

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** May 25, 2005

**TIME:** 4.00 pm

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Alan Endall, Chair  
Larry Adams (Items 1 and 2)  
Robert Barnes (Item 2)  
Nigel Baldwin  
Shahla Bozorgzadeh  
Ronald Lea  
Margot Long  
Edward Smith  
C.C. Yao (Items 2 and 3)

**REGRETS:** James Cheng  
Marta Farevaag  
Peter Wreglesworth

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Karen Miller, Raincoast Ventures

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	749 West 33 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue (4855 Heather)
2.	821 Cambie Street
3.	3891 Main Street

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**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Endall 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: 749 West 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue (4855 Heather)  
Use: Assisted Living (St. Vincent's Hospital)  
Zoning: CD-1  
Application Status: RZ  
Architect: IBI Group/Henriquez  
Owner: Providence Health Care Society  
Review: First  
Delegation: Tony Gill, Richard Henriquez, Robert Barnes  
Staff: Mary Beth Rondeau/Dave Thomsett

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-1)****• Introduction:**

Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner requested that the Urban Design Panel consider the drawings provided on table for the presentation in place of those distributed in the agenda package.

Dave Thomsett, Development Planner, presented the Providence Health Care application for an assisted living 'Campus of Care' to include 60 units for seniors and 8 independent living units for younger adults. He noted that the project was to be ILBC funded; and Providence Health Care was anxious to begin the Master Planning for the site.

Mr. Thomsett advised that the location of the assisted living project was at the southeast corner of the site (previously occupied by St. Vincent's Hospital); and the building would be 60 ft. in height with a 1.24 FSR. Additionally, it was proposed that two existing vehicle crossings be retained.

The policy context for the application was provided by Mr. Thomsett, and it was acknowledged that the Planning Department supported the consideration of the rezoning application for the affordable housing project prior to the completion of a Master Plan. Mr. Thomsett recognized that the results of a community choices survey and visioning would be critical in determining the complete project density. He added that large site cost recovery projects typically included a workshop with the Urban Design Panel during the process.

Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, provided additional commentary on the application, and noted that the character of the building had changed from the previous drawings, as it was now more rectilinear. She acknowledged an adjacent bikeway on Heather Street; and noted that a continuation of the green area from the Children's Hospital was a factor in the development. It was noted that the site was very prominent at the crown of the hill where the land fell away at Heather Street and West 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. She added that views from properties to the east would be very minimally impacted; however one area resident had expressed concern relative to the character of the building within the context of the neighbourhood.

Ms. Rondeau advised the meeting that funding for the assisted living portion of the project was a major consideration, in addition to the neighbourhood visioning, with respect to the order of events and timing. It was noted that uses and density would be determined within

the Master Plan and that the neighbourhood choices survey would contribute to the consultation on the project.

The advice of the Panel was sought on the overall form, height and density of the assisted living building, but not on the preliminary Master Plan work. Additionally, comments were welcomed regarding whether the assisted living building might preclude any options for the upcoming Master Planning work on the site.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Robert Barnes, Landscape Architect, provided an overview of the context of the development within the neighbourhood noting that the project included a double canopy of trees on Heather Street and West 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, a proposed arrival court, covered canopy, simple drop off in and out design, and a small parking lot on the north side of the site. He added that the units expressed at the main floor had patios; the secondary access point was located on West 33 Avenue; a large, partially covered amenity patio was expressed at the west side of the site; tree islands were included in the parking lot and some of the existing trees would be retained at the corner of Heather Street and West 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

The Architect responded to the Panel's questions and the following highlights were noted:

- within the preliminary Master Planning exercise, originally the main assisted living building was oriented to West 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue with an additional assisted living building oriented to Heather;
- the land sloped away to the north west of the site; there could be a pedestrian oriented garden shared by the whole facility and taller buildings could be accommodated as the site dropped away;
- surface parking was included on the site and had been accepted by Planning at this point;
- dining rooms were included on each level as extensive consultation with Providence Health Care had been undertaken; it was felt that smaller dining groupings would be more appropriate than a common dining room on the main floor;
- residents could use the ground floor outdoor areas and balconies on each floor;
- the design concept included a common lounge on each floor and a large common lounge on the main floor;
- design of the southern area of the building included a function for younger handicapped adults in self contained suites, each with independent cooking facilities;
- cost was the major factor influencing the design changes shown between earlier drawings and current drawings;
- the approach to the overall building form was recognized as institutional assisted living;
- short term parking would service the multi-level care portion, and parking shown for Area A was sufficient.

