
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: May 1, 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 (present for Items 1 - 3 only)
Jeffrey Corbett
Gerry Eckford
Joseph Hrudá
Reena Lazar
Stuart Lyon
Kim Perry
Sorin Tatomir
Ken Terriss

REGRETS: Richard Henry
Maurice Pez

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	651 Expo Boulevard (FCN Area 7B)
2.	600 Granville Street (688 Dunsmuir)
3.	900 Beatty Street
4.	1249 Granville Street

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| 1. Address: | 651 Expo Boulevard (FCN Area 7B) |
| Use: | Mixed (5 residential towers and Costco) |
| Zoning: | FCN to CD-1 |
| Application Status: | Rezoning |
| Architect: | James Cheng |
| Owner: | Pacific Place Developments Corp. |
| Review: | Second |
| Delegation: | James Cheng, Bill Steinberg, Matte Meehan |
| Staff: | Phil Mondor/Jonathan Barrett |
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-3)

- **Introduction:** Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, presented this application for rezoning. A preliminary rezoning proposal for this site was reviewed by the Panel in November 2001, in a workshop. Mr. Barrett briefly described the site context. The proposal comprises four market residential towers, one non-market residential tower and some lower-rise residential on the upper level of the site between Beatty, Dunsmuir and Georgia Streets, and a Costco store at the lower level on Expo Boulevard. The development contains a total of 216 dwelling units. The armoury, an "A" designated heritage building at the corner of Dunsmuir and Beatty Streets, is not part of this application.

In the earlier workshop review the Panel was very supportive of the proposed uses. There were questions about tower locations, the number of towers on the site and spatial separation, the road circulation, and the pedestrian circulation system. The previous submission proposed four towers and a different road system. The footprint of the Costco store is essentially unchanged from the previous proposal.

The areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought on this revised submission include:

- the fit of the development in the context, noting the attempt to knit it into the general downtown street pattern;
- residential livability between towers, both on and off site;
- the lower level form and uses, noting the attempt is to provide a sense of extending the grid as well as acoustical barriers for the internal spaces;
- tower locations, built form relationships;
- the lower building heights and development forms;
- Costco: how it relates to Expo Boulevard and the public interface it provides;
- the overall pedestrian system; vertical and horizontal movement;
- vehicular system;
- the built form and density for the non-market housing component;
- appropriateness of the proposed uses, built form and density.

This application is expected to go to Public Hearing in July 2002. The Panel will review the project again at the development application stage, likely in the Fall 2002.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** James Cheng, Architect, noted this site is within the Northeast False Creek Master Plan which established certain urban design principles, mainly to extend the city street grid to bring people towards the waterfront. He briefly described the proposed pedestrian network, including the dispersal of people after stadium events, and the pedestrian and vehicular circulation through the site. The rezoning application seeks a change of use from office to mixed use. The density in the ODP is 1.2 million square feet, the application seeks one million square feet. Mr. Cheng noted the site has a key role in tying into International Village and the future development of Area 6C adjacent to the Plaza of Nations. The pedestrian interface on Expo Boulevard will be enhanced by a very large glass canopy over the Costco entry. As well, there is a vertical element containing a stair and elevator to connect people from the lower level to the upper viaduct level. Mr. Cheng described the scheme in greater detail, noting that two of the towers are at the maximum height permitted by the view cone affecting this site. He responded to Panel members' questions.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application. There were, however, major concerns about the built form, and the Panel's support was on the assumption that the issues will be addressed at the next stage of development.

The Panel agreed that this is a very difficult site and commended the applicant for what has been achieved in its organization given the severe restrictions.

The Panel strongly supported the proposed use and density.

The Panel generally found the placement of the towers and their more slender forms to be an improvement over the previous submission. Some Panel members felt there was a mid-rise component that is missing from the scheme and suggested this site would be a good location for diverting from the typical tower and townhouses solution. Another suggestion was to consider greater variation in the tower heights.

Costco/Expo Boulevard Interface/Escarpment/Vertical Connection

Most Panel members supported the proposed treatment of the Costco store and thought the public space in front of it will be a very useful amenity. It was considered to be a good response to the scale of Expo Boulevard, and the concept of a "designer" Costco was supported for this location.

The Panel liked the vertical connection and stressed that the more movement that can be brought to this edge the better. It was also stressed that pedestrian circulation on the upper level above the Costco will be very important, so it should be very obvious and not obscured in any way. A recommendation was made to enhance the stair, possibly adding a glass elevator, to strengthen the vertical connection and make it more inviting.

