

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** May 26, 2004

**TIME:** 4.00 p.m.

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Bruce Haden, Chair  
Mark Ostry, Deputy Chair  
Larry Adams  
Robert Barnes  
Alan Endall (arrived 5:45 p.m.)  
Marta Farevaag (arrived 5:45 p.m.)  
Steven Keyes  
Ronald Lea  
Margot Long  
Jennifer Marshall (departed 8:00 p.m.)  
Brian Martin

**REGRETS:** Jeffrey Corbett

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Vivian Guthrie, Raincoast Ventures

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1120 West Georgia Street
2.	538 Smithe Street
3.	2228 West Broadway
4.	4833 Main Street

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1.	Address:	1120 West Georgia Street
	DE:	408377
	Use:	Mixed (60 storeys)
	Zoning:	CD-1
	Application Status:	Complete
	Architect:	James Cheng
	Owner:	KBK No. 11 Ventures Ltd.
	Review	First
	Delegation:	James Cheng, Dawn Guspie, Chris Phillips
	Staff:	Jonathan Barrett

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8 - 0)****• Introduction:**

Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, offered background information for the project and provided an update on the project's progress since it's rezoning was approved. He described it as mixed use, residences, live/work, hotel, urban fair, sculpture court, with restaurants, open space and adjacent to a heritage building. It was noted that, at the time of rezoning, design conditions seen as refinements included:

- character of tower;
- overall relationship between tower and lower portion;
- refinement of the 'skin';
- micro climate analysis;
- design development of the sculpture court for higher presentation to public;
- roof garden improvements; and
- enhancement of sustainability characteristics.

Staff requested the Panel's comments on the continuity of street trees and had no design issues to discuss.

**• Applicant's Opening Comments:**

James Cheng, Architect, reviewed three models of the project that demonstrated the design development from the rezoning stage to the current proposal, noting that the building's shape was restricted by view corridor requirements. He advised that the revised project addressed some initial concerns of the UDP regarding ground plane treatment, and described folding the bulk of the base towards the street level and the creation of a bridge in order for the ground plane and second floor to work efficiently together. Elevators are in glass to bring light down to the entry plaza.

The building comprises a hotel, live/work units and residential with three penthouses. Wind tunnel testing has been completed and people will be able to enjoy the outdoors in comfort at any level. The exterior finish will be of translucent quality with some lighting for colour change at night and there are some innovative solar powered lighting solutions incorporated, e.g., the vents to each unit will be treated as square 'buttons' with a 'glow' material that will illuminate at night. Other changes have been to bury the food store and to allow six feet to the heritage building for buttresses that exaggerate its seismic improvements. Landscaping provides for a very flexible courtyard treatment and the pavers could be removed to allow soft landscaping. The project is striving to obtain LEED™ certification with the goal of silver.

Chris Phillips, Landscape Architect, noted amenities at ground floor that combine intensive and extensive roofs and a series of treatments on walls for green walls as well as green roofs. A bamboo grove creates a green transition between the heritage and project sites

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with a connecting metal walkway floating above the bamboo. The project has responded to Engineering concerns with no drop-off area on Georgia.

The applicant requested input from the Panel in regard to the roof treatment, specifically the colour of the lath 'room'.

The applicants responded to questions regarding exterior finishes, tree plantings between the 48<sup>th</sup> and 53<sup>rd</sup> floors, the use of bamboo, the relatively tight sidewalk on Thurlow, the outdoor sculpture gallery, and the grid pattern to the east and north elevations.

#### Summary of Panel's Key Issues

- design development to the floating metal tread plate stairs at the northwest corner on the site leading to the heritage building;
- design development to the roof top expression (particularly on the southwest side); and
- design development to the handling of sidewalk and building entrances at the corner of Thurlow and Georgia and along Thurlow Street.

The Panel was undecided about the street trees, with some members in favour of retaining regular intervals between trees and others considering the removal of more trees for better exposure of the art exhibitions.

**Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported the design of the project.

#### Ground Plane

- axial slash through the site is positive and takes a private walkway into a public domain;
- unacceptable stair at church (northwest end termination) and walkway needs to be more usable by public;
- as you come off Georgia the stair is too muted, narrow and skewed; a suggestion is to reconsider widening the stair to have it perpendicular to Georgia with some scissor treatment;
- the terminus is tight and unresolved; don't mind width of stairs; would like room to move to terraced area;
- stair at corner - create a raised podium plaza or other solution;
- south and east treatments offer an opportunity to eat or meet;
- issue of flooding with the pavement coming out over the sidewalk;
- bamboo at this scale is a dynamic element and will add animation;
- bamboo court could be very sensuous space;
- public space may need more pedestrian movement, not more seating as there is a place to stop at the podium level;
- engaged by galleria and sculptural design to public area;
- roof gardens seem less verdant, the sense of lushness is less intense;
- Thurlow, Georgia, and Alberni may be too busy; recommend the elimination of retail on Thurlow creating views through to the hotel lobby, the retail component is not really characteristic of what exists on Thurlow;
- the way in which the structure hits the ground could be simplified;
- regarding public seating on the stairs and considering the sun pattern - are there more opportunities for seating to get the sun;
- wheelchair access transition should be easier.

#### Exterior Skin

- sorry for loss of translucent veil that lent a calmness to Georgia;
- double height box on the high northeast corner is out of context;

- the pop out works well in terms of form, but trees may not be long lasting - to take it in an abstract direction would be more interesting;
- corrugated treatment needs work;
- interesting treatment of lighting, button highlights;
- these are interesting ideas for treatment of the top of the tower, but it doesn't really match the building;
- mock up of 'skin' is required including the junctures where the two types of systems meet.

#### Roof Treatment

- needs to be more of a jewel at the top;
- roof can continue with design development - not quite as elegant;
- barely perceive planting on the top of building;
- roof public space is sparse;
- if there is no public access, people will look at top and wonder what the mystery is;
- needs more 'comfort' zones;
- support simplicity of glass screen, rather than something that says, "I am roof";
- lath could be a strong colour statement or fade into the skyscape;
- scale of lath needs to be lower.

#### Other comments:

- building is elegant in simplicity - pop out corners (residential in nature) could stay or go;
  - mid-height arboretum breaks otherwise monolithic tower;
  - trees planted at great height could be surreal rather than real;
  - for the cost and size of the units, the elevator lobbies are too tight and am amazed that residents will step out of elevators and look into recycling and mechanical closets. This treatment is not warranted and lobby area could be put to better use;
  - pop out subtle and on one edge is fun element;
  - hope the trees can be maintained in condition.
- **Applicant's Response:**  
Mr. Cheng thanked the Panel for the comments and indicated that he looked forward to resolving some of the design issues.

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2. Address:	538 Smithe Street
DE:	408385
Use:	Residential Live/Work (7 storeys)
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	F. Adab
Owner:	Nijaf Enterprises
Review:	First
Delegation:	Fred Adab, representatives from Forma Design and BLK Consultants
Staff:	Mike Kemble

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#### EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (1-9)

- **Introduction:**

Mike Kemble, Planner, presented this application located at the southwest corner of Richards and Smithe Street. The proposal is for 60 residential units (11 townhouses and 49 condominiums) contained in a seven-storey building to a maximum height of 70 feet, surrounding by very dense and high buildings. The site is relatively flat with a slight slope.

The project seeks a 10% heritage transfer (roughly one floor) and provides townhouses at grade on Richards Street. The mix is from studio to two-bedroom and some larger suites with 35% deemed suitable for families thereby raising questions regarding suitable play space. The main entry is from Smithe and is delineated by a canopy cover. 12-foot setbacks on Smithe and Richards allow for a double row of street trees. Access to the underground parking is off the lane on an open ramp down to the parking garage. There is an open patio and amenity room located on the lane. Exterior finishes are stone facing for three storeys with concrete, metal and glass over. The shadowing analysis shows any impact from this building to be miniscule.

