

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: June 7, 2006

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Walter Francl, Chair
Margot Long
Nigel Baldwin
Albert Bicol
Shahla Bozorgzadeh
Tom Bunting
James Cheng
Eileen Keenan
John Wall
Peter Wreglesworth
C.C. Yao

REGRETS: Bill Harrison

RECORDING
SECRETARY: D. Kempton
*C. Hubbard, Raincoast Ventures (Item 3. only)

*Not present at the meeting. Minutes completed from audio recording.

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1070 West Broadway
2.	Southeast False Creek
3.	688 East 17th Avenue

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Francl called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

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|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Address: | 1070 West Broadway |
| DE: | 410287 |
| Use: | Mixed-use residential |
| Zoning: | C-3A |
| Application Status: | Complete |
| Architect: | GBL |
| Owner: | Redekop Homes Ltd. |
| Review: | First |
| Delegation: | Amelia Brudar, Peter Kreuk |
| Staff: | Dale Morgan, John Greer |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-1)

- **Introduction:** Dale Morgan, Development Planner, presented this complete application in the C-3A Central Broadway district. Mr. Morgan advised that the application proposes a conditional density of 3 FSR plus a 10% transfer of heritage density for a total of 3.3 FSR. Mr. Morgan described the surrounding site context, noting that the 1000 block of west Broadway is a mix of older low-rise commercial buildings with recent approvals of mid-rise structures.

Mr. Morgan reviewed the Central Broadway C-3A guidelines with respect to massing and height. He noted that the proposal meets the 80 ft. separation requirement and staff support the proposed tower height, which exceeds the maximum in the guidelines, in order to achieve thinner massing for less impact on the street and to reduce shadowing on Broadway. Mr. Morgan described the proposed massing and materials and also described the landscaping treatments.

The Panel advice is sought on the following:

- Comments on the height considering that at 125 ft. it exceeds the guidelines;
 - Overall massing and architectural treatment of the building;
 - Comments on the base expression and treatment;
 - Whether the retail should be more continuous and the residential entry less wide;
 - Comments on the interface between the loading bay and the adjacent amenity space.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Amelia Brudar, Architect, referred to the model noting that the design attempts to minimize the impacts of views from 10th Avenue and also the overshadowing of Broadway. Ms. Brudar advised that the commercial component is broken up by the residential courtyard and water feature in order to minimize the sound of traffic. Ms. Brudar described the materials that are proposed and also some of the sustainable features that will be incorporated.

Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect, briefly reviewed the landscape plan. The Applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Concerns about the lack of specific landscaping details given the absence of a detailed landscape plan in the review package;
 - Concerns about the expression of the second floor of residential above the retail component;
 - The west retail units is a solid wall with no opportunity to animate that space;
 - Concerns about the livability of some of the narrow units;
 - Consider introducing some screening or a trellis element between the loading and amenity room and suites;
 - Concerns about the integration of the massing and base of the tower at the upper courtyard level;
 - Consider continuous weather protection.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel supported the massing, height and position of the proposed tower. The Panel felt the application was well put together and would benefit from further details on the retail and tower interface on the upper base and a sense of richness in details that are missing from the drawings; particularly the appearance of the second floor residential units.

Due to the absence of a detailed landscape plan in the review packages it was requested that the two Landscape Architects on the Panel be sent plans and then after review they would forward their issues as an amendment to the minutes. The Panel asked the City staff to be diligent in reviewing material submissions before they are circulated to ensure that all of the materials are included in the review package.

Several Panel members expressed concern about the width of the residential opening into the courtyard. It was suggested that a more consistent street wall and expression on Broadway might be more successful with a smaller residential courtyard entry and a minimal setback from the street. It was also suggested that the back edge of the courtyard could use some form of stepping or landscaping to soften the edge. One Panel member suggested making the residential courtyard a public space.

With respect to sustainability, the Panel felt that the sustainable contributions were minimal. The original scheme to reduce west and east façade areas was supported as well as creating opportunities for cross ventilation. A Panel member expressed concern about the amount of glazing on the building and lack of shading opportunities on the south facing glass.

