

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: June 22, 2005

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Larry Adams, Chair
Robert Barnes
Shahla Bozorgzadeh
Marta Farevaag (present for Items 1 and 2 only)
Ronald Lea
Peter Wreglesworth
C.C. Yao

REGRETS: Nigel Baldwin
Alan Endall
James Cheng
Margot Long
Edward Smith

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard, Raincoast Ventures

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1675 West 8th Avenue
2.	1323 Barclay Street
3.	2010 Franklin Street

1. Address:	1675 West 8th Avenue
DE:	409080
Use:	Residential (10 storeys, 77 units)
Zoning:	C-3A
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Ramsay Worden
Owner:	Intracorp Pine St. Development Ltd.
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Tom Miller, Bob Worden, Andrea Bolin, Bruce Hemstock
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this application in the C-3A zone. The site is in the Burrard Slopes area between Broadway, Granville and Burrard and the proposed all-residential use meets the intent of the guidelines for a predominantly residential neighbourhood. Proposed density is 3.3 FSR, which is the maximum of 3.0 FSR plus a ten percent heritage density transfer. The proposal also generally conforms to the massing suggested by the guidelines.

The Panel did not support the proposal when it was first reviewed on February 16, 2005, having concerns about the apparent scale and mass of the building, particularly on the north elevation. The Panel also recommended integrating the indoor and outdoor amenity spaces, to reduce the visual scale of the lane wall, and to consider integrating the corner open space with the entry.

The revised scheme incorporates a corner open space that is enriched with a corner bulge and extension into the public boulevard, and there is a 12 ft. setback on West 8th. The scale of the project on the lane has been improved by lowering the raised podium.

The advice of the Panel is sought on whether the project has earned the maximum density of 3.0 FSR from the outright approvable 1.0 FSR, noting the ten percent heritage density transfer is considered a benefit in itself. Advice on the height is also requested, noting the proposal seeks approximately 104 ft., from the outright approvable height of 30 ft.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team briefly reviewed the project and noted the incorporation of sustainability features including low flush toilets, re-use of materials and energy conservation measures. The landscape plan was also briefly described and the applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - The Panel had few design development suggestions. The only area of consensus was that the elevator should be taken to the roof to take advantage of the views and to give the space more usability and accessibility.
- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this application and considered it had well earned the requested height and density. The Panel found the project considerably improved since the last review, particularly the lane elevation.

Positive comments about the scheme included:

- This will be a great addition to the neighbourhood because of its rich landscaping and a building form that is a good fit;
- The building has an interesting assemblage and a very rich language in its façade;
- The midrise component has been very successfully handled;
- The townhouses give the building a great street presence;
- The revisions to the lane are a tremendous improvement;
- The building is much less monolithic than previously;
- It has come a long way in slimming up the midrise component and improving the corners;
- The integration of the amenity spaces is very good;
- The scale at the lane is very well handled; lowering the podium has solved the earlier problems and creating units with a face on the lane provides a really nice edge;
- The architectural language and scale of the street, as well as the double row of trees, creates a very nice streetscape;
- The sustainability aspects are appreciated.

The Panel unanimously recommended that the elevator be taken to the roof. It was noted that the roof deck is a major asset to the building and the elevator will make it much more usable and accessible.

In addition, the following design development suggestions were made by Panel members:

- The northwest corner wall on the lane would be improved with more glazing;
- The elevations could be simpler;
- Suggest more hard landscaping in the outdoor amenity to make it more usable;
- Some concern about the interim condition at the lane, possibly calling for fencing or soft permeable privacy measures for the units closer to the lane;
- The street tree at the front entry should not be moved;
- Recommend adding some landscape that will grow down the wall around the parkade entrance.

There were conflicting comments about the corner public plaza, ranging from making it more elaborate and contained, connecting it in some way to the entrance, and leaving it the way it is.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Worden said he appreciated the Panel's comments which reflect their own discussions, including the comments about simplification.

2. Address:	1323 Barclay Street
DE:	409286
Use:	Residential (4 storeys, 16 units)
Zoning:	RM-5
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Matthew Cheng
Owner:	Kallista Properties
Review:	First
Delegation:	Matthew Cheng, Fred Liu
Staff:	Bob Adair

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (0-6)

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner, presented this application in the West End RM-5 zone. The site is on the north side of Barclay Street between Jervis and Broughton Streets and currently contains two older houses that will be demolished. The proposal is for a four-storey multiple dwelling containing 16 dwellings units with parking accessed off the lane. Two ground floor flats at the front of the building have their entry from the street; the main residential entry is off the side yard.

