

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: March 29, 2006

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Walter Francl, Chair
Margot Long
Nigel Baldwin
Albert Bicol (Items 1 & 2 only)
Shahla Bozorgzadeh
Tom Bunting
James Cheng
Bill Harrison
Eileen Keenan
John Wall
C.C. Yao

REGRETS: Peter Wreglesworth

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Debbie Kempton

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	833 Seymour Street (819 Seymour) Capitol 6
2.	535 & 565 Smithe Street
3.	1655-79 West 3 rd Avenue

BUSINESS MEETING

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

1. Address: 833 Seymour Street (819 Seymour) Capital 6
DA: 410152
Use: Mixed (42 storeys)
Zoning: DD
Application Status: Preliminary
Architect: Howard Bingham Hill
Owner: Orpheum Condominium Properties Ltd.
Review: First
Delegation: John Bingham, Doug Nelson, Gerry Eckford
Staff: Ralph Segal

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (10-0)

Introduction: Ralph Segal, Development Planner, presented this preliminary application for the redevelopment of the former Capitol 6 site on Seymour Street. Mr. Segal said that this proposal for a 42-storey, predominately residential building, contains a very important series of cultural amenities which include an addendum to the Orpheum Theatre stage area and an expansion to the back of house facilities for the Orpheum. In addition, the proposal includes a full rehearsal hall and a School of Musical Excellence which are in association with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. These cultural amenity bonuses resulted in a density transfer to bring the FSR to 18.79 from the zoned 5 FSR.

Mr. Segal noted that Council approved the density transfer and cultural amenity bonus and concluded that the proposed height of 413 ft. was acceptable. Mr. Segal said that the zoning allows for 300 ft. of height with discretionary height increase up to 450 ft. The impacts, in terms of shadows and views, are believed to be acceptable in exchange for the cultural amenity package that is being provided.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- Tower shape/character/expression, given its prominence;
- Tower/podium transition;
- Seymour Streetscape, including integration with the Orpheum;
- Seymour Public Realm treatment (sidewalk & setback area).

Applicant's Introductory Comments: John Bingham, Architect, said this is an important development that will provide additional infrastructure to the Orpheum and rejuvenate its operating style. In addition, this development will provide a music school, loading for the Orpheum and a rehearsal space which will make it a more dynamic facility with an improved realm.

Gerry Eckford, Landscape Architect, described the landscape scheme. Mr. Eckford said that he has built the landscape plan around a musical theme with a more whimsical quality. He also noted that the applicant team is in discussion with the City to find out how many granite cobbles are available to use for the lane treatment to create a higher quality texture along the lane from Robson Street to Smithe Street. The design team responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel Consensus:**

- Simplify the tower expression by editing the architectural vocabulary, particularly in the upper reaches of the tower;
- Give further consideration to the transition of the tower and the integration of the podium. The Seymour façade expression should operate on the scale of the Orpheum façade, which is a very large and monumental brick facade;
- The parking entrance, although an unconventional point of entry, was supported with the proviso that it should be more elaborately integrated into the podium design.

- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel unanimously supported this application. There was general support from the Panel for the height, floor plate sizes, the form being expressed and the general shape of the tower; however there was a request for some editing to simplify the tower expression, particularly in the upper reaches of the tower, so that the overall form blends more successfully with the neighbouring commercial towers.

The Panel strongly supported the Seymour Streetscape, the lanes and the notion to push them as far as the Applicant team is willing, and to include elements such as lighting and to take those elements around the corner. Two Panel members suggested that the intermediate, second, third and fourth floor blocks of uses be expressed at a larger scale and in materials that are more sympathetic to the Orpheum itself. It was also suggested that perhaps the massing and datums established at the Orpheum find their way into the base of the tower.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bingham said there is some opportunity for the applicant team to integrate the valuable commentary from the Panel.

2. Address: 535 & 565 Smithe Street
DA: 409900 & 409895
Use: Mixed (31 storeys, 197 units & 28 storeys, 118 units)
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete/Rezoning
Architect: Merrick
Owner: Solterra Downtown Holdings
Review: First
Delegation: Paul Merrick, Greg Borowski, Jennifer Stamp, Lutz Haufschild
Staff: Francisco Molina

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-4)

- **Introduction:** Francisco Molina, Development Planner, presented this complete application after a rezoning process. There are two separate applications which will be reviewed in combination. The applications propose mixed-use development in the CD-1 zone with a height limitation of 300 ft. on Richards Street and 270 ft. on Seymour Street. Mr. Molina said that the proposed heights meet the rezoning conditions.

Mr. Molina noted that this proposal is located at the transition between two areas of the Downtown District; the residential component to the south and the business district to the north. The Seymour Street frontage is 150 ft. with retail at the ground level and micro-offices on the upper levels; while the Richards Street frontage is 200 ft. with a combination of live/work and retail in the lower levels. Some of the existing public parking on this site will be replaced with new public parking spaces provided in the new development, with access from Seymour Street.

