

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: March 21, 2012

TIME: N/A

PLACE: N/A

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Robert Barnes
Helen Besharat (Chair)
Daryl Condon
Vincent Dumoulin
Veronica Gillies
David Grigg (Item #1 & #2)
Bruce Hemstock
Arno Matis
Geoff McDonell
Norm Shearing

REGRETS:
Gregory Borowski
Peter Wreglesworth
Alan Endall

RECORDING SECRETARY: Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	6010-6050 Oak Street
2.	1699 Main Street
3.	189 Keefer Street
4.	1388 Continental Street

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Romses called the business meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. Anita Molaro welcomed the incoming Panel members and notified the outgoing Panel members that this was their last meeting. She explained that because of time constraints, the outgoing Panel members and staff would get together at a later date to thank them for their contribution to the Urban Design Panel. Mr. Romses then noted the presence of a quorum and the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. **Address:** 6010-6050 Oak Street
DE: N/A
Use: To permit the construction of 19 market townhouse suites on three lots. The proposed development would comprise 5-storeys, have a maximum height of 37.5 feet, and would include underground parking. Proposed 2,739.5 square meters of total floor space area, with 20% bonus density option, for a total FSR of 1.2, in exchange for public benefits.
Zoning: RS-1 to CD-1
Application Status: Rezoning
Review: First
Architect: Yamamoto Architecture Inc.
Owner: 0880041 BC Ltd.
Delegation: Taizo Yamamoto, Yamamoto Architecture Inc.
 Yoshi Mikamo, Yamamoto Architecture Inc.
 Meredith Mitchell, M2 Landscape Architecture
 Yi Ugi Xuan, 0880041 BC Ltd.
Staff: Devon Rowcliffe and Paul Cheng

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)**Introduction:**

Devon Rowcliffe, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for the 6000 block of Oak Street between West 44th and West 45th Avenues. He described the policy for the area noting that the site is in a "High Priority Sub-Area" and calls for multi-family residential. Under the Green Buildings Policy for Rezoning, the applicant is required to meet LEED™ Gold with a minimum of 63 points or Built Green BC Platinum. The proposal also needs to have community amenity contributions in the form of childcare facilities, non-market housing or park acquisition and development. Mr. Rowcliffe noted that the applicant hasn't made an allocation decision as yet.

Paul Cheng, Development Planner, further described the proposal noting that the site is on the east side of Oak Street with 189 feet of frontage. Mr. Cheng described the context for the area. There have been a number of rezonings in the area to create more substantial new multiple dwellings in keeping with the typical row-housing topology. The proposal is for 19 townhouse units in four buildings with shared underground parking for 26 parking spaces access from the lane. It will be three to four storeys high with flat roofs and a contemporary expression. There is access to the roof gardens. Mr. Cheng noted that there is a substantial grade change across the site from Oak Street down to the lane. He also noted that the tandem parking spaces were not accepted by Engineering Services and will now be used for storage. The parkade has been designed to preserve a significant conifer tree in the middle of the streetscape.

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

- Is the proposed streetscape design including tree retention successful in incorporating the proposed height into this context?
- Are the different edge conditions well resolved considering the proposed landscape design, setbacks, lane entries, side yards and parkade structure?
- Is the scale and overlook to nearby houses appropriate handled?
- Is the landscape design sufficient in terms of providing a staggered wall/fence buffer along busy Oak Street?

Mr. Rowcliffe and Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Taizo Yamamoto, Architect, further described the proposal noted that there are a few constraints with the site. He said they are trying to take advantage of the site by using the extra height that they have at the back to develop a new type of unit with a lock in-suite for a potential rental unit for each of the rear units. This would allow for more affordable housing stock within the area. At the front of the site they are trying to create enough space to preserve the tree and to have a larger element in the streetscape. As well they want to break up the somewhat relentless rhythm of the streetwall that had been established by the existing townhouse development along the street. Mr. Yamamoto said they are asking for some additional height in the centre of the site as they feel it works with the larger scale streetscape and especially with the scale of the tree. He added that are trying to introduce a contemporary solution that would be counter point to the traditional Tudor style that is happening in the area.

