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**URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES**

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**DATE:** May 28, 2003

**TIME:** 4.00 p.m.

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Stuart Lyon, Chair  
Helen Besharat  
Jeffrey Corbett  
Reena Lazar  
Brian Martin (present for Item 1 only)  
Kim Perry  
Sorin Tatomir  
Ken Terriss (present for Items 1 and 2 only)  
Mark Ostry

**REGRETS:** Bruce Haden  
Jennifer Marshall  
Eva Lee

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	2001 Cassiar Street (Beulah Gardens)
2.	205 East 10th Avenue (2580 Main Street)
3.	351 East 11th Avenue

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| 1. Address:         | 2001 Cassiar Street (Beulah Gardens)            |
| Use:                | Seniors Residential (351 units)                 |
| Zoning:             | CD-1  |
| Application Status: | Rezoning  |
| Architect:          | Hulbert Group                                   |
| Owner:              | Beulah Garden Home Society                      |
| Review:             | First   |
| Delegation:         | Rick Hulbert, Robin Hall, Don Wuori, Doug Purdy |
| Staff:              | Anita Molaro, Lynda Challis                     |
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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-2)

- **Introduction:** The Rezoning Planner, Lynda Challis, introduced this application to amend the site's existing CD-1 zoning to permit phased redevelopment of 299 housing units for seniors. The 1.4 ha site, rezoned in 1961 and developed during the early '60s, is bounded by Cassiar Street, Rupert Street, 4th Avenue and 5th Avenue. The site slopes down about 50 ft. from Rupert to Cassiar. The site currently contains 136 seniors rental housing units in four duplexes along Cassiar Street, five 2-storey apartment buildings in the central portion of the site, and a 3-storey building along Rupert Street. The site contains surface parking for about 16 cars and a considerable amount of mature landscaping, including numerous trees. Properties immediately to the north and south of this site are zoned RT-2, also owned and operated by Beulah Garden Home Society and providing non-market seniors housing. The remainder of the immediate area is zoned RS-1S, primarily developed with single family housing with suites. To the west is Sunrise Park and to the southeast is Skeena Terrace, also zoned CD-1 and developed with social housing in the '60s.

The application proposes to increase the amount and improve the quality of affordable rental housing for seniors. Redevelopment will occur in three phases. In the first phase, the duplexes and one of the buildings will be demolished and replaced with a 3 - 4-storey building containing 91 units (Building A). In the second phase, the remainder of the buildings in the central portion of the site will be demolished and replaced with Building B containing about 91 units. In the third phase, the apartment building will be replaced with Building C containing 118 units. The realisation of Phase 3 is dependent on the funding programs available at the time. The proposed overall density is 1.45 FSR. Phased parking is also proposed and by the end of the third phase there would be about 130 underground parking spaces. The proposal includes relocation plans for the site's existing residents. The open space plan and tree retention has helped dictate the overall design. This approach was the result of several community workshops and open houses where the community identified tree retention and open space as very significant features they wished to see maintained on this site.

Anita Molaro, Development Planner, reviewed the proposed form of development, noting the overriding urban design principle has been to determine how the form of development fits in its own site as well as with the surrounding context which is generally single family housing scale. Among the factors that were considered were neighbourhood character, streetscape character, massing and shadowing, open space and landscape, livability and pedestrian and vehicular access. The primary pedestrian crossing is at Rupert and 5th Avenue. The site planning response has been to respect as many of the existing trees as possible and to maintain a level of openness to the site for the enjoyment of the broader community as well as the site's residents. Phase 1 (Building A) consists of non-market rental accommodation providing independent living for seniors in a 3-storey building facing Cassiar Street. Each unit has its own outdoor space, and parking is accessed off 4th Avenue. Phase 2

consists of a large 4-storey building containing 91 units of seniors rental housing and also includes a seniors activity centre, a daycare and wellness program. Its principal entry is off 5th Avenue. Phase 3 comprises a 6-storey building facing Rupert Street, with 8 storeys facing into the courtyard and 4 storeys at street level. The housing type for this component is yet to be clarified.