The shadow analysis indicates that there will not be an impact on the area of Library Square and there will be no additional impact on views to the north shore mountains. Mr. Molina said that an important detail of this application is the proposed main access to the residential lobby from the porte-cochere. He said that there will be two additional access points to the lobby of the residential towers on each side of the lane on Smithe Street; as well the Richards Street tower will provide a secondary access from that street. The porte-cochere is a large; double-height area created on the lane and will also provide access to the residential underground parking for both towers.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- Overall character of the towers;
- Podium and towers architectural integration. Massing relationship, proportions, colour and materials;
- Overall integration of the various architectural elements in the podium;
- Architectural expression of the podium façade on Seymour Street including integration of public art as a continuous feature on the west side elevation facing the Orpheum and extension of the commercial frontage character at street level;
- Overall quality of the porte-cochere at the lane as the main entrance to residential towers while also serving as passenger drop-off area, access to underground parking and services, and residential/commercial loading. Issues of uses, scale, proportions, lighting and pavement;
- Multiple access points to the lobby of the two towers. Main entrance to the towers provided from the lane and from the foyer on Smithe Street;

- Entrance to micro-offices and public parking right beside the entrance foyer to the residential towers on Smith Street;
 - Closeness of lower levels of Seymour Street tower to potential future development to the north.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Paul Merrick, Architect, provided some history on how the accommodation of the public parkade developed and became a part of this proposal. Mr. Merrick, along with Lutz Haufschild, the Artist, described in detail the proposed 3-storey high, half a block long piece of glass art work that will be introduced on Seymour Street to screen the parkade.

Greg Borowski, Merrick Architecture, briefly reviewed the porte-cochere and said that the idea is to create the sense of a piazza extending across the lane. Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect, reviewed the public realm aspects of the scheme, as well as the on-site landscaping treatments being proposed. The design team responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel Consensus:**

- Further design development recommended to the porte-cochere, particularly the dark colours employed, the shaping of the interior, lack of natural light, light penetration, whether it is an interior space or half-covered exterior space, the scale and volume, the paving treatment, and the suggestion that perhaps it should be lifted to loft it a little higher;
- Give consideration to the lobby entrance from Richards Street. It seemed poorly connected to the circulation and entry within the building;
- Give further consideration to the Smithe and Seymour streetscapes. The streetscapes seemed poorly developed and not particularly sympathetic to some of the streetscapes being developed across the street for the Orpheum. There is a lost opportunity, in terms of the amount of surface treatment and planting;
- Concerns that the north amenity space will receive too much shade and therefore will be underutilized.

- **Panel Commentary:**

The Panel supported this application. The majority of the Panel members supported the overall massing and general architectural expression, as well as the differentiation in height between the two towers. Some Panel members suggested further refinement to the architecture to better integrate the expression. The Panel supported the differentiation of brick or solid facades versus the glazed interior facades of the building. There was general approval for the form of the circulation of entry into the building through the porte-cochere and major points of entry and connection across the lane.

The public art was well received although some Panel members felt it may obscure the intention of the parkade. Signage and way finding for the parkade will be important. There was some discussion about how the glass artwork might be inserted into the architecture.

A panel member suggested opening the retail onto the glass corridors to provide animation. It was also suggested to consider a glass cover over the porte-cochere to bring the canopy down at a lower level.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Merrick thanked the Panel for their valuable comments and said that he appreciated the distinction between the areas of the proposal that were supported and others that needed further thought.

3. Address: 1655 - 79 West 3 Avenue
Use: Mixed
Zoning: IC-1 to CD-1
Application Status: Rezoning
Architect: Hywel Jones
Owner: 142 Taurus Ventures Ltd.
Review: First
Delegation: Hywel Jones, Jonathan Losee
Staff: Michael Naylor

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction:** Michael Naylor, Rezoning Planner, presented this application on behalf of Mary Beth Rondeau the Development Planner. Mr. Naylor said this is a rezoning application for a site on the corner of 3rd Avenue and Pine Street in the Burrard Slopes area. The proposal includes three buildings with 1 FSR of residential and 1 FSR of commercial use on a site with a 350 ft. frontage. The residential use is measured across the entire site and then massed in one building. The proposed height is 50 ft. with the top two storeys on 3rd Avenue stepped back.

Mr. Naylor noted that the centre building is an existing 2-storey industrial building that will be converted to office use with the office parking located in the mixed-use retail and residential building. The building on Pine Street will be a vehicle dealer and service building similar to the existing Porsche dealership across the street.

Staff are requesting an end treatment on the mixed-use building and may also request an increase in the amount of parapet on the car dealership. In addition a 5 ft. setback is being requested on Pine Street to enhance the pedestrian environment.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- Use, density and form;
 - The size of the elevator penthouse which provides access to the roof deck and whether the size should be scaled down.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Hywel Jones, Architect, said the proposal respects the Guidelines of setbacks, heights, roofs, shoulders and industrial expression. He said that the automotive dealership fits within the present IC-1 zone and the existing building will be retained and converted to an office building; thereby preserving some of the grain of the street.
 - **Panel Commentary:**
The Panel unanimously supported this application. There was strong support from the Panel for the proposed use, density and form. The Panel appreciated that the existing building would be retained and integrated into the project for office use and supported the auto dealership at this location.

There was support for the height and size of the elevator overrun with several Panel members suggesting that it could be larger. It was also suggested that the Applicant consider providing some roof top amenities such as a barbeque area or gazebo. There was strong support from the Panel for the accessible roof top garden amenity space.

Several Panel members offered detailed suggestions for the Applicant's consideration as this proposal advances to the Development Permit stage as follows:

- Consider adding additional height to the residential building to achieve a floor to floor height that is higher than the standard 9 feet as proposed. This may add additional amenity to the long and narrow units;
 - Further development of the through block connection. Explore the possibility of an open air pedestrian passage from the parking through the residential building;
 - Further consideration of the blank cross wall condition between the proposed residential building and the existing building;
 - Further refinement to the residential expression to reflect the industrial quality of the area;
 - Consider replacing the street trees on 3rd Avenue.
- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Jones thanked the Panel for their comments and said that he will take them into account, particularly the suggestions regarding the cross wall and residential expression, as this application proceeds beyond the rezoning stage.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.