

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: March 12, 2008

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
John Wall, Chair
Walter Francl
Tom Bunting
Maurice Pez
Douglas Watts
Bill Harrison
Albert Bicol (Item 2 only)
Martin Nielsen (Excused Item 1)
Mark Ostry
Gerry Eckford

REGRETS: Richard Henry
Bob Ransford

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	58 West Hastings Street
2.	1754-1772 Pendrell 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 Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 58 West Hastings Street
 DE: 411789
 Description: To construct a new 7-storey mixed use, retail and residential building with two levels of underground parking.
 Zoning: DD Victory Square
 Application Status: Complete
 Architect: Busby Perkins + Will
 Owner: Crestmark Developments Ltd.
 Review: First
 Delegation: Peter Busby , Busby Perkins + Will Architects
 Eric Stedman, Busby Perkins + Will Architects
 Margot Long, PWL Partnership
 Peter Web, Crestmark Developments Ltd.
 Staff: Ralph Segal/Paul Cheng

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0) SUPPORT FOR HEIGHT INCREASE (7-0)

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Senior Development Planner introduced the proposal for a new development in the Victory Square area of the downtown. The development in an economically distressed area and is generally welcomed by staff. The historic nature of the neighbourhood was stressed by Mr. Segal, of which the small-scale development frontages of 25 - 50 feet achieve a richly varied streetscape. With respect to building heights, it was noted that while 70 feet is the maximum allowable for market residential projects, building heights above 70 feet are permitted for projects with a significant social housing or public amenity component. Mr. Segal also pointed out that Planning is currently conducting an Extra Height Study in the area to encourage development and affordable housing.

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

1. Overall Massing:
 Within the 70 foot Victory Square height limit, is the proposed overall building massing appropriate?
2. Streetscape:
 Does the proposed Hastings Street massing and architectural treatment address the desired streetscape pattern?
3. Storefront:
 Does the proposed ground floor retail storefront treatment achieve the desired pedestrian interest, modulation and scale along the sidewalk?
4. Liveability:
 Is the project's overall residential liveability satisfactory?

Mr. Segal took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Peter Busby and Eric Stedman, Architects, described the proposal in further detail. Margot Long, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plan.

The applicant team responded to the Panel's questions.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Provide a higher retail ceiling height of two to three feet. Pursue with staff a 'hardship' relaxation of the maximum building height as noted in minutes below.
 - Design development to the proposed metal and glass cornice to provide more variability in response to the neighbourhood context.
 - Consider some variation in the architectural expression of the bays of the ground-oriented retail to enrich the pedestrian experience. The residential entrance could be further differentiated from the retail.
 - Design development of the signage concept for the ground-oriented retail so that it better relates to neighbourhood context.
 - Consider design development to the south facing end units with a zero property line setback to improve privacy.
 - Consider design development to the concrete lane elevation.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel unanimously supported the proposal and thought it would be a great benefit to the neighbourhood.

The panel strongly felt that 70 feet was unduly restrictive for this site, noting that existing buildings in the vicinity exceed this height to no detriment to the character of the neighbourhood. They thought the height limit needed to be relaxed in order to provide a retail ceiling height that is similar to typical retail floor to ceiling heights in the precinct and which will support viable retail.

Some of the Panel had concerns regarding the architectural treatment of the Hastings Street retail elevation. They thought the retail elevation should express some variability and syncopation within the 268 foot frontage. Most of the Panel challenged the applicant to develop a retail signage concept that responds to the character of the area; noting that the current retail frontage does not easily allow for signage. A few panel members suggested that the applicant consider adding a few solid elements at the street level to add variety to streetscape. One panel member suggested adding some higher quality materials at the street level, and two others recommended improvements to the public realm interface.

Some of the Panel thought the cornice line should be more variegated to reflect the neighbourhood context. A few Panel members thought the building massing and the residential elevation on Hastings Street needed to be more varied with a stepped massing that relates to the existing neighbourhood pattern.

The Panel generally applauded the livability of the residential units and the relatively shallow unit depths that will provide excellent access to natural lighting for the interior spaces. Several Panel members suggested that the windows overlooking Hastings Street should have larger operable windows to better animate the street. A concern was expressed by some members with respect to the portion of the building with a zero setback from the rear property line and its relationship with neighbouring buildings across the lane. They thought this portion of the building required some design development to increase the privacy of the central south facing unit. A couple of Panel members suggested adding greenery or an artful treatment to the concrete walls at the lane.

Some of the Panel thought the access to the exterior amenity space from the interior amenity space needed some work and suggested the connection between the two spaces could be more generous. A couple of Panel members suggested some thought needed to be given to where the tools would be stored for the urban agriculture on the podium and that some form of shading be provided. Several Panel members expressed their disappointment that the proposal did not include a green roof at the top level of the building.