Meredith Mitchell, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans noting the large pine tree that they wanted to use as a feature with the architecture. To create more of an entry they created a water feature to for some sound to buffer the traffic noise and to make the entry more welcoming. There are existing trees on the perimeter which will be retained. Individual entries have been created along the street frontage with gates. There are a series of planters in the internal space with two different heights to separate it from the semi-public walkway. There is also a good size amenity with a seating area. On the lane side there are small patios with individual yard entries and fencing and a gate. There are also street trees running along the lane.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Further design development on the lane expression;
- Improve design of the gate/fence expression;
- Consider eliminating the pedestrian connection through the site.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and liked the contemporary approach to the design.

The Panel supported the form and density and thought the proposal was well resolved and was a good approach with the addition of the rental units off the lane. The Panel supported the height however one Panel member suggested creating another step in the façade or reducing the mass as the height is not typical of the area.

Several Panel members thought the lane expression seemed to have lost some of the strength in the design and should improve. The Panel thought the same amount of care should be taken on the lane as with the front expression and that it should transition better to the neighbours across the lane.

The Panel supported the landscape plans but felt the gate/fence expression could be broken up. They supported retaining the large tree and thought it was a good move. Several Panel members didn't understand why there was a pedestrian connection on either side of the building and suggested removing them. One Panel member was concerned with the pine tree and thought the project was inside the critical root zone and suggested the applicant check it again. One Panel member thought that the central amenity needed to be moved more to the center of the space to get more sun.

Considering there is a lot of noise on Oak Street, one Panel member thought more should be done at the entry with the water feature and suggested it be moved further in otherwise it will be drowned out by the vehicle noise. One Panel member suggested there was an opportunity to integrate some public art as well.

Regarding sustainability, some of the Panel thought the sustainability strategy could be improved as there wasn't anything innovative in the design. A couple of Panel members would like to have had the Built Green score card in the package. One Panel member suggested adding operable windows for natural ventilation as high volume areas and as well solar shading on the west façade.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Yamamoto said he appreciated the Panel comments and that they will continue developing the project.

2.	Address:	1699 Main Street
	DE:	411865
	Use:	To construct a 231 unit residential/commercial development consisting of one 15-storey midrise and one 5-storey townhouse connected to a 10-storey midrise all over 4 levels of underground parking. Note: the townhouse is connected from level 3 and up and the commercial retail CRU is on level 1 of the 10 storey midrise.
	Zoning:	M-2
	Application Status:	Complete
	Review:	Fourth
	Architect:	Chris Dikeakos Architecture
	Owner:	Onni Group
	Delegation:	Chris Dikeakos, Chris Dikeakos Architecture Robert Duke, Chris Dikeakos Architecture Gerry Eckford, ETA Landscape Architects Michael MacKay, Onni Group
	Staff:	Dale Morgan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

Introduction:

Dale Morgan, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a 231 unit residential building with a 15-storey, 10 storey and 5-storey towers. The site is in the rail yard Neighbourhood of Southeast False Creek. The property was rezoned to allow for two extra partial storeys from 13 to 15 and from 8 to 10. Mr. Morgan noted that the proposal had been reviewed twice before by the Panel. The first review the proposal received non-support and was supported at the second review. The site is a full block between Quebec and Main Streets along East 1st Avenue. The site has a curving frontage along the rail spur and terminates at a blunted point of reduced frontage on Main Street. Mr. Morgan described the context for the area and noted that another development has been recently approved along the rail spur.

The development is organized into three blocks of buildings; the 15-storey residential tower at the west of the site, a 5-storey mid-rise residential building mid block and a 10-storey mixed-use building with commercial uses at grade and residential uses above. Vehicle access will be off the rail spur and integrated within the 15-storey tower.

The public realm will be in accordance with SEFC Public Realm Planning, Transportation and Environment guidelines with a continuous row of trees on all frontages. There will be layered landscape edges for the townhouses and a roof top garden with intensive and extensive green roofs are proposed. The applicant will be pursuing LEED™ Silver.

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

- Massing:** Is the massing well handled? Are the large floor plates have enough articulation to break down the scale of the large floor plates of the tower form
- Expression:** Are all frontages given the same attention and detail with particular concern of the lane frontage?

