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## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

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**DATE:** May 19, 1999

**TIME:** 4.00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Committee Room #1, City Hall

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Roger Hughes (Chair)  
Patricia Campbell  
James Cheng  
Per Christoffersen (excused Item #1)  
Paul Grant  
Sean McEwan  
Gilbert Raynard (excused Item #1)  
Keith Ross  
Norman Shearing (excused Item #1)  
Joe Werner

**REGRETS:** Sheldon Chandler  
Joseph Hruda

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. 601 Canada Place Way
2. 677 Davie Street ( <i>1196 Granville</i> )
3. 377 Powell Street

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1. Address: 601 Canada Place Way  
DA: 404106 & 404108  
Use: Convention Centre and Parkade  
Zoning: CD-1  
Application Status: Complete  
Architect: Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership  
Owner: Vancouver Port Corporation  
Review: First  
Delegation: Dave Galpin, Frank Musson, Mark Whitehead, Don Wuori  
Staff: Ralph Segal, Rob Jenkins
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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)**

- **Introduction:** Rob Jenkins briefly reviewed the process to date for the trade and convention centre complex. The subject submission is for the convention centre itself and parking, and is the second of five submissions. The Panel reviewed the first application, for the hotel, on February 24, 1999. Applications 3 - 5 will include the commercial building, the plaza, and the SeaBus Terminal. The end-of-pier development has a different jurisdictional context and will be reviewed as a “shadow” development application. At the Comprehensive Development Agreement (CDA) stage there was the equivalent of a preliminary development application review of all components.

Ralph Segal reviewed the relevant conditions that were applied at the CDA stage. He stressed this is a review of the public experiences on the most important public edges of the site, namely the waterfront and one side of the important Howe Street promenade. The access from Canada Place Way to Waterfront Road, shown previously as a series of temporary ramps, has been reconsidered and the intent now is to achieve a more permanent solution at the onset.

- **Applicant’s Opening Comments:** Dave Galpin briefly reviewed the projected timing for the various components, and the members of the design team provided an update on various aspects of the proposal.
- **Panel’s Comments:** Following a review of the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application and thought the project was developing very positively.

Regarding the south side of the project, there was some support for the approach being taken but also some comments that the Cordova connection could be enhanced, perhaps with some stronger gestures to engage the city to make the project not quite so detached from the downtown. There was a suggestion that it should be lighter and feel more like a bridge. Also, that people should not be prevented from looking down onto the rail tracks since they are interesting to look at and do reflect the area’s history. With respect to the garage elevations, it was suggested the applicant might be trying too hard. It might be better to leave it more open, with a more honest expression of the slab and railing, perhaps with hanging planters on the railings but with opportunities for people to look out and through.

On the easterly side, most Panel members were not concerned about the monolithic form because of its temporary nature. There was, however, a suggestion that perhaps a temporary pedestrian connection across that wall would help to relieve the façade in the short term and be a convenience for pedestrians to be able to stay at street level instead of the present circuitous route up and down, particularly at the scalloped edge.

With respect to the north side, it was felt the SeaBus terminal could be more expressive of its function, with a suggestion that perhaps separating that building from the scalloped form would help both components. It was noted that earlier illustrations of the terminal were much more exuberant and it has since become somewhat prosaic. The Panel thought that the beacon here should be much more dominant than the one next to Canada Place. It was felt that this will be of greater importance because it is a focal point. The Panel thought the waterfront walkway might be too tight at 3 m and it was suggested this might be enhanced by reflecting the scalloped form in the walkway and railing.

Concerns were expressed about the SeaBus vertical connector and tunnels. It was suggested it should have a much stronger form and identity, which would contribute to the whole project because it anchors and forms the focus of that edge. There was a comment that it can't decide whether it's a causeway or a bridge. Given the terminal is some distance from the old CP Station it will be a challenge to engage commuters and provide a positive experience through all aspects of it. The underground portions of the route will certainly be less attractive than the current overpass to the seabus with its panoramic views of the harbour and everything should be done to open it up as much as possible.

