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## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

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DATE: June 28, 2000

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room #1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Paul Grant [Chair]  
Lance Berelowitz [left at 6:30 p.m.]  
Tom Bunting  
James Cheng  
Alan Endall  
Bruce Hemstock  
Roger Hughes  
Gilbert Raynard  
Keith Ross  
Sorin Tatomir

REGRETS: Jack Lutsky  
Brian Palmquist

Acting Recording  
Secretary: M. Penner

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	3200 East 54 <sup>th</sup> Avenue [Champlain Mall]
2.	Cambie Bridgehead Draft Study <b>WORKSHOP</b>
3.	858 Beatty Street [Site 5GH] <b>WORKSHOP</b>

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<b>1. Address:</b>	<b>3200 East 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue [Champlain Mall]</b>
DA:	405181
Use:	Residential
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete after Preliminary
Architect:	W.T. Leung
Owner:	Palladium Development Corp.
Review:	First
Delegation:	W.T. Leung, C. Brook, J. Durant
Staff:	Eric Fiss

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**EVALUATION: [8 - 0] Full Support**

- **Introduction:**

The Development Planner, Eric Fiss, gave a brief synopsis of the previous submission for the benefit of the new Panel Members. He noted Champlain Mall, on approximately 10 acres, was situated at the southeast corner of Kerr Street and East 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The commercial zoning had a form of development which called for a shopping mall, resulting in the construction of Champlain Mall in the 1970s; allowing residential use with no regulatory restrictions either in height or density.

Two years ago staff was approached about a significant change in the form of development on this site, from predominantly commercial to additional housing, complying with City policies - in particular CityPlan and Clouds of Change, which encourage residential capacity.

Mr. Fiss confirmed this project proposed an increase in FSR from 0.28 [approximately 190,000 sq. ft.] of existing commercial development, to an overall FSR of 0.77 [525,000 sq. ft.] of development. The approved overall residential density would average approximately 0.96 FSR [about 1.4 FSR on the 2 parcels for the apartment buildings]. He advised the proposed market residential part of the project would occupy the easterly two-thirds of the site - to include two 4-storey apartment buildings [166 units], plus 154 townhouses in 5 clusters, three of these clusters [96 units - with an average unit size of 1,524 sq. ft.] would be located on the southerly portion of this site, along with a central open space, a park, as well as an east/west greenway connecting this site to Cpt. Cook Elementary School. The commercial component on the westerly one-third portion of the site would retain a portion of the existing mall, including food stores, pharmacy, and bank.

Mr. Fiss noted one feature of the previously approved completed DA for the commercial sector was the inclusion of the Champlain Heights Library from a basement location in the existing mall, to a larger site on the ground floor of the mall on the east side. He also advised a separate drive for the residential clusters would be added, and a boulevard-like entry drive would consist of a dedicated right-of-way in the centre.

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Mr. Fiss advised staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

1. comments on the revised form of development;
2. landscape design to achieve high quality, family-oriented housing;
3. comments on the architectural design and composition of the various townhouse clusters;
4. the design condition to reduce asphalt paving and to provide more opportunity for play and soft landscaping to enhance livability;
5. reduction of the width of the central park from 90 to 80 ft., which would reduce underground parking from 41 stalls to 15;
6. to provide childrens' play areas in association with each townhouse cluster; and
7. comments on the proposed materials and colour palette.

The Panel viewed the model and posted materials

In response to a query from the Panel concerning traffic flow, Mr. Fiss advised a one-way circle around the park was supported, as well as two entrances to the underground parking, with a single exit from this parking facility. He also advised that in response to concerns which arose from the notification process regarding to possible changes in traffic flow along West 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue, staff would be studying this to ensure a smooth entrance to the residential component.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:**

Mr. Lueng noted there was a formality in the public realm, the open space, as well as the east/west walkway, and that the townhouse residential architecture would be reflective of that. He also referred to the formality expressed in the masonry and articulation of the architectural expression. Mr. Leung noted that the individual parcels would have a less formal, softer approach to the semi-public open spaces within the townhouse clusters.

Mr. Leung also mention the Community Amenity Contribution package that had been negotiated as part of the form of development approval, which totalled approximately \$2.3 million. He also noted that these funds translated to \$6.76/sq. ft. buildable, as compared to the \$3/sq. ft. buildable in the interim policy.

