
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: May 16, 2001

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room #1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Tom Bunting, Chair
Lance Berelowitz (Items 1 and 2)
Jeffrey Corbett (Items 1 and 2)
Gerry Eckford
Alan Endall
Bruce Hemstock
Richard Henry
Jack Lutsky
Maurice Pez
Sorin Tatomir

REGRETS: Walter Francl, Deputy Chair
Joseph Hruda

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Rae Ratslef, Raincoast Ventures

| ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING |
|---------------------------------------|
| 1. 858 Beatty (875 Expo Blvd.) |
| 2. 1650 Bayshore Drive |
| 3. 565 West 10 th Avenue |

Ralph Segal, Senior Development Planner, advised that the Louis Brier Home and Hospital application, previously considered by the Panel, was approved by the Development Permit Board on May 14, 2001.

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| 1. Address: | 858 Beatty (875 Expo Blvd.) |
| DA: | 405676 |
| Use: | Office (8 storeys) |
| Zoning: | CD-1 |
| Architect: | Busby & Associates |
| Owner: | Pacific Place Holding Ltd. |
| Review: | 2 nd |
| Staff: | Ralph Segal |
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction**

Ralph Segal, Senior Development Planner, introduced the application for 858 Beatty Street noting that the application was first considered by the Panel on April 18, 2001 (as 875 Expo Boulevard). Areas of concern that were identified by the Panel at that time pertained to the project's response to the Cambie Street Bridge axial view, the intended design for the gap, the need for further development of the lower block facing Pacific Boulevard, and questions regarding the strength of the cornice and architectural details.

Mr. Segal, referencing the model and posted drawings, led the Panel in a review of the changes to the application in response to the Panel's initial comments. Members were advised that the application at this time relates to Phase 1 of the project and that, once the market allows, the applicant will proceed with Phase 2 of the project under a separate application. Members were invited to comment on Phase 1 and to provide directional comments concerning Phase 2, and were advised that the model and drawings will be held as reference on the development permit for the latter phase.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments**

Michael McCall and Peter Busby, Peter Busby & Associates, joined the Panel for consideration of this item.

Peter Busby, Peter Busby & Associates, referencing the model, discussed the intent for various elements of the site design noting that pockets of greenery and fresh air have been created to make the lower circulation route safer and more enjoyable. Mr. Busby further commented on the visual axis of the building from the Cambie Bridge, and discussed the project's architectural challenges in the context of the surrounding area, noting that it is flanked by the very large-scale structures of GM Place and the Vancouver Public Library. Given this, the project now includes a larger scale, super-bay window type structure that is a change in scale over the remainder of the building, to serve as the project's visual axis from the Cambie Street Bridge.

Concerning the architectural elements at the top of the building, Mr. Busby indicated that the client and tenant both feel very strongly about including the curved concrete cornice and window heads. From an architectural position, Mr. Busby suggested that the building is robust enough in its simplicity to handle the curvature. In response to questions, the applicant further commented regarding the design of the tenant and public open space areas, and concerning the elevator, and exit stair.

The Panel reviewed the model and posted materials.

- **Panel's Comments**

Panel members indicated their unanimous support for the overall simplicity and confidence shown in the project scheme and expressed appreciation to the applicant for their quick response to the Panel's initial review. Several members commented that the project would be a wonderful addition to the City and a tremendous improvement to the area.

With respect to the corner element, it was generally agreed that the simplistic treatment works well in the building design and as an effective backdrop to the immediate context of the bridge head and the vista off the bridge. However, several members suggested that, while the design was definitely an improvement over the first submission, it was overly polite and did not go far enough as a visually scaled landmark that is different from the surrounding buildings.

The Panel also commented regarding the need to ensure that the roof-scape of Phase II and screening of the roof top from the bridge view is achieved and suggested that some smaller scaled ways of relating to the pedestrian and cycling traffic along the bridge need to be referenced in the design.