Although outside the scope of this application, there were some comments about the retail component and how the arcade fits into the pedestrian experience at the edges of the plaza. There was concern about what appears to be a somewhat constricted entrance beside the retail building which, compared to the grand entrance of the convention plaza, feels a bit like an alley. It was suggested that 50 ft. might be better than the proposed 40 ft.

On the west side at the hotel lobby, there was a concern about the scale of the arcade, with a suggestion to add trees along there to humanize the experience more at this axis point.

The Panel generally supported the palette of materials, and the landscape materials were also generally well received.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Galpin said he agreed with the comment about the heaviness of the bridge and the guard rails and noted they would prefer to make it a lighter structure, however, there are some very severe engineering constraints. It will ultimately become integrated with future developments. Mr. Galpin also acknowledged the Panel's advice to not put undue resources into the south and east sides of the parking structure. He said they believe they will be temporary conditions. Regarding the 40 ft. wide connection, Mr. Galpin said they concluded it is an appropriate width in terms of the hierarchy of access points. He noted it will be a covered link, creating a retail/mews precinct to allow retailers and food outlets to spill into the space. With respect to the walkway on the west side, they decided to make it straight to provide the opportunity for tall ships or other significant vessels to tie up there, which would not be possible with a scalloped edge. They decided to put the greater width on the east side of the SeaBus link and they believe 10 ft. is appropriate. It will be looked at again, however, and if there is room to move they will seriously consider putting additional width into the walkway.

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2. Address:	677 Davie Street ( <i>1196 Granville</i> )
DA:	404010
Use:	Dance Centre
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Architectura
Owner:	Bank of Nova Scotia
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Arthur Erickson, Noel Best
Staff:	Mike Kemble

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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction:** Mike Kemble, Development Planner, presented this application, last seen by the Panel as a preliminary submission on March 10, 1999. On March 30, 1999, Council decided the retention of the Granville Street façade was sufficient to qualify for a heritage density bonus. The application has now been revised and upgraded to a complete submission. The Panel supported the earlier submission, noting concerns about the extent of setbacks of the upper storeys above the heritage façade on Granville and the stepped terraces on Davie, the functionality of the pedestrian weather protection on Davie, and the Davie Street façade's response to solar heat gain issues. Other issues related to the rooftop elements and north façade treatment in terms of its blank appearance.

The planning configuration remains essentially as submitted previously. The main change has been with the upper level massing where the mechanical areas have been reduced and set back. As well, there has been some minor reconfiguration of some of the studio and office areas. Pedestrian weather protection has been added along Davie Street and the Davie façade treatment has been refined, now proposed as a combination of clear and fritted glass. The Panel's comments are sought on the response earlier concerns, as well as the following issues identified by staff: the grade level pedestrian interest and amenities, the Granville Street façade, noting the guidelines call for continuous weather protection on Granville, and the blankness of the north wall.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Arthur Erickson, Architect, briefly described the revised façade treatment, noting the design has been simplified.
- **Panel's Comments:** After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application. The Panel acknowledged the applicant's positive response to its previous comments and noted that pulling back the mechanical penthouse has reduced the mass quite effectively.

Some concerns were expressed about the north wall facing the neighbouring hotel. Suggestions were that it should be lower; also, that the façade might express the interior functions in some way to provide some visual relief for the hotel residents who will look onto it.

There was mixed response to the issue of weather protection on Granville. Two Panel members thought it would detract from the effect of the heritage façade but others thought a light and transparent canopy should be added to provide continuous weather protection.

The Panel supported the approach to the retention of the Granville Street façade as a “ruin” or “set piece”. Panel members particularly liked the Granville/Davie corner treatment and suggested allowing planting to grow up or down the join to further accentuate it. One Panel member thought the planter on top of the heritage façade at the corner was superfluous.

