

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** May 19, 2010

**TIME:** 4.00 pm

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Oliver Lang (Chair)  
Robert Barnes  
James Cheng  
Jeff Corbett  
Jane Durante (Excused Item #1)  
David Godin  
Jim Huffman  
Steve McFarlane  
Maurice Pez  
Alan Storey

**REGRETS:**  
Bruce Haden  
Scott Romses  
Vladimir Mikler

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	4355 West 10 <sup>th</sup> Avenue
2.	1777 West 7 <sup>th</sup> Avenue

**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Lang called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There being no New Business the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 4355 West 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
DE: 413675  
Description: To construct a 4-storey mixed-use building consisting of 32 dwelling units with two retail units on the ground floor over one and half levels of underground parking.  
Zoning: C-2  
Application Status: Complete  
Review: First  
Owner: Mosaic Homes  
Architect: Neale Staniszkis Doll Adams Architects  
Delegation: Kristina Kovacs, Neale Staniszkis Doll Adams Architects  
Peter Kreuk, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects  
Katherine Hamilton, Mosaic Homes  
Staff: Sailen Black

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-2)**

- **Introduction:** Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the proposal noting that the context model was somewhat inexact in its depiction of nearby buildings. The proposal is for a mixed-use building and generally meets the C-2 zoning and guidelines which recommends compatibility among new and existing uses; massing and design for neighbourliness, especially privacy and visual impacts to nearby residential; appropriate street scale and pedestrian interest and a high stand of liveability for housing. Typical features of C-2 zoning include the two foot setback at grade and an eight foot setback on the fourth floor. Mr. Black described the architectural plans noting commercial uses on the ground floor with residential above. The commercial and residential entries have their own separate identities on the front of the building.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

- Proposed architectural and landscape design.

Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Kristina Kovacs, Architect, further introduced the proposal noting the building follows the established pattern along the streetscape with commercial on the ground floor and continuous weather protection with three floors of residential above. Ms. Kovacs describe the proposed materials and noted the residential entry is emphasized with a larger canopy. Planters will be added along the street to contrast with the white brick of the building. The north side of the building responds to the view.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Design development to improve the rear façade;
  - Design development to improve the livability of the units;

- Consider adding more greenery to the lane condition;
  - Consider adding a green roof and roof access.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought it would fit well into the neighbourhood.

The Panel felt that a strong approach had been taken with the design and supported the density. Several Panel members liked the architectural style and supported the use of white brick and liked that it was unusual and different. They liked the prominent residential entry and felt there was lots of pedestrian interest on the street. One panel member thought that the articulation of the front facade looked too artificial and themed, reflecting more the branding ideas of the developer and with a lack of contemporary expression. Several Panel members struggled with the back facade as they thought the lane condition was not conducive to the residential across the lane and looked like it wasn't given the same attention to detail as the front façade.

There was some concern regarding the liveability of the units. The Panel noted that in loft style units there is usually more ceiling height to offset the smaller size of the unit. They felt these units were less supportable with eight foot ceilings and that although the units would be marketed to students they deserved to have the same standard of living as any other owner. One Panel member noted that there is a struggle between capitalizing on the FSR exemption versus access to daylight to the sleeping area. One Panel member suggested the interior stairs be made more usable than just emergency exits since the building would only be four storeys.

The Panel liked the landscape plans but several Panel members thought it was a missed opportunity to not have roof access. They noted that having stair access to the roof, gardens and patios would add value to the project and that there didn't need to be only individual access. One Panel member noted that more greenery could be added at the pedestrian level with planters and green screens. Also it was felt that the back of the building could get more greenery.

Several Panel members noted that there didn't seem to be much in the way of sustainability initiatives planned for the project. There was also some concern regarding cross ventilation and solar gain on the south façade and the Panel supported adding a green roof.

