be a good interim measure, with some cautionary suggestions to not include too many trees which could impact the existing northerly vista from this location.

With respect to the daycare it was noted that development of the outdoor play area is essential and should be considered as early as possible. There was also a recommendation to strengthen the connections between the interior spaces and the roof garden. One Panel member regretted that the daycare roof design is not yet available for consideration.

There was a concern expressed about the lack of a real proposal for the future library connection and a recommendation to give this greater consideration now.

With respect to the landscape plan it was stressed that it will be important for staff to review the details, including plant sizes and species, noting that this information is not yet provided. There was a recommendation to avoid the use of English Ivy which is invasive.

One Panel member commended the applicant for what is clearly a sustainability driven project, and strongly recommended that LEED silver certification be sought.

In general, the Panel found the project to be very well handled and looks forward to seeing it proceed. However, while the Panel has confidence in this applicant team, concerns were expressed that the Panel is being asked to endorse parts of the scheme that have not yet been designed.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Fassler said they appreciate the Panel's feedback and will take all the comments into consideration. With respect to the integration of the new with the existing building, Mr. Wreglesworth agreed it is an issue but that the funding is unfortunately limited to the new structure. With respect to the efforts to reduce the institutional appearance, he added that they have attempted to provide the college with a playful feel.

-
3. Address: 368 West 1st Avenue
Use: Residential heritage rehabilitation and conversion
Zoning: M-2 to CD-1
Application Status: Rezoning
Architect: Burrowes Huggins Architects
Owner: PCI Development Corporation
Review: First
Delegation: Mike Huggins, Robert Lemon, Andy Croft, Geoff Vaughan, Mychaj Lyszyn
Staff: Phil Mondor, Mary Beth Rondeau
-

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction:** Phil Mondor, Rezoning Planner, presented this application for rezoning in the “private lands” of Southeast False Creek, noting that two other rezoning applications in the vicinity were reviewed recently by the Panel. The Southeast False Creek Official Development Plan was adopted by Council in 2005 and amended earlier this year. The application generally responds quite well to the objectives and principles of the ODP which has a significant emphasis on sustainability. Mr. Mondor briefly described the project which is to rehabilitate and convert a heritage resource and provide new development that responds both to the heritage building and the ODP. The application will be reviewed by the Vancouver Heritage Commission on June 26, 2006. The existing building is four storeys high (47 ft.), the new development is five storeys (61 ft.). Overall density is 3.5 FSR. Details of the bonus for heritage rehabilitation are yet to be determined.

The Development Planner, Mary Beth Rondeau, advised that staff have no issues on this project, except to note that the proposal does not include a pathway connecting 1st and 2nd Avenues between this site and the adjacent property, as shown in the ODP. The Panel’s comments are sought on this slight variation from the ODP.

- **Applicant’s Introductory Comments:** Mike Huggins, Architect, briefly described the general massing arrangement and the design rationale. He noted the original building (B.C. Telephone office and Stores) was constructed in 1915 and added to in the 1920’s. The heritage consultant, Robert Lemon, briefly addressed the heritage aspects of the project and Mychaj Lyszyn reviewed the sustainability contribution. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Summary of Panel’s Consensus:**
 - Unanimous support for the use, density and form, with several Panel members recommending increasing the height of the new structure to six storeys;
 - The applicant should seek an architectural vocabulary that is more sympathetic to the rhythms and architectural forms of the heritage building;
 - Design development to strengthen the sense of entry;
 - Improvement to livability of the units.
- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this rezoning application and appreciated the retention and rehabilitation of the heritage building.

Concerns were expressed about the “keyhole cutouts” on the newer portions of the heritage façade and the compromised livability of the very deep suites behind in terms of light access.

It was noted that the relationship of the old to the new calls for considerable finesse and more than is currently indicated, especially noting the three bays butting up against the old building with the third bay encompassing the entrance. There were suggestions that the entry point should be setback somewhat and made more expressive of the vertical face of the building. It would also allow the old building to be more “stand alone”.

Several Panel members thought the new building should be six storeys, on the basis that five storeys does little in terms of the relationship with the heritage building and results in unnecessary problems in the new building. The suites are extremely deep whereas a little extra height and a trimmer, small building would allow much more livable units. It would also help the legibility of the old and new buildings. There was also a recommendation to recognize the four storey height of the old building in the new structure, possibly with a cornice.

It was strongly recommended that the timber trellis on the roof be reconsidered in favour of something that respects the form of the old building, enhances its sense of cornice, set back appropriately, and which responds to its structural bay.

There was a recommendation to locate the amenity room behind the main entrance to provide the opportunity to see right through the building at ground level.

In response to the adjacent Polygon courtyard the upper levels of the new building should be set back sufficiently and treated appropriately with good glazing.

The sustainability strategy looks encouraging and the Panel looks forward to seeing more details at the development permit stage. One Panel member was concerned about the implementation of a radiant heat system with the existing façade. The inclusion of prominent bicycle parking was strongly supported.

One Panel member commented on the pathway connection and supported its exclusion.

- **Applicant’s Response:** Mr. Huggins thanked the Panel for its input and said he did not disagree with any of the comments.