The Panel's advice is sought on the direction the form of development is taking, noting a principal urban design objective for each building is to respect the scale of its own neighbouring context. Since each of the components is quite long, efforts need to be made to break down their scale and create a sense of individuality. The Panel's input is also sought on the site planning response, whether the site needs to have some kind of site identifier, and whether the proposed density fits well on the site.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Rick Hulbert, Architect, briefly described the design rationale, noting the site has a very diverse context. He stressed that the neighbours have indicated strongly that they wish to retain the amenity of the mature trees and landscaping on the site. The neighbours have been very involved in the concept for the site and a landscape architect has been involved in the project from the outset. After Mr. Hulbert described the project in greater detail and Don Wuori, Landscape Architect, reviewed the landscape plan, the design team responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application for rezoning. The Panel agreed with the importance of also meeting the neighbours' aspirations for this site and commended the applicant for the community consultation that has taken place to date.

There was strong support for the proposed use.

The proposed density was also fully supported. Several Panel members thought there could be more density, suggesting additional height could be added in places to the interior building without impacting on the neighbours. Greater density might also be achieved with non-frame construction, perhaps with less site coverage, increasing density in the centre building and reducing it at the edges of some of the other buildings.

The Panel generally supported the massing and building locations, with some reservations expressed about the central V shaped building. It is somewhat mundane in its interior format. Several Panel members recommended opening up the building at the V. There were concerns about the tight spaces between the ends of the V and the end legs of the L shaped buildings A and C, and a suggestion to consider enclosing the open breezeways connecting the buildings, noting the age population of the development. These edges could also be celebrated in the design and form edges to landscaped spaces.

The Panel strongly supported the proposed tree retention and generally liked the landscape plan. Some Panel members had concerns about deep shadowing in the courtyard areas. Lack of sun penetration into some of the units was also a concern.

There was a suggestion to consider a future visual connection between the forested garden and the site across the street which is also owned and managed by Beulah Garden Homes Society.

With respect to Building C, it was suggested its character could be more modern than the other buildings which are more residential in scale. If Building C is to be non-combustible construction, as indicated, it would lend itself better to something other than a pitched roof form, which may also benefit uphill views.

There were some concerns expressed about the vehicular access adjacent to Building C and a suggestion to consider allowing only pedestrians to pass through, making it a dead-end for vehicles in order to avoid it being used as a vehicular short-cut through the site.

The Panel agreed that the drop at the Rupert Street edge is rather brutal. It was recommended to explore ways of filling it in to improve livability for some of the units at this edge.

There was a strong recommendation from a Panel member to consider an overlay to clarify pedestrian and vehicular circulation on the site. There was serious concern about potential conflicts among elderly pedestrians, truck deliveries and vehicular access. It was also recommended that careful consideration be given to the amenity spaces in terms of programming and identifying the amenity rooms and the views in and out.

One Panel member found the massing, materials and treatment of the elevations unresolved and too suburban at this time. It was suggested that each building could have a completely different expression.

The Panel did not believe the development needed an identifying element. As long as the entry points are clearly readable, the development should just blend in as much as possible with the neighbourhood.

Commenting on the proposed phasing of the development, one Panel member questioned if there was a contingency plan in the event one of the phases is unable to proceed.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Hulbert thanked the Panel for its input. While this a rezoning application, it does provide a window to the future development stage. He noted they have worked out contingencies if any of the phases is unable to proceed. Doug Purdy explained that the driveway through the site is seldom used by anyone in the neighbourhood and it has been narrowed to ensure that it continues to be a private driveway rather than a public thoroughfare. The intent is also that it will not be perceived to be a shortcut through the site.