- **Applicant's Response:** Ms. Brudar thanked the Panel for their comments.

2. Address: Southeast False Creek
Use: Mixed-use Residential/2010 Olympic Athlete's Village
Zoning: Rezoning
Application Status: Workshop
Architect: Millennium
Owner: City of Vancouver
Review: First
Delegation: Stu Lyon, Paul Merrick
Staff: Karis Hiebert, Scot Hein, Jody Andrews, Ian Smith

EVALUATION: WORKSHOP

- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Planner, presented the South East False Creek Olympic Village workshop, noting that the formal rezoning submission is expected in mid-August. Mr. Hein highlighted the differences between this proposal and the ODP.

Jody Andrews, South East False Creek Project team, introduced the project and the overall scope and context. Mr. Andrews said this workshop will focus on sub-area 2A with Millennium identified as the developer. Mr. Andrews noted that there are two aspects to this project, one is to deliver a permanent sustainable community and the other is to deliver the buildings in time for November 1, 2009 to meet the needs of the Olympic Village for 2010. The Olympic Village will house 2,800 athletes and officials and therefore the project has a fixed timeline.

Ian Smith, Manager of Development for the South East False Creek precinct, noted the changes to the site in the last two years from the tower and podium scheme into a low to mid-rise form as well as restructuring the site and adding a road to allow for development closer to the water for a more active water edge.

Originally the scheme for one large park has now been divided into three parks around three distinct neighbourhoods. Mr. Smith advised that the heritage buildings on the City lands will remain in place as opposed to the original plan which consolidated them in one area. Mr. Smith said that the parks need to be strongly defined, the Salt building should be respected as a significant heritage building and there is also a very important public component on the site. He noted that significant progress has been made and the work thus far has received unanimous support from City Council at the Public Hearing stage. In terms of sustainability, Mr. Smith advised that these buildings are likely to achieve LEED Gold standard.

Margot Long, Landscape Architect, briefly described the open space plan for the site noting that the buildings will frame the open space rather than set the framework for the open space. Ms. Long said there are approximately 26 acres of park on the site.

Ms. Long said the heritage stories of the area will help to inform the character of the open spaces. The streets and open spaces will also take into consideration sustainability. The streets will be narrower which will result in a narrower public realm. Consideration is being given of how to animate the streets and retain street trees.

With respect to the public realm, Mr. Hein said there are a number of layers relating to commemoration, heritage referencing and the opportunity, in the private realm, to express patterns. He advised that programming, particularly of the Olympic plaza space, is being

designed for uses beyond the Olympic period, such as farmers market stalls etc. Mr. Hein advised that the authors of the public realm, Stantec Architecture and PWL Partnership, received the top Urban Design award this year.

Mr. Hein asked the Panel to focus their commentary on use, density and form of development at this workshop stage, as well as the question of character. One of the key questions for the Panel at this stage is the location of the food store, with two options currently presented. Mr. Hein asked for specific advice on the proposed heights given the affordable housing strategy. He said it is very important that the architecture is sound and that the plaza and parks are strong.

Mr. Hein advised that there is a desire to develop this part of SEFC without design guidelines and to use the advice of the Panel at the Development Permit stage to seek out the quality. The rezoning submission should include general strategies for planning of the site, form, and massing and design character. Mr. Hein said there will be general adherence to and compliance with the ODP intent.

- **Applicant Comments:** The applicant said there are significant challenges in terms of the timing of this project and delivering the project in a timely manner.

Stu Lyon, Architect, noted that the process is ongoing and the layout is constantly changing. He said a lot of work has already been done to establish the parameters, edges and street alignments. The public realm and streets were established first and now the architects are beginning to work the sites. He advised that the model represents the densities and arrangements of massing for the site.

The applicant team described the project in greater detail and responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Commentary:**

In the question period that followed, the points and questions from Panel members included:

Q: How much latitude is there?

A: There will be some tweaking given the aspirations for double fronting units and townhouse units. The scale of the buildings surrounding the plaza and Salt Building is not set; nor is that of the affordable housing buildings. There is the opportunity for refinements to the buildings that are below the maximum height.