- **Other Commentary:** The Panel recommended that the Development Permit Board consider using the Hardship Clause in order to permit a modest increase in the allowable building height. This will allow for higher ceiling heights for the ground floor retail which will help to ensure economic viability for these units and also achieve a rich pedestrian experience in the public realm.
- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Busby thanked the Panel for their comments noting that they will likely end up appearing in the application. Mr. Busby agreed that having an extra couple of feet on the building would help with the retail floor to ceiling heights. Mr. Segal suggested applying to the Director of Planning using the Hardship Clause to ask for a couple of extra feet.

2. Address:	1754-1772 Pendrell Street
DE:	Rezoning
Description:	Increase density from 2.20 to 3.28 FRST to develop a 34-unit, 19-storey units of affordable rental housing.
Zoning:	RM-5A to CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	W.T. Leung Architects Inc.
Owner:	DTKH Robson Developments
Review:	First
Delegation:	Wing Ting Leung, W.T. Leung Architects Inc. Barry Krause, W.T. Leung Architects Inc. Peter Kreuk, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects
Staff:	Dale Morgan/Michael Naylor

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Michael Naylor, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a site located in the West End which is currently zoned RM-5A. The applicant is applying to have the site rezoned to CD-1. There are three lots with an older post-war apartment building on the westerly lot, an eighty-two year old house which was damaged by fire and demolished in 2006, and a 1925 rooming house with a coach house on the lane. Mr. Naylor described the surround neighbourhood noting the mix of retail and residential in the area.

Mr. Morgan, Development Planner, described the applicant's plans for the site. The 1925 house and the coach house will be retained and renovated and turned into 10 self contained apartment units. This property will be subdivided and the ownership will be transferred to the City of Vancouver as affordable rental housing.

The remaining lot is to be developed into a condominium tower with a relatively small floor plate of approximately 3,200 square feet providing good livability with cross ventilation and ample day lighting. The base of the tower will be fronted with 2-storey townhouses.

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

1. Does the Panel support the proposed multiple dwelling use and a density of 3.28 FRS, for this rezoning?
2. Does the Panel support the proposed form of development of 10 affordable rental units, and 34 units in a 19-storey tower, including townhouses at grade?
3. Further detail comment is requested on:
 - a. Solar Orientation: Does the building massing, window and expression respond well to solar orientation?
 - b. Townhouses: Do they achieve the desired smaller scale of individual ground oriented units at street level? Should there be more units at grade, at the building base and perhaps along the lane?
 - c. Materiality and Expression: Comments are requested on the materials and expression.

Mr. Naylor and Mr. Morgan took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Wing Ting Leung, Architect, reviewed the proposal in greater detail. Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect, described the landscape scheme. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider moving the tower closer to the lane to improve views from the neighbouring buildings;
 - Design Development to improve the public realm interface of the Pendrell Street townhouse units by moving the units closer to the street and strengthening how they address the street;
 - Consider moving the existing house closer to Pendrell Street;
 - Consider some design development to the material and expression of the tower form by changing painted concrete to brick or improving the concrete details;
 - Design development to improve the passive solar design of the facades; consider more glazing area to the north and less glass area on the south facing facades; and
 - Consider further design development to the public realm interface on the lane by providing a more urban expression.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel unanimously supported the proposal.

The Panel also supported the proposed height and density. They thought the tower should be as slim as possible so as to be less intrusive to the buildings across the street. Most of the Panel encouraged the applicant to further explore the exact position for the building. They thought the tower should be closer to the lane and that the townhouses should be pulled forward towards Pendrell Street.

The Panel supported the proposed form of development for the ten affordable rental units. Most of the Panel thought the 1925 house and coach house should stay in their present location although several Panel members thought the coach house could be moved back from the lane. One Panel member suggested moving the house closer to the street for more light and views. Another Panel member suggested using the older home and coach house to make twenty rental units in order to replace the units being lost with the development.

The Panel thought the tower was beginning to respond to solar orientation and that the balconies were a good first step. Several Panel members thought there should be some shading on the glazing on the west side of the tower. They thought the solid walls were on the wrong side of the tower and that the glazing on the south and west was a big challenge as typically the internal blinds would be down most of the time in order to keep the heat out of the suites. One Panel member suggested the applicant not include geothermal and air conditioning but to put the money in the envelope as a way to cool the building. It was suggested that most of the windows should be on the north façade for the view and as a better solar response.

Most of the Panel thought the painted concrete was a bit underwhelming and monotonous and suggested adding brick or other material details to make the façade look richer. However, a few panel members felt that an honest concrete expression was fine for a small tower and related to the neighbouring context.

The Panel thought the lane needed some attention to make it more urban with a stronger identity. Also they thought there needed to be some work with amenity rooms.

Some of the Panel suggested the applicant include more sustainable measures and suggested having a system to capture rain water for irrigation.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Leung noted that the orientation of the building has always been a challenge. He added that it is only a preliminary design for the rezoning and is still a work in progress. Mr. Leung thanked the Panel for their comments adding that the Panel made a lot of good suggestions that they will take under consideration.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.