Panel Members reviewed the model and material.

- **Panel's Recommendations:**

Chair Endall summarized recommendations discussed by the Panel acknowledging that there were no concerns with use and density. Some concerns were expressed that commentary was difficult given the proposal was out of sequence with the preparation of a comprehensive Master Plan for the overall site. The north / south orientation of the building fronting Heather Street appears to be appropriate, however it may preclude siting and orientation opportunities on the overall site to better optimize efficient use of energy. Additional consideration should be given to issues of response to the site slope; integration of surface parking; integration of the NE to SW diagonal pedestrian desire line; and forecourt treatment to the building along Heather Street.

- **General Comments from the Panel:**

The Panel offered the following comments relative to overall form, height and density:

- there are no concerns or problems regarding the use and density;
- there is confidence in the applicant;
- the site model suggests some delightful qualities to the articulation of massing, and
- 1.25 FSR is fine.

The Panel offered the following comments relative to siting massing issues and whether the form development shown would have a bearing on the Master Plan:

- more rationale and background for the assisted living building siting would be helpful;
- the site is fairly sloped and the characteristics of the building seem slightly uncomfortable for the site - the design should fit the sloping site better;
- the siting was appropriate and offered the most flexibility;
- there is potential for movement diagonally through the site from the northeast corner towards West 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Willow Street; this could connect people from the neighbourhood with public access through the courtyard towards the future park at West 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Oak and Willow Streets;
- the desire to connect some of the open spaces for a "wellness walk" concept could be considered at the Master Plan level;
- surface parking and its treatment would be an issue as planning continues;
- as part of the big space/campus the landscaping would be important;
- on-grade parking and how it ties into the complete Master Plan should be considered, and providing underground parking to the building should be looked at;
- buildings should be approached at the Master Plan stage with energy in mind, within the context of the whole site, to take advantage of the early opportunity to contemplate impacts on the energy and sustainability of the building(s);
- concrete as opposed to wood should be given consideration relative to energy and sustainability; and
- consideration should be given to the mass of the building and the impact that its shape will have on the future Master Plan.

Additional comments were offered on the overall character of the building as follows:

- the character of the building includes some large blank faces facing the residential neighbourhood; these are foreign to the neighbourhood and should be further considered;
- the long sides need some treatment;
- the next phase should show the character of the building and its finer grain development; and
- mass is a concern; it does not feel like a "home".

- **Applicant's Response:**

The applicant thanked the Panel for their comments and noted that the points raised were well taken.

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2. Address:	821 Cambie Street
DE:	409233
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete/Rezoning
Architect:	Hancock, Bruckner, Eng & Wright
Owner:	Raffles on Robson Dev. Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Jim McLean, Jim Hancock, Hilda Heyvaerts, Peter Kreuk
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

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#### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-1)

- **Introduction:**

Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, referenced the models and provided a description of the project within the context of the neighbourhood. It was noted that the current stage of the rezoning application required consideration of the tower placement and form, acknowledging the terracing and shadowing onto Library Square. Ms. Rondeau advised that the use, density and massing had been set, noting that the proposal was similar to what was seen at the rezoning stage. In terms of context, the preliminary development application was reviewed. Comment was offered on the planning policy relative to density along Robson Street.

