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URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

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**DATE:** March 5, 2003

**TIME:** 4.00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Walter Francl, Chair  
Helen Besharat  
Jeffrey Corbett (excused Item 3)  
Gerry Eckford  
Stuart Lyon  
Kim Perry  
Maurice Pez  
Sorin Tatomir

**REGRETS:** Richard Henry  
Joseph Hruda  
Reena Lazar  
Ken Terriss

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	455 West 8th Avenue (2300 Cambie)
2.	1305 Arbutus Street
3.	1280 Richards Street
4.	1900 West Georgia Street

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|---------------------|---|
| 1. Address:         | 455 West 8th Avenue (2300 Cambie)           |
| DA:                 | 407357                                      |
| Use:                | Mixed (Live-Work/Commercial)                |
| Zoning:             | C-3A  |
| Application Status: | Preliminary                                 |
| Architect:          | Nigel Baldwin                               |
| Owner:              | Grosvenor Canada Ltd.                       |
| Review:             | First                                       |
| Delegation:         | Nigel Baldwin, Jane Durante, Ryan Beechinor |
| Staff:              | Mary Beth Rondeau                           |
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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-1)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this preliminary application. The site comprises the block bounded by Cambie Street, 8th Avenue, Yukon Street and 7th Avenue in the C-3A zone. The proposal is for a community shopping centre comprising three floors of retail uses with 2-storey artist live/work studios above. Ms. Rondeau briefly described the proposal, noting it achieves the 25 ft. setback and small-scale retail recommended in the guidelines for Cambie Street. The entry to the residential units is off 8th Avenue. Artist Live/Work is the only type of residential use that can be supported in this sub-area of C-3A because of its adjacency to the industrial area to the east. The proposal seeks the maximum 3.0 FSR, which must be earned. The guidelines call for a 30 ft. high podium on Cambie Street, stepping back 25 ft. and increasing to 90 ft. The maximum height of the proposal is approximately 90 ft.

The areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought relate to:

- whether the proposal earns the height and density requested;
- treatment of the Cambie Street setback;
- view impacts on the XL building to the south.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Nigel Baldwin, Architect, described the design rationale. He noted that this proposal is similar to the Future Shop development on West Broadway in that the proportions of retail and residential are very similar although it is a little more than twice its area. He explained that the live/work studios are double-height with through ventilation. Two-thirds of the suites are accessed directly from the courtyard, and the intent is that the courtyard will become private work space for the resident artists. There is a second level of two-storey units along Cambie Street and extending half a block down 7th and 8th Avenues. With respect to height, Mr. Baldwin said the intention is that, with finetuning, the height will meet the maximum 90 ft. They do not wish to achieve this by reducing the floor-to-floor heights of the retail, noting that 18 ft. ceiling height is already very modest for the type of retail use proposed. Locating the live/work units at the perimeter provides activity on the streets as well as creating double-ventilated suites. Mr. Baldwin briefly reviewed the view diagrams and noted that they will work to refine view impacts on the XL building.

The Landscape Architect, Jane Durante, briefly described the open space plan and the design team responded to the Panel's questions.

- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application as a preliminary submission and most Panel members thought it earned the height and density requested. It was also thought to respond very well to the guidelines.

The Panel strongly supported the proposed treatment along Cambie Street. One Panel member thought the stepping might be a bit of an obstacle for pedestrians and suggested it be limited to one or two unit frontages, but most Panel members liked the terracing as proposed. There was a suggestion to do two different treatments for the sidewalk, or having benches facing the building rather than the street. Also, to bring the bus stop into the project in some way. Another suggestion for the Cambie setback was to consider introducing overhead doors to gain more transparency and exposure.

Most of the Panel's comments related to the courtyard and the artists live/work studios at the upper levels. There was general support for the units around the perimeter and preserving the integrity of a single, large courtyard. The architect and the landscape architect were encouraged to work closely together as the project proceeds. Comments were made that the courtyard should be less of a designed space in order to provide flexibility for the artists in residence. Concerns were expressed about the rigorous appearance of the units and suggestions made to break down the scale by introducing some variety into the units and paying attention to detailing around the unit entries. There were also suggestions to open up the corners to allow some light through onto the street below as well as offer a glimpse of the courtyard for people on the street. Some cover for the decks was recommended to improve the livability of the units, particularly those facing Cambie Street. Some Panel members questioned the rationale for the higher element on the western edge.