Several Panel members commented on the escarpment and how it has been treated in this proposal. It was stressed that it needs to have a positive element and not just provide screening for parking. The green edge spilling down creates the suggestion of a new escarpment and this could be built upon in terms of landscape to create a stronger gesture to what was there before. There were some questions about the trees on the terraces, which create the rather artificial appearance of "trees in the air". One Panel member, who did not support the Costco in this location, stressed that its success will depend on how well pedestrians are brought down to grade. Downtown Seattle was cited as a good example of how it can be done successfully.

Townhouses

Serious concerns were expressed about the townhouses on Georgia and Dunsmuir Streets. There needs to be something much more substantial on these streets, perhaps interspersed with some of the amenity uses. Several Panel members suggested switching the location of the townhouses and the amenities. While there are townhouses at the other end of Georgia Street, near Stanley Park, they are set well back, with access off Alberni. Townhouses would be out of character at this end of Georgia which has a much more commercial feel. One Panel member questioned whether some small sports-related retail would work in this location. Litter and noise generated by sports fans might also be an issues for townhouses in these locations.

The New Street

The new street which extends between the two viaducts and the introduction of the cul de sac was an area of serious concern for the Panel. While it is a public street that invites people into it, it is a dead-end. A positive aspect of the previous submission was that it was clearly a public space and there was a way through and out of it. As well, given the heavy pedestrian traffic that will occur on this street, it would have been preferable for it to have a townhouse frontage. As proposed, there are many gaps and openings on the street and no real sense of frontage. There was also a concern expressed that this street might end up being used as a turnaround to avoid the proposed new traffic lights. In general it was thought the new street should be grander and more dramatic.

Non Market Housing

The density and form of the non market housing component was considered appropriate. While it was noted to have been stepped back in deference to the Armoury, it was also noted that the open space beside it will rarely receive any sunlight. The suggestion was to investigate if there is some way of massing this corner to achieve more light in the public space. Another recommendation was that there be some architectural relationship to the Armoury in the expression of the non-market tower. Given the gateway nature of the site, the applicant was urged to ensure that this component is treated better than typical non market buildings otherwise it could contribute to a very weak exit for the city.

Landscape

A suggestion was made to put some texture onto Georgia and Dunsmuir Streets to help tame the traffic. A concern was expressed that input from a landscape architect is not evident, noting it would have benefited the scheme, even at this early stage of development.

Circulation

General concerns were expressed about the complexity of the internal circulation on the site. As well, a comment was that the connection to International Village is unclear and should be strengthened in the next stage of development.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Cheng explained that the townhouses are not traditional townhouse units but live/work or choice of use is under discussion. Bill Steinberg noted an extensive traffic study was undertaken which indicates the traffic is in transition, especially the stadium traffic. As the vacant lands around the stadiums get developed the traffic for events will decrease because there will be less parking available in the long term. Mr. Steinberg stressed this is a very difficult site with a number of other proposals having been considered previously. This is a unique mixed used development and Costco are to be commended for diverting completely from their typical suburban model for this site. Mr. Cheng urged the Panel to remember that this is the first phase of a transformation of a large section of the city. As well, to keep in mind the long term vision of the Northeast False Creek Plan and the work that is being done to link the south side of this part of False Creek and CityGate. The aspiration for this area is that it will eventually become a viable residential community that will help revive Chinatown, Gastown and International Village. This site, together with Area 6C, is the beginning to try to knit together communities that are separated currently by the stadiums, noting that BCPlace may not exist in five to ten years time.

2. Address:	600 Granville Street (688 Dunsmuir)
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	Architectura
Owner:	McDonald Development Corporation
Review:	First
Delegation:	Alan Endall, Malcolm Elliott
Staff:	Jonathan Barrett, Dave Tomsett

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction:** Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, presented this rezoning application for a large site at Granville and Dunsmuir Streets. The site contains four heritage components including the Gotham Restaurant, the St. Regis Hotel, the BC Electric building and the building facade next to The Bay, all of which will be upgraded and maintained. The first four storeys are proposed for commercial use, as well as one level of commercial below grade which will link to the Granville Street Skytrain station, a key public objective being the provision of handicap access to Skytrain. 29 storeys of residential use is proposed above the commercial, including live/work on the first four floors. The rezoning application is principally to seek residential use which is not permitted in this part of the Downtown although may be considered where there is a heritage component.

