
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: March 10, 1999

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room #1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Joseph Hruda (Chair)
Sheldon Chandler
Per Christoffersen
Paul Grant
Roger Hughes (items 1, 2 and a portion of 3)
Sean McEwan
Gil Raynard (items 1, 2 and a portion of 3)
Keith Ross
Norman Shearing
Joe Werner

REGRETS: Patricia Campbell
James Cheng

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Marnie Cross

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. WORKSHOP: 555 Great Northern Way
2. 6475 Elliott Street (2526 Waverley Avenue)
3. 1196 Granville Street

1. **WORKSHOP:** 555 Great Northern Way
Use: High Tech Industry - Master Plan
Zoning: M-2 & I-2 to CD-1 and/or I-3
Application Status: Rezoning (Pending)
Architect: Busby & Associates
Owner: Finning Inc.
Review: First
Delegation: Peter Busby
Staff: Ian Smith/Michael Naylor
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- **Introduction:** Mr. Smith, Development Planner, outlined the False Creek Flats area currently used for rail and transportation uses, warehouses, storage and light and heavy industrial uses. The Finning lands border the southern edge of the Flats along Great Northern Way. Immediately to the north are the BNSF and CN lands and beyond, the Terminal Avenue industrial/commercial area, the Malkin Avenue lands and the Strathcona neighbourhood. To the south is the Mount Pleasant residential area, to the east the Clark Drive industrial area and Commercial Drive neighbourhood and to the west Main Street and the City Gate development. The Brewery Creek area that extends down to the Finning site at 1st Avenue contains approximately 800 artist live/work units.

Mr. Smith advised Council approved the Industrial Lands Strategy in March 1995 and requested staff to develop a plan for reviewing issues relating to industrial, industrial live/work, commercial, transportation, public amenities and the relationship between the Flats and surrounding neighbourhoods. The False Creek Flats Preliminary Plan prepared in 1996 reinforced the industrial land policies and proposed innovative treatments for redevelopment of larger sites. The I-2 zoning initiative was intended to allow for contemporary industrial uses. At Finning's request, Council granted an exclusion of the Great Northern Way site from I-2 provided Finning place a restrictive covenant on title that restricts the height and density to I-2 provisions.. The permitted uses in I-2 do not include software production or multimedia research/design.

Council endorsed a staff report "Accommodating High Technology Uses in Industrial Areas" in July 1998. A new I-3 zoning schedule is being developed by staff to allow a broader range of high-tech and ancillary uses although a CD-1 zoning could be considered. The current outright height is 60' on the site, currently zoned M-2, with the ability to go up to 100'. The City intends to negotiate a package of amenities on the site in lieu of DCL/CLCs. As well, there may be some negotiation/tradeoffs on height, with some buildings being lower to respect private views and some higher in lesser view-sensitive areas. Some owners/residents north of 5th Avenue would like to see heights lower than 60', while the owners/residents south of 5th Avenue who do not have a view in any case, are not concerned with a change in height. This is still in the public process and will be presented to a major public meeting at the end of March.

There are ongoing discussions with respect to Brewery Creek restoration and its importance to the redevelopment of the area, as well as opportunities to link China Creek Park with False Creek. Mr. Smith noted there might be some issues as the property owner (Finning) will not be the developer. They would like flexibility so the future developer can make some decisions on the site.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Mr. Peter Busby, Busby & Associates, Architects, advised the

proposed plan for the Finning site is to combine a mix of uses and open space amenities to create a dynamic and economically sustainable business community. The proposed uses will be high technology businesses from software and multimedia design to biotechnology research and production.

Secondary support uses would include office, retail, service, hotel and live/work units. The major massing on site focuses around open space nodes, one in the east portion and one in the west portion. The main development is located on the western end of the site where topography and soil conditions would accommodate the height with the lowest massing along Great Northern Way to reduce private view impacts. Discussions are underway regarding public transit to connect the site to downtown and to Skytrain. Traffic connections through the site connecting Great Northern Way and Industrial Avenue will disperse traffic and promote development through the Flats. Traffic signals on Great Northern Way will enhance connections through the site to surrounding communities by providing alternative routes. Amenities would include large public open spaces, greenways, three signalized intersections across Great Northern Way, recreational facilities and transit.