The Panel was sympathetic to the XL residents' loss of views. However, the Panel did not believe this project should be restricted in height to maintain views that will inevitably be lost, especially noting that it responds fully to what the guidelines suggest for this site. Some Panel members strongly recommended providing an opening in the courtyard to allow for the XL residents to enjoy the garden.

One Panel member recommended distinguishing the residential from the commercial along 8th Avenue, even bringing the courtyard down to the street with a planted wall. A suggestion was made to explore another entry to the residential component on 7th Avenue.

The Panel noted the importance of signage on this project. Concerns were expressed about the signage intruding on the residents and a recommendation that it be limited to the commercial levels. Some members found the corner signage inappropriate and too commercial.

A recommendation was made that greater consideration be given to the bikeway along 7th Avenue with the provision of a bike rack and a place for cyclists to stop.

With respect to the restaurant, a recommendation was made to pull it around the corner onto 8th Avenue and off Cambie Street.

In general, the Panel thought the project was very nicely handled and showing a lot of promise for a preliminary submission. The Panel recognized that it is a very important project that will set a precedent in an area which has long been neglected.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Baldwin thanked the Panel for the comments and advice. The residential units will be more differentiated with design development, creating more variety on both the inside and the outside of the courtyard. He agreed the units are not yet fine tuned.

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2. Address:	1305 Arbutus Street
DA:	407191
Use:	Mixed (Restaurant)
Zoning:	RS-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Anthony A. Robins
Owner:	Vancouver Park Board
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Tony Robins, John Hemsworth, Jane Durante
Staff:	Scot Hein

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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-1)

- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Development Planner, presented this application. The Panel did not support the proposal when it was first reviewed on February 5, 2003. The uses were unanimously supported and the concerns related to the form of development. The Panel's previous concerns were briefly reviewed, followed by a description of how they have been addressed in this revised submission. The concerns related to the quality of the east elevation, the building as viewed from the driveway, the breezeway opening through the building, the expression of the lifeguard turret, the length of the building, its mass and its siting, articulation of the washroom/lifeguard wall and entrance to the restaurant. Mr. Hein noted that with respect to programming, there needs to be close adjacency for families using the facilities, particularly from the beach side where it is necessary to have surveillance of both the concession area and the changeroom area, and noting that the concession and the restaurant above share some of the kitchen facilities.

The advice of the Panel is sought as to whether the applicant has effectively responded to the previous concerns.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Anthony Robins, Architect, briefly reviewed the public consultation that took place prior to the development permit application. This included a four day public tent on the beach to survey people last summer. 400 people completed the survey, with 89 percent approval. Several meetings have been held with the Kits Point Residents' Association who provided a list of 11 requirements, ten of which have been satisfied. The hours of operation are not yet resolved. Individual residents have also been consulted concerning their potential view blockage. Mr. Robins noted that from the outset the building has been redesigned several times to accommodate various concerns, including noise for which the restaurant deck has been moved to the southwest. Several drastic changes were made to accommodate, as much as possible, all the neighbours. As well, more recently, they have moved the building even further away from Creelman in response to another neighbour who has only recently expressed concern about view blockage.

Mr. Robins said they have paid intensive care to the earlier comments of the Panel and in response to input from the public. He briefly reviewed the changes, noting the building design has now reached a high level of completion and refinement. The amendments include:

- the size of the building has been reduced by 680 sq.ft. and 24 ft. 5 ½ in. in length;
- the view corridor through the building has been increased by bridging it with the fire exit. This creates a view corridor from the lane on Arbutus through to Creelman;
- the grounds yard has been drastically reduced in size to accommodate only two vehicles. This has

- allowed expansion of the green area to the east of the building and creation of a 360 degree walkway around of the building;
- the utilitarian fire escape on the east facade has been included in the envelope and the height has been reduced by lowering the ceiling height of the kitchen. A window and a 2 ft. soffit have been added to break down the scale of this facade. The galvanized steel sheeting has been eliminated and a wood screen added which slides to enclose the entry to the kitchen at night;
  - the width has been reduced by separating the aesthetic of the entry which is now a glass and fir box. This also addresses the concern about creating some interest when approaching from the driveway;
  - the stairs to the restaurant are now more substantial and clearly visible;
  - the building is intended to be a light building with the least imposition on the seawalk. However, some substance has been added with the complete redesign of the turret, including reducing its height to that of the existing turret. The turret anchors the space and reduces the dominance of the restaurant;
  - the building has been moved 17 ft. further away from the existing willow tree.