Mr. Morgan took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Robert Duke, Architect, further described the proposal noting that the site is within the rail precinct of the southeast False Creek area. He described the architecture noting the building form, material and colour palette which has been developed from this history. There is a retail component that turns the corner onto East 1st Avenue and onto the lane. The commercial loading and garbage is directly off the retail. There is a lobby for commercial parking with direct access from the parkade. The residential lobby is off the pedestrian link with an amenity space on the north portion of the site. The elevator core is shared between middle and east building and has been located to allow lighting into the lobby. The two storey townhouses face north and south with direct access of East 1st Avenue and off the outdoor amenity courtyard. There is a small courtyard in front of the western building. There are penthouse units proposed on the top two floors which are stepped back.

Gerry Eckford, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans. He said they have responded to the character of the rail yard and used that as a governing factor in the landscape plans. For the public realm they are looking at emphasizing the historical character with elements representing trains. They have also introduced the water line that comes through the site. The main pedestrian circulation comes through the site which lines up with the project across the street. There is a green wall proposed on either ends of the townhouse units. The upper levels will have a green house in the center of the bridge for the community gardens. As well there are amenity open spaces.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Design development to have the project relate better to the lane by expressing the rail yard and shoreline past in the project;
- Consider materials that are more industrial;
- Consider emphasizing the curve of the rail spur;
- Consider opportunities for cyclists to stop;
- The public art should be robust and exciting;
- Consider improving the sustainability strategy.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thought the design was well handled.

The Panel thought the project had improved since the last review and supported the massing and the additional height and thought the design fit the neighbourhood. One Panel member thought there was a lost opportunity in that the building did not acknowledge the shaping of the rail spur or at least addressing it in the architecture. A couple of Panel members were disappointed that the shoreline treatment stopped at the site as they felt it was also an important element that could be expressed. A couple of Panel member thought the larger tower could use some further articulation.

Some of the Panel had some concerns on with how the public would interact with the development. They noted that there wasn't a connection with the industrial past in the materials. They wanted to see a more dramatic expression that would be obvious to the public. They suggested using rougher materials such as metal elements and wood.

Since 1st Avenue is a bike route, some of the Panel thought there should be some way that people on bikes could stop, maybe have a coffee or perhaps see some artifacts reminiscent of the railroad topology. They also thought there should be some seating spaces available and a space for children.

A couple of Panel members thought that expression could be used in a public art piece and wanted to see it as a dynamic and exciting piece. One Panel member suggested public art to

the blank walls on the west side with the use of precast panels or some sculptural element. As well this could be used on the blank walls on the lane side.

Most of the Panel thought it was unfortunate that the project didn't relate better to the lane as they felt this was the only true historical part of the site. Some of the Panel thought the courtyard was another lost opportunity where the rail yards could be expressed. They also thought it could be brightened up perhaps with some green walls or other plantings. One Panel member was concerned with the green wall and didn't think it was sustainable.

A couple of Panel members were concerned with the thermal bridging and noted that the LEED™ chart was only showing two energy points which won't meet the development permit requirements.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Duke thought the Panel had some great points and thanked them for their feedback. He added that they are looking forward to continuing to improve the project.

3.	Address:	189 Keefer Street
	DE:	415496
	Use:	The proposal is to construct a new mixed use building containing commercial use on the ground and mezzanine floors and 81 residential units on the 2nd and 9th floor over 3 levels of underground parking.
	Zoning:	HA-1A
	Application Status:	Complete
	Review:	First
	Architect:	Rafii Architects
	Owner:	Solterra
	Delegation:	Foad Rafii, Rafii Architects Jennifer Stamp, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects Craig Marcyniuk, Solterra
	Staff:	Garry Papers

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)**Introduction:**

Garry Papers, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a project on Main Street at Keefer Street and located in Chinatown. The site is in the special sub area that allows heights up to 150 feet however the applicants have elected to stay with the base zoning that allows for a height up to 90 feet. The ground floor is largely commercial with services off the lane and will wrap the corner to activate the lane. There is a mezzanine above the commercial with eight levels of residential above for a total of 81 units. There are also three levels of underground parking. There are three levels of roof gardens; a small garden on the second level off the amenity space, on the third level on the northwest corner and an extensive roof garden on the top of the building with a elevator/stair override and small utility room to provide for urban agriculture support. The site is subject to the Chinatown HA-1A Design Guidelines. Mr. Papers summarized some of the guidelines that pertain to the site. He noted that staff feel there has been a thoughtful response to the Guidelines. The design expression is crisp and contemporary. Mr. Papers noted that the proposal will be reviewed by two heritage bodies (Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee [CHAPC] and the Vancouver Heritage Commission) as well as the Development Permit Board. He added that CHAPC was enthusiastic in their support and felt it was a good response to the Guidelines. They did have some comments on materiality and some mixed comments on the clock tower feature. The proposal got unanimous support from the commission.

