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## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

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**DATE:** June 27, 2001

**TIME:** 4.00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Tom Bunting, Chair  
Jeffrey Corbett (excused Item #4)  
Gerry Eckford  
Walter Francl  
Bruce Hemstock (excused Item #3)  
Richard Henry  
Jack Lutsky  
Sorin Tatomir

**REGRETS:** Lance Berelowitz  
Alan Endall  
Joseph Hruda  
Maurice Pez

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1. C-2 Presentation	
2. Northeast False Creek	<b>Vote only</b>
3. 500 Pacific Street	
4. 1238 Burrard Street	

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| 1. Topic: | C-2 Presentation |
| Staff:    | Scot Hein        |
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Scot Hein, Development Planner, provided a brief overview of the C-2 zone and the purpose of bringing C-2 projects to the Panel for review. A similar presentation was made to the previous Panel.

In June 1998, Council directed the Planning Department to refer all C-2 applications which have residential uses to the Panel, regardless of their scale and complexity. Mr. Hein noted that a further review of C-2 zoning is currently underway and some recommendations are likely to result with respect to the kinds of C-2 projects that should be referred to the Panel in the future.

Mr. Hein distributed copies of the presentation material that was prepared for the previous Panel in November 1998. This booklet illustrates eight projects that had been reviewed by the Panel since Council's directive. It was very obvious to staff that the effect was an immediate "raising of the bar" in terms of architectural quality. Staff believe Council's directive gives them greater ability to negotiate better design quality in standard submissions, and the Panel was also encouraged to see the positive role it played in these projects. Staff want to continue to bring C-2 applications to the Panel and appreciate the Panel's advice, particularly on those projects which do not have the best design response.

The C-2 zone is intended to take up approximately 60 percent of Vancouver's GVRD residential commitment and is very important because it takes the pressure off the lower density zones. C-2 applications are usually mixed-use and lately some explorations are being made into live/work or home office. These present some new and unique challenges that will likely also be addressed in the current C-2 study. Planning will also entertain all-residential C-2 projects with ground-oriented units where appropriate.

The height limit in C-2 is 40 ft. which is challenging for some commercial uses. Council is very mindful of concerns about views and height of streetwall and Planning is obliged to report to Council on any applications exceeding 40 ft. Therefore, the Panel's advice on height, streetwall, parapet lines, etc. is very helpful.

With respect to FSR, the C-2 zone is unique, being the only zone which starts at 3.0 FSR and is negotiated down. It is not a discretionary zone with a base density that can be increased by "earning" extra density for higher quality or guideline performance. This topic is also being considered in the study.

Retail continuity at grade is usually sought in C-2, together with the highest quality possible at the ground plane, including weather protection. Livability is a focus in terms of privacy and overlook. Room configuration and open space are also areas for consideration. Projects are also required to perform well in terms of CPTED issues.

In terms of design expression there are no stylistic cues in C-2. Careful attention is paid to massing, however, particularly off the lane and the carving of the upper storeys. The Panel's advice in these areas is particularly helpful in terms of neighbourhood impact, usually at the rear of the project.

Mr. Hein briefly reviewed four of the projects illustrated in the booklet.

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In response to a question concerning applications brought to the Panel that are not architect-designed and supervised, Mr. Hein explained that generally the planners who are members of AIBC report questionable projects to the AIBC Registrar who then pursues it directly. He noted it is probably not an issue for projects with four units or less where a registered architect is not a requirement. In discussion, it was noted that non-architect designed projects are very rarely reviewed by the Panel. Ralph Segal, Senior Development Planner, advised that staff are attempting to get the City's policy to reflect the Architects Act. This matter will be put on a future Panel agenda for further discussion.

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2. Address: Northeast False Creek  
Use: Mixed  
Zoning: CD-1, DD, BCPED  
Application Status: ODP Amendment  
Architect: James Cheng, Busby & Assoc.  
Owner: Concord Pacific  
Review: Fourth  
Staff: Michael Gordon/Ralph Segal
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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)**

This application was last reviewed by the Panel on June 11, 2001, in a Workshop format. There was considerable discussion at that meeting and the Panel presented its opinion and advice in the usual way. However, as is customary in a Workshop review, the Panel did not vote.

Since the last meeting, the applicants have requested the Panel's opinion to be formalised with a vote. A poll was taken which indicated that, with the exception of the Chair, all members present today were also present at the June 11 meeting. Since the last review was so recent, it was agreed that further review and discussion of the project could be foregone and the Panel would proceed with the vote. The minutes of the June 11 meeting were distributed for reference.

The application for ODP amendment was unanimously supported.