With respect to the public realm, open space is provided through enhancement of the existing mature landscaped buffer along Great Northern Way. An east-west greenways route consists of a central access road running almost the full length of the property with three separate open spaces –main westerly amenity core surrounding a large multi-function park setting, the central access hub with a formal public space defined by built form, and an easterly amenity core around a simple park setting. The central entry to the site is near the current Finning main entry and focuses on the public square allowing access to all other areas of the site. The east entry to the site is along the existing China Creek easement. Traffic calming of Great Northern Way is proposed by the addition of a small landscaped median (1.5 m wide) and signal lights at three intersections. Sidewalks on both sides of the street and the central median will be enhanced with street trees.

- **Panel's Comments:** After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The greening of Great Northern Way and possible traffic calming is welcome but needs to be extended to internal street i.e. a different theme mixing cars, people and landscaping. The street system linkages north/south are important. Consideration should be given to aligning the grid in a north/south direction without a 'turning' of the grid at mid site so that views northbound to the mountains are available from the development at grade level. There is support for the greenways concept—the bicycle system linkages are good. However, the east/west green linkages remain unresolved and require further study. The China Creek and Brewery Creek restoration should be developed as the theme, and should form an integral part of the proposed development. Expression of Brewery Creek as a real green creek gesture at the entry is essential, not merely a plaque or memorial approach. While there are concerns with the 120' heights at the westerly end due to likely mountain view impacts from Mount Pleasant, the Panel felt that more information on view analysis should be provided before it could comment. The amount of park space should not be an amenity for the development but should be public. The amount of park space was also questioned for its adequacy in view of the 8-9,000 projected employees in the development. Permeability at the perimeter needs to be visual and functional, signalling an entry as greenway links to the park spaces. There was support for the idea of a real public square with a vertical emphasis to reduce the traffic circle character now presented. There was some concern regarding ground floor treatments—there needs to be street level animation and this needs to be ensured through strong design controls. The Panel supported the use of amenity contributions vs. CAC/DCLs.

The Panel expressed support for flexibility of use. The incubator residential of the recently

constructed live/work units adjacent to the westerly portion of the site is an important buffer and will help provide security measures to the proposed development and will help build a sense of neighbourhood after hours. The Panel noted concerns with respect to views of roof overviews, consideration of visitor parking and the intensity of the night lighting. The Panel would like an indication of the future of the City lands to the west in context with this development.

2. Address: 6475 Elliott Street (2526 Waverley Avenue)
Use: Seniors Congregate Housing
Zoning: CD-1 (Text Amendment)
Application Status: Rezoning
Architect: Neale Staniszki Doll Adams Architects
Owner: Baptist Housing Ministries
Review: First
Delegation: Garth Ramsay, Howard Johnson, Randall Sharp
Staff: Marco D'Agostini, Mary Beth Rondeau
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-1)

- **Introduction:** Mr. D'Agostini, Development Planner, outlined the proposed application for 104 units of seniors congregate housing on an L-shaped portion of the site zoned CD-1 thirty-five years ago. The seven two-storey buildings currently on the site are vacant. The adjacent sites are mostly zoned RS-1. The Faith Fellowship Baptist Church is south across the lane and the Corpus Christi Church/school/playground is to the west. Killarney Mall (zoned C-1 commercial retail) is to the southeast.

Mr. D'Agostini advised a previous text amendment approved in September 1997 permitted 100 non-market seniors rental dwellings in two buildings 3-4 storeys in height and 90 market dwellings (36 townhouses and 54 apartments) in three buildings also 3-4 storeys in height. The allowed density is 1.25 permitted over the entire site. Enactment is anticipated shortly.

The current application for a text amendment relates to the portion of the site that was to be developed as market housing. The applicant is seeking an amendment to allow 104 units of market rental congregate housing for seniors typically 75+ years who are independent and do not require nursing care or supervision. Meal, housekeeping, laundry and social and recreational programs would be available. The form of development would change from separate buildings to an elongated building form. There would be an increase in height (maximum 39.37' excluding appurtenances) over a view sensitive area (views from the westernmost and easternmost homes on East 48th Avenue). The density would be increased to 1.32 for the entire site and the number of units would be increased from 90 to 104.