Concerning the cornice design, there was consensus that this is a design issue better left to the designer, their client and tenants to resolve. However, most members agreed that the architecture is strong and simple enough to allow the arches and still remain an acceptable architectural piece.

One member expressed concerns regarding the overall viability and acoustic impact of the basketball court and suggested that use of the court could become contentious over time. In light of this, the applicant was encouraged to give some forethought to an alternate open space design for the area in the event that the court needs to be removed.

With respect to the restaurant pavilion in the "Gap", the Panel expressed its general support for the intended design but most members suggested that additional height and more mass to more appropriately enclose the plaza and to relate to the surrounding buildings. Also, a centralized service area off of the private side of the site, rather than off the plaza, was suggested for the intended restaurant/pub, to allow a more active interface with Terry Fox Plaza.

Concerning Phase 2's stair design, while most members agreed that its design was well handled, several suggestions were made that the stairs could be wider to better accommodate the flow of pedestrian traffic through this area.

- **Applicant's Response**

Mr. Busby thanked the Panel for its comments regarding Phase 1 and advised that the Panel's comments with respect to Phase 2 are appreciated and will be referenced in future submissions.

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| 2. Address: | 1650 Bayshore Drive |
| DA: | 405699 |
| Use: | Residential (19 storeys, 76 units) |
| Zoning: | CD-1 |
| Architect: | Downs Archambault |
| Owner: | Blue Tree Management |
| Review: | 1 st |
| Staff: | Ralph Segal |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-1)

- **Introduction**

Mike Kemble, Development Planner, referencing drawings, discussed the application for 1650 Bayshore Drive in the context of the surrounding area noting that it is the eighth building to be before the Panel from the Bayshore site, but the first in the Cardero Precinct.

In his further presentation, Mike Kemble commented concerning the project's amenity space, parking garage access and shared use, impact of the building on the Georgia view corridor, topography of the site, and the building materials and treatment used. Mike Kemble also discussed the relevant guidelines for this site which include a need for buildings to relate to the West End street grid, height, floor plate and massing limitations, and terracing of the top four floors. It was noted that the massing of the tower complies with the guidelines but is somewhat elongated.

The Panel was provided specifics concerning the make-up of units on this site, including four townhouses and five ground units facing the inner courtyard, and concerning the division of the interior private open space courtyard into areas for market and non-market developments' use. Additionally, information was provided regarding the building's 20 metre set-back at the entrance way which is of concern to the fire department, concerning the function of neighbouring towers, and regarding the meshing of market and non-market housing in the Precinct.

Comments were sought from the Panel regarding the tower massing and configuration; the balance of usable private open space versus the extent of the water areas; acceptability of the street edge interface; and regarding views from the walkway.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments**

Mark Ehman, Al Johnson and Jane Durante joined the Panel for consideration of this item.

Mark Ehman, referencing the model, discussed the orientation of the building's units towards primary views in the northwest and commented regarding secondary views towards the harbour. It was noted that the guidelines do not reference the need for this building to be the same width as others in the Precinct and suggested that a departure from the simple point tower design might be appropriate.

With respect to the top four floors of the tower, Mr. Ehman commented that, with the faceted feature, the stepping is integrated much more than on some of the other buildings. Mr. Ehman further commented on the tower's view impact noting that the rotation is anchored firmly and presents a thinner profile to Georgia Street. There is a minor set-back at the bottom because of the building height

restrictions, the cross-slope of the site and the need to enter on the high side of the building. Also, because of view corridors, the entrance is further back to avoid encroachment.

Jane Durante discussed the application's landscaping and use of water elements noting that the water secures a separation between the public and private realm but can be enjoyed by both. Ms. Durante advised that the site's townhouses have private courtyard spaces, and that separate spaces are provided for the daycare and non-market and market housing. Ms. Durante also discussed the linking bridge and methods taken to hide the separations between areas and to link amenities.