Mr. Kemble requested comments on the following issues:

1. the appropriateness of the heritage density massing on site;
2. massing and character, clarity of exterior architectural (lane side next to hotel and interface with buildings on all sides);
3. interface with public realm - at grade treatments, access to building;
4. open space and landscaping - a possible children's play area on a podium or roof deck;
5. flat roof treatments with overview from other buildings looking down on project.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:**

Fred Adab, Architect, explained the architectural approach and noted that the 10-foot difference in grade from NW to SE dictated the provision of steps from townhouses to the street level. The base material is an artist craft cast stone (two feet high by one foot) and this base material with exposed concrete emphasizes the townhouses at grade. Entry to the condominium component of the building has been moved from Richards to Smithe in response to providing a more urban concept to Smithe and at the request of Planning.

Terraced overhead landscaping is provided at the entrance to the parking garage and the security gate. The overhead door is located after the visitors' parking area. The massing, scale and orientation observe the guidelines with a 12-foot setback along Smithe and Richards, a 35-foot setback from the south elevation to the adjoining property line, and a 25-foot setback to separate tower at first floor. A further setback is provided at the 5<sup>th</sup> storey to create emphasis at the corner.

The overall design is based on a strong horizontal base with vertical elements created by enclosed balconies. Changes have been incorporated to strengthen the vertical elements on Smithe. Double rows of trees match the existing streetscape, while smaller trees line Richards and lead to private entries of the townhomes.

In an overview of sustainability considerations it was noted the site lends itself very well to certification with regard to density, underground parking, water use, filter, lighting, and acoustic analysis. Glazing exposures to the east and north are maximized, and glazing to west and south is reduced.

#### Summary of Panel's Key Issues:

- Design Development to clarify massing, corner treatment and façade treatment strategy, particularly on Smithe;
- Design Development to enhance the quality and habitability of private open space at grade;
- Trees should be paired on Smithe.

- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel did not support the design other than concurring that the site could easily support the density increase (heritage). The Panel would encourage further design development to improve the building, particularly on Smithe and Richards, by enhancing open space opportunities, and creating more habitable entrances to the townhouse units. Further clarifications of massing and façade treatments were recommended, and more detail was required in regard to the street trees provided along Smithe.

The Panel indicated that the interface to the public realm needed more thought to the experience of the public and the privacy of the residents. The front door expression with planters is better on Richards than on Smithe and the landscaping leaves no room for individual expression for the landscape. The street tree alley should remain consistent with existing streetscape.

It was recommended that a stoop be provided to the townhouses or at least some transition space in the landscaping to allow for personal interest beyond controlled plantings. Potential development opportunities in landscaping at the corner of the two streets could be explored to create a more friendly experience to a busy public corner. It was recommended that the sloping walls be corrected and that horizontal expression be provided to the tops of planters. It would be helpful to have more information on paving materials and heights of walls and planters. It was also offered that the landscaping favoured the public rather than the resident.

The Panel understood that the applicant had no notification about the introduction of a play space but considered it an interesting and challenging idea. Suggestions included that it might be located in a landscaped area over the parking entry or on a roof deck.

Treatment of the flat roof space is not optimal and could become usable space. In view of the intention to achieve LEED™ certification, it was suggested that one option could be a true green roof. It was offered that even more opportunities of sustainability could be found in the building design. One member commented that the project was visually borrowing the neighbour's garden and should give something back in terms of the overview of the flat roof.

While the presentation materials were somewhat confusing, the Panel considered the clarity and consistency of the architectural design to be of benefit although legibility of the massing and character could still improve. It was suggested that the cornices at the upper

level resolve the edge condition and should occur around all sides of the building, specifically on the lane side. It was further offered that the relationship of renaissance stone to concrete needed to be resolved as it was not clear whether the transition from one material was in the same or a different plane.