- **Applicant's Response:** Ms. Kovacs thanked the Panel for their comments and noted that there was a struggle to make the units affordable and liveable. They are actually targeting a more economical unit and felt they hadn't compromised liveability. She added that the kitchen, living and dining area will receive the most amount of light and that there would be enough light in the sleeping area. She said the design team would take the green roof into consideration. Ms. Kovacs noted that it wasn't as simple as adding stair access to the roof as they will need to extend the elevator over the building envelope but thought it would worth doing as the views are incredible. Ms. Kovacs noted that there is limited opportunity to provide planters in the lane because the gas meter, loading bay, access to the underground parking and the electric transformer take up a great deal of space.

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2. Address:	1777 West 7 <sup>th</sup> Avenue
DE:	413828
Description:	To construct a new 12-storey mixed-use building.
Zoning:	C-3A
Application Status:	Complete
Review:	First
Owner:	Intergulf Development Group
Architect:	Ramsay Worden Architects
Delegation:	Doug Ramsay, Ramsay Worden Architects Bruce Ramsay, Ramsay Worden Architects Allison Good, DMG Landscape Architects Danile Roberts, Kane Consulting
Staff:	Anita Molaro

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)**

- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for mixed use development with 267 residential units between West 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues along Burrard Street. Ms. Molaro described the context for the area noting that West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a bike route. The density is 3.0 FSR plus 10% heritage for a total of 3.3 FSR. The proposed height is slightly over 100 feet because of the sloping grade. Ms. Molaro noted that C-3A is a zone that has some specific wording about how one can achieve up to 3.0 FSR and an increase in height. The proposed massing is based on a u-shape, low rise, two stepped mid-rise elements and a 10-storey highrise. The stepped massing with high volume retail space allows for some opportunities for mezzanine levels. On the two side street frontages there will be a small amount of retail wrapping and the balance as grade oriented residential uses. The project massing has responded to the C-3A zoning and Burrard Slopes Guidelines. The guidelines call for a maximum height of 100 feet, and a maximum height along Burrard Street of 50 feet, with a further shaping of the building mass to both open up and preserve views of the mountains along Burrard Street but also to frame and create a sense of street enclosure. An existing pedestrian walkway is on the adjacent property and provides a connection between West 6<sup>th</sup> and West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues. The proposed uses along the walkway are residential. The proposed set back along the pedestrian walkway varies between 20 feet and 12 feet. A small parkette/plaza is planned on West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue which will offer an opportunity for respite along the bikeway and at the top of the pedestrian connection. The tower massing separation with the adjacent building will be over 140 feet with some shadow impacts on the neighbouring courtyard (in the afternoon) and there are some private view impacts affecting the most westerly views. Amenity spaces are dispersed through the building with a meeting room on level 1, media room on level 2, two exercise rooms on level 3 and a roof deck on level 8. The applicant has presented a LEED™ scorecard indicating they will be achieving LEED™ Silver equivalent. In addition to the public realm treatments, including the enhancements to the connecting walkway, midblock plaza on West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and an expanded public realm on the corners of Burrard Street and West 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues, the applicant is proposing a water feature in the courtyard and intensive and extensive green roof treatments.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

- building form, massing, height and density (3.0 plus 10% Heritage density = 3.3 FSR);
  - the increase in height (100ft.) and the increase in FSR from 1.0 to 3.0 and additional 10% HD;
  - streetwall scale and massing in response to reinforcing the view cone objectives as described by the guidelines;

- building's overall design and its effect on the site and surrounding buildings, streets and views;
  - shadow impacts
  - view impacts
  - response to the mid block walkway connection - building massing/setback
  - extension of retail uses along West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- open space design and landscape treatments including;
  - contribution to the public realm - plaza as an amenity of for the area
  - the provision for pedestrian needs
- design and livability of the dwelling uses;
- articulation of facades and material treatments;
- sustainability attributes.

Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Doug Ramsay, Architect, further described the proposal. He noted the building changes as it goes around the site with 3-storey residential on top of the commercial. The north end of the building is lower than the view cone. The courtyard has units organized around it and is at the same level as West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. As the courtyard is north facing they have stepped the massing down to allow light access. There is some water to offer some reflection in the darker area of the courtyard. Regarding sustainability, they are targeting a LEED™ Silver equivalency. They have already initiated some energy modeling which will help the design team chose the glazing and other materials. The owner wanted more affordable units so there will be studios and one bedroom units available. There is an emphasis on providing a lot more common spaces with access on the roof for a common area. The exercise room has a patio to make use of the roof. The commercial space is two levels and is planned for six tenants. Intergulf is currently negotiating with Thrifty Foods and also an auto dealer for the commercial space. Mr. Ramsay noted that they are trying to reduce the solar gain on the south façade by creating fins to add shadowing as well as using tinted glazing.

Allison Good, Landscape Architects, described the landscape plans noting that there will be additional bike parking along Burrard Street as well as seating. Ms. Good described the planting material. Smaller trees are planned for the courtyard with intensive and extensive green roofs.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Design development to the courtyard to make it more useable for the residents;
  - Consider adding a cut out at the corner for cyclists entering traffic on Burrard Street;
  - Revisit some of the unit sizes to make sure they are marketable;
  - Consider adding urban agriculture on the roofs;
  - Limit retail to Burrard Street and the corner of West 7th Avenue and Burrard Street;
  - Give more attention to the common courtyard and its relationship to West 6th Avenue by creating visual continuity and potentially extending the water feature.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal as well as the building form, massing, street wall scale, height and density.

The Panel felt the project would fit into the neighbourhood and as well thought the project was skillfully handled. Given that West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a bicycle route, some of the Panel encouraged the applicant to add more retail as a way to contribute to the public realm

although several other Panel members thought the commercial didn't need to wrap the corner. One panel member thought a more glazed corner would reinforce the commercial. Another Panel member suggested providing more pedestrian access over vehicles on West 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue with another Panel member acknowledging the mid block pedestrian crossing. Another Panel member noted that the blank wall on West 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue was problematic and suggested making the corner friendlier. A couple of Panel members thought there were some minor shadow impacts although there didn't seem to be any to the adjacent open space.

Most of the Panel supported the design and liveability of the units noting that there was a broad use of dwelling units. Several Panel members thought the smaller size of some of the suites was getting very close to being restrictive regarding furniture and perhaps liveability. The Panel noted that they would not like to see them be any smaller as the narrow units have insufficient width. One Panel member suggested some consideration be given to making the townhouses on West 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue more regular as they come out to the sidewalk as a way to clean up the architecture. A couple of Panel members noted that the street condition for bike storage was right by a primary entrance but should be taken further to utilize the plaza and to have a cut out to make it easier for the cyclists to get into traffic.

Some of the Panel thought the courtyard needed more programming as it will not be just a visual space but will be used by the residents in the building. One Panel member suggested a larger water feature in the courtyard to make for a quieter space. Several Panel members thought the mid block passage would work well with the addition of trees and a sidewalk as it created a public benefit. A couple of Panel members thought some more edging material could be added along the sidewalk. One panel member suggested that the three bedroom units should have roof access.

Regarding sustainability, most of the Panel thought more could be done. One Panel member wanted to see more extensive green space on the eighth level roof as the area will be a prime community outdoor space. They also thought there was plenty of room on the roof to add some urban agriculture. One Panel member noted that the roof had potential to support a solar hot water system and suggested putting electric car charging in the parking stalls and looking into a way to plug into a future neighbourhood energy utility (NEU). A couple of Panel members noted that a strategy needed to be determined as to how the applicant will deal with sustainability and how the building will be viable in years to come.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Ramsay thanked the Panel for their comments. He said that there were some exciting ideas that have come from their comments and would be looking at the water from the courtyard having a presence on West 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.