Q: How will this play out architecturally? Is there a vision for the vocabulary, consistency, colour, materiality or degree of similarity at the conceptual level?

A: An attempt is being made to differentiate and tighten the public armatures and streets and consolidate space and focus on the square and water. There is a fundamentally different way of seeing the urban pattern settlement. Typically the city is made up of 66 ft. wide roads and streets with lanes that bisect and negate the opportunity to create the things that we can here. Images of the shipyard circumstance that used to exist and images of False Creek and how it has evolved are being considered. A fundamental factor inherent in the design is the value of dwellings that are created. This will be a place where you can live and not have to go outside the precinct or neighbourhood for services. It is also a place that people from other neighbourhoods come to, a place to be in Vancouver and enjoy the delights of the particular neighborhood...

Some similar characteristics might occur at the base that begins at the street, permeability, and accessibility. The ODP differentiates where that happens. The design will be driven by the demands of the building to be a habitable and sustainable environment. Some the issues that need to be considered are sunlight, south facing versus east, west or north facing, outlook and views.

The building expression is born out of good passive performance and design. There is a desire to achieve vertical circulation which will help with ambient light at night. There is some reiteration of west coast modernism. Staff expect to see high quality materiality, detailing and the use of sustainable materials such as wood in the material palate.

Q: Approximately 70,000 sq.ft has been identified for retail space, what does the consultant think the capacity is?

A: The food store will be approximately 22,000 sq.ft. but in terms of neighbourhood retail the remaining amount is in excess of what is sustainable.

Q: What is the mandate for the Salt Building and what is accomplished in moving the Salt Building back?

A: Council has not specified the use of the Salt Building. It needs to link to the community and there is a retail strategy to create a level of activity and interest. Part of the concern is that the uses are heading more in the direction of public uses versus retail uses.

Streetscape:

- The east/west streets are compromised streetscapes, especially at 1st Avenue.
- 1st Avenue is losing definition, it needs more variation of height and the park space is also losing definition. Higher buildings cause a loss of quality to the park space.

Forms, Massing and Density:

- The forms on the edges feel like stubby vertical buildings and have been developed to avoid a design driven by the corridor alignment. The physical living environment is intriguing.
- Try to achieve more density up and towards the waterfront.
- Have to be true to the building form determined by the ODP.

Character:

- Like the character images.
- This is a working class area and the buildings should be functional and not pretentious.

Sustainability:

- Want to see a visual sustainable response.
- Important to follow through with sustainability.
- Very hard to express sustainability on east/west facades.
- Mini elevator access is good from a sustainability standpoint.
- The biggest and most repeated building block for the scheme is questionable in terms of sustainability. It does not seem to get anymore daylight or through ventilation and will be reliant on electrical energy.
- 70-75% of the buildings seem to be east/west oriented which is not in keeping with sustainability. Consider having more north/south oriented units.

- Consider the roof tops and how they will be used from communal and private standpoints. Aside from the podium levels are the roof tops going to be useable?
- Consider how to use the roof tops in a variety of ways versus making them all green roofs. Some of those ideas might drive the building forms.

Grocery Store Location:

- Consider creating corner stores to encourage people to walk instead of driving to just one large store
- A coffee store would create the same level of activity for the plaza as the food store would; therefore the food store could be located in either proposed location.
- From an urban design point of view the grocery store will generate traffic and would be better located at the northwest corner than in the residential core.
- Prefer grocery store loading to happen out in the open the way it is done in Europe
- Would prefer to see the grocery store located on the biggest open space and have as much retail activity off of the plaza as possible.
- Having small retail on the square instead of a large food store will animate the square more. Granville Island is an example of single fronting retail that works well.
- The grocery store works well in both proposed locations.

The Applicant indicated that their preference is to locate the grocery store on site 9 for an ideal interface with other uses.

Salt Building:

- The Salt Building should remain where it is.
- Concerned about the relationship of buildings to the Salt building. Find a form that doesn't destroy the scale of that.
- Salt building needs to be animated.

