

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: March 2, 2005

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Bruce Haden, Chair
Mark Ostry
Larry Adams
Robert Barnes
Jeffrey Corbett (excused Item 2.)
Marta Farevaag
Ronald Lea
Margot Long
Jennifer Marshall
Brian Martin

NEW MEMBERS (NON-VOTING THIS MEETING):
Nigel Baldwin
Shahla Bozorgzadeh
Edward Smith
Peter Wreglesworth
C.C. Yao (excused Item 2)

REGRETS: Alan Endall
James Cheng

RECORDING SECRETARY: Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1752-60 West 3rd Avenue
2.	1750 Davie Street

1. Address:	1752-60 West 3rd Avenue
Use:	Mixed (2 storeys, 20 units)
Zoning:	IC-1 - CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	GBL
Owner:	Tasolini/Chetner
Review:	First
Delegation:	Tom Bell, Jonathan Losee
Staff:	Grant Miller, Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction:** Grant Miller, Rezoning Planner, presented this rezoning application. The site is currently zoned IC-1. The rezoning application is to allow the development of a mixed-use building with commercial use at grade and ten two-level residential units on the second and third floors. Proposed density is 1.36 FSR (1.0 FSR residential). Parking is at grade, with access off the lane. The site falls within the Burrard Slopes I-C District Interim Policies which allow development of a maximum 1.0 FSR residential use in conjunction with commercial and light industrial uses through a CD-1 rezoning. The intent is to allow the introduction of residential uses to the area without unduly compromising its downtown support services role while maintaining the existing small-scale and architecturally varied character of the area.

Comments from the Panel are sought with respect to use, density and form of development. The application complies well with the Burrard Slopes policies with respect to use, density and height. Maximum permitted height is 45 ft., the proposal seeks 37 ft. in three storeys. Staff have no major concerns with the design but seek the Panel's comments on the residential interface with the street in terms of the frame elements.

It was noted that a project of this small scale is unlikely to be returned to the Panel at the development application stage.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Tom Bell, Architect, briefly reviewed the design rationale and the applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to the courtyard to enhance sunlight access and livability of both the courtyard and private terraces. This should include consideration of expanding the width of the courtyard and should definitely including opening up the party wall where possible;
 - Design development to enhance the entry sequence from the street to the courtyard with respect to visibility, distinctiveness from the retail, openness and safety;
 - Consider increasing the usable outdoor private space for the north block;
 - Design development to street edge landscaping adjacent to the building to better integrate it visually and functionally with the adjacent commercial use, with consideration to future possible configurations;
 - Design Development to the frame element.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this application. There were no concerns about use and density and the Panel thought the building would be a good addition to the neighbourhood.

With respect to the form of development, concerns were expressed about the courtyard. Given the limited private open space elsewhere in the building and the likely limited usability of the rear decks, the Panel thought more effort should be put into the design of the courtyard to maximize the sense of community with some common amenity space and to provide more light access. Deleting some or all of the end walls of the courtyard was strongly recommended. It was not thought to be a Building Code issue. The courtyard was considered to be somewhat relentless at its south edge. One suggestion for improving the quality of the courtyard was to consider flipping the bedroom balcony on the upper units. As well, there was a comment that the concrete walls in the north courtyard will promote heat gain, affecting the livability of the top units.

The amount of usable outdoor space on the north block was thought to be insufficient and the addition of roof decks, including opportunities for gardening, was strongly recommended, especially on the north block.

It was also recommended to provide a greater connection between the courtyard and the street to make it more inviting. There was thought to be a good opportunity to create a gracious entry, playing down the elevator in favour of an attractive exterior stair. Safety and security should also be carefully considered in design development of the residential lobby.

There were differing opinions about the frame element, although the Panel in general agreed that it needed better resolution. One Panel member thought the frame was gratuitous, another that it seemed neither one thing or the other and needed to be either stronger or more integrated. Another thought it was a legitimate architectural expression but needed further design development. One Panel member questioned whether the frame should be in steel rather than concrete to better reflect an industrial character, and suggested the success of the frame in concrete might also be difficult to achieve in such small dimensions. There was also a note of caution that concrete frames tend not to age very well.

With respect to materials, the Panel stressed the success of the building will be in its detailed treatment and how the various materials come together. One Panel member recommended reconsidering the use of cementitious board for the canopies, and to pay careful attention to the top flashing to ensure a clean expression.

