

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: March 1, 2006

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Alan Endall, Chair
Larry Adams
Robert Barnes
Shahla Bozorgzadeh
Marta Farevaag
Ronald Lea
C.C. Yao (excused Items 2 & 3)

REGRETS: Nigel Baldwin
James Cheng
Margot Long
Peter Wreglesworth

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Debbie Kempton

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

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| 1. | 2901 Wall Street |
| 2. | Broadway/City Hall Station (460 W. Broadway) |
| 3. | False Creek Station (595 W. 2 nd Avenue) |

BUSINESS MEETING

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

1. Address: 2901 Wall Street
DE: 409890
Use: Residential (4 storeys, 52 units)
Zoning: C-2
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Merrick
Owner: 326754 BC Ltd.
Review: Second
Delegation: G. Borowski, J. Losee
Staff: Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, introduced this application for a second review. Ms. Rondeau noted the unusual context of this C-2 site which is located between the rail lines and a single family neighbourhood.

Ms. Rondeau referred to the view study taken from surrounding residential homes and said that the view study resulted in two building forms with heights of 33 ft. for the lower shoulder and 38 ft. in the higher elements. The view slot through the middle of the site was carefully considered to allow views through to the water from every house in the neighbourhood.

The most significant change from the previous proposal is that the lower floor units now follow the form of the building as the Panel had suggested. The density has changed slightly from 1.5 FSR in the previous scheme to 1.38 FSR in this scheme. Ms. Rondeau also noted that the unit counted has been reduced to 52 units from the previous 64.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Greg Borowski, Merrick Architecture, outlined the applicant team response to the Panel commentary from the previous scheme. He said that the previous proposal showed the lower level as a band of single-sided units with inboard bedrooms and that has now been changed to sculpt the lower level and add a landscaped courtyard. This is an improvement in terms of access to light, recess from the rail line activities and access to garden space. The parkade entry has been lowered with a trellis added in front of it.

Mr. Borowski also noted that there is now access to the gardens from both buildings on the upper level. He said the common amenity space has full height glass and linkages from both buildings. The amenity space is 1,200 sq.ft. and opens to the courtyard.

Jonathan Losee, Landscape Architect, described the revised landscape plan and noted that there is more visually and accessible open space. The amenity space has a green roof as well as a skylight and the patios have both physical and visual access to the open space. At the first review the Panel requested a continuous pattern of street trees however that has not been provided. The applicant team has worked with the neighbours to open up views and create visual access from above which they did not want to fill in with street trees.

- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel unanimously supported this application and was very pleased with the changes that were made to improve livability of the lower units. It was felt that this submission was a big improvement from the previous scheme. There were a few minor suggestions for improvements to the landscaping to consider truncating the trellis over the amenity space to allow more sun into the patio spaces and also for more design development to the informal outdoor space to make it more useable.

A suggestion was made to consider an additional entry to one of the lower level units. A Panel member said that the move to replace the water feature with outdoor space was an improvement and the amenity space will probably work better as communal space. In general the Panel felt that the landscaping in this proposal was much improved from the previous scheme and complimented the applicant team on all of their revisions.

- **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Borowski thanked the Panel for their second review and said although he was disappointed after the first review; he is pleased with the end result.

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| 2. Address: | Broadway/City Hall Station (460 W. Broadway) |
| 3. Address: | False Creek South Station (595 W. 2 nd Avenue) |
| Use: | Transit Station |
| Application Status: | Workshop |
| Architect: | Stantec |
| Owner: | InTransit BC/RAVCO |
| Review: | First |
| Delegation: | Chris McCarthy, Allen Parker, Peter Zieth, David Harding,
Peter Buchanan |
| Staff: | Anita Molaro |
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These two Canada Line transit stations were presented concurrently, each with their own unique context and built form opportunity.

- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Urban Design Planner, introduced this workshop discussion and briefly explained the City's role which is to provide advice on issues relating to the alignment, stations, station entries and connectivity. Each of the stations will be taken through a design advisory process which is based largely on the typical major development application process. The stations will be reviewed by the Panel in the form of a workshop and reported to the Development Permit Board for advice only since the stations do not require a development permit.

In addition to the design advisory process around each of the stations, City staff will be undertaking a Precinct Planning Exercise to ensure appropriate bicycle and pedestrian access and dealing with traffic, parking and other issues in and around the stations.

The early concepts were to help the public understand the scale and mass of the stations within their immediate context. Since the detailed design of the stations is in its early phase this workshop is an opportunity for the Urban Design panel to provide creative urban design and architectural advice into the station designs as they are being developed.

Broadway/City Hall Station will be a significant transit hub on day one because of the B-line connection and possible extension with the Millennium Line. Lands owned by the City around Broadway between 10th Avenue and Yukon and Cambie Street have a long term vision to be developed as a City Hall expansion although there is no specific timeline. This site is limited to 80 ft. height from the Broadway elevation to 10th Avenue and that height limit will be protect whether or not the zoning changes.

Another aspect of the long term vision for this area is active street level frontages along Broadway and Cambie Street. This station and the entry to the building will play an important role and provide the opportunity to develop as a piece of public architecture within this precinct.

False Creek South Station was not within the original scope of work for phase one; however the City has made a contribution so that this station can be built now. The lands around this site will go through a rezoning so the street network and development details are still unknown. There are a number of different variables that may affect the road network and the accommodation of the existing streetcar is one of them. With respect to built form and massing of the site, it will be consistent with the neighbourhood to the north with 10-12 storey buildings. The station will be standalone with buildings that may come close to it but the station will not be overbuilt. An important

element of this particular site is the Traction Power Service (TPS) building in Rocket Park. This may be an opportunity for this building to take advantage of the changing grades between the higher slope of the off-ramp and the lower slope of 2nd Avenue.