In response to questions, the applicant provided additional information regarding grade changes on the site, efforts taken to make the property line as invisible as possible, design of the courtyard as a physical and visible amenity, distribution of the public space amongst the buildings and related legal and marketability issues, parking and shadow impacts.

The Panel reviewed the model and posted materials.

- **Panel's Comments**

The Panel provided generally supportive comments concerning the overall presentation of the scheme in its design and concerning the form of the tower within the requirements of the rezoning guidelines. However, regarding the tower top, several members suggested that fanning, balconies, etc. create terracing, but others encouraged terracing of the top four floors. No concerns were expressed regarding the minimal impact to the Georgia Street view corridor, concerning the building's orientation or regarding the shadow impact on the neighbouring park.

With respect to the application's street edge interface, Panel members agreed that the ground plane concept was quite successful with picking up on the water design and bringing it around the face of the building. However, it was suggested that the height of the water element be adjusted, i.e. lowered, to provide more of a pedestrian amenity at the street level.

Members noted that the entrance of the building as indicated in the amendment sketch is heading in the right direction but could use more scale and presence. Also, related environmental issues were raised and it was suggested that an overhang be utilized to protect the entranceway.

Concerning the parking, it was strongly suggested that the access be moved further east for safety reasons given its proximity to the public corner. Additionally, given that residents need to go down four levels to their parking with three levels of hotel parking above, it was suggested that the articulation of the entry way needed to be handled very well.

Panel members recognized the difficult task and valiant attempt of the applicant to bring together the market and non-market open spaces, but noted that it did not seem yet resolved with quite deeply etched barriers. Several members generally questioned the integrated usability of the central space and the rationale for it.

Concerning the application's townhouse element, the appropriateness of the townhouse form and location was questioned given its close proximity to non-market housing and adjacency to the blank hotel ballroom across the street. Also, it was noted that no other developments in this area required townhouses and its appropriateness was therefore questioned.

It was generally agreed that additional height would not be detrimental to the project.

- **Applicant's Response**
None.

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| 3. Address: | 565 West 10 th Avenue |
| DA: | 405666 |
| Use: | Office |
| Zoning: | C-3A |
| Architect: | CEI |
| Owner: | Canadian Cancer Society |
| Review: | 1 st |
| Staff: | Mary Beth Rondeau |
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- **Introduction**

Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, introduced the application for 565 West 10th Avenue, noting that the additional floor will be used for administrative offices in this lodge for cancer patients and their families to stay in while they receive treatment at the nearby Cancer Agency. Panel members were informed that the use is very supportable in this area and information was provided regarding the evolution of the existing building to its present form and concerning the contextual surroundings. Additionally, information was provided regarding the height and FSR being sought.

The Panel was requested to comment regarding whether the application has earned its extra FSR and height and whether the landscaping should be further enhanced as compensation for the presently existing surface parking.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments**

Bill Locking, CEI Architecture, Fred Ingles and Bill Goodsir, Canadian Cancer Society, joined the Panel for consideration of this item.

Mr. Ingles, referencing the drawings, commented that the applied for addition to this existing building is primarily for administrative offices. Given that there is some occupancy allowed on the second floor of this building, with 80-95% occupancy at all times, an interstitial area is provided between the existing and new floors so that moving the occupants is not required. While the applicant did consider locating these offices above the lower original building, there are some structural problems with this solution.

Mr. Ingles advised that letters were sent to neighbouring residents with an invitation to view the drawings and that no opposition was expressed. Also, clarification was provided that there will be no increase in staffing given that the addition is to relocate existing administrative offices into a larger work space, and that no additional parking is required over what already exists.

- **Panel's Comments**

The Panel expressed its unanimous support for the architectural design of the addition but suggested that the landscaping along the lane and entry area could be further improved to earn the height. It was also suggested that the east wall could be articulated somewhat to negate some of the height, by not carrying the masonry up the extra storey but instead using a visually lighter weight material.

- **Applicant's Response**

None.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.