

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: June 23, 2004

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Bruce Haden, Chair
Larry Adams
Robert Barnes
Jeffrey Corbett
Marta Farevaag (excused Item 2.)
Ronald Lea
Margot Long
Jennifer Marshall
Brian Martin

REGRETS: Alan Endall
Mark Ostry
Steven Keyes

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	2028 East 37th Avenue (5308 Victoria)
2.	750 Pacific Boulevard and 10 Terry Fox Way
3.	2520 Manitoba Street (60 West Broadway)
4.	8915 Hudson Street

1. Address:	2028 East 37th Avenue (5308 Victoria)
DE:	408500
Use:	Mixed, 4 storeys, 27 units
Zoning:	C-2
Applicant Status:	Complete
Architect:	Andrew Cheung
Owner:	Royal International Import
Review:	First
Delegation:	Francis Yau, Andrew Cheung
Staff:	Dale Morgan

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (1-7)

- **Introduction:** Dale Morgan, Development Planner, presented this application in the C-2 zone. The site is at the corner of Victoria Drive and East 37th Avenue and has a frontage of 98 ft. on Victoria and 110 ft. on East 37th. Across from the lane at the rear of the site is zoned RS-1. Neighbouring properties on Victoria Drive comprise a mix of one- and two-storey commercial uses and some mixed use across the street. The proposed development consists of ground floor retail which extends along the Victoria frontage and partially along East 37th Avenue, with three floors of residential use (27 units) above. The residential entry lobby is off East 37th Avenue. Underground parking is provided for 35 cars, with access from the lane. There is also at-grade commercial parking at the rear. The total density is 2.49 FSR (maximum permitted 2.5 FSR).

Following the project description and a brief description of the C-2 guidelines, Mr. Morgan noted the following areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought:

- Architectural expression and proposal materials;
 - Livability of the units, in particular the 20 ft. wide units;
 - Outdoor amenity space - size and location of balconies and rooftop patio areas;
 - Treatment of the lane.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** The applicants briefly described the design rationale and responded to questions from the Panel.
 - **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Wrap around the corner brick
 - Consider expansion of balconies and 4th floor roof decks;
 - Add landscape planting including at a minimum street trees along 37th; also consider added planting on a new lane deck, 4th floor deck and Victoria Drive enhancements;
 - Create an outdoor amenity space at grade adjacent to the existing amenity space with a suitable landscape strategy;
 - Consider enhancements to the retail frontage and the entry on 37th;
 - Revisit issues of light accessibility and livability of the 20 ft. wide units.
 - **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support this application and had a number of suggestions for improvement.

There were no concerns about the architectural expression which was generally thought to be going in the right direction. The proposed materials were also supported.

The Panel generally thought more attention should be paid to the 37th Avenue elevation and strongly recommended extending the brick all the way around onto 37th. A stronger sense of residential entry on 37th Avenue was also recommended.

The Panel found the outdoor amenity space inadequate. It was strongly recommended that the common outdoor area be located next to the ground floor amenity space to provide a more usable patio for the residents. The applicant's stated intention to create a deck over the service area in the lane was strongly supported. This deck should be appropriately planted.

Design development to the lane elevation was recommended to make it much more pedestrian friendly both for the residents of this building and the neighbours across the lane.

Some concerns were expressed about the livability of the 20 ft. wide units although some members found them adequate and noted that similar small units are marketable and they do add needed affordable units to the city's housing stock. One suggestion was to reconsider the need for two bathrooms and reconfigure the units to make them more livable. One Panel member also recommended increasing the size of the windows to take advantage of views to the north.

There were concerns about the undersized balconies and it was suggested they should meet minimum standards. It was noted that a larger outdoor space could easily be achieved on the top floor where the units are set back. In general, the Panel thought the whole landscape plan needs much more consideration, including adding as many street trees as possible on both Victoria and 37th. There needs to be much greater integration between the landscape and the architecture. There was also a suggestion to make the penthouse level completely green which would contribute to the building's sustainability and improve marketability.

One Panel member thought the roof setback could be improved by aligning the balcony railings with the building symmetry below.

With respect to the retail frontage there was a suggestion to consider making the retail windows higher.

One Panel member was concerned at the suggestion the density may be too high, noting that a much different massing will result from any necessary FSR reduction.