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3. Address:	500 Pacific Street
DA:	405861
Use:	Residential (33 storeys, 196 units)
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Roger Hughes & Partners
Owner:	Concord Pacific Group Inc.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Roger Hughes, David Negrin, Bruce Hemstock
Staff:	Ralph Segal

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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** The Senior Development Planner, Ralph Segal, presented this complete application in the Beach Neighbourhood. This component will complete the “gateway” to the precinct, fronting Beach Crescent. Mr. Segal explained the intent is to create a very special and formally symmetrical space, and this submission will continue the symmetry around the formal axis of the park. The proposal is a mirror image of the project already approved on the other side of Richards Street. This submission has not generated many issues.

The Panel, staff and the applicant team assembled around the model for a review of the proposal.

- **Panel’s Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application and thought it was an exceptional design, elegant and very well executed. The Panel thought the project was a wonderful opportunity to create a unified precinct and the applicant was commended for doing a very good job in this regard.

The Panel strongly supported the symmetry of the scheme and thought its rigid application was refreshing. One comment was that the symmetry of the townhouses around the base of the crescent, as well as the pure symmetry of the tower expression, will strongly reinforce the nature and use of the crescent and give it substance and meaning. There was one note of concern that the mirror image configuration results in the view from the middle units being directly across the units opposite. As well, two Panel member commented on the somewhat unrelenting symmetry of the curve of the townhouses themselves, suggesting it could have been a little softer.

The Panel saw the need for further design development to address the adjacency of the autocourt to the rear of the townhouses. There may be ways to soften it with landscaping or some redesign to add more space between, which would also likely improve the commercial success of these units.

One Panel member thought more attention should be given to the end walls of the crescent townhouses, where the units wrap around to meet Richards Street.

A recommendation was made to add some animation to the water elements on the ground plane along Pacific Street.

A suggestion was made that greater attention should be given to the tower entry which appears to have some leftover spaces since the lobby entry area was reconfigured.

Some Panel members were disappointed at the lack of commercial space in this precinct, citing the success of the Roundhouse Neighbourhood with its lively retail uses. There was concern expressed that this precinct might suffer in the long run if provision is not made now for some commercial use. Another comment was that it might result in this precinct becoming like a gated community for the upper classes. It need not be at the scale of the Roundhouse neighbourhood, but some opportunity for a future modest retail/restaurant unit would help to draw the public through these areas in a subtle way.

One Panel member was satisfied with the all-residential nature of the project and saw no need to include retail.

There was a comment made about the hierarchy of the semi private open space between the market and non-market components needing to be addressed from a ground plane perspective. As well, it was thought there may be a missed opportunity for the public to wander through some of the mews and courtyards.

One Panel member expressed concern about the buildings presenting their backs to Pacific Boulevard, noting also their high visibility from Granville Bridge.

In general, the Panel was very complimentary about this proposal. The towers are beautifully proportioned and the material choices are excellent. It is a very elegant and competent scheme.

- **Applicant's Response:** Roger Hughes, Architect, thank the Panel for its comments. He said they are sensitive to the issue with respect to the end of Townhouse D. One approach being considered is to wrap the patio terrace around the end of the townhouse and create a space that is behind the townhouse as the small entry court, noting there is also a private elevator at this point. It is not intended to be the private outdoor space, rather another entry court. With respect to the townhouse fronts, Mr. Hughes said they are also struggling with the metaphor of the curve at the same time as providing the detail and filigree to humanize it. With respect to the suggestion of animating the water features, Bruce Hemstock, Landscape Architect, explained the water feature does step in four different places with a series of waterfalls which creates interest.

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4. Address: 1238 Burrard Street  
DA: 405874  
Use: Mixed  
Zoning: DD  
Application Status: Complete  
Architect: Lawrence Doyle  
Owner: Incofact Consultants Ltd.  
Review: First  
Delegation: L. Doyle, C. Chan, P. Lee  
Staff: Eric Fiss
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**EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (1-5)**

- **Introduction:** Eric Fiss, Development Planner, introduced this application. In 1990, there was an approved development application for this site and construction was started on three levels of underground parking for a project comprising a 5-storey commercial podium with a slim residential tower above. A later proposal was reviewed and supported by the Panel in February 1998. The building permit for this proposal also subsequently expired. Drawings of the 1998 approved application were posted for reference. The subject submission is a new application and a new design and is based on the 1998 approved proposal. The applicant was advised that the Planning Department would consider a new complete application for Director of Planning approval, with advice from the Urban Design Panel, on condition that the modifications were within the framework and context of the previous approval.