With respect to the landscape there was a suggestion the landscape architecture is too residential in character. There were also questions about the planting in front of the CRUs because it could interfere with the intent if the units are for retail uses having display windows to encourage passersby to look in. This should be clarified in design development. There was also concern expressed that the CRUs do not provide much flexibility for individual treatment of the units.

Finally, there was a suggestion that even a project of this small scale should include consideration of sustainable design.

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

2. Address:	1750 Davie Street
Use:	Mixed (12 storeys)
Zoning:	C-5 - CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	Henriquez & Partners
Owner:	Holyburn International
Review:	First
Delegation:	Rui Nunes, Paul Sander
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this application to rezone a C-5 site to CD-1 to permit the addition of one storey of commercial infill in front of an existing residential tower which is set back from Davie Street and also contains ground floor commercial use. The proposal adds commercial space at the ground level and the three residential units impacted by the addition will be converted to storage and amenity uses. The existing building is currently non-conforming and this proposal increases the non-conformity to 2.3 FSR (C-5 permits 2.2 FSR). Approximately 4,800 sq.ft. is being added by a transfer of heritage density and the proposed new amenity spaces are excluded from the FSR calculation.

The rezoning application is strongly supported by staff because it improves the retail continuity on this part of Davie Street. The Panel's advice is sought on use, form and density. As well, comments are sought on the strong horizontal element on the retail frontage and whether it should be broken down, especially at the residential entry.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Rui Nunes, Architect, noted that for a small increase in floor area they are able to repair the Davie streetwall. He briefly reviewed the design rationale, noting the coloured concrete frame expression and glazing are intended to reference the original 60's building. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Review the entry with respect to CPTED concerns, visual differentiation from the retail and the overall depth of public access;
 - Increase the opportunity for a finer grain of storefront differentiation. This could be within the context of an overall horizontal strategy and could include consideration of stepping the canopy but should include a comprehensive signage strategy;
 - Enhance the rooftop detailing including detailed consideration of plant species and patterning taking into account overlook from the tower;
 - Design development to the lane planter to improve durability;
 - Include street trees if practical.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this rezoning application and thought it achieved a good urban design objective for a very small increase in density. The improvement to this section of Davie Street will be very welcome.

Concerns were expressed about the treatment of the façade, although one Panel member thought its horizontality was a legitimate architectural response. However, most Panel members thought it should better reflect the incremental nature the Davie Street frontage and be broken up more. Design development was recommended to provide greater opportunity for individual store expressions. One Panel member acknowledged the horizontal element brings the two neighbours together but thought there could be some articulation or change of materials at the entry. There were also comments that the building needs to be more playful, warmer and more inviting. One Panel member did not support reflecting the horizontal banding of the 60's tower in the commercial addition but recommended considering it as two projects: a residential tower at the rear and a streetscape urban design exercise at the front. Questions were raised about the row of bamboo, which contributes to the monolithic appearance of the building. More landscape details will be necessary at the next stage of the design. Another Panel member questioned whether the bamboo will achieve the crisp horizontality suggested in the illustrations; some other plant material might be better.

Design development to the canopy was recommended, and to bring it down to a level where it is more effective as weather protection. Signage will also need to be carefully considered at the development application stage.

The Panel had concerns about the residential entry, in particular with respect to security because it will likely attracted unwanted overnight guests as currently designed. Several Panel members suggested a courtyard entry would be a better solution.

One Panel member questioned whether the back-illumination of the spandrel glass would be successful, and stressed that careful attention should be paid to the details in the way the glass joins the concrete.

Reconsideration of the planter in the lane was recommended, making it bigger and replacing the fibreglass with concrete. There is also opportunity to soften the rear parking deck to improve overlook from the tower.

Street trees were strongly recommended and the building should respond to the Davie streetscape. There was a strong recommendation to relocate the bus stop.

One Panel member questioned the livability of the centre residential unit in the tower and suggested deleting this unit in favour of increasing the size of the gym.

Careful attention should be given to the west wall screening the outdoor amenity space to improve its livability. Attention should also be given to overlook of the commercial roof. Surface patterning or planting should be considered.

Finally, there was a recommendation to consider replacing the boiler in the existing residential tower because it is likely very inefficient by current standards.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Nunes said they will look at the grain of the façade and noted that stepping the canopy was a consideration at the onset. He agreed that signage will be part of the design development at the next stage.