Note: *Since the foregoing review, the following clarification on the allowable residential FSR in C-2 was provided:*

The proposed residential FSR at 2.0 exceeds the allowable for density of 1.75 for dwelling uses in conjunction with other uses for storeys above street level. An additional 0.4 FSR is permitted at street level for a residential maximum in conjunction with other uses of 2.15 for a total FSR in conjunction with other uses up to 2.5. The applicant had incorrectly used the permitted density of 2.15 for multiple dwelling (without other uses) with no limits on floor levels. Consequently the residential FSR is over by 0.25 or 2,800 sq.ft. (Ref: 4.7 Floor Space Ratio, C-2 District Schedule).

2. Address: 760 Pacific Boulevard
DE: 408507
Use: Casino
Zoning: CD-1
Applicant Status: Complete
Architect: Patrick Cotter
Owner: Canadian Metropolitan Prop.
Review: First
Delegation: Patrick Cotter, Chris Phillips, Joel Berman
Staff: Jonathan Barrett
- Address: 10 Terry Fox Way
DE: 408501
Use: Parking
Zoning: CD-1
Applicant Status: Complete
Architect: Patrick Cotter
Owner: Concord Pacific Group Inc.
Review: First
Delegation: Patrick Cotter, Chris Phillips, Joel Berman
Staff: Jonathan Barrett

EVALUATION:

760 PACIFIC BOULEVARD: SUPPORT (6-1)

10 TERRY FOX WAY: SUPPORT (4-3)

- **Introduction:** Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, presented two applications for the Enterprise Centre (Interim Casino Facility) and a parking lot, respectively. The proposal is to introduce a casino use into the existing Plaza of Nations building, with minor changes to the outside of the building and a more formalized vehicular drop-off. The major changes to the building occur internally.

The proposal is the result of a rezoning that in January 2004. The Panel's advice is sought on the applicant's response to the following main design conditions of the rezoning:

- Retention of the transparency of the existing building, both inside and outside;
- Overall architectural treatment including lighting (signage is not part of this application)
- Location and treatment of the vehicular drop-off
- Retention and enhancement of the sea walk/bike route through the site
- Design development of the overall landscape plan

In addition, the Panel's comments are sought on the architectural presentation of the walkway, the vestibule on the westerly side, treatment of the northerly face, and the existing grove of trees which is a legacy of the former Expo 86 BC Pavilion.

The Panel's comments are also requested on the proposed landscaping of the parking lot.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Patrick Cotter, Architect, briefly described the design rationale. The proposal is to enclose the interior volume of the space to meet the condition to maintain transparency of the building. Parking requirements for the casino

are met by underground parking on the site and securement of lot 5B for overflow parking which will be accessed by a shuttle bus from the casino. Primary access to the casino will be via the vehicle drop-off. Chris Phillips, Landscape Architect, briefly reviewed the landscape plan and access arrangements. He noted the City has identified the existing stand of trees has having some heritage value and while many of these trees are in poor condition some can be retained.

Mr. Cotter noted the existing building was never intended to be a long term structure and it contains no adequate mechanical systems. To achieve the air conditioning requirements of the casino operations, studies indicate the need to create a second skin within the building, which is contrary to the rezoning condition to maintain the building's transparency. Mr. Cotter briefly reviewed their design approach and the lighting study.

Joel Berman briefly described the three glass sculptures he has designed for the project, and the applicant team responded to the Panel's questions.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

- **760 Pacific Boulevard:**

- Allow intermittent in-house views at grade including full height night time transparency of the prow;
- Explore the possibility of relocating the bikeway to the outside of the building, recognizing technical considerations;
- Design development to the turnaround location;
- Allow the applicant to consider the removal of the trees.

- **10 Terry Fox Way:**

- Recommend the addition of textured elements, either landscaping and/or structural elements to visually break up and soften the parking lot.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported these applications. The Panel considers the casino use to be quite appropriate in this location.

The Panel acknowledged the challenge of maintaining transparency of the building, although some Panel members commented that they did not perceive the present Plaza of Nations building as particularly transparent. The applicant's approach to meeting this rezoning condition was considered to be acceptable, particularly at the upper levels of the building.

Some Panel members expressed regret that there are no views out from the lower level. There were recommendations to leave the prow completely clear for a view out to the water and to provide places at ground level to look beyond the café, at the same time offering glimpses into the gaming floor from the outside.

The Panel strongly supported the glass sculptures and the proposed LED lighting program. It was noted that signage will be a dominant feature on this project, with a recommendation to restrict signage to either the solid or glazed parts of the building and to avoid lighting on the solid part.