The initial proposal for this site was for a double row of townhouses. However, many of the issues were difficult to resolve and the applicant was advised to consider a simpler building type. Planning has no objections to the proposed building type but have a number of concerns which question whether it achieves the overall design quality expected in the West End District. Multiple dwelling is an outright approvable use in RM-5 up to 1.0 FSR, which may be relaxed to 1.5 FSR. The application seeks 1.5 FSR.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the following, relative to the RM-5 guidelines:

- Streetscape: whether the proposal is adequate to meet the guidelines;
- Materials: whether the proposal meets the guideline for high quality materials and detailing, especially at the front entry on the street and the balconies;
- Scale and visibility of the main entrance;
- Screening of the parkade entry.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Matthew Cheng, Architect, and Fred Liu, Landscape Architect briefly reviewed the project and responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - The streetscape is unacceptable. Suggestions include: depress the slab and increase the planting at the front, and more carefully differentiate the entries to the individual ground floor units;
 - Concerns about the way the materials are being used;
 - Major concerns about the definition of the two front unit entrances on the street;
 - The balconies should be more carefully integrated into the building;

- The project is seriously lacking in the scale and visibility of the main entrance;
- Recommend adding some screening to the parking ramp to soften its impact;
- Suggest manipulating the grade more and raise the rear yard so that it better addresses the lane;
- General concerns about the need for design development of the aesthetic, including the use of materials, the front entries, the relationship of brick to the hardi panel, and concerns that the building is neither historicist nor modern.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel was unable to support the application as presented and had a number of suggestions for design development improvements. The overall building massing and approach to the layout was considered generally acceptable but the Panel thought greater consideration should be given to the opportunities that exist on this site, which is in a great neighbourhood.

Front Yard Treatment:

- Consider adding extra earth to facilitate a less rigid landscape. This may also allow for a better differentiation of the two ground floor units and improved entries;
- There is conflicting information on the model and drawings so the intent is not entirely clear;
- There is no indoor/outdoor relationship in the front yard treatment for the residents on the ground level;
- The streetscape should be more of a garden for passersby to enjoy as well as being optimized for the use of the residents of the building.

Materials, Detailing and Building Expression:

- Question how the brick is used and the extent of hardi panel on the side elevations. The materials need to be better integrated with the architecture;
- The balconies appear to be tacked on to the building and need to be better integrated with the architecture;
- Question whether emphasizing the cornice line at the third floor is appropriate. A break at the second level might be better to differentiate the ground floor units from the units above;
- The application of building materials is awkward;
- The use of materials looks like facadism. Whatever material is chosen it should be better integrated in the building;
- While the use of brick borrows from some of the elements of an historic West End building, some elements would not appear on a brick building in a very prominent way, most notably the balconies;
- The very symmetrical form had forced some other solutions both in the building and the landscape that fight some of the urban design intentions that the building should deliver, e.g., the symmetry of the building makes it very unclear which side of the building is the front entrance, and the two front gardens and symmetrical door placement is creating spaces that are less than usable;
- If an historic expression is chosen for the building then an historic form also needs to be brought into the landscape;
- It would be preferable to have brick all the way around the building at the lower level;
- It is a bad replica building and would be better as a more contemporary building that suits the marketplace and this location.

Scale and visibility of the entrances:

- Sense of entry is seriously lacking. The entry was described as mean and meagre.
- The doors to the front units look planted onto the brick and no weather protection is provided;
- The front units are not oriented to the street but are internalized towards the lobby - do one or the other. They could be street-oriented townhouses which would begin to create some diversity in the plan and in turn help to improve the architectural expression;
- Consider creating partly covered outdoor spaces for the ground level units with landscaping that contributes to the streetscape.

Parking and Security:

- It is unfortunate the lane is so much higher than the street which creates a difficult situation for the design of the parking ramp;
- Security concerns about the exit stairs;
- Recommend covering the parking ramp with a trellis/landscaping.

Lane Treatment:

- The landscaping should be stepped up, if only partly, to meet the lane;
- It is somewhat mean to locate the common space below the lane;
- Recommend terraced planters, stepping up to the lane with considerable landscaping and some greening in the lane;
- The rear garden should not be depressed from the lane. It is important both for the residents and for people walking in the lane;

Other suggestions and comments included:

- Consider turning one of the stairs to create a more generous lobby and making changes to the unit layouts so the elevator can be seen when entering the lobby;
- There is no lobby for residents to meet; there needs to be a centre to the building;
- The overall landscape needs to better relate to the grades at the property lines around the site.

In general, the Panel thought the project needed much more work given the expectation that the increase in density from 1.0 to 1.5 FSR should be earned through quality. The Panel recommended that the project be reconsidered from both architectural and planning aspects.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Cheng thanked the Panel for the comments and said he agreed with much of the advice.