Miscellaneous:

- There is a lot of material to consider and it is still not clear whether the layout is working. The question of formality or informality remains. There is a good opportunity here for high quality development, a funky chaos and experimental feel.
- Concerns that the SEFC developments are falling short of the promises and becoming similar to developments elsewhere in the city with shorter buildings designed around views and glass.
- There shouldn't be any retail until a retail plan is completed that deals with the demand of the neighbourhood and what amount of retail is actually needed.
- The buildings fronting either side are a part of the major public spaces and the area in the middle is a jewel and creates a unique precinct in the middle. I like how fundamentally different it is.
- Have more rigor with the plan, you are losing the small "f" formality. Rigor will be the backbone that will generate a wealth of images.
- Concerned about the 4-5 townhouses because they don't appear to be very wide. They should be two storeys.
- The bookend scheme seems like two different languages that are fighting each other. The bookends are becoming relentless; some variation in height would relieve that.
- Front Street could have more mass. Consider a stepped unit with two storey townhouse and narrow depth would still give good sun penetration and also enliven the scheme.
- The massing is going in the wrong direction in terms of sustainability, urban form and legibility.
- Like parcel 11 and the fact that it is broken up and is three buildings now.
- The end buildings need to be bigger or move them back into the view corridor. It can't always be reinforced that every time you look down the street you see the water.

- Some of the linearity to the north/south buildings slab form is missing.
- The buildings need to work together and right now they are separated. Consider how you take different land uses and make them work.
- Like that access to the waterfront sites is off of the front rather than at the ends of the streets. This is a strong move and is better for frontages on the ends of the buildings.
- There is a lot of residential and commercial use and nothing in between. The in between is what will make the neighbourhood unique and special. Flex space will help to give a varied street experience.
- The whole scheme has the same unit types, consider a greater variety of unit types.
- Concerned about the possible tendency to repeat typology across the site. Take advantage of the opportunity to create a variety of expressions and experiments on this one project. Get the massing and character in place for the rezoning and then consider bringing more architects on board to add variety to the design.

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3. Address: 688 East 17th Avenue
DE: 410111
Use: Mixed-use Residential
Zoning: C-2
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Cornerstone
Owner: Mason Sewing Machines
Review: First
Delegation: Scott Kennedy, Andreas Vargas
Staff: Bob Adair
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EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (0-6)

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner, presented this complete application in the C-2 zone. The site is located at the southwest corner of 17th Avenue and Fraser Street, about a block and a half south of Kingsway. The site is 158 ft. x 122 ft. Mr. Adair briefly described the site context and noted this is the first major C-2 development application in this part of Fraser Street. One the challenges of the site is that that the water table is very high, limiting the depth of excavation.

The proposal is a four-storey mixed-use building, commercial at grade with three floors of residential above. The main residential access is off East 17th Avenue. There are also two ground level units further west on East 17th Avenue which have individual street access. Parking access is from the rear lane. Total FSR is 2.49, 2.5 FSR being the maximum permissible. However, the upper level parking is counted in FSR because it is above grade which was necessary to deal with the high water table. Proposed materials are a combination of brick, hardi panel and hardi siding. Staff generally support the proposal conceptually given the site constraints and seek the advice of the Panel in the following areas:

- Relaxation of the rear year setback on the fourth floor level. The requirement is for a 35 ft. setback and the proposal seeks 30.5 ft. for part of the building, adjacent to the single family house across the lane;
 - Overall architectural expression of the building, particularly the Fraser Street elevation and the detailing approach to the fourth floor, including materials, glazing expression, and resolution of the roof overhangs which are consistent on all sides of the building;
 - Residential entries, both the main residential entry on 17th Avenue and the individual entries further west.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Scott Kennedy, Architect, said the biggest concern with the site is the high water table and how to create enough parking to achieve a viable building. He briefly described the proposed parking arrangement which is to set the whole building face back at the ground floor to create a paved parking court which accommodates two disabled stalls. Trelliswork and landscaping is proposed around the area to help soften its impact on the neighbouring residential neighbours. He said they believe the interface with the neighbours is generally better than is typically seen in C-2 developments. Mr. Kennedy responded to questions from the Panel.
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- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel did not support this application.