The Panel agreed the access/drop-off is difficult to resolve. Suggestions included rounding off the vehicle turnaround area and to pay close attention to the pedestrian crossing. Panel members thought the bike route should ideally be on the outside edge of the building, but acknowledged the limitations. It was recommended to explore this further with Dept. of Fisheries.

Some Panel members did not support the retention of the stand of trees from Expo-86 since there is no legacy of forest in this location. The applicant was encouraged to pursue eliminating these trees.

The Panel was disappointed with the proposal for the overflow parking lot and thought much more could be done to soften it up with more substantial landscaping and perhaps adding a structure. The current proposal was considered quite weak, noting its high visibility from Cambie Bridge.

The applicant was commended for the very thorough presentation and materials. One Panel member also commended the applicant for making this level of improvements for a limited time period and thought the improvements to the public realm will be a major benefit to the city.

- **Applicant's Response:** With respect to the recommendation to leave the prow permanently exposed, Mr. Cotter noted there is a need to maintain constant light levels for security reasons. The proposed blind is a motorized retractable fabric blind. Mr. Cotter agreed that the landscaping in the parking lot can be considered further. A plaza area is proposed for the shuttle drop-off with a steel and glass canopy which will provide a focal point on the corner of the parking lot.

3. Address:	2520 Manitoba Street (60 West Broadway)
DE:	408554
Use:	Mixed, 7 storeys
Zoning:	C-3A
Applicant Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	Downs Archambault
Owner:	677002 BC Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Al Johnson, Alan Shatwell
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-1)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this preliminary C-3A application in Mount Pleasant. The site is at the corner of Manitoba Street and West Broadway Pleasant and directly adjacent to the site is the recently constructed *Element* building. The application proposes one level of commercial use on the ground floor on West Broadway, wrapping around the corner onto Manitoba Street. Six levels of residential use containing 51 units is proposed above the commercial base. The residential entry is on Manitoba Street. Following the description of the project, Ms. Rondeau reminded the Panel of the requirement for maximum conditional height and density to be earned in the C-3A zone. The application seeks the maximum density of 3.0 FSR and a height of 70 ft.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- Whether the project earns the height and density requested;
- The appropriateness of the scale relationship with the adjoining residential building.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** The applicant team briefly designed the design rationale and responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to enhance landscape design including lane, rooftop, deletion of soft landscaping at the corner and enhancement of the Manitoba edge;
 - Design development to reflect more clearly the difference between the urban qualities of Broadway and the residential qualities of Manitoba and the lane, particularly in terms of scale and materiality;
 - Explore opportunities for specific community contributions for earning the discretionary height and density, which could include exterior public space amenity or public art;
 - Explore sustainability as a means of earning the maximum height and density.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel strongly supported this application.

Most Panel members thought the scheme earned the requested height and density and found it a handsome building although some members said they struggled with how the maximum height and density is earned in the C3-A zone. There was some concern about the scale relationship to the neighbour. Stepping down to the adjacent building is not supported although changes in material would be appropriate.

The Panel strongly supported the proposed 8 ft. setback on Manitoba. The trees and benches are a good contribution to the neighbourhood.

The Broadway streetscape was supported and the Panel liked the retail wrapping around the corner onto Manitoba.

The Panel was disappointed with the landscape plan, even at this preliminary stage, and urged that it be more fully developed for the complete submission. Given there is a fair amount of overlook from adjacent buildings, the landscaping needs to be developed in concert with the architecture. The roof garden needs design development and would best be at the same level as the amenity space. With respect to the amenity space, a suggestion was made to flip the stairway to the other side so that the meeting areas can be combined, with the possibility of being able to spill out. The meeting area on the Broadway side was thought to be a bit weak as shown.

Design development to the lane was strongly recommended, noting the significant pedestrian movement in Mount Pleasant lanes. Eyes on the lane with a more heavily landscaped edge will provide a much better relationship to the neighbouring heritage homes.

One Panel member thought there should be a better response to the heritage district to the south, even if it means a slight reduction in FSR. The south elevation in particular looks very urban and slick in an area of transition to residential use. Some Panel members suggested more attention should be given to having the Broadway frontage reflect its commercial character and Manitoba the residential character. The grass boulevard, for example, is inappropriate noting there are other ways to achieve healthy trees in a more urban way. The heavily planted display garden at the corner is also not sufficiently urban. There was also a suggestion to move the retail entry closer to Broadway so that the transition to a residential character occurs in a stronger way. It was recommended that, since this is a preliminary scheme, serious thought be given to how this building, while architecturally handsome in itself, fits in its immediate context and the city. This would go some way to fully convincing the Panel that this project earns the maximum height and density being sought, noting also that it will likely set a precedent for future development in the area.