City urban design objectives for the station designs on which the advice/comments of the Panel is sought:

- achieve a strong sense of publicness, conveyed through the highest quality architecture, also highlighting access and openness;
- achieve good connectivity/accessibility for transit users and pedestrians;
- achieve a safe environment both within and around the station;
- achieve high quality public realm interface with high amenity sidewalk areas with active edges providing pedestrian interest and weather protection;
- allow for future commercial/retail opportunities within or near stations.

These stations are an opportunity to be a statement of public architecture and an extension of the public realm for many years to come. The Panel is asked to consider and advise on the public nature of these stations given the highest quality architecture is the goal.

• **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Allen Parker, InTransit BC, said that the two stations being reviewed at this meeting, although part of the Cambie corridor, are set apart from King Edward, 41st and 49th Avenue stations because of the potential for adjacent development.

False Creek South station will have a centre platform and trapezoidal geometry. The station is located at a transition between the bored tunnel and the cut and cover tunnel. Broadway station will be the highest station of the Canada Line with interfaces for the bus on Broadway and equally important is the future connection to the extension of the Millennium Line. Mr. Parker noted that optimizing the connection to the Millennium Line is important.

Peter Buchanan, Stantec, said that the Broadway station introduces gardens and landscapes of City Hall and British Columbia (BC) whereas False Creek South station introduces the waters edge of Vancouver and BC. Both stations are potential foregrounds for future developments. The proposed False Creek South station house takes the form of a ship with ribs and strapping to reflect the False Creek ship building and timber industries. This building will be warm and welcoming with wood and glassy walls that celebrate public transit as the future method for moving around the city.

False Creek South station will have abundant overhangs to protect the traveler and movement to the platform is fairly simple as you descend to the mezzanine level. Using an escalator and elevator as the primary means to get below grade the ambition is to have a place that is defined and very easy to orient oneself in. There is a desire to bring as much daylight as possible to the lower levels.

David Harding, Stantec, said that the design of Broadway station is a much simpler building that is limited in terms of the site. The form is on a tight site with a narrow station entrance caught in the steep plain of Cambie Street. This is the only station with double height volume and the concourse will overlook the platform below.

There is an opportunity for overbuild in the area and there will be a party wall in anticipation of future development. The use of light and transparency has been considered for this station, noting that more glass is better for visual access and a sense of safety. Mr. Harding said that

an all glass building at night becomes a marquee. He described some of the other station details and the connection to the landscaping of City Hall.

- **Panel Consensus:**

- Everyone was complimentary in terms of the two stations recognizing the opportunity for a more legible sculptural form and both show promise to provide for a strong urban gesture;
- Need to achieve more sense of commonality between the two stations. The stations are interesting individually but they need a stronger sense of how they connect. Elements such as glazing and handrail details are perhaps too subtle to adequately tie the stations together and stronger linking design elements should be explored.

- **Panel Commentary:**

GENERAL

- Concerns that advertising be within the nature of the building and not on the street. Advertising inside the building is acceptable;
- Natural light is key and should be key for all stations. Natural light will go a long way to relieve anxiety and to enhance passenger experience;
- Make the stations simpler than they are as now. Should be strong gesture but not a grand gesture;
- Revisit the 5 major City goals to determine if they have been achieved;
- The stations seem to turn their backs on strong connectivity issues;
- There should be parking and washrooms available at the stations for the convenience and comfort of the transit users.

BROADWAY

- Broadway is not responding well to the context; take into consideration the great retail opportunity on the roof that is green space;
- The idea of spilling out onto the roof is a great opportunity;
- Creating opportunities for street interest should be a priority over the lightbox;
- Further design development to make the sculpturally folded plate more interesting;
- Further consideration to the triangular wedge and the column is disappointing;
- Cantilever piece is exciting;
- Address the corner plaza to make it more open;
- The inspiration for this station should not be the park in front of City Hall but City Hall itself. City Hall is an icon of the city and it would be nice if the concrete work could reference City Hall;
- Like the double row of street trees;
- The roof top with a small area of seating is not sufficiently attractive. By making the roof flat and accessible the opportunity to make it sculptural is missed. Make it strong and not necessarily accessible and work at the scale it is, which is small compared to what will happen adjacent in the future;
- The opportunity for retail in the south portion of the site is not a compelling urban design priority. City Hall and its park are not retail and the logic for retail continuity doesn't make sense in this block form. Give it more of a Civic Precinct quality;
- The lookout is important on Broadway but it should be hardscape;
- Give further consideration to the roof top space;
- Ventilation could be used as a sculptural element.

FALSE CREEK SOUTH

- Further consideration of what the light well might be;
- Capitalize on the opportunity to get natural light as far down to the platform level as possible;
- Appears more standalone in terms of characteristics, consider further simplicity in the sculptural approach;
- Like that the station can be viewed from above and it would be nice not to lose the roof treatment;
- It would be helpful to see how the station will look in context next to the bridge, needs to be modeled in context in order to be better understood;
- Like the idea of the ship form;
- Concerned with the peripheral facilities of the station;
- The future streetcar alignment should be anticipated in this design;
- The TPS station should be advanced and a green roof there would be logical;
- Further explore South East False Creek and the waterfront edge;
- Concerned about the way it is tucked in and the strength of it. As a sculptural form the station may not be perceived from all of the angles that would be expected.

Applicant's Response: The applicant team thanked the Panel for their constructive input.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.