
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: March 6, 2002

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 #1, not present for #2 and #3)
Gerry Eckford
Richard Henry
Reena Lazar
Stuart Lyon
Kim Perry
Ken Terris

REGRETS: Joseph Hruda
Maurice Pez
Sorin Tatomir

RECORDING
SECRETARY: Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	550 Burrard Street (Bentall V)
2.	2665 West Broadway
3.	7001 & 7089 Mount Royal Square (Champlain Mall)

1. Address:	550 Burrard Street (Bentall V)
DA:	405804
Use:	Public Plaza
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Minor Amendment
Architect:	Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership
Owner:	Bentall Corp.
Review:	Fourth
Delegation:	Frank Musson, A. Whitchelo, D. Wouri
Staff:	Ralph Segal

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-1)

- **Introduction:** Senior Development Planner, Ralph Segal, presented this application for Minor Amendment. Phase 1 of the Bentall V tower, comprising 21 storeys, is now under construction. The remainder of the tower, up to 450 ft., will not now proceed in Phase 1, as was originally hoped, but will occur in a second phase, when the market dictates. A temporary plaza has been approved for the corner of Dunsmuir and Burrard, as well as a final Phase 2 plaza (with public art). This application seeks a Minor Amendment to the temporary plaza to incorporate elements of the final plaza design. Because this is a high profile site in the downtown, it was felt the Panel should review this revision to the temporary plaza. Although the plaza is temporary, it could remain in place for some time, likely at least five years. Staff response to the application is positive. It is believed the urban design objectives from the original temporary plaza are maintained and enhanced in this proposal.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Alan Whitchelo, Bentall Corporation, noted the major factors driving this proposal are the changes to the interim design as a result of the approved final plaza design with the public art, in particular the handicap access and planting of the trees. The Landscape Architect, Don Wouri, noted they have fully recognized the site's location, fronted by two major arteries, Burrard and Dunsmuir Streets, and its relationship to the Burrard ALRT station and associated high pedestrian traffic. He briefly reviewed the plaza design and he and Mr. Musson responded to questions.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application and had many positive things to say, including that it will be a delightful urban landscape in a very important downtown neighbourhood. It was noted there are many positive elements in this temporary scheme that will be unfortunate to lose in the final design, e.g., the large open green space which is in keeping with the large buildings around it.

With respect to the experimental paving material at the corner, the Panel had some reservations about whether it will succeed in Vancouver's climate but supported testing it out. A trial period of six months or a year was recommended rather than waiting until phase two to evaluate it.

Given the proximity and relationship of this plaza to Park Place one Panel member recommended duplicating the large Honey Locust trees that are very successful in Park Place.

Since it is not known how long the lawn will be in place, and it could be many years, a suggestion was made to consider a diagonal pattern for pedestrian movement so that it is not necessary to go to the perimeter to get from one corner to the other.

A question was raised about the width of the strip around the lawn, which is not wide enough to be a sidewalk but too wide for a border so that people might be encouraged to walk around the space.

Different shades of green were recommended by one Panel member, as well as the ability to see and smell the seasons.

A suggestion was made to consider a different paving pattern for the disabled ramp that would put more emphasis on its orientation.

One Panel member had a major concern about the treatment of the lane, which is currently somewhat unpleasant. The proposal for this edge seems to be temporary and the material very basic and suburban. The suggestion was to revisit the fence detailing, with a revision for the lane in both phase one and two.

Some questions were raised about the small freestanding staircase element and how it will look until the final plaza is completed.

One Panel member thought more descriptive illustrations should have been provided in order to properly evaluate this application.

2. Address:	2665 West Broadway
DA:	406400
Use:	Mixed (4 storeys)
Zoning:	C-2C1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Creekside
Owner:	West Hall Properties Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Don Andrew, Mark Vance
Staff:	Bob Adair

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (1-6)

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner, presented this application for a 4-storey mixed use building containing one level of retail on the ground floor, three levels of residential above, and two levels of underground parking with access from the rear lane. The site, having a 200 ft. frontage, occupies approximately half the 2600 block West Broadway between Trafalgar and Stephens Streets. The C-2C1 zone allows retail uses outright and dwelling use is conditional. Proposed density is 2.96 FSR which is within the maximum permitted 3.0 FSR. The front elevation facing West Broadway is broken down into two main segments with an open courtyard in the centre. Proposed exterior materials include concrete, slate tile, cast stone, a combination of face brick and curtainwall, and a slate-look tile at the upper floor. Split face concrete block is proposed for the rear elevation. Outright permitted height in this zone is 35 ft., relaxable to 40 ft. with consideration given to: impact on adjacent properties, provision of public open space, submissions from neighbouring residents and the C-2C1 guidelines. The application seeks relaxation to the maximum 40 ft. There is also an angled height restriction in C-2C1, off the north property line, to which this application complies.