Ms. Jane Durante, Landscape Architect, advised they had stressed the infrastructure that would pattern the movement for both people and vehicles, along with a triple row of trees coming in from 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue. She also noted the passive park on the southward sloping site would have a trellis and water feature, with soap columns throughout, and that coloured pavement would aid to identify the difference between the vehicular and pedestrian movement. As well, all the units would have private back gardens - some above grade, others at grade and some below grade; however, not every cluster would have its own play area but there would be sufficient open space for play.

Ms. Durante advised the 12-15 ft. existing hedge on the southern edge would be saved along with other groups of trees, providing an instant scale and proportion to the site.

Mr. Leung confirmed entries and exits to the site would all be one-way; and that the southern

3 clusters of townhouses would have front doors, front gates, front porches, etc.

The Chair briefly summarized the issues: reduction of central park from 90 to 80 ft.; soft landscaping permeability and overall landscape design; comments on this revised submission; general comments on architectural design including corner units and diversity of units; width of roads, reduction of asphalt; distinction between the clusters; and proposed play areas.

- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel supported this revised submission and thought it was a good, sensitive scheme - noting its basic massing and urban design; liked the greenway and courtyard spaces and felt the transition from the public way to the front doors of the clusters was well handled. They were unanimous in their approval of the reduced width of the central park from 90 to 80 ft., and that not every cluster needed a play area, especially with Cpt. Cook Elementary School's playgrounds nearby.

Although the Panel approved of the architecture in general as well as the varying architecture at the ends of the townhouse clusters, it was felt that the townhouses were undiverse and needed some differentiation, perhaps a different colour, or some other unique features, to give each townhouse its own identity. There was general approval of the roof lines, as well as the proposed materials.

The Panel approved of the subtle grading on the site, and felt the proposed high quality of landscaping would work well. The sustainability of the proposed non-grass court yards was applauded from a use standpoint, noting there were sufficient permeable areas proposed for this project. They also approved of relegating visitor parking to the end of the site.

However, it was noted that the focus of the entry to this site and the community, i.e., parcel D, portrayed building #1 as rather weak in that its height had been lowered to a 2-storey building and should perhaps be revisited by the Applicant in order to give this structure more presence at the southern end.

Although there was concern that some front doors appeared to be facing the back doors of other townhouses, the design and layout, including the individual courtyards, would provide sufficient space between the townhouse rows.

The Chair summarized the Panels comments noting the general high level of support. The architecture was found to be charming and well resolved in most cases in terms of scale; but some Members found the geometry unrelenting. The front entries were singled out to be exemplary in terms of how they relate to the green spaces; the public areas found favour with the Panel and there were positive comments on the edge connection at the external parts of the site.

The Chair added his comments regarding the last building at the south end of the green space, suggesting it should be scaled up relative to the future 4-storey apartment buildings on the north side, with emphasis on massing towards the centre due to the change from the originally-accepted plan, which had a focus point at that time.

- **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Leung noted the Panel's comments were well taken. He confirmed that the end building of the open space on parcel D could stand to be taller, and that future review of their project would take the Panel's comments under consideration.

The Chair called for the vote and advised the Applicant they had the support of the Panel.

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<b>2. Address:</b>	<b>Cambie Bridgehead Draft Study - WORKSHOP</b>
DA:	n/a
Use:	Mixed Use
Zoning:	CD-1
Architect:	P. Busby
Owner:	Concord Pacific
Review:	WORKSHOP
Delegation:	P. Busby, D. Negrin
Staff:	M. Gordon

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**EVALUATION:**                    **Workshop - vote not taken**

- **Introduction:**

The Planner, Michael Gordon, introduced the Northeast False Creek re-think of an area that had already been planned and zoned at the foot of the Cambie Bridgehead, as well as the City's look at issues such as built form and uses, focussing on the various sectors, including either side of BC Place stadium between Nelson Street, and the Dunsmuir Viaduct, between Beatty Street and the water.

Mr. Gordon advised staff had worked closely with the Applicant as well as other property owners in the area. He stressed the subject area was an important gateway into the downtown, not just for vehicles but for pedestrians as well, particularly Robson Street, and Beatty Street leading up to Robson, and requested Panel's advice on how Beatty Street.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:**

Mr. Busby noted James Cheng and he had been retained by Concord to re-examine land uses in light of new market information. Mr. Cheng's office would be handling the residential components and Busby and Associates would handle the Bridgehead site.