3. Address:	2010 Franklin Street
DE:	409153
Use:	Residential (10 units)
Zoning:	C-2C1/RM-3A
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Matthew Cheng
Owner:	Amandeep Dhillon
Review:	First
Delegation:	Matthew Cheng, Fred Liu
Staff:	James Boldt

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-1)

- **Introduction:** James Boldt, Development Planner, presented this application for the site at the corner of Semlin and Franklin Streets, half a block north of East Hastings Street. It is a split-zoned site: C-2C on the corner and RM-3A on the easterly portion. Initial inquiries were for a rezoning but it was ultimately decided to consider the proposed site consolidation with the building complying with the relevant zoning on each portion of the site. While applications in these zones would not typically be referred to the Urban Design Panel, the Panel's advice is being sought given the C-2C1 component comprises all-residential use where normally mixed-use commercial-residential would be sought.

The immediate site context includes an industrial-manufacturing area to the west, multiple residential to the east, mixed commercial C zoning along East Hastings, and residential to the north. The proposal is for a ten unit townhouse complex at 1.25 FSR with a central raised courtyard. There are landscape setbacks at the rear, sides and front. All-residential use is permitted in the C-2C1 zone. Good quality materials are sought in this zone, as well as good architectural expression related to its context. The site has a 10 ft. slope down from the lane to the front, which complicates the underground parking and raises the interior courtyard as proposed.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- Overall expression and design of the building;
 - Landscaping;
 - Safety and security.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant team reviewed the project and responded to the Panel's questions.
 - **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - How the materials are used and come together (brick, siding, etc.) needs much better resolution. The use of vinyl siding not recommended;
 - Consider an alternate location for the parking garage entrance;
 - Landscaping, with concerns largely relating to security. Recommend increasing the size and usability of the raised patio spaces and reduce the amount of no-man's land at the lane and Franklin Street. Consider revising the landscape treatment of the courtyard to simplify it or make it asymmetric. Wood planters are not recommended. Consider rationalizing the stair widths on the project and increase the amount of landscaping.
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- Concerns about safety and security. Recommend enclosing or covering the stairwells from the parkade up to the courtyard level. CPTED concerns also about the exits from the parking garage.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel strongly supported this application and had no concerns about the basic layout of the scheme. There was also support for a minor height relaxation in order to simplify the massing at the roof level. In general, it was thought to be a good building for the neighbourhood.

The upper courtyard was considered to be a big asset to the project but with suggestions for improvements in the landscaping and to its security. There were suggestions to revise the courtyard to provide small private open entries to the units. Another comment was that it should be screened more on Semlin for better privacy. The entries to units 6 to 10 on the courtyard are a bit awkward to access and they are expressed the same as the secondary access of the other units opposite, which may be unclear for visitors. It was noted the courtyard will always be in shade so will unlikely be used socially. Additional soft landscaping was recommended and careful attention to trees in the courtyard to ensure a light canopy to maximize daylight access. The use of wooden planters, which have a limited lifespan, is not recommended.

Street trees should be provided on Semlin Street.

With respect to materials, the Panel strongly recommended that the use of vinyl siding be reconsidered in favour of hardi panel. As well, there was a suggestion to generally revisit the use of materials, possibly having the brick as the background material. There was also a suggestion to reflect in some way the industrial materials of the adjacent zoning (possibly metal). It was also recommended that the use of materials could be more playful.

The Panel considered the break-up of the façade to be quite successfully handled, with the exception of Franklin Street where it was recommended to reconsider the repetition of the lower level expression. In general it was recommended that the materials and glazing patterns be simplified.

The Panel had concerns about the safety and security aspects of the parking entry and it was strongly recommended that the stair be secured and either fully or partly enclosed. An open stair would be acceptable provided it is secure and weather protection is provided. There was also a recommendation to relocate the door from the garage to the exit stair to take into account the very tight turning radius.

Some Panel members recommended revisiting the location of the parking entry, possibly to the east off Franklin Street. This would also provide an opportunity to bring the whole building down as well as offering a better solution for the parking entrance. A comment was also made that the 1.5 FSR, while appropriate for the combined zones, does create a somewhat bulky form on the site, which might be improved if the parking entry can be configured from the high side of the site. It would also offer greater flexibility in how the various edges of the building meet the property line, and eliminate the need for high walls.

One Panel member suggested that units 6 to 10 should have their entrance off the lane, provided the lane is more friendly and secure. It was suggested the patios be pushed out to the lane and the wooden fence eliminated. The wider entry stair was also questioned because it could be taking away from potential patio space.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.