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2. Address:	205 East 10th Avenue (2580 Main Street)
DA:	407534
Use:	Mixed (4 storeys, 42 units)
Zoning:	C-3A
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Howard Bingham Hill
Owner:	Centurion Investment Properties
Review:	First
Delegation:	John Bingham, Jane Durante
Staff:	Bob Adair

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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-1)

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner, presented this application in the C-3A zone. The site, currently vacant, is located at the northeast corner of Main Street and East 10th Avenue. The historic Brewery Creek runs under the site, from the southwest to the northeast, and it is believed to be culverted to a depth that will not impact the site. Mr. Adair briefly reviewed the C-3A zoning regulations which permit an outright density of 1.0 FSR and a height of 30 ft. Residential use is conditional. The density may be relaxed to a maximum of 3.0 FSR and height to an unspecified maximum. The application seeks 2.96 FSR and height of about 55 ft. Relaxation of density and height in C-3A needs to be carefully considered and clearly earned by responding appropriately to the criteria set out in the District Schedule and the Guidelines. Mr. Adair reviewed these criteria. The Main-Kingsway sub area of the Central Broadway C-3A Guidelines support mixed commercial and residential uses. They also generally support streetwall type buildings that match significant older buildings, up to a maximum of 70 ft. The guidelines also encourage retention of older structures, where they exist, and encourage new construction to be detailed to match that character in terms of height, scale and storefront.

Staff support the proposal in principle and have suggested that it may earn a density relaxation by creating a building of the same scale and quality of the older buildings in the neighbourhood, as well as through superior materials and detailing, the appropriate marking of Brewery Creek, and a high quality design approach along Watson Street. Watson Street, which runs behind the site, also functions as a lane.

The proposal is for ground floor retail facing Main Street with three storeys of residential above. The principal residential entry is off East 10th Avenue. The rear of the building faces Watson Street where studio units are proposed at ground level. These have individual access to the street as well as from an interior corridor. Access to the underground parking and a loading bay are at the north end of the site. The massing is based on the significant older buildings in the neighbourhood. The main floor retail space has a floor to floor height varying between 13 ft. to 15 ft., and a residential floor to floor height of 10 ft. Proposed materials are concrete and brick. There is also a variation of façade treatment to create a break in the building. The location of Brewery Creek has been marked with special paving and a cairn at the southeast corner.

Staff generally support the proposal but have a number of specific concerns:

- treatment of the ground floor residential units on Watson Street in terms of achieving the highest quality streetscape, noting their separation from the street may be greater than desirable;

- treatment of the corner given the high visibility of the BC Hydro transformer;
  - whether the marking of Brewery Creek is successful as a public amenity, as encouraged by the Guidelines;
  - the general approach to detailing; whether the organization of the façade is handled as well as could be, and the overall design strength of the facades.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** John Bingham, Architect, reviewed the design rationale. He advised that Brewery Creek is located below the second level of parking which determines the location of the ground floor. He noted that Watson Street slopes 7 ft. from 10th Avenue towards the adjacent property, which helps facilitate the loading and vehicular access but also results in raising these residential units somewhat. The advantage is that it provides a landscape screen as well as greater security for the residents, noting that this area is currently in transition. Mr. Bingham stressed the retail units need to be relatively narrow in depth given most of the neighbouring retail units are small. It is believed that smaller CRUs will be more affordable and more easily rented. He agreed the transformer presents a challenge and deserves more detailed design attention. He briefly described the rationale for breaking up the façade which they think adds to the character of Main Street and relates well to the scale of Watson Street. Jane Durante, Landscape Architect, reviewed the landscape plan and the design team responded to the Panel's questions.
  - **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application and considered it earned the height and density relaxations being sought. A comment was made that it is good to see affordable studio units being proposed, and the 10 ft. ceilings will add to their livability.

There was general support for the massing but concerns with respect to the detailing of the façade. It was stressed that careful attention needs to be given to window proportions as well as the detailing and material transitions. The Panel generally thought more design development was needed on the detailing to ensure the ultimate success of this building. The Panel was not convinced that differentiating the façades on Main Street is necessary although was not opposed to it either. However, it was suggested that the differentiation needs to be strengthened, particularly at the base of the building. It was noted the exit stairs are consuming what could be window space at the visible Watson/10th Avenue corner.

With respect to the building expression, it was recommended that more thought be given to the historic buildings in the neighbourhood, noting the strong presence of their simplicity and high quality detailing. The façade is currently too "busy" and needs to be simplified, in keeping with neighbouring buildings.

There were concerns expressed about the treatment of the corner of Main and 