More than one member was of the opinion that the height restriction was causing the density to enclose the courtyard, and that the height of the proposal could be increased by two or three storeys to apply more rigor to a plan that was in need of more open space.

In consideration of Smithe as a major feeder route into the downtown core, preference was expressed for a simplified, more suburban elevation with a box-like office or more commercial storefront quality. While the interface along Richards was deemed appropriate, it was incongruent with the street rhythm to provide residential entries along Smithe and was recommended that the residential entrance be relocated off Richards.

The Panel expressed major reservations regarding the lane treatment. Suggestions included pulling the building back to open a more meaningful space for the lane. While some individual elements along the lane could be considered handsome, the total effect is in disarray. It was suggested that the amenity space was cramped, jammed against the lane and not readily accessible to the residents. With more pedestrian traffic in Vancouver lanes the Panel recommended more landscaping treatment to the lane elevation.

- **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Adab appreciated the Panel's comments and concurred that the marketability of the townhouses on Smithe was not optimal. He noted that the site did offer accessibility challenges and that the condominium entrances had been located on Smithe at the request of Planning.

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3. Address:	2228 West Broadway
DE:	407977
Use:	Mixed (8 storeys, 134 units)
Zoning:	C-3A
Application Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	Hancock Bruckner
Owner:	665428 BC Ltd.
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Jim Hancock, Jim McLean, Chris Phillips, and LEED consultant
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9 - 0)** (Mr. McLean abstaining)

- **Introduction:**

Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this application to redevelop the former ICBC Claim Centre site on West Broadway for its second review by the Panel. She reviewed the site context as being the whole block in Kitsilano except for one small site not able to be acquired to the east of the proposal. The site has connections to Connaught Park, Vine Street, a new townhouse development at 10<sup>th</sup> and Vine, and to existing uses across Broadway.

It was noted that the current application responded to the initial UDP review in that it had broken up the residential mass into three distinct blocks and opened up the commercial components to reflect a smaller, more varied retail feel to the street. Ms. Rondeau advised the Panel of a new policy that allowed a height of 70 feet with an earnable density of three FSR. She addressed the amenity of the area (massing) and open space (proposed Vine Street and Broadway corner) noting that the proposed 10-foot set back was not large but was the quality of spaciousness sought in the neighbourhood.

The Panel's comments were sought on the following aspects:

- street interface relationship of commercial to streetscape;
- earning density;
- scale of building, with the residential component revised from one long element to three high blocks and consideration to the large wall on the lane elevation;
- green building efforts; and
- inclusion of a proposed art feature as a requirement for the development permit.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:**

Jim McLean, Developer, advised of the vigilant public consultation that had contributed to changing the project from the initial design, resulting in a reduction of the commercial component by 22% to now maintain a one FSR, and changes to the ground floor retail areas to allow for a compressed food store with high ceiling and a grocery loading area in the parkade.

Jim Hancock, Architect, recalled the formerly linear scheme with no view penetration from behind. The new configuration was designed to be more livable, with green spaces to allow quiet courtyards, separated from the street by residential unity. He commented that in an effort to bring varied character to the retail level, store frontages would be visible from the street, the entry to food store has been opened to the street, the small bistro plaza has been elevated to street level, and the back wall lowered by two feet.

Mr. Hancock advised that vine pockets, concrete reveals, ornamental grilles and cascading vines have been introduced to soften the lane elevation. The parking entrance has been

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located at the east side of the site and has been widened for easy access. The scale of the building has been reduced by elements directly off sidewalk and somewhat mirrors developments across the street. The applicants are seeking LEEDS certification.