The Panel was apprised of project details noting the proposed development included retail use on Robson Street; and the office live-work concept included ground floor open space with living quarters on the second floor. At the rezoning stage, the panel suggested the actual use be expressed more clearly as office live-work. The meeting was informed that the proposal included 150 residential units; a total 7.54 FSR; and semi-private open space including some outdoor space with a connected indoor amenity (approx. 10 sq. ft. per unit).

Direction from the Urban Design Panel was sought relative to detailed resolution of the building including the mechanical penthouse and semi-private open space for the use of the residents.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The proponent team responded to the Panel's questions and the following highlights were noted:

- the building height relates to the neighbourhood;
- the glass color was changed on the corners to express the verticality;
- the second story mezzanine to the penthouse has been added;
- loading requirements are met;
- there are roof decks on various levels;
- outdoor space includes a children's play area;
- the floor surface materials includes brick, cut stone and painted concrete; the cut stone relates to the neighbourhood context; and
- the window patterns are in compliance with fire code and structural requirements.

The Panel reviewed the model and material.

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- **Panel's Recommendations:**

The Chair recognized that the Panel was supportive of the overall massing of the project.

Chair Endall summarized the Panel's comments on the design development; responses to the Panel's previous comments; detail and overall resolution of the building; and the quality/quantity of semi-private open space.

- **Key Issues to be Addressed:**

In general it was suggested that consideration be given to:

- simplification of the architectural expression and detailing of the building, (specifically the resolution of how the several different architectural expressions are combined and integrated);
- the massing and expression of the corner entrance and stone lintel at the top floor;
- potential deletion of the continuous canopies along Cambie Street in favor of individual entrance canopies that might strengthen the two storey expression of the live-work units;
- adjusting the two angled wings on the Robson elevation to be of matching heights; and
- further development and refinement of the lane elevation.

Additionally the applicant was encouraged to explore opportunities to optimize efficiencies of shared energy between uses.

It was further requested that the Planning Department give consideration to clarification of requirements for open space on projects in this area and in general.

- **Panel's General Comments:**

The following comments were provided relative to design development and detailed resolution of the building:

- there is some awkwardness relative to the resolution of the entry corner and incorporation of cut stone;
- perhaps some of the elements that come down on the painted concrete at the lane elevation could be improved;
- the live-work character was well handled and works well with the streetscape;
- the canopies over the live-work units are over semi-private space rather than public space; the live-work concept would be better without them;
- with respect to the massing/composition, the two angled surfaces would be better if they went to the same height;
- the exuberant stylist bundling is good and would require a huge commitment to the detail package;
- the applicant must be commended for the level of interest and variety of glazing used;
- the mid-portion of the building has taken on a level of interest and weaves interestingly with the base of the building;
- the depth with the window overhangs works well;
- the northwest corner would benefit from being raised;
- the base has taken a position that is too contextual and should stand on its own rather than trying to respond to all buildings around it;
- the concrete, stone and brick all work on the building in various ways - the brick on Robson Street was most successful; the one on Cambie Street should be the same;
- the vertical striping on the corner should be reconsidered;
- the stone on the building should not be carried on as a fascia; this is the wrong material;
- the size of stone beside the front door is too foreign to the language of the building and is too small; it should be enlarged or removed;
- there are too many unrelated details and materials; it would look better simpler;

- it is a handsome building, but perhaps too eclectic;
- the architectural expression is exuberant; it could almost do with one or two less approaches to the expression of the exterior envelope of the building;
- regarding the detailing of the glazing systems, the applicant should look at the connections and make sure there are no thermal bridges;
- office retail and restaurant combined with residential should give some opportunity for efficiencies in the use of heat;
- some of the suites on the higher levels will get hot; some shading should be considered instead of air conditioning; and
- the stack effect typically through the elevator room does not allow for pressurization of lower levels; this should be looked at.

The following comments were provided relative to the semi-private open space:

- outdoor space for the residents is appropriate;
- for a building of this scale and mass the detailing of the landscape elements (planters and what was provided within the semi-private open space) seems too basic for a project of this scale;
- the minimal semi-private open space would allow for a richly detailed approach;
- the outdoor space could use a level of landscape detail- it needs more programming and the various elements enhanced;
- the space appears to be adequate in terms of the size of the building; and
- perhaps the space was a little more broken up than it should be.