Planning staff support the proposed uses and the general massing, scale and rhythm of the building along West Broadway, especially including the central courtyard. The height relaxation to 40 ft. is also supported, noting the height angle of 30 degrees is less than the sun angle of 34 degrees which is used for the required shadow impact diagrams. Staff have some significant concerns, however, and seek the advice of the Panel on the following:

- the massing expression of the rear elevation to better respond to the adjacent single family use across the lane to the north;
 - the location of the courtyard access from the commercial parking;
 - the amount of courtyard area under cover;
 - overall quality of materials and detailing;
 - layout of the commercial units.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Don Andrew, Architect, briefly explained the goals of the property owners, noting this is not a market driven project. A major focus is on the quality of the building which will be entirely of concrete construction. All the materials will be high-end and durable. Mr. Andrew and Mr. Vance reviewed the design rationale and responded to questions from the Panel.
 - **Panel's Comments:** The Panel did not support this application. The 40 ft. height relaxation was supported, as was the proposal for concrete construction.

The Panel had major concerns about the variety of materials and colours being proposed and the way they are being applied. In particular there were concerns about the use of modern curtainwall juxtaposed with historically referenced features. This is a well built out part of Broadway and there

have been some good precedents set on adjacent properties that this project does not yet live up to. The Panel generally found the elevations too “busy”. As well, the front and rear elevations look like two different buildings.

There were major concerns about the rear elevation, which is being driven by the 40 ft. height limited and height angle restrictions. The applicant was urged to examine other ways of dealing with the rear massing, perhaps negotiating with the City on the 30 degree angle, in order to achieve some vertical expression. The Panel thought it was unfortunate that the angle has dictated such a finely stepped, monotonous facade. While the rear elevation may not necessarily need to read as single family it needs a lot more attention. A comment was made that it appears the zoning requirements are being expressed rather than an architectural resolution of those requirements.

The Panel was not convinced that the courtyard would be usable, being more of a slot entrance into the complex. It was thought it should be elaborated on and the uses within the space explored. The Panel agreed the main central stair should be moved forward even if it compromises the retail space a little.

The Panel was not concerned about the layout of the commercial units because these will change when the tenancies are confirmed.

The Panel thought there was landscape potential on this site which needs to be explored.

The Panel was also disappointed with the elevation facing the Dairy Queen site which seems to have been totally disregarded.

It was noted the route to the garbage is very circuitous and not successfully resolved.

The lack of canopies along Broadway was questioned.

Concerns were expressed about the main entrance which it was thought needs to have a more generous view through. It should be more open all the way to the lane, with some expression on the lane that this is a primary opening through the building. The central portion of the building was found to be somewhat weak with not enough space between the top of the arch and the base of the windows.

The unit layouts were found to be very good.

One Panel member urged that the applicant consider the use of environmentally sustainable materials.

- **Applicant’s Response:** Mr. Andrew explained the intent is to have retractable fabric canopies along the West Broadway frontage. He agreed the route for garbage disposal is somewhat circuitous which results from the necessity to separate the retail from the residential. He noted the difficulty of relating closely to the building to the west, which is a very basic 40 ft. stucco building. With respect to the use of historical elements vs. the curtainwall, Mr. Andrew said he had no problem with re-examining the detail but noted they did not want it to be exclusively historical. He said they will take it under advisement that there may be too many colours. With respect to the courtyard, Mr. Andrew noted the model fails to illustrate the slot that actually daylights the courtyard through to the rear. The prescribed height envelope is dictating the rear elevation and creates the steps between floors. He said he had no problem with re-visiting this elevation and adding some vertical elements, although noted they will still step back.

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3. Address: 7001 & 7089 Mont Royal Square
DA: 406527
Use: Multi-family Residence
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete
Architect: W. T. Leung
Owner: Intercorp Developments Ltd.
Review: First
Delegation: Wing Ting Leung, Barry Krause, Wendy Armstrong-Taylor, Lena Chorobik
Staff: Eric Fiss
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EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (1-6)

- **Introduction:** Eric Fiss, Development Planner, introduced this application and briefly reviewed the history of the site. A preliminary application for the entire Champlain Mall redevelopment was approved in principle in 1998 and a complete application for Parcels C, D and E was approved in August 2000. The subject application comprises Parcels A and B. Mr. Fiss reviewed the conditions that were applied to the preliminary submission that affect this proposal, noting there has been some revision to the form of development since the preliminary application stage. The intent now is to reconsolidate Parcels A and B into one parcel, which allows the townhouses opposite the entrance to the mall/library to be longer and create more street frontage. The density to allow for this has been taken from the apartment building.

The areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought include:

- increase in townhouse setback;
 - changes in unit count and massing of the building forms;
 - townhouse end units;
 - diversity of unit types;
 - size and quality of the amenity space;
 - outdoor space, particularly around the children's play space;
 - sunken patios along 54th Avenue and the entrance drive;
 - roof decks.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Wing Leung, Architect, reviewed the design rationale and responded to the Panel's questions. Wendy Armstrong-Taylor briefly reviewed the landscape plan. Tom Miller, Intercorp, noted the current scheme is the result of market research which indicates a demand for smaller townhouses.
 - **Panel's Comments:** The Panel had a number of concerns about this proposal and did not support the application.

The outdoor space was generally supported and the children's play area thought to be located appropriately on the sunny side of the site. On the landscaping, there was a recommendation to provide more articulation in the perimeter planting. As well, to consider a different landscape character for each phase, varying them somewhat to make each phase distinct from the other. Upgrading some of the landscape walls was recommended.

The Panel was generally pleased with the setback of the townhouses facing the mall (although one Panel member questioned why they were facing the mall in the first place) and thought the reconfiguration was an improvement because it encloses the courtyard. The massing of the

townhouses was seen to work well. The Panel endorsed the diversity of units and had no concerns about the unit count.

A comment about the treatment of the end units was that the end facades could be handled a little better with more articulation.

There was mixed response to the amenity room with comments both for and against its size and usability.

Some Panel members were not persuaded that this phase of the development is very distinct from the previous phases in terms of design quality. In fact, a comment was made that it appears an effort has been made to make them uniform. A comment was made that the buildings are somewhat monotonous and neither urban nor suburban. There was a suggestion to express more of the fireplaces. There were also concerns about the roof pitch and a recommendation to add to the livability of the upper floors by making use of the slope within the units. There was a comment that the pitched roof form looks “tacked on” in a building of this size. It does not integrate well with the building.

The Panel agreed with the importance of having as many ground oriented units as possible but there were concerns expressed about access to the units and how they relate to the street and the public spaces. It was questioned whether many residents will enter at the front of the building. There were concerns about the ground floor apartment units not being ground oriented and that residents will be unlikely to access their units through the patios. A major concern was expressed about the grading, especially buildings 1 and 2. The proposal to push them to the ground in order to relate to the houses across the street does not work and should be reconsidered, noting the mall itself is already higher than the neighbouring houses. It was noted that 54th Avenue is a very large street so overshadowing won't be an issue. The suggestion was to raise them up to reduce the impact of the sunken courtyards which were considered to be fairly brutal and not very usable. They also defeat the objective of creating a good interface by having doors on the street.

With respect to the apartment building, there were recommendations to strengthen the main entrance. A two-storey entry was thought to be more appropriate for a building of this size. It was also noted that the bay windows seem too small and virtually a repeat of those on the townhouses. There was also a criticism about the over-use of the same type of window. In general, it was thought that the scale of the elements on the apartment building seem too small for its size.

It was recommend that the arrival sequence from the underground parking be explored further to make it a bit more gracious. The stair from the parking was thought to be rather mean given that most people will be using it to access their units. Something should be done to make it more hospitable and attractive.

There were concerns expressed about the general pedestrian movement through the site, noting the intrusion of the parking access. It was noted it will be virtually impossible to move eastward into the open space without going all the way around. The ability for pedestrians to move through would improve the scheme considerably.

With respect to materials, there were questions about the use of the dark asphalt shingle and the large expanses of vinyl siding. A suggestion was made that the guidelines for this site should be revisited because the project is not living up to the original concept.

Most Panel members liked the roof decks and thought they were a good addition to the scheme.

The applicant was commended on the high quality of the presentation materials.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Leung made the following comments:
 - generally, the original intention for diversity and building types did not mean diversity between the buildings within each parcel but diversity between parcels so that each parcel is identifiable;
 - the muted palette of colours for the siding was chosen with accent colours for the bay windows;
 - the programmatic changes allowed the opportunity to introduce a wall with punched windows;
 - the choice of materials could be bolder;
 - there is a prescribed roof height which was strongly urged by the neighbours in the public information meetings. A visible flat roof was not something that was committed;
 - there is also a prescribed "look" resulting from the public information meetings;
 - concur with the concerns about the sunken patios, especially on 54th Avenue being north-facing; the height along 54th Avenue was generally supposed to be 2-1/2 floors. If these units can be raised, the patios would work better;
 - it was originally hoped to have direct access from the parking garage to the townhouse units but it was not possible given the limitations and the footprint;
 - agree it is not easy to gain access to the central park, where the parking garage entrance somewhat cuts it off;
 - generally a lot of the forms were already established through all the meetings over the years and some compromises were made.

Ms. Armstrong agreed a lot can be done to increase articulation at the perimeter of the site. The main entry to the apartment can also be elaborated upon. Circulation patterns will also be studied more closely. Many details can be added to provide some playfulness to the scheme.