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

- The extent of painted concrete facades in a heritage district, their color and the material continuity along the lane elevation and the visible party wall of the north elevation?
- The three dimensional resolution of the brick piers, trellises, privacy screens and other elements at the top of the 65-70 foot base?
- The composition, streetscale and materiality (painted concrete) of the corner, and the clock tower as a minor, height exception, special feature?

Mr. Papers took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Foad Rafii, Architect, further described the proposal noting the Chinatown Guidelines are specific about dividing the elevations vertically to look like different buildings sitting side by side. They have used different materials to divide the building and as well after the seventh floor there is a setback and one at the eighth floor. They introduced lighter colours to the base and the top of the building to reduce the weight of the building. The amenity on the second floor has a garden which has been stepped back. At the top of the building two floors have been cut back on both the west and north side. Mr. Rafii said he thought that turning the brick onto the lane façade could be an issue with getting permission from the neighbour as they would need to be on their property to add the bricks. However with painted concrete they would be able to use scaffolding that wouldn't impact the property next door. He said they plan to use a compatible colour with the painted concrete that resembles the brick. Mr. Rafii said they have chosen colours that are a modern interpretation of the historical colours. He added that the balcony railings and detailing are simple and modern.

Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect described the landscape plans. She explained that in order to buffer the adjacent building wall from the amenity patio they have looked at putting a trellis along the building face to provide some screening. On the top floor they have tried to break it up into several different rooms. There are plans for an outdoor kitchen area and lounge that is separated from the garden plots. As well a small children's play area and some lawn are proposed.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Design development to match the painted concrete to the brick colour;
- Consider having the brick turn the corner into the lane façade;
- Consider adding more durable materials on the lane side;
- Design development for major improvement of the clock tower expression;
- Change corner building materials to brick below the clock tower;
- Remove the trellises from the upper floors and improve design.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was a handsome building.

The Panel thought the painted concrete was supportable but cautioned that the colour choice would have to be well done to match the brick material. They agreed that brick would be wasted on the side of the building if another building was developed next door. Several Panel members thought the brick should turn the corner on the lane to give it a more robust expression. A couple of Panel members said they liked the way the massing was broken up.

Several Panel members wanted to see some different materials on the lane side as it is an area for potential graffiti. They suggested the materials needed to be more durable although one Panel member suggested not using brick as it is harder to clean. Another Panel member suggested the applicant consider a mural or other public art on the side window as the area is prone to graffiti.

The Panel had mixed feelings about the clock tower. Several thought it could be a more dominate feature, while most of the Panel thought the setback didn't make sense. They wanted to see the clock tower expressed right down to grade. One Panel members suggested the applicant make sure the clock face fitted the Chinatown vernacular.

The Panel supported the landscaping with a couple of Panel members noting that deck 2 and 3 were in a shady location and suggested the applicant maximize the usability. Most of the Panel thought the trellises should be removed.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Rafii thanked the Panel for their good comments. He said they would work on implementing as many of the ideas as possible. He noted that he can't recall any building where the brick turns the corner in Chinatown. He said they want the building to be more in keeping with what is already there. He agreed with the comments regarding the lane as they want those units to be liveable.

4.	Address:	1388 Continental Street
	DE:	415460
	Use:	The proposal is for the construction of a 10-storey 89 unit STIR residential building with commercial at grade over two levels of underground parking. this is a concurrent rezoning/development permit application.
	Zoning:	DD
	Application Status:	Rezoning/Complete
	Review:	First
	Architect:	IBI/HB Architects
	Owner:	Cressey Development
	Delegation:	Martin Bruckner, IBI/HB Architects Jennifer Stamp, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects David Evans, Cressey Development Daniel Roberts, Kane Consulting
	Staff:	Anita Molaro

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-1)**Introduction:**

Ian Cooper, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a development on the west side of Granville Street beside the south-bound Granville Street Bridge. It is a concurrent rezoning and development application. He noted that the rezoning was needed to increase the density and the height of the building. The application is for a 10-storey rental apartment building with some ground floor retail and one level of underground parking. It is located in the downtown, sub-area 54 where the guidelines suggest a maximum height of 300 feet. The site is also affected by the Granville Loops Policy Plan where residential uses are emphasized and the Short Term Incentives for Rental (STIR) program. The proposal must meet the Rezoning for Greener Buildings (LEED™ Silver).