He explained the existing ODP consisted of approximately 200,000 sq. ft. of commercial, with little residential. Their intent would be to move the commercial density off this site to the Cambie Bridgehead due to interest from the high tech sector for large floorplates. The residential density would be moved to the current commercial site which Concord was interested in rezoning.

Mr. Busby mentioned a series of urban design ideas to be studied by Mr. Trevor Ward, retained by Concord et al, in order to bring more commercial activity to this area. He stressed Concord were not looking for extra density, but rather to improve the urban design. The only exception could be BC Place looking at a possible rezoning which would add density. Mr. Busby advised the Cambie Bridgehead site consisted of various vacant lots as well as a large parking lot, and that 15 - 20 storey towers, approximately 225,000 sq. ft. each, were proposed on either side of the bridge, and that City Engineering was examining issues of setbacks on either side of the bridge.

- Panel's Comments:

Note: The Panel will comment on Workshop Items 2 and 3 at the end of Item 3.

3. Address:	858 Beatty Street [Site 5GH] - WORKSHOP
DA:	n/a
Use:	Office & Commercial
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Workshop
Architect:	P. Busby
Owner:	PCI Development Corp.
Review:	First
Delegation:	P. Busby, A. Grant
Staff:	M. Gordon

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**EVALUATION:** Workshop - vote not taken

- **Introduction by the Applicant:**

Mr. Busby introduced Concord's rezoning application. Their intent was to have a major 1<sup>st</sup> phase tenant front on Beatty Street with a street wall-type 6-7 storey building; the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of development would be on Expo Boulevard for high tech users, and advised this area would have an approximate 3-storey grade drop from Terry Fox Plaza to Beatty, along Smithe to Expo Boulevard.

He asked Panel's comments on the character of the building, noting the Applicant preferred the texture and solidarity of Yaletown.

Mr. Grant added they preferred urban, concrete structures rather than glass towers, with schematic elevations, and this proposed development would relate to the character of the heritage buildings across the street. He also expressed the need for live/work options and the importance of flexibility, i.e., the idea of all retail on Beatty Street would not work, although the frontage would be an important feature for major tenants.

Messrs. Busby and Grant noted zoning would not permit live/work in this proposed space and that the zoning would need to be flexible.

Mr. Grant advised that proposed parking would exceed the built code amount of stalls, but intended to pay in lieu of additional 100 stalls, to meet the ever-increasing parking demand in the neighbourhood.

- **Panel's Comments:**

Some Members felt the direct vista of Cambie Bridge wasn't being addressed in a built form, but that the proposed architectural direction was appropriate. Others approved of the robust concrete industrial character of this project and stressed the importance of incorporating unique architecture at the Bridgehead. The Panel was unanimous in that flexibility in this area would be of utmost importance, and noted that in order for this project to succeed would require both a retail and commercial aspect at street level, and that residential space could be made available on the upper floors of store front shops/offices.

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They also felt that a '0' lot line would be at the expense of sidewalks, which should have room for pedestrians, cafes, and the like.

The Panel was generally enthusiastic of this undertaking, and agreed that these projects would create a positive, well-defined and active environment for this part of the City. They also stressed the need for a strong public realm and that the overall principles appeared sound and moving in the right direction.

However, the Panel did have some concerns:

Item 2 - *Bridgehead* - The Panel suggested the study committee needed to exploit the grade differential throughout this site and that a solid approach must be taken in order to obtain the best solutions for this area. They noted the need to address the Terry Fox Plaza and that the Cambe Bridge needed to be revisited in order to improve the pedestrian environment.

Item 3 - *Beatty Street* - The Panel stressed the need for street level activity in order to create a vibrant street front; also the sidewalk width needed to be addressed. Several Members stressed the importance of the proposed landscaping and streetscape in this area.

The Chair's summation stressed this project was a great response the cityscape needed in this area in terms of its massing, presentation, and elegance regarding the industrial motif. He noted that Yaletown's urban experience had more to do with the streetscape than it did with its buildings and that his concern pertained to making this industrial precinct more pedestrian friendly which would also require flexibility in the planning process of this streetscape. He thought there needed to be more opportunities close to home for people to want to stay in this urban environment.

The Chair noted that in order to succeed in this project, the architecture of the buildings would need to extend beyond the footprint and go to the street edge.

- **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Busby noted that 'taking' the Panel through this Workshop had been an extremely worthwhile exercise, and the Panel's appreciated the comments.