The following comments were provided relative to the mechanical penthouse:

- no major concerns have been expressed;
- it has been reworked adequately with the addition of a second floor;
- the penthouse was weak and the projection could be a lot stronger; and
- it looks quite plain and is in contrast to the rest of the building.

The following additional general comments were offered:

- the proponent team must be complimented on the work done to address the comments and concerns previously provided by the Urban Design Panel;
- the proposed development handles the density very well;
- the layered and contextual approach to the massing is very successful;
- the streetscape has been handled well according to City requirements;
- in some of the upper patios there might be an opportunity to add more trees;
- the height of the building compared to the width/diameter of the building is too short;
- the loading zone could be too safe for crime;
- the Robson Street tree grid and bands across the sidewalks are just off the building grid;
- the Robson Street pattern should go to the corner;
- the bike racks may be blocking retail;
- some of the private decks on levels 5 and 9 include a mid-deck planter that could be removed; they break the outdoor space into two smaller less useable spaces; and
- the golf green is a puzzling component.

Additionally, City of Vancouver "open space" requirements were queried, noting that each building was handled differently making it challenging for the Panel to comment.

- **Applicant's Response:**

The applicant expressed appreciation for the Panel's comments and indicated that all of the comments were anticipated and would be dealt with.

3. Address: 3891 Main Street  
DE: 409240  
Use: Neighbourhood House (4 storeys)  
Zoning: C-2  
Application Status: Complete  
Architect: Neale, Staniszki, Doll & Adams  
Owner: City of Vancouver  
Review: First  
Delegation: Larry Adams, Robert Barnes, Wanda Felt, Joel Bronstein  
Staff: Mary Beth Rondeau

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#### EVALUATION: UNANIMOUS SUPPORT (6-0)

##### **Introduction:**

Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, provided an overview of the proposal noting the site was located in a C-2 zone on Main Street at West 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue which was on the edge of a vibrant retail/commercial area. She added that the program for the site was the Little Mountain Neighbourhood House, and acknowledged that a Neighbourhood House already existed a short distance away. Ms. Rondeau noted that the site was 100 ft. wide and the depth was less than normal at 84 ft., which made parking difficult. It was recognized that other Neighbourhood Houses had been approved with a lower number of parking spots.

Ms. Rondeau apprised the Panel of project details noting the main floor of the building included an administration area; a seniors' centre and a meeting/kitchen area; the second floor was programmed for neighbourhood social services, classrooms etc.; and the third floor contained a consolidated preschool. It was noted that C-2 zoning allowed for a four storey building. Ms. Rondeau acknowledged that the application was for a building one storey lower than permissible, which worked into the rear yard setback.

She acknowledged that one comment had been received from a neighbour relative to the rear yard setback. It was noted that the continuation of the lane would be addressed; and that the proposal achieved significantly less massing than the existing building. Ms. Rondeau added that building was currently owned by the City of Vancouver.

There were no specific issues from Planning for consideration relative to the application.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Larry Adams, Architect, and the proponent team addressed the meeting advising that the application was a story of process rather than product. He noted that the project had progressed from 'no LEED' certification, to 'Silver LEED' certification, to partially-funded 'Gold LEED' certification; and that the project was funded by the City of Vancouver and the federal government through an infrastructure program, and also through some neighbourhood fundraising. Mr. Adams acknowledged that budget considerations had resulted in changes to the building.

The Panel was informed that relaxations were being sought relative to the encroachment into the rear yard and regarding parking. He recognized the applicant was endeavoring to maintain the building at three stories rather than four, with a single level of parking; and that the development's use as a neighbourhood house was relevant to the parking relaxation.