Mr. D'Agostini advised there is staff support for the use and the opportunity to provide much needed additional seniors housing. The proposal is in keeping with the congregate care guidelines being developed by staff and a view study has been requested. It is anticipated the impacts of additional height will be minimal.

Mr. D'Agostini requested advice from the Panel on the following issues:

- different architectural character of the non-market and non-market components
 - change to the form of development from that proposed in previous text amendment
 - treatment of the front yard (Waverley) and access to the underground parking.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Mr. Ramsay noted the non-market housing component is the equivalent of subsidized social housing and as such is being built with a more economical budget. The change from three buildings to one is primarily due to the nature of congregate housing and the people who will live in the building. The residents need a direct, covered secure route to the amenity spaces. The main entry, at the same location as the previous application, consists of two driveway crosswalks for ease of circulation and manoeuvrability into the area for elderly drivers. Access to the basement parking is provided off the main vehicle entry. The main entrance is defined by a drive-through covered area which also serves as a pedestrian entry. All the amenities are grouped on the main and basement floors adjacent to and easily accessible from the main entrance. Mr. Johnson, Baptist Housing Ministries, advised that public input was sought and the concerns expressed at that time related to parking, traffic, and circulation issues. It was felt if the development was for seniors there would be less cars and therefore less impact. The site is all one property in terms of ownership. There is integration with all buildings on the site through the large courtyard off the common areas on the south side of the building that opens onto the shared landscaped area between the three buildings. The project was designed with a character and image that is residential and non-institutional. Residential materials and detailing have been chosen to reflect and relate to the residential neighbourhood.

Mr. Sharp, Landscape Architect, noted that integration of the two sites is important. Both residential components share a common landscaped courtyard, with seating and a secure active area for residents. There is a continual communal walking loop, raised planters, secured fences and large patios.

- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel did not have concerns regarding the architectural differences between the market and non-market housing components on this site. Some general concerns were expressed about the massing on Elliott and the use of dormer forms and sloped roof form to articulate the elevation. The Panel was concerned about length of building, architecturally unrelenting in its 300' length. It was felt another natural sitting sociability area that looks out and maybe opens into the courtyard should be developed to provide a break in the long corridor and provide some resting spaces for the residents. The location of amenities with regard to the location of the elevator core was a concern. It was suggested a second elevator at the southerly end be considered to allow for an additional way to access upper floors from the parking garage. There was general support for how the use of the Waverley Street entry has been handled although some panel members felt its location at the corner of the site was unfortunate. It was felt the landscaping treatment integrating both housing components was generally well done. There were concerns expressed with the long expanse of fencing along Elliott Street. Some detailing in character with the building to break it up should be considered.
- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Johnson advised that the provision of light into the corridor is of concern and will be alleviated as each unit has a unique feature of a glass panel by the wide entry door which will allow natural light into the corridor. There is a lounge area off the elevator but there is no glazing. Amenity spaces for independent seniors are deliberately designed in a central area to encourage and promote seniors to leave their units and to socialize with others. The parkade will only be utilized 30% by the seniors that live in the complex. Many of them will have scooters accessible to their vehicles. Mr. Ramsay advised the nature of the soil meant a careful approach as to where the massing on the site would be.