Chris Phillips, Landscape Architect, reviewed the design efforts to create a very pedestrian friendly streetscape, noting the scale of the café and street trees (vine maples). By tucking servicing and deliveries into the building and providing a series of intensive thin green roofs the design has responded to livability concerns. The residential courtyard components are inter-connected and the two patio areas with trellises and fireplaces are located in the sunniest locations.

The LEEDS consultant noted the reduction of water use and fenestration openings, and advised that the design responded to focus groups' requests for secure parking spaces for bicycles.

#### Summary of Panel's Key Issues

- Increase number of entries and CRU's along Broadway, if possible;
- Design Development to reduce monolithic quality of lane façade, including improvements in massing, materials, and planting.

- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel generally approved the application and expressed reservations in two areas: the need to increase the number of entry points to the commercial level from the street; and, to reduce the potential of monolithic massing in the commercial element. Most members were satisfied with the height of the building and concluded that the design had earned the proposed density.

It was agreed that the commercial interface had been enhanced yet the Panel expressed disappointment with the single entrance to the London Drugs component that detracted from an otherwise warm and friendly street. There has been some attempt at character development of the streetscape and panel members would appreciate an opportunity to review exterior finishing materials that would obtain the expectations of quality. One member stated that the block could not support the extreme height.

There were several comments regarding the size and treatment of the residential lobbies. It was suggested that elevators be relocated to enhance spaciousness or made transparent for more activity on the façade.

In regard to the wall on the lane, the Panel stated its preference for a better relationship with the neighbouring buildings. Suggestions were to explore more opportunities by reducing the height, providing glass or solid railings, duplicating the expression of the courtyard spilling over into lane in a grand gesture, and/or bring the brick around to the wall on the land to increase it's civility.

Other general comments included:

- the design is to be commended for the green building initiatives;
- perhaps some water elements could be introduced to the residential courtyards to buffer the noise from Broadway;
- if London Drugs wanted to respond to the community, they would open more doors;
- an alternative would be to front the street with 10 - 12 foot deep retail units and push London Drugs behind;
- presentation material goes well beyond what is needed and could be toned down;

- move canted lid to the residential entrance on Vine and define more strongly the retail expression along to the corner; and
  - eliminate the clerestory to be in keeping with the suburb quality of Kits.
- **Applicant's Response:**  
Mr. Hancock thanked the Panel for their considerations and looked forward to further design development on this exciting project.

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4.	Address:	4833 Main Street
	DE:	408388
	Use:	Mixed (4 storeys)
	Zoning:	C-2
	Application Status:	Complete
	Architect:	Ankenman Marchand
	Owner:	Sarban & Kamaljit Rai
	Review	First
	Delegation:	L. Zold, K. Rai
	Staff:	James Boldt

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#### EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (2- 7)

- **Introduction:**

James Boldt, Planner, provided an overview of the complete application for a mixed use building, commercial with 22 units of two-bedroom residential units above, on a site approximately 97 feet wide and 101 feet deep located on the west side of Main near 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. The proposed density is 2.45 FSR within the allowable 2.5 FSR. The application responds to the design guidelines and offers a good urban response to the neighbouring buildings as reflected in the rhythm, colour, street wall continuity, and the landscaping at grade on lane. Some units facing Main Street have windows opening into solariums and there is some question as to their livability with regard to sunlight, private and semiprivate spaces.

Mr. Boldt sought the Panel's comments on the following elements:

1. overall expression, rhythm, articulation and design of the cornice line and eave expression;
2. urban street wall and set back of second and third stories from face of retail;
3. visual amenity in lane including landscaping; and
4. livability of units.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:**

Laslo Zold, Architect, described the objectives of the building design to comply with the new C-2 guidelines and to achieve the maximum residential space with a strong commercial line on the ground floor that echoes other buildings in the neighbourhood with strong elements of split face concrete block bricks and open space for solarium windows.