Robert Barnes spoke to the general program advising that as part of a federal funding program, Main Street was being translated into a bus transportation route and therefore the city pattern of an exposed aggregate band at the curb and the pattern was fairly benign. He commented on expressing the grids, retaining and replacing street trees, and the development's public entry area where paving gave way to a bit of a larger court and a bench at the corner. Mr. Barnes advised that a lot of the landscaping happened above with extensive green roofs at the upper levels, and specifically for the preschool on an east and south facing deck. It was noted that the design included an interior corridor which spilled out into the courtyard; a children's play area; a tricycle route of resilient material; planter boxes for a garden program; semi-private play areas for children; artificial turf; a large canopy with an eight foot wall; and a water retention/play area that added to the sustainability.

The proponent team responded to questions from the Panel and the following highlights were noted:

- the client would very much like to add a fourth floor in the future if possible; the size of footings and seismic requirements were originally considered for this but were cut out due to cost considerations and zoning requirements;
- the development is 2.5 FSR on a site that fills the envelope;
- 15 parking spaces works for the owner and the Neighbourhood House Society; the ramp location, number of stalls etc. have been discussed with the Engineering Department;
- the roof garden was oriented to the east in response to the neighbourhood concerns regarding the anticipated noise from the children's play area; and
- parking exhaust comes up in the corner of the multi-purpose room on the group floor, and is carried out and over the top of the recycling area, and into the lane.

- **Panel's Recommendations:**

The Chair summarized that the Panel was generally strongly supportive of the application. Suggestions for additional consideration related to:

- enhancing the connection to the street along Main Street (possibly with operable windows to achieve better animation of the street);
- the over use of concrete aggregate paving and tree grates (consideration to using granular material for street trees was suggested);
- enhancing the spatial connection between the first and second levels and opportunities for future expansion;
- adequacy of proposed parking; and
- concerns regarding the overlook for residents to the west (opportunities for additional shading devices such as trees along that frontage were suggested).

- **Panel's General Comments:**

The following comments were provided relative to the design:

- the thought given to the detailing of the building and its public use is appreciated;
- it is a great addition to the neighbourhood;
- it is a delightful building and is quite contemporary and interesting for that section of Main Street;
- the streetscape is concerning; it would make sense for the seniors room and multipurpose room windows to open out, as there is no retail interface; additionally, little seating stoops could be added to the exterior columns to add more connection opportunities for people inside and outside;
- a connection of the first and second levels would benefit the building; the opportunity to open up the second floor should be considered;
- the building should be designed to allow for a fourth floor in the future and the opportunity for expansion;

- the canopy should be closer to the model, and stop short of the brick so the brick can carry on around the corner;
- the signage is neat; more signage at the street level may be needed;
- the perspective from the lane side of a three storey box with a flat façade is a concern; and
- planting three big trees on the first storey roof deck could address concerns regarding the west side glass and façade overlooking the neighbours.

The following comments were provided relative to landscaping:

- the roof decks, green roofs and the children's deck were well handled;
- street level planted areas or the addition of a granular material that provided more ability for the trees to survive should be considered; and
- the third street tree should go back on West 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

The following comments were provided relative to parking:

- the parking may be minimal and less than required for the building.

The following general comments were offered:

- the streetscape quality is concerning; exposed aggregate and concrete are not really an appropriate way to deal with the streetscape; this concern should be directed to the City of Vancouver;
- lighting should warm the street and be street friendly;
- with respect to energy efficiency, consider the location of the computer room on the east face as it is a high heat intensified room; the staff conference room may not be used as much as the enclosed offices, which would be best suited to the windows and natural light; and
- the proponent must be congratulated regarding the continued enthusiasm, over the extended duration of the project.

- **Applicant's Response:**

The applicant expressed appreciation for the Panel's comments and advised that extensive analysis was done with regard to the parking. It was noted that although consideration was given to going down another level, the addition accommodated a few more cars but was cost-prohibitive. A traffic study was referenced, which indicated that the number of parking spaces shown would be appropriate.

The meeting of the Urban Design Panel held May 25, 2005 concluded at 6:29 p.m.