The Panel acknowledged the challenge of providing affordable housing but some Panel members suggested that given the constraints of this site it might be better to build bigger and more regular units.

The Panel's main concern related to the livability of the units which is seriously compromised by very small windows and set back bedrooms, particularly on the upper floor beneath the overhangs. There will be very limited light penetration and there are a lot of deep recesses that that will cause severe shadowing. While the challenge of creating affordable housing was acknowledged, the Panel found the suite layouts extremely tight, making furniture layout almost impossible.

There was a concern expressed about the expression of the ground floor residential component which it was thought could be more sensitively integrated into the neighbourhood; perhaps a change in fenestration or re-massing of the rear corner to make it feel more appropriate to the scale of the neighbouring properties. The deep recess of these north-facing ground floor units will make them very dark.

With respect to the entries, some Panel members found them too small, with the main entry elevator pushed off to the side. It seems like a leftover space rather than a front door gathering space, particularly in a building which offers no communal space. It was suggested the residential entry could be used as a vertical break that not only better defines the entry to the whole complex but also creates a transition to a more residential character.

The Panel generally supported the architectural expression on Fraser Street and most Panel members supported the requested relaxation of the setback of the 4th floor. In general, it was thought the side and front elevations were much more successful than the rear. There were concerns about the roof overhangs; carrying them out to a single cornice line is contributing to some very dark conditions particularly in the upper floors at the rear. As well, a comment was made that the soffits seems to be contributing the sense of bulk of the building.

The Panel was concerned that sustainability needs to be addressed. One Panel member commented on the lack of attention to solar heat gain and energy efficiency in the design, and suggested it can be addressed quite simply, without additional expense. For example, the skylights could be used to better advantage by having them angle to the south. As well, while the overhangs on the fourth floor provide weather protection, those on the west and east sides are too short to offer any shade. Another Panel member suggested an approach to sustainability could be not only providing affordable housing for people of low and moderate income, but to make the building as energy efficient as possible so that it is affordable to live in on an ongoing basis. Consideration should also be given to providing a communal roof deck.

There were concerns about the minimal amount of landscape. It was noted that a lot of the materials are very small scale so they will have virtually no impact, e.g., a 2 m high tree in a planter will take a very long time to mature. The guardrails beside the planters on the second floor terraces were questioned. It was also suggested that the slope on the ground floor patios will need much more plant material to keep the soil in place. As well, having them raised seems to be more of a suburban approach.

A comment was made that the project seems too complex for the simple uses it contains. The Panel generally thought a simpler solution would help the overall architectural expression.

A comment was made that while the project seems generally to meet the intent of the C-2 Guidelines, it is not being a very good neighbour. It was noted the most recent revisions to the C-2 guidelines with respect to density and setbacks were to address relationships with single family neighbourhoods across the lane. The lane is not very friendly to the neighbour and is largely hard surface parking.

- **Applicant's Response:** With respect to planning the suites, Mr. Kennedy stressed it is very much a matter of market demand, noting that realtors have indicated that the suites are too large, and this has been a challenge from the outset. He noted that in most of their other C-2 projects they have been able to make the suites deeper. The reason for the massing at the back was to try to create more bedrooms rather than providing a lot of one-bedroom suites. Mr. Kennedy said they have included 9 ft. ceilings in recognition of light penetration problems in these kinds of buildings. With respect to the top overhangs, Mr. Kennedy said he thought they were too small because rain protection is a far more important consideration than light outdoors in Vancouver. With respect to the recessed entries to the ground floor units, Mr. Kennedy noted that front porches are now being encouraged for single family houses. As well, it provides a rain sheltered seating area. The ceiling heights in these units is 10 - 11 ft. which also allowed some high windows. Regarding the guardrails along the planters, Mr. Kennedy noted this has been changed from what is shown on the model. He said he does not agree with what the C-2 zoning does to the lanes and thinks there is not enough parking in the lane for the commercial. He suggested a stair could be taken up to the roof to provide some roof deck amenity, although there may be an impact on the height.