The top floor is set back to minimize height. All commercial parking is enclosed and separated from the residential parking with access from the lane. Two low planters provide a row of landscaping to soften the impact on the lane. The building is basically symmetrical, and the two-bedroom units all face one way providing city views. Solariums are provided to units facing Main Street and decks for those on the back; the upper levels have balconies. Suites have generous 9-foot ceilings with some top floor units having areas with 10-foot ceilings.

The residential component is faced with metal cladding and split face brick in soft tones, with charcoal accents of railings and metal window trim. Planting is provided to offer privacy to units, including street trees on Main, and on the lane some planters in the solid area of the lane wall and on top of wall over parking entrance.

The staff and applicant responded to questions regarding exterior finishes, building setbacks, the internal organization of units and landscaping details.

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### Summary of Panel's Key Issues

- Enhance livability (particularly with respect to light and ventilation) of 2 bedroom units;
- Design Development to enhance Main St. façade including continuity of vertical elements to grade and canopies;
- Design Development to enhance entry lobby and corridor.

- **Panel's Comments:**

It was the opinion of the Panel that the project required further design development, specifically to enhance the resolution of the vertical elements, redesign of the canopy railing horizontal element, enhancement of the entry to the residential component, design improvements to the units with solariums, and to provide some consistency to the finishing materials. The Panel acknowledged the challenge of C2 sites with viable FSR within a restrictive envelope and commented that effort has been made towards maximization rather than optimization.

In regard to overall expression, rhythm, and articulation, including the eave expression and design of the cornice line, the Panel in general agreed that the resolution of the Main Street façade with two brick bays was not supported visually and could reach down to grade. While the cornice detail at the roof level was well expressed, the cornice at the floor level of the second floor could use some attention. One member thought that the canopy line could be broken up to provide colour and festivity. Another commented that the vestigial cornice lines and eave treatment did echo some of the more historical buildings of the area.

There were varying opinions regarding the building setbacks. Comments included that, given the continuous canopy line, the set back [front elevation] would probably not be noticed and that the cantilever undermined the set back of the top floor on the front elevation. Alternatively, it was suggested that the setbacks would be enhanced by changing to two-foot setbacks, as allowed for in the guidelines. Setbacks on the rear elevation have been effectively detailed.

The Panel was not convinced with the livability of the awkward layouts that necessitated both bedroom windows in some units to open into a solarium. Some members preferred to see open decks and larger setbacks. It was thought that some area might be sacrificed in order to allow more windows for better livability.

There was some question as to how the landscaping in planters on the lane would survive, but in general the Panel appreciated the treatment of the wall. More information regarding the plant types and paving materials for roof decks and grade level was required.

Other comments and suggestions included:

- the residential entry was a long, tight brutal corridor that could lead to security issues and needs more expression at the facade;
- fireplaces could be sacrificed for larger living room windows;
- built-in planters can be problematic, it's sometimes advisable to provide containers on a hard surface;
- bathrooms are far away from bedrooms;
- there are numerous bike racks indicated along Main, deleting some would allow space for other street furniture;
- ensure that street trees match the scale of existing trees on Main;

- it would be helpful to have the landscape architect present to answer questions;
  - commercial level requires another level of richness.
- **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Zold was appreciative of the Panel's comments and addressed the issue of the livability of units with windows opening to a solarium. It had been his experience in recent projects that units remained bright with the full height glass solarium and had proven to be easily marketable for the developer. He agreed that the area of fenestration could be increased in living room areas but noted that one-bedroom units were not marketable in this area.
5. **Other Business**

The Chair advised that the Eburne Lands site project for a Transit Centre had received unanimous approval from the Development Permit Board on May 25, 2004, without going through the normal process of reconsideration by UDP.
  6. **Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled Monday, June 21, 2004, at 3:00 p.m., in Council chambers, to consider proposals for the Woodward's' site. It was noted that the meeting would be a joint review with the Panel and the Heritage Commission. Members agreed that presentations should be done consecutively with comments from UDP and Heritage Commission following.
  7. **Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:50 p.m.