John Hemsworth described the redesigned lifeguard turret and noted the revised scheme now duplicates the footprint of the existing facilities. Jane Durante reviewed the landscape plan and the architect responded to the Panel's questions.

- **Panel's Comments:**

(Panel member, Gerry Eckford, Landscape Architect, prefaced his comments with a statement that he has lived in the Kits Point neighbourhood since 1974. He said he considered very carefully whether his residency placed him in a conflict of interest and concluded that his ability to provide a professional opinion was not compromised.)

The Panel strongly supported this submission and generally found it considerably improved since the first review. The Panel appreciated the amount of effort that had gone into responding to its earlier concerns and noted that major changes have been made to the proportion of the building and the materials. The Park Board and the design team were commended for setting the bar very high with regard to the quality of the architecture and for pursuing something worthwhile in this important location.

It was noted that pulling the building further back from the north is good not only for the sake of the willow tree but even more importantly for the axis down Creelman Street.

The majority of Panel members strongly supported the palette of modern materials proposed. Suggestions were made to introduce more wood to the north elevation. A comment was made that there might be too many materials, and some questions raised about the amount of concrete wall. It was suggested consideration be given to adding reveals or enlarging the sliding door to help break up the wall on the east elevation. It was also suggested there might be an opportunity, particularly on the north facade, for plant material to grow up the wall. A comment was made that special attention will need to be given to detailing where two different materials meet, and the architect was urged not to be too committed to the exact extent of the materials as the design evolves. The architect was also encouraged to be sensitive to detailing at the open exit stairs, and to properly express the fireplace in the design.

The applicant was cautioned to consider locations for vending machines, maps and signs and to incorporate them into the vocabulary of the building. It was noted that signage will be very important

and to ensure the lighting is not intrusive.

A suggestion was made to add seating areas between the building and the beach, possibly replicating some of the logs close to the building. One Panel member had some concerns about the use of removable tables and chairs and the barren appearance when they are absent. It was strongly suggested to consider designing more permanent seating, perhaps a combination of individual seating and a sitting wall.

A concern was voiced about the asphalt walkway and a recommendation for the plaza to extend out to the lawn, extending the stamped concrete without a division.

The Panel acknowledged that an important improvement has been made by opening up the slot through the building.

A number of comments were made about the lifeguard turret. Most Panel members found the proportion of the previous iteration more elegant and appropriate. It was suggested the turret is now too "bunkerish", although one Panel member commented that it is an interesting massing when viewed from the north. A number of suggestions were made to make the turret lighter and more expressive of its function.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Robins stressed the concession food will include healthy choices as well as the more typical menu. It will be operated by the same restaurateur as the main restaurant. With respect to the expression of the fireplace, he noted it will be in the centre of the dining area so will be less visible from the concourse. Regarding the amount of wood, Mr. Robins noted the soffits are all wood. He agreed they can look at adding more on the north elevation. Mr. Hemsworth explained the turret will not actually be used for lifeguarding which is done from an area to the right of it. Mr. Robins added they have considered the concrete walls and how to dapple shadows of leaves onto them.

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3. Address: 1280 Richards Street  
DA: 406694  
Use: Residential (27 storeys, 68 units)  
Zoning: DD  
Application Status: Complete  
Architect: Paul Merrick  
Owner: Grace Residence Ltd.  
Review: Second  
Delegation: Paul Merrick, James Schouw, Eva Lee  
Staff: Scot Hein
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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-1)

- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Development Planner, presented this complete application. In May 2002, the preliminary submission was unanimously supported by the Panel and it was subsequently approved in principle by the Development Permit Board. The Panel's initial review of the project focussed on the tower position, the general approach to the distribution of massing, the height of the podium and the interface with the Canadian Linen building directly to the north. Given these issues have now been established, the Panel's commentary at this complete stage should focus on the detailing and execution.

Mr. Hein briefly reviewed the current submission and noted the following specific areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought:

- interface with the Canadian Linen building;
  - architectural quality, materials and execution;
  - quality and location of the open space.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Paul Merrick, Architect, reviewed the areas of the concern raised at the preliminary stage and how they have been addressed in this submission, stressing the importance of the successful realisation of the architectural expression. He also described the materials and Eva Lee, Landscape Architect, noted the streetscape follows the Downtown South Guidelines. Mr. Merrick responded to the Panel's questions.
  - **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application. Comments were made that the scheme gets better with each iteration and that the very small floorplate is a refreshing departure for this part of the downtown. The applicant was commended for continuing with his vision for the project and refining it over time.