The Panel found the Davie Street façade interesting but suggested the canopy could be simpler and closer to the sidewalk to be more effective; also, that the stepping down form might be a little too busy.

One concern was raised about the legibility of the entry. With respect to the streetscape, there was a call for a lot of street trees in the public right-of-way, which would also help to address the question of solar heat gain.

In general, the Panel found it to be a wonderful building that will set a standard for the entertainment district. It will be a very pleasant addition to this part of the downtown and the Panel looks forward to seeing it built.

- **Applicant’s Response:** Mr. Erickson agreed the height of the north wall could be brought down to the same height as the glass, however, its purpose is to provide the upper terrace with protection from north winds. He agreed it would be advantageous to increase the amount of street trees. With respect to the canopy, Mr. Erickson noted it will be clear glass and will be less dominant than it appears in the perspective.

3. Address:	377 Powell Street
DA:	404082
Use:	Residential (31 units) with social service centre
Zoning:	DEOD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Davidson Yuen Simpson
Owner:	City of Vancouver
Review:	First
Delegation:	Dave Jansen, Robert O'Dea
Staff:	Bob Adair

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

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner, presented this application for a 4-storey building containing a service centre on the ground floor with residential above. Parking is at the rear, with access off the lane. The site (City owned) is 122 ft. x 50 ft. on the north side of Powell Street between Dunlevy and Gore Streets. There are 31 self-contained, low-income dwelling units, grouped around a courtyard. Proposed materials are brick above the main floor level with a split-face concrete base and glazing patterns recalling the general rhythm existing on the street. Two major relaxations are being sought. This section of the DEOD allows a maximum density of 2.5 FSR. The proposed FSR for the residential units is 2.5, and 0.4 for the social service centre, for a total of 2.9 FSR. The ODP allows for an increase in FSR for uses considered to be socially needed in the neighbourhood. The application also seeks a relaxation on unit sizes. The Zoning & Development By-law requires a minimum of 400 sq.ft., relaxable to 320 sq.ft. The typical unit size in this project is about 277 sq.ft., with the smallest at about 265 sq.ft. Both relaxations are generally supported by staff. The DODP also seeks continuous retail at grade in this location. Staff also support this relaxation given the need for this facility and that it will add to pedestrian activity on the street.

The Panel's comments are sought on the livability of the units and general comments on the appearance of the building.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Dave Jansen, Architect, had nothing to add to the Development Planner's description of the project.
- **Panel's Comments:** After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application. The Panel fully supported relaxation of the FSR and the unit sizes and found the units to be generally very well laid out and livable. The Panel also considered the proposed grade level function to be a good equivalent to retail in this case.

Some concern was expressed about the security of the end units on the lane that flank a 2-storey building, with a suggestion to consider returning the wall at each property line.

It was suggested the courtyard landscaping may not be practical, and that its layout is somewhat rigid and unfriendly. It was recommended that providing planters for residents to take ownership may be a

better solution. There was also a question about whether the benches are movable, given the limited amount of sun the courtyard receives.

The façade was well received by the Panel who found it nicely proportioned and a good piece of contextual design. There was a concern about the durability and long term maintenance of stucco, and it was suggested there are alternatives available for a building of this nature that would not cost any more. The Panel found the building fits well in this location. There was one recommendation to consider making more of the cornice, to reflect the older buildings in the area, with the hope that the Engineering Department's restrictions on projections over city property could be relaxed in this case.

There was a recommendation to differentiate the entry to the residential from the grade level use, and to ensure the lobby remains transparent for security reasons.

With respect to the 4th floor deck, there was a recommendation to enlarge it a little to allow more seating on the easterly side. Another suggestion was to consider relocating the amenity to the north side so that the deck would be sunnier and quieter, and relocating the two units on the lane.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Jansen noted that BC Housing does require irrigation of all landscaping.