The proposal is for 103 residential units in a 14-storey tower, similar to the previous proposal. FSR is 5.0 which is the maximum permitted. In this Hornby Slopes area of the Downtown South minimum site size and frontages are not a precondition for achieving the maximum FSR. Mr. Fiss briefly reviewed the site context. It is a small lot and the tower is centred on a two-storey retail podium. The podium is intended to match the two-storey brick-clad podium that was approved in the previous submission. Certain elements of the tower expression are also consistent with the previous submission. The project contains an amenity space at the second level where there is also a large landscaped deck. Parking and loading are off the lane within the existing concrete structure which has been partially built. The proposed height is 139 ft. which is below the 300 ft. maximum permitted. The floorplates are about 5,280 sq.ft. on levels 3 - 8, up to 5,430 sq.ft. on levels 9 - 11, and below 5,000 sq.ft. on levels 12 - 14. This is relatively close to the floorplates previously approved for this site. Maximum dimensions are 78 ft. x 88 ft.

A key issue is the relationship between this tower and the existing adjacent office tower which has a separation of about 42 ft. to 46 ft., noting that a separation of at least 80 ft. is usually sought between residential towers in Downtown South. The two-storey podium is about 28 ft. high. Proposed materials are glass and metal for the main façade, and architectural concrete. The base is brick clad.

The advice of the Panel is sought in the following areas:

- whether this proposal is consistent with the 1998 approved application;
  - adequacy of the the separation between this building and the adjacent office building;
  - whether the proposed exterior finishes are complimentary to the existing context along Burrard;
  - comments on the penthouse composition which differs significantly from the previous application;
  - usefulness of some of the proposed semi private open space on the podium levels;
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- public realm.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Lawrence Doyle, Architect, noted the proposal has been very challenging given the past history of the site and the parking and elevator shaft already being in place. He said they used the previous approval as a guideline as to what was acceptable and kept the placement and certain key dimensions very similar. They hope this revised scheme will result in a first class building, suitable for an important street like Burrard and appropriate for the area. He briefly described the project and the design rationale. With respect to the top of the building, Mr. Doyle said they felt the previous design was over-exuberant and sought the Panel's comments on this aspect of the proposal.

The Panel reviewed the model and posted materials.

- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel expressed a number of concerns with this proposal and was unable to support the application.

While the Panel agreed that this submission is somewhat in keeping with the previously approved proposal the general consensus was that such a comparison may not be relevant because expectations have changed since that time. Notwithstanding the obvious difficulties created by the existing condition of an already built parking structure, the Panel felt that the number of high quality buildings that have been built in this area in recent years places much greater demands on new development proposals. The bar has clearly been raised and unfortunately, this scheme fails to respond as well as other recent developments to the important ceremonial aspect of Burrard Street.

The Panel had serious concerns about the separation between this building and the existing adjacent office building. It was felt there needs to be considerable reworking to deal successfully with the separation. The building itself fails to reflect its proximity to the office tower in terms of the solid-to-void ratio and unit planning. One Panel member also questioned whether the building needed to be symmetrical.

The Panel supported the choice of materials which were considered consistent or better than the previous scheme. However, it was suggested that the way they have been handled does not really put the best face forward. Comments were made that the building appears squat, subdued and timid. The south façade (facing Burrard) was found to be particularly understated given this could be a very important façade to this building for some time to come. As well, the base does not respond to the need to add more vitality to the street, nor does it integrate well with its neighbour to the north.

With respect to the penthouse, the Panel thought the previous scheme was superior in its form and shape, noting it helped give a very distinctive façade, particularly to the south, in the important approach up Burrard Street. Notwithstanding the use of side slung elevators, the Panel thought there needed to be some expression to help the building on that side.

Considerable concern was expressed about the landscape plan, both on the podium and the lower area of semi private open space. There were a number of comments about missed opportunities with respect to the landscaping, noting poor adjacency conditions and the need for greater distinction between the north and south landscape materials. Comments were made that the design of the spaces themselves does not respond to the architecture of the building, seeming to be from a different palette of design thought altogether.

The Panel was generally quite disappointed with this proposal and thought the site deserved much higher quality urban design. Burrard is an important gateway street to the city, warranting as much attention as Georgia Street.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Doyle said he somewhat agreed with the Panel's comments on the landscaping and felt the concerns could be handled quite easily. He pointed out the building is 45 degrees to north and south because of its orientation on the downtown peninsula, so from a sun exposure point of view there is not much difference between one side or the other. He said asymmetrical towers in a downtown context are not necessarily understood where many influences are being responded to. Mr. Doyle said he looked for the Panel's support so that the issues can be worked out with staff and through the Director of Planning.