The transition element next to the Canadian Linen building was considered to be sensitively handled.

There were some questions about the necessity for the brick on the northern portion towards the Metropolis or, if it is maintained, whether it should be continued to the back of the building as well.

With respect to the architectural expression, one Panel member questioned the need for the three gables on the roof given they are quite small and not well proportioned relative to the window openings below. Several Panel members also questioned the proportion of the arch elements on the tower. One Panel member thought the windows and balconies on either side of the main building

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bay might be too fussy. With respect to the proportional elements on the tower, a comment was also made that there may not be enough solid to glazing. Another member thought there might be too many ornaments on the building.

The fabric canopies on the townhouse element were thought to be unsuccessful and unimproved since the previous submission.

It was noted there are still some difficult suites at the back of the building on the lane. There was a suggestion to consider putting an amenity at the lane level, overlooking the courtyard.

The Panel liked the open space treatment and the way the axis of the entrance has been picked up and incorporated into a formal element when looking through the building. The rooftops were also seen to be much improved and providing some interesting spaces.

In general, the Panel found the application much improved since the previous submission and looks forward to seeing the project proceed.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Merrick noted the brick is intended to be lighter than it appears on the rendering. Although the tower has ended up being more or less in the middle of the site, the subtle idiosyncrasies of the project will be enjoyable, over time. He agreed the treatment should be repeated on the lane and will occur. He also agreed that the canopies could benefit from further study in design development.



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|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 4. Address: | 1900 West Georgia Street    |
| WORKSHOP    |                             |
| Use:        | Residential                 |
| Zoning:     | RM-6                        |
| Architect:  | Paul Merrick                |
| Owner:      | Prima Prop. Ltd.            |
| Review:     | First                       |
| Delegation: | Paul Merrick, Greg Borowski |
| Staff:      | Jonathan Barrett            |
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Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, introduced this workshop discussion regarding the site at 1900 West Georgia Street. The proponents intend to challenge the existing guidelines for the four blocks, 1600, 1700, 1800 and 1900 West Georgia Street. The 1600, 1700 and 1800 blocks of West Georgia have been already developed. The 1900 block is probably the most important because it is at the end of the city, next to Stanley Park. It contains an existing building on the corner, the Ho building. The applicant wishes to explore whether the guidelines can be changed to achieve a development that is an appropriate gateway to the downtown and that fits in with the scale and cadence of Georgia Street, being Vancouver's principal ceremonial street.

Paul Merrick, Architect, stressed the proposal is in the very early stages of development. He noted the guidelines describe a proposal that was previously made and approved for the site, about ten years ago, and the aspirations articulated in the guidelines seem to be contradictory. Greg Borowski, Architect, gave a power-point presentation describing the explorations that were made into the guidelines and the impact of their application.

In the general discussion that ensued, the Panel's comments included the following:

- as a hinge element the corner is the stronger location for the tower;
  - putting the tower next to the Ho building creates a landmark tower;
  - putting it right next to the Ho building might be too close;
  - this is an icon corner but the Ho building is not an icon building;
  - this is an opportunity to take the focus off the Ho building;
  - none of the towers around this site are landmark quality so it would be exciting to see a landmark building terminating this important end of the city;
  - not sure the mural is wanted and loved by most citizens and it should not become a big feature in the design;
  - the east corner component should not be residential use;
  - support the tower in the west location but it crowds the Ho building;
  - some members of the public may consider the Ho building as being a significant little building;
  - agree the west end is the best location for the tower in terms of minimizing view impacts;
  - putting the tower next to the Ho building creates a powerful landmark and it puts a lot of emphasis on the architecture of the building;
  - not fully convinced this is the right place for the tower although it is the best location for views from the tower;
  - the overriding concern is the relationship to the Ho building;
  - question putting a high signature building next to the Ho building when it won't actually be on the corner and the Ho will look like a mistake;
  - if you accept that the tower should be close to the Ho building they need to be better integrated;
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- the interstitial element seems to highlight the Ho building because it's the same height; it needs more gap;
- may be it should be more of a bridge element;
- it is important to have the eastern corner well anchored;
- the landscape should respect its location next to the natural landscape and the urban edge;
- it is important that the townhouse element remains;
- consider a wider gap between the townhouses.

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