4. Address:	1885 Venables
DE:	410267
Use:	Cultural and Recreational - Theatre
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Proscenium Architecture and Interiors Inc.
Owner:	Vancouver East Cultural Centre
Review:	First
Delegation:	Tom Weeks, Duncan Low, Ron Clay
Staff:	Sailen Black

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (1-5)

- **Introduction:** Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced this application to renovate and expand the Vancouver East Cultural Centre (the "Cultch") at the northwest corner of Victoria Drive and Venables Streets. The site was rezoned in 2004. At the rezoning stage the Panel's advice was sought on the relationship between the existing building and the additions, how the new structure related to the existing house to the west, and on the pedestrian quality along Venables and Victoria. The key issues for the Panel related to the general simplification of expression, with particular attention to greater visual clearance of the hip roof, and improved integration of the landscape with the architecture of the building, especially on the Victoria Drive side. The Panel supported the rezoning application but to return for review at the development permit stage. The conservation aspects of the project were supported by the Vancouver Heritage Commission. Mr. Black briefly reviewed the rezoning design conditions and the applicant's response.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the current proposal in response to the rezoning conditions, especially with regard to:

- The façade on Victoria Drive;
 - The pedestrian space on Venables Street; and
 - The connection between the existing and new buildings.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Tom Weeks, Architect, briefly described the project and the rationale for the proposed changes to the facility. He noted the project will be built in phases for funding reasons and to allow the theatre to remain in operation as long as possible. Following a brief description of the landscape plan the applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Summary of Panel's Consensus:**
 - Major concerns about the massing of the new building in conjunction with the old, i.e., alignments of the roof and heights of the buildings at the corner vs. the side, and general concerns about the complexity of the new addition.
- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel did not support this application. It was acknowledged to be a very complex and important project for retaining this significant cultural institution for the neighbourhood. While the Panel recognized the improvements made since the rezoning stage, most Panel members were not convinced that it works and thought it needed much more design development.

The Panel's main concern was with how the old meets the new and concluded that the original building is not treated with enough respect or left with enough integrity. While some Panel members quite liked the new additions in themselves, the concern was with how they collide with the existing building. There were also concerns about the new buildings and a suggestion that they include far too many modernist elements, which makes the composition too "busy" and confusing. They fail to complement or reflect the proportions of the old building in any way, which also impacts the overall legibility of the whole composition. There is no way to see where the main entrance is.

The Panel had serious concerns about the extent of the canopy and its negative impact on the roof of the existing building. There was a suggested alternative for a modernist glass canopy that stands alone and only touches the building where it needs to. Another suggestion was for it to be broken in the centre to allow the existing building to come to the ground without interrupting the roofline.

There was a concern with the upper lobby and how it meets the roof of the existing building above the eave line. If a way could be found for it to be lower than the eave line, even at the expense of a low ceiling in a portion of the lobby, there may be a way to make it work.

The pedestrian space on Venables Street seems to work except it is hard to find where the entry is. The outdoor space was thought to work quite well but could have more benches.

Other comments and concerns included:

- the relationship of the westerly façade to the adjacent single family house is very harsh;
- some of the internal arrangements seem to be rather awkward;
- it will be important to find a solution that does not dramatically change the streetscape that is established in this neighbourhood;
- the phase one interface works better than the phase two;
- the new should be simplified to offset the more complicated style of the heritage building which has its strength in its large roof, simplicity of form and fenestration, as well as the "quirky" additional masses. It has a lot of presence and fits comfortably in this neighbourhood. While its expansion is important and necessary, it is also important not to lose the character of what makes the Cultch a great institution;
- the roof needs to retain some presence from the public realm, more than just on Venables Street;
- the phase one massing will hide the building from the street corner;
- an ideal phase one massing would push the massing back to have a bigger setback to the corner to allow the existing building to still command the corner of Venables and Victoria. This would also allow the exterior gathering space on the corner to be much more interesting;
- concerns about the three storey massing on phase one. It will dominate the corner in a way that will be uncomfortable in this neighbourhood. A two storey massing would likely feel more sympathetic

- there will be limited sun penetration to the internal courtyard.

It was noted that sustainability seems to have been an afterthought on this project. The applicant was urged to consider increased energy efficiency and better indoor air quality that takes advantage of the high volume spaces.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Weeks said they do not disagree with the Panel's comments but stressed it is a very complex project. He noted they have worked hard to get the interconnection between the lobby space and phase two and the existing building under the eave, but the eave height is just above the sill height of the door. The level of the lobby cannot be lowered without making accommodation for handicap access into the theatre. He agreed they can look at reducing it at the front of the building, although 6 ft. would be a very low ceiling height.

With respect to the suggestion to pull the massing back, Mr. Weeks noted it was pulled forward since the rezoning in order to separate it more from the existing building. Moving it back would eliminate 50 percent of the area added to the back-of-house which would be an extreme hardship for the theatre. He agreed the large roof of the existing building is a dominant feature during the day, but at night, when most people come to the building, it will be much less prominent. Mr. Weeks agreed that attention needs to be given to defining the entrance. With respect to sustainability, he also noted that they will be seeking LEED certification.