The advice of the Panel is sought in the following areas:

- built form relationships, noting there is a very complex building form designed to respond to very specific context, notably The Bay, the Stock Exchange tower and the BC Electric Building;
- building character;
- residential livability, eg., the amenities, adequacy of the open space and whether it is sufficiently removed from the street activities, acoustic treatment of the lower component, security of access;
- Skytrain access which is proposed from three points - the corner of Dunsmuir and the lane, through the heritage building beside The Bay, and through The Bay itself.

Comments on use, built form and density are requested, noting the density is the result of heritage retention and will be approximately 13+ FSR.

The application will proceed to Public Hearing and will be returned to the Panel at the development application stage, likely in Fall 2002. The Heritage Commission has reviewed the application and unanimously supported all aspects of the heritage retention and integration with the new component.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Alan Endall, Architect, described the project in greater detail and explained the design rationale, and he and Mr. Elliott responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application and generally found it to be a very handsome project. The applicant was commended for the very high quality of the presentation materials. There was strong support for the use and the general disposition of the massing and density.

The Panel unanimously supported the residential use and had no concern about livability. Several Panel members said they thought it would be very livable. The Panel did not believe noise will be a

problem for the people who would choose to live in this highly urban location. It was also thought that sophisticated security systems could easily address any security issues. Another comment was that the live/work component is contributing to the overall livability of the building in this location. Attracting people to live on Granville Street was seen to be very positive for the area.

The relationship to the heritage BC Electric building elicited a number of comments from the Panel. The attempt to pull the new building back was appreciated but there were concerns about it appearing somewhat as though it is sitting on top of the BC Electric building. It was recommended that there be some exploration into pulling it back more to provide a clearer separation and making it look less as though the new building is extruded from the old. One Panel member urged that the BC Electric sign be kept as the only sign on this corner, similar to the previous proposal for this site.

The Panel appreciated the recognition of The Bay and the treatment of the small heritage component next to it. One Panel member commented it is unfortunate that the whole of this piece is taken up with Skytrain entry. If the Skytrain entry could be moved further south this building could be left for a unique retail opportunity, which would be more deserving of it. In recognizing The Bay, one Panel member recommended that its materials and colours not be repeated.

Concern was expressed about the residential lobby which seems a bit buried. Although there will be improvements made to the lane, it would be unfortunate if the lane entry becomes the primary residential entrance for this building.

A recommendation was made to consider careful detailing at the top of the building, given the close proximity to other buildings nearby.

One Panel member was concerned that the cornice line of the St. Regis hotel is not acknowledged in this building.

In general, the Panel was very complimentary about the proposal and looked forward to seeing it proceed.

3. Address:	900 Beatty Street
DA:	406606
Use:	Mixed (26 & 32 storeys - 526 units)
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Lawrence Doyle
Owner:	Concord Pacific Group Inc.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Larry Doyle, David Negrin, Bill Harrison
Staff:	Jonathan Barrett

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (4-5)

- Introduction:** Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, presented this application in Site 5F of the Quayside Neighbourhood. The proposal is for two residential towers, 32 and 26 storeys. The site also includes a non market housing site which is not part of this application and its general massing is shown for reference. Mr. Barrett briefly reviewed the CD-1 guidelines for this neighbourhood. The towers locations, heights and floorplates are generally as suggested by the guidelines. The specific areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought related to:
 - the strength of the Beatty Street built form in terms of the general concept for Downtown South and how it relates to the development across the street (scale of the townhouses, vehicular entrance, etc.);
 - the scale and development form along Smithe Street and how it responds to the strong urban context;
 - strength of street definition of Pacific Boulevard North;
 - overall landscape;
 - overall built form and character and how it responds to its context;
 - the general massing of the proposed non market housing component (not part of this application).
- Applicant's Opening Comments:** Larry Doyle, Architect, described the project in greater detail, noting they have taken care to comply with the guidelines. Bill Harrison, Landscape Architect, briefly described the landscape plan and the applicant team responded to the Panel's questions.
- Panel's Comments:** The Panel did not support this application. There was general satisfaction with the placement of the towers and the disposition of the mass on the site, but there were major concerns about the treatment at the base of this gateway site. There was a lot of commentary about the townhouses and the treatment of the corner of Smithe Street and Expo Boulevard.

