

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** June 20, 2007

**TIME:** 4.00 pm

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Walter Francl, Chair  
Douglas Watts  
Richard Henry  
Bill Harrison  
Albert Bicol  
Mark Ostry  
Gerry Eckford

**REGRETS:** Maurice Pez  
Martin Nielsen  
Tom Bunting  
Bob Ransford (VCPC)  
John Wall

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	745 Thurlow Street
2.	221 Union Street
3.	1402 McRae Avenue & 3238 Granville Street

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**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Francl called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There being no New Business the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

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| 1. Address:         | 745 Thurlow Street   |
| DA:                 | Rezoning   |
| Description:        | 23-storey office tower, with other commercial uses at grade, with height of 300 ft. and FSR of 15.4.   |
| Zoning:             | DD to CD-1   |
| Application Status: | Rezoning   |
| Architect:          | Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership  |
| Review:             | First  |
| Delegation:         | Mark Whitehead, Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership<br>Mark Thompson, Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership<br>Chris Sterry, PWL Partnership Landscape Architects Inc. |
| Staff:              | Phil Mondor/Ralph Segal  |

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (3-2)**

- **Introduction:** Phil Mondor, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a rezoning application at the corner of Thurlow and Alberni Streets. The maximum FSR for the area is 7 with applicant seeking 15.4 FSR. The proposal is for a 2 storey retail podium with a 23 storey office tower and below grade parking. There is a view cone from the False Creek Seawall and the height of the tower will be slightly over the 300 foot limit. City Policy encourages transfer of density and the applicant will be transferring density from the Evergreen property on West Pender Street. Although there isn't a Green Building Strategy in place, the City has an expectation that new buildings will achieve at least LEED™ Silver. The applicant will be pursuing a LEED™ Gold registration and will be the first office tower in the city to do so.

The Panel adjourned to the model, where Ralph Segal, Development Planner described the surrounding area and the design development for the property.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

1. Overall built form:  
Does the proposed building massing accommodate the increased density, creating an appropriate urban design "fit" in this context?
2. Pedestrian Environment:  
Will the proposal's Public Realm interface contribute to pedestrian activity and amenity?
3. Preliminary Architectural Design Concept:  
Does the proposed architectural design respond appropriately to this site and context?

Mr. Mondor and Mr. Segal took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Mark Whitehead, Architect, further described the proposal noting the various sustainable measures planned for the site including green roofs and water conservation. He noted that they are committed to achieving LEED™ Gold for the project.

Chris Sterry, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans for the project noting the roof gardens as well as the plans for green wall proposed for the upper portions of the podium façade on the lane.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Consider looking at the density on the site and adjusting the form of the building; and
  - Consider the type and amount of glazing in order to make for a sustainable building.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a very interesting project and commended the applicant for an excellent presentation.

The Panel thought it was a great location for an office building and that it would animate Alberni Street. Some of the Panel thought the two levels of retail were a benefit in terms of also animating the street. The Panel did not have any concerns regarding shadowing into public spaces.

The Panel commended the applicant for their commitment to achieve LEED™ Gold registration. One Panel member suggested angling the glass for more solar control especially on the south side of the building. It was suggested that care needed to be taken in the building design to make it sustainable considering the high percentage of glazing.

There was good support for the office use on the site. Several Panel members were concerned with the amount of density being asked for in this submission. There was a comment that, in the Development Permit submission, the applicant should further develop the expression of the building. They felt there could be a more strongly sculpted form to the building. The Panel did not have any concerns regarding the floor plate size and one Panel member commented that they would like to see the floor plates more clearly expressed on the building facade.

Several members of the Panel thought the building had a strong entrance and one member commented that the canopy could project more strongly. It was noted that the quality of the detailing would be key to the success of the project.

Most of the Panel liked the landscape plans and thought the green roof on the lower level would work but they weren’t sure about the green roof on the 23<sup>rd</sup> floor of the tower as they felt it hadn’t been integrated into the building. A couple of Panel members thought the public realm had not been as well developed as the roof level. There was also a comment that the public open space on the podium was a little too narrow and may have some problems with wind shear. Several members of the Panel noted that it would be wonderful to have the green wall visible from Robson Street.

Several members of the Panel noted that the oval plan forms in the roof landscaping did not seem to complement the oval mechanical enclosure on the roof.

- **Applicant’s Response:** Mr. Whitehead thanked the Panel for their comments and noted that they will be back to the UDP at a future date. He added that they will not be using 100 per cent glazing but some spandrel glass or frosted glass.

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2. Address:	221 Union Street
DA:	411269
Description:	9-storey residential and commercial
Zoning:	HA - 1A
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Young and Wright Architects Inc.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Lawrence Doyle, Young and Wright Architects Inc. James Jarvis, James Jarvis & Associates Ltd. (Landscape Architects) Toshimasa Ito, Ito & Associates (Landscape Architect) Chris Evans, Onni Group of Companies Damien Crowell, Pottinger Gaherty Environmental Consultants Ltd.
Staff:	Ralph Segal

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-1)**

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner, introduced the application for a new residential building in Chinatown. The proposed building is located in the non-designated sites portion of Chinatown where new buildings are expected. The site differs from patterns in Chinatown where lot sizes are generally very small. The building will contain ground floor commercial with residential above with 50% of the units being studios and the remainder either one or two bedroom units. The Panel adjourned to the model where Mr. Segal further described the proposal and development in the surrounding area.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

1. **Building Character and Architectural Treatment:**  
Does the overall building character and exterior patterning, treatment and detailing respond appropriately to the Chinatown context (non-designated sites)?
2. **Height:**  
Is the discretionary increase in height from 70 ft. to 90 ft. “earned”?
3. **Union Street Pedestrian Realm:**  
Will the proposal’s sidewalk perpendicular lane interface contribute activity and visual interest to the Public Realm?