Anita Molaro, Development Planner, further described the proposal noting the context for the area. The proposal is for 89 market rental rents with commercial units on Granville Street. She explained that the proposal has to accommodate the existing grade conditions and be adaptable to a future condition when the Granville Loops are removed. The grade of Neon Street will change to rise up to meet the elevation of the Granville Bridge deck. There is an interim arrangement to provide a pedestrian crosswalk/stairs along the frontage. As part of the Granville Loops policy the open corner treatment was intended as part of the public open space for the area.

The policy describes an urban design intent to create a “valley gateway” with lower building massing located on the Granville Street sites relating to massing permitted further north along Granville Street. Within the policy this site was identified for a general height of 70 feet, however flexibility in the maximum heights should be considered to a modest extent where there can be significant improvement in building form.

The proposal is seeking a maximum height of 90 feet with sculpting at the floors above 70 feet to address the relationship with the adjacent Best Western Hotel. The separation achieved above 70 feet to the elevator core is 24 feet.

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

Rezoning application attributes:

- form of development including:
 - height (90 feet)
 - density (6.99 FSR)
 - overall building massing within the neighbourhood context
 - view impacts from adjacent building

Development application attributes:

- overall architectural expression within the neighbourhood context
- proposed materials quality and treatments for the various facades including interior façade facing adjacent property
- sustainability attributes (LEED™ Silver)
- detailed landscape treatments

Mr. Cooper and Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Martin Bruckner, Architect, noted that it will be a rental building under the STIR program. He stated that they wanted the building to fit into its context but to have as much efficiency as possible. On the lower floors there will be 24 feet of separation from the hotel and then above the 70 foot mark the upper floors are carved away for better views. He noted that the impact of the building is only on a couple of rooms in the hotel. They have designed some architectural character to the wall facing the hotel to make it less of a blank wall. The unit plans are above the minimum for STIR projects with 420 square feet for the studios which face Granville Street. The one bedroom units are 550 to 600 square feet. Brick is proposed for the Granville Street façade with articulated bay windows and also composite cement board as a colour accent. The wall to window ratio will be below 40% for a passive way to address energy consumption. Mr. Bruckner noted that they are planning to meet LEED™ Silver for the project.

Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architects, described the landscape plans. There is a small amenity deck on the north side of the building and there is also a large deck for a common amenity on Level 9. She noted that currently there aren't any trees planned for Granville Street until the built condition occurs.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Design development to the Neon façade component;
- Consider using a more permanent material for the canopies;
- Consider improving the sustainability strategy;
- Consider adding public art in the landscaping.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal but felt there was room for improvement.

The Panel supported the height, density and massing. Several Panel members thought the proposal needed more work regarding the Neon façade component and thought the sign could be more simple in design. Several Panel members thought the façade next to the hotel was ominous and needed some improvements and reveals to make it more sympathetic to the hotel. One Panel member thought the cornice could be broken up to reduce the tightness in the expression. A couple of Panel members were concerned with the red materials and thought they might fade over time.

Most of the Panel were concerned with the temporary nature of using canvas for the canopy and wanted to see a more permanent type of material used. One Panel member suggested using colored glass.

The Panel felt that the sustainability strategy could be improved and suggested the applicant go further than LEED™ Silver as they will need more when they apply for their building permit. One Panel member thought the window and curtain walls could be improved to make the envelope and energy requirements especially on the western facade.

A couple of Panel members thought the small public parkette was in a dark north corner and needed to be made as green as possible. One Panel member suggested adding conventional street trees along Granville Street and as well level 9 could use some functional programming and greenery. Several Panel members thought it was a lost opportunity that there wasn't any roof top access. A couple of Panel member suggested adding some public art to enhance the landscaping.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Bruckner thought the Panel had made some important observations and added that he appreciated their suggestions. He noted that they will be using Swiss pearl for the colour panels for a long lasting colour.

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.