3. Address:	1196 Granville Street
Use:	Dance Centre
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	Architectura
Owner:	Bank of Nova Scotia
Review:	First
Delegation:	Arthur Erickson, Noel Best, M.A. Ferris
Staff:	Mike Kemble, Gerry McGeough

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-2)

- Introduction:** Mike Kemble, Development Planner, presented this application, noting the location at a prominent downtown entry intersection in an area currently in transition. The owners attempted unsuccessfully to purchase an adjacent vacant 25' lot for consolidation. The application is currently submitted as a Preliminary Application, however, due to a funding/scheduling time constraint, the applicant may upgrade the application to Complete. This 50' x 125' site at the northeast corner of Davie and Granville Streets is within the DD zoning which allows a 3.5 FSR and 90' height. Street level retail is encouraged on both elevations as well as pedestrian weather protection. The applicant is seeking a heritage bonus to develop a seven-storey Dance Centre building housing a production studio on the lower level, dance studio, and administrative offices for a number of dance companies. The existing heritage building on the site is a two-storey former bank building. The applicant proposes to retain only the Granville Street façade, and develop the building in a contemporary expression and not deal with the heritage aspect on Davie Street. The proposal would contain a small bank office and banking machine space at the Granville Street entrance. The proposed building would total 5.4 FSR, with 100% site coverage. The applicant is requesting relaxation of parking and loading requirements. Mr. Kemble noted a variance of staff opinion with respect to the heritage retention options, ranging from retention of both the Granville and Davie facades to retention of the Granville façade and either the first bay on Davie Street or alternatively the first and last bay on Davie Street. A report is being prepared, requesting Council's opinion on the retention aspect.

Mr. Gerry McGeough, Heritage Planner, advised in January, the Heritage Commission reviewed the proposal for this B building, a "temple bank" design with columns and pilasters, carried around the corner. The proposal at that time included the Granville façade and the first bay on Davie. The Commission was supportive of the project, its location and the adaptive reuse as an appropriate conservation approach. The Commission supported the density bonus and requested relaxations provided the two street facades were preserved and the spaces fully aligned with the existing window opening.

Mr. Kemble requested the Panel's advice regarding:

- the general heritage approach
 - the general massing and architectural concept of project
 - ground level interface with public realm in terms of street level elevation.
- Applicant's Opening Comments:** Mr. Arthur Erickson, Architect, advised the nature of the

performing and production studios does not allow retention of the Davie heritage façade. The façade will be butt glazed with frameless corrugated diffused cast and curved glass, even-textured, no pattern so as not to compete with the old bank. The upper studios are open to light and ventilation and will have more of a factory-type glass to allow dance to be part of the street scene on Davie. The lower two-storey height will also be glazed but with animated posters/neon signage behind on the solid wall. The production space has to be a 'black box' sound and light proof space. At the upper levels there are strip planters, building setbacks and a glass topped terrace. The entry to the centre is at the eastern end of the Davie frontage.

- **Panel's Comments:** After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel supported the proposed use for this building, as it would be a positive addition to a neglected part of the City. The proposal is audacious and adds visual excitement through the transparency of its glass facades. The 'stage-set' approach to the bank façade was felt to be appropriate as the entire concept is a theatrical one.

One Panel member expressed some concerns about the 'aggressive' nature of the floor plate along Davie and Georgia Streets. Suggestion was made to set the curbed Granville glass curtain further back from the bank façade and to set back the upper levels along Davie Street more. Several members suggested a less frivolous and more functional approach to weather protection along the Davie Street elevation. The blank wall with neon display along Davie at street level was felt to be supportable by most Panel members as it added to the theatrical feel of the project. Other recommendations included further study of the south-facing Davie façade to deal with solar heat gain resulting in a more hi-tech expression and for less emphasis on the two rooftop elements on the Davie and Granville facades.

While two Panel members were opposed to the retention of only the Granville bank façade and felt that Options 2 or 3 should be the minimum retention in order to justify the bonused density, the majority of the Panel members felt that the Davie portion would detract from the clarity of the proposal and that the Granville frontage was the most important historical context for this building.

Some concern was expressed over the blank north façade with suggestions that consideration be given to flexibility in that façade (such as knock-out panels) so that once the future of the 25' lot was known, a more appropriate response could be made at that time.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Farris, The Dance Foundation, outlined the costs of the various heritage retention options and the decision to go with only the Granville façade. Mr. Best, Architectura advised that many alternatives were explored to locate the production studio in another location, but with the constraints of studio dimensions and requirements of the dance community, the lower floor and the resultant 'blank wall' were accepted as the only appropriate space. The Panel's comments with respect to the potential sunlight problem and weather protection treatment were noted.