Concerns were expressed about the livability of unit E.

Finally, there was a recommendation to consider sustainability as one of the ways to earn the maximum height and density.

The Panel looks forward to seeing this project again at the complete application stage.

4. Address:	8915 Hudson Street
DE:	408484
Use:	Mixed, 3 storeys
Zoning:	C-2
Applicant Status:	Complete
Architect:	Robert Turecki
Owner:	Bill's Development Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Sean Rutlien, Peg MacDonald
Staff:	James Boldt

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (0-8)

- **Introduction:** James Boldt, Development Planner, presented this C-2 application. The proposal is for a 4-storey residential building, including a dwelling unit at grade and enclosed at-grade parking off the lane. The site is 61 ft. wide x 140 ft. deep, flanking the southern end of Hudson Street at 73rd Avenue. The area is currently mixed use but evolving to more residential. It has been recognized in previous policy work that this node of C-2 could be considered a let-go area for all-residential use. The only remaining commercial use is a single storey mini-mall directly to the north.

The C-2 guidelines indicate that dwelling uses at grade on the fronting street will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, typically at the end of a retail section and provided the impact of ground floor residential units regarding traffic can be addressed. On this site, due to its size and configuration, including the issue of parking, the initial advice to the applicant is that the City could accept a single dwelling unit or two at grade at the front, with good landscaping. The C-2 design guidelines do require a good urban response. In this area there has been a pattern of more industrial finishes reflecting the evolving context, such as the metal siding proposed in this scheme.

There are rear yard and envelope restrictions in C-2. In this case, the Director of Planning is prepared to relax these to build up to the fire wall of the building to the west in order to improve light access and privacy.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- Architectural expression and materials;
 - Public realm interface and landscaping with respect to the context;
 - Livability of the units;
 - Impact of the north courtyard on the potential redevelopment of the adjacent site.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Peg MacDonald noted this proposal is following the trend in the area for all residential use. She and Sean Rutlien briefly described the design rationale and they responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Clarify and increase the conceptual precision of the plan strategy;
 - Simplify the exterior expression, particularly with respect to roofscape;
 - Design development to enhance landscape and overall quality of the south courtyard with particular attention to considerations of unit adjacency;

- Design development to improve lane edge condition in particular with respect to parking level and residential level relationship;
 - Improve open space of the at grade unit at Hudson;
 - Consider deletion of the north courtyard.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel was unable to support this application.

While the massing concept was considered interesting and unusual, the Panel found the architectural expression of the building to be out of step, with comments made that it looks somewhat "ski chalet" and "motel" like, with no bearing on its context. There were particular concerns about the roof forms which detract from the building and may not be worth keeping for the sake of some vaulted interior space. In general, the proposed materials do not suit the chosen expression which the Panel thought should be more contemporary with high quality detailing. With some manipulation, however, it was thought the plan could be made to work.

The Panel was disappointed with the landscape plan, or lack thereof, and urged that a landscape architect be involved as soon as possible to deal with, among other things, issues of territory on the terrace. The use of free-standing planters to delineate the various patio spaces was questioned.

Panel members had concerns about livability of some of the units, in particular the unit at grade. There were mixed opinions about the livability of the units, however, and some Panel members thought they could be made to work with further design development. One suggestion was to increase the floor-to-ceiling height to improve light penetration.

A stronger sense of entry was recommended on the Hudson Street elevation.

Design development of the lane was recommended and if the brick wall is to remain it must be beautiful. There is opportunity for some landscaping on the lane, perhaps with climbing plants up the wall to soften the large expanse of brick. Some Panel members thought the use of the brick unnecessarily accentuated the unfriendliness of the wall.

The Panel could see no benefit in the north courtyard, either for this project or its potential neighbour. It was suggested that if it is deleted units B and E could be moved further north and the deck space enhanced. There was also a recommendation to check whether the courtyard meets the Building Code in terms of firefighting access. The free-standard planters are also inappropriate.

The Panel urged the applicant to more clearly demonstrate the design rationale in order to understand the approach being taken.

- **Applicant's Response:** Ms. MacDonald said the Panel's comments will be taken into consideration.