

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: June 6, 2007

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
John Wall, Chair
Walter Francl (excused Item 2)
Tom Bunting
Maurice Pez
Douglas Watts
Richard Henry
Bill Harrison
Martin Nielsen
Mark Ostry
Gerry Eckford
Bob Ransford

REGRETS: Albert Bicol

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	236 West 1 st Avenue
2.	99 West 2 nd Avenue
3.	2020 Alma Street

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Wall called the meeting to order at 4:15 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: | 236 West 1 st Avenue |
| DE: | Rezoning |
| Use: | 13-storey residential tower with townhouse podium |
| Zoning: | M-2 to CD-1 |
| Application Status: | RZ |
| Architect: | Rafii Architects |
| Review: | First |
| Delegation: | Foad Rafii, David Evans, Robert Brown, Peter Kreuk |
| Staff: | Michael Naylor/Mary Beth Rondeau |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (10-0)

- **Introduction:** Michael Naylor, Rezoning Planner, introduced the application for a rezoning in South East False Creek from M-2 to CD-1. Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, gave an overview of the South East False Creek ODP. The application is for a tower with a height of 124 feet, townhouses in the mid-block along West 1st Avenue and a pedestrian link between the tower and townhouses. The tower consists of the main entry with indoor amenity spaces on the second level and an amenity lounge on the tower roof. The roof amenity lounge supports the outdoor activities of urban agriculture, passive seating and has the benefit of hiding the elevator mechanical penthouse but staff note that this room would need to be excluded from height. No views or shadow issues were identified and staff were generally supporting this slight variation from the ODP. 2 storey townhouses have grade level entrances along the street with stacked units above which creates a three and a half storey massing. This is also a slight variation from the ODP from three storeys which staff support

Mr. Naylor and Ms. Rondeau took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Foad Rafii, Architect, noted that they will be using the LEED™ checklist and have several sustainable strategies planned for the project. He added that the elevator penthouse will look like a greenhouse and the roof will be accessible.

Peter Kruek, Landscape Architect, noted that the landscape plan incorporates green roofs and urban agriculture. There are a variety of other elements including a children's play area. The ground level open space at the lane will be semi-public, without fencing or gates. There will also be a water feature which will allow for storm water management practices by collecting rain water and recirculating it via the irrigation system.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - design development to the architectural vocabulary of the tower to break down the tower's apparent bulkiness;
 - widen the breezeway (pedestrian link) between the tower and the townhouses; and
 - improve ground level resolution of the city homes at the base of the tower.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel unanimously supported the project and agreed that the use, density and form were well resolved. They also supported the height exclusion for the tower roof lounge as they thought it would enhance the use of the urban agriculture.

Panel members encouraged the applicant to further develop the architectural resolution of the tower; noting the sculpted form is good, however the various façade elements should be recomposed to help break down the bulkiness of the tower. The Panel thought the southwest façade seemed stronger and suggested the attention to detail could be played out on the other facades. The members also thought some work was needed to the ground level city homes of the tower and suggested bringing the language of the townhouses to the tower base. The deep slab recess over the ground level and particularly the angled “kink” at the corner should be improved but the Panel agreed that the city homes themselves were nice and would make a wonderful space in the development. Also, one Panel member thought the lane elevation of the tower needed some work and that some of the units might have some light issues.

Several members of the Panel thought the pedestrian link between the tower and the townhouses was too pinched and needed a bit more room. Several Panel members thought the lobby would be better connected across the breezeway as an indoor space.

The Panel commended the architect on the sustainable measures and that the landscaping elements needed some work but showed promise. Most of the Panel liked the publicness of the open spaces particularly on the lane.

- **Applicant’s Response:** Mr. Rafii, Architect, thanked the Panel as he thought they had some good points. He added that they will endeavour to use as many of them as possible in improving the design of the tower. He noted that there needs be a walk way through the site which is part of all of SEFC.

2. Address:	99 West 2 nd Avenue
DE:	410230
Use:	12 and 7-storey mixed use commercial/residential development
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Howard Bingham Hill Architects
Review:	First
Delegation:	John Bingham, Vito Decotis, Peter Kreuk
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

Panel member Walter Francl declared a conflict of interest and did not participate in discussion on this item.

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (1-8)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, introduced the application in the Southeast False Creek (SEFC) private lands for a 12 storey residential building (West Building) with commercial at grade and a 7-storey residential building (East Building) with commercial and live work units at grade. Ms. Rondeau noted that the design responds to the Official Development Plans for SEFC and the CD-1 for this site with the exception of an additional storey the height on the West Building for which a text amendment is being processed. This additional floor should not create any additional shadowing on the important public plaza across the lane to the north.

Ms. Rondeau took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Howard Bingham, Architect, described the proposal in further detail noting design elements, materials being used and the design concept for the project.

Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect, gave an overview of the landscape plans for the project. He noted the rainwater storage, a high efficiency irrigation system, a rain garden proposed in the main courtyard space and urban agriculture to be located on the roof of the East Building.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to better resolve the fragmented architectural components and colour palette to create a more cohesive project;
 - Express the tower to recognize the gateway site;
 - Consider linking the interior and exterior amenities.
 - Design Development to building entry and entry courtyard on 2nd ave.
 - Stronger expression for the water garden.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the application but supported the overall site layout, massing and additional height of the tower.

The Panel noted that it was a missed opportunity in the ODP for SEFC in not recognizing the site as a gateway building to the commercial village. They felt that Manitoba Street is an important connector and is the retail high street. There was a desire from the panel for a

bolder gesture that engages the project and if additional height could not be considered then the tower should make more of a gateway statement.

The Panel thought the architectural treatment needed to be calmer against what the Panel felt was generally a bit too busy of a composition with a variety of architectural expressions. Panel members felt that perhaps the colour palette was a too muted. They thought there was an opportunity to find some calmness in the composition by offering another layer of colour and texture that could balance the project.

The landscape and the laneway treatments received good support from the Panel except for the water feature which the Panel thought should be emphasized and made stronger but should also be made believable as to the source of the rainwater. One Panel member suggested expressing the element as a cistern instead of having stairs with the water spilling down the side. Also a couple of Panel members would like to see the water feature expressed as rain garden.

The Panel thought the access to the site and the entry were very important linking elements between the two buildings and noted that it needed to be simplified. The Panel thought the Caper's building on West 4th Avenue offered a good precedent. Also some of the Panel would like to see the entry off to the side of the tower to make for a stronger entrance as they felt that it seemed like a secondary entry.

The Panel had some concerns regarding the smaller elements of 8th floor amenity and the associated tower massing which looked like a missing chunk. One comment suggesting a bridge element that could link some of the amenity space from the tower to the west building and also suggested providing interior amenity space coupled with the exterior amenity space.

The Panel commended the applicant for pursuing passive sustainability techniques and how they dealt with the solar on all four sides of the buildings.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bingham thanked the Panel for the comments and agreed that they could enhance the colour and enrich the elevations. He noted that the ground plane and the entrance hasn't been developed as yet and agreed that it needed to be simplified.

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3. Address: 2020 Alma Street
DE: 411287
Use: 4-storey mixed use commercial/residential development
Zoning: C-2
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Bryce Rositch, Rositch Hemphill Architects
Review: First
Delegation: Bryce Rositch, Amy Yung, Meredith Mitchell
Staff: James Boldt
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-4)

- **Introduction:** James Boldt, Development Planner, introduced the project for a commercial/residential building located at the corner of Alma Street and West 4th Avenue. The proposal is located under C-2 zoning and Mr. Boldt reminded the Panel that the current policy to bring all C-2 projects to the Panel. The proposal is for a 4 storey mixed use building with 11 residential units over retail. It is an awkward sight and presents a challenge for this prominent corner. The applicant is asking for a relaxation of 4 inches at the first floor and 12 inches for a portion of the fourth floor penthouse facing 4th Avenue. Mr. Boldt added that the Director of Planning is prepared to allow for the relaxations. Mr. Boldt noted that the model is not correct but the material board and renderings clarify the materials being used.

Mr. Boldt asked the Panel for general comments on form, architecture, materiality and liveability. He added that the primary concern was the corner and how the building architecturally deals with the corner. He noted that on the south side of the site there are two small buildings. Initially there was a request to step back the building on the north side to allow for roof decks and asked the Panel for their comments.

Mr. Boldt took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Bryce Rositch, Architect, further described the proposal. He noted that should the sites to the east be redeveloped they would likely go to three storeys and they stepped back the building in order to be more compatible. He added that they thought it was important to bring some verticality to the corner with a two foot setback.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to make for a more prominent corner expression;
 - Corner CRU should be open at grade;
 - Design development regarding a stronger base expression; and
 - Access to the roof for common outdoor space and private patios for the penthouse units.
 - **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the project and agreed that this was a prominent corner and the site deserved to have a building that meets that prominence. It was felt that the applicant had broken away from the traditional C-2 type of design and had introduced vertical elements which the Panel thought was not appropriate. They
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agreed that more treatment needed to take place on the corner to represent the gateway of West 4th Avenue to an important neighbourhood.

The Panel thought the corner CRU should be big enough to house a café and needed to be open at grade to allow for an entry on the corner. It was also thought that stepping the building back above the corner weakened the corner. The Panel thought the retail should be strengthened with the use of lots of glass and that the awnings took away from the building.

The Panel felt there needed to be some continuity with a diadem at the base to separate the retail from the residential.

The Panel supported all the relaxations for the project and would like to see a relaxation of the height to give roof top access for patios for the penthouse units. The Panel felt there could be some good views and would add value to the units. As well they would like to see some common outdoor space.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Rositch thanked the Panel for their comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.