Mr. Segal took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant’s Introductory Comments:** Lawrence Doyle, Architect, further described the project noting the sustainable and security measures planned for the project. Mr. Doyle added that the brick on the building will be consistent with other buildings in the area.

Toshimasa Ito, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans for the project noting the plans for the roof top patios and the lane elevation. He added that landscaping the lane will improve the overlook from the units.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Consider design development for a more historical Chinatown context;
  - Consider reducing the floor area in the upper floors to allow; and
  - Consider design development to allow for a single storey penthouse.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the basic massing, articulation and building components although the Panel felt the building didn't represent Chinatown but had a more Yaletown appearance. Some of the Panel would like to see more reference to the historical context of the area and felt the applicant had made the building too contemporary in appearance. Several Panel members liked the simplicity of the brick and thought it was well handled. They also liked the small, fine grained architectural expressions and how they were detailed.

The Panel noted that retailers in Chinatown usually put their wares out onto the street and the building would need the appropriate weather protection.

Most of the Panel thought the upper two floors were dominate and that the roof top elements should be more recessive. They suggested a slight reduction of floor area on the upper most floors to allow for a single storey penthouse to allow for more habitable space on the roof. A couple of Panel members suggested that the cornice lines needed to be stronger.

Most of the Panel thought the pedestrian realm could use more work and suggested adding more Ginko trees. They liked the way the retail wrapped around to the west lane as it was felt this would result in more use of the lane way but one Panel member suggested getting rid of the mechanical unit on the lane.

A couple of Panel members had some concern about the west facing suites noting that they would get hot and that ventilation would be important. There was also a concern regarding the pure glass element on the roof noting that the area could get very hot and would need a mechanical solution.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Doyle thanked the Panel for their comments. He acknowledged that they will look at the design for the upper two floors regarding making the penthouse less dominant. Mr. Doyle expressed concern with the required setbacks on the lane adding that the design needs to take the setback into consideration.

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3. Address: 1402 McRae Avenue & 3238 Granville Street  
DA: Rezoning  
Description: To retain the existing heritage house in situ, and develop the remainder of the property with 16 townhomes in 2 buildings. Total FSR 0.45. The heritage home would be designated with an HRA, and that site would be retained in FSD. The balance of the site would be sub-divided and rezoned from FSD to CD-1.
- Zoning: FSD to CD-1  
Application Status: Complete  
Architect: Formwerks Architectural Inc.  
Review: First  
Delegation: Jim Bussey, Brian Bell, Ken, Paul Sanga  
Staff: Vicki Potter, Sailen Black
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#### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Vicki Potter, Rezoning Planner, introduced the application for the rezoning of the property at the corner of McRae and Granville Street. Currently on the property is a Heritage A listed house. The applicant will be rezoning part of the property and asking for a development application for the remainder of the project which includes the heritage house. The Panel will see the rezoning portion when it reaches the development permit stage. The site will be rezoned to CD-1 in order to permit the building of 16 townhouses. The First Shaughnessy Advisory Panel has already reviewed the proposal and has offered some advice.

Sailen Black, Development Planner, noted that the community was consulted regarding the form of development and urban design issues. Mr. Black described the plans for the property noting the front yard setback of 30 feet along MacRae Avenue and Granville Street. The single vehicle entry off MacRae Avenue will be retained with two pedestrian entries from the sidewalk. Mr. Black also summarized the comments from the First Shaughnessy Advisory Design Panel.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

1. the Streetscape along McRae Avenue and Granville Street, in terms of scale and landscaping;
2. the siting, scale and linear form of the 5-unit townhouse;
3. the relationship of the middle townhouse to the street, in terms of entries and orientation; and
4. The sequence and choice of roof from the Nichol house to Granville Street.

Ms. Potter and Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Jim Bussey, Architect, described the history and the evolution of the design for the project. He noted that the concerns and comments of the First Shaughnessy Advisory Design Panel will be answered in the next month. Paul Sanga, Landscape Architect, described the streetscape aspects of the project. He noted that MacRae Avenue will be heavily planted with a double row of trees. Also the existing trees will be retained around the principle house.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Consider another orientation for the five block townhouses; and
  - Consider reducing the constriction between the townhouses and the heritage house.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel unanimously supported the project and appreciated the care and attention that had been taken to incorporate the heritage house and property into the project. The Panel commended the applicant for being bold in terms of density. The Panel agreed that the massing, the streetscape and the scale of the landscaping would be essential to the success of the project.

Most of the Panel liked the approach to the landscaping and felt the filtered look along the streetscape would be an important part of the project. Also the internal garden would be a great addition but would require good design to make it work well within the development. Most of the Panel agreed that the pedestrian walkways through the site were well worked out and would be very successful. However, several members of the Panel would like to see a more formal landscape. A couple of Panel members noted that the separation between the unit's private yards and the common area pathway needed more room.

The Panel liked the underground parking and having the owners able to park under their own units.

Most of the Panel liked the linear form of the five unit townhouse with the big open space in the centre. Most of the Panel thought that roof top decks were the right way to go and suggested holding the balcony edges back from the parapet for more privacy which would make them invisible from the street. However, a couple of Panel members thought the flat roofs were too urban and weren't the right model for First Shaughnessy.

Most of the Panel though the curving façade of the townhouses was a very effective and dealt well with the awkward corner. A couple of Panel members suggested that the five unit townhouse could pivot and give more views to the heritage house. Also, several Panel members thought the five unit block in the middle of the project was too constrained against the heritage house.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Busby thanked the Panel. He agreed to look at the orientation of the five townhouse block. Mr. Busby added that the landscaping would be a large part of the project as they are trying to create a refuge from the urban streetscape on the other side of Granville Street.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.