While the Panel thought the little elements at the corner were quite interesting, they were considered too weak to express this corner at the Cambie Bridge exit. In general, it was thought the commercial units lack substance and appear too small in relation to the tower. Two and three storeys would be better than one and two storeys. Something is needed to celebrate this corner.

Most Panel members found the Beatty Street townhouses too disconnected from the tower, preferring them to be part of the same composition. There were also suggestions that these townhouses should be higher on Beatty Street.

The Panel had major concerns about the relationship of the non market housing component to the rest of the site. It appears to have been done quite exclusively of this development. It was thought there should at least be a visual connection. The location of the co-op tot lot adjacent to a busy intersection was also considered to be inappropriate.

Concerns were expressed about the courtyard plan which did not clearly organize the site. The large amount of hard space, dominated by vehicular use, was a concern. It was thought there could be a better gesture made towards making a connection between the towers across this courtyard into the open space. As well, the open space would be improved with better separation between the parking area and the lawn. The residents are not being permitted to use the open space in any active way; it is purely a visual space. The integration of the forms with the water at the base of the building needs to be better resolved.

The curved element over the entry was considered to be inappropriate.

With respect to the top of the towers, it was thought the top element should continue to be expressed down the spine of the building. The rooftop element was found to be not to the level of roof design on other Concord Pacific projects.

The cover over the health club facility was an issue for the Panel because it has no association with the other forms established on the site.

It was agreed that this is a very difficult site, in a gateway location with three busy streets. Because this site is somewhat isolated, it was suggested that something other than 2-1/2 storey townhouses could be explored.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Negrin thanked the Panel for its comments. He said they can strengthen the base of the building and agreed there is better connection required on Beatty Street. He explained they would have liked to have some access off Expo Boulevard to help the interior courtyard, but Engineering requirements prevented it. Mr. Negrin agreed the corner of Smithe and Beatty could take a little more height but the problem is the viability of the space. He said the Panel's comments are well taken and will be taken into account in the revisions. Mr. Doyle noted that autocourt entries are a necessity on streets that have parking restrictions. The guidelines also stipulate that access to the parking is to be off the courtyard. They will, however, attempt to make the courtyard as livable as possible. He stressed they can work with the Panel's advice.

4. Address:	1249 Granville Street
DA: 406551	
Use:	Mixed (6 storeys, 45 units)
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Norman Zottenberg
Owner:	Carvo Development Corp.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Norman Zottenberg
Staff:	Scot Hein

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Development Planner, presented this application which proposes a six-storey residential building with commercial at grade. The site is located on Granville Street, midblock between Davie and Drake, in the Downtown District (Downtown South) which permits a maximum density of 3.5 FSR and maximum height of 90 ft. (70 ft. on the Granville frontage). Staff believe the project generally performs well in terms of the guidelines. Following a general description of the project and its context, Mr. Hein noted the following areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought:
 - general facade treatment, including the proportion of glass to wall, noting a more predominant punched-window character for Granville Street;
 - transition to the upper floor for the Granville facade in terms of cornice line articulation and upper floor setbacks;
 - architectural expression and detailing substance, especially around openings and at the cornice line, noting a fairly robust context;
 - design approach taken for the enclosed balconies for the Granville facade;
 - treatment of the north elevation;
 - lanescape including surface parking/loading ground treatment and softscape opportunities at grade;
 - the provision of common open space for the project, most likely on the roof.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Norman Zottenberg, Architect, noted that one of the issues has been to bring in as much light as possible to the proposed studio units, which precluded the use of punched windows. The solution therefore has been to create as much light penetration as possible.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application.

The Panel had no concerns about the fenestration and saw no need for a punched window expression. The Granville Street façade was thought to be quite appropriate and a fairly good fit in the context.

Several Panel members had concerns about the parapet which it was thought should be much stronger and more pronounced.

A comment was made that the entry treatment is a little confusing. As well, a suggestion was made that the peaked canopy element over the front entry seems out of character with this part of Granville Street.

The Panel thought there should be more landscaping in the lane, noting that this project will set a precedent for future adjacent redevelopment. Several Panel members suggested adding some trees for the benefit of the residents who will overlook the lane. Attention should be given to the exposed concrete on the lane which could invite graffiti.

The Panel did not feel strongly about whether the roof should be landscaped. Some Panel members thought it would be a good addition if possible, but not essential.

A suggestion was made that the architect commit to either a contemporary or historic style, noting the proposal currently is not strongly one or the other.

One Panel member commented that it is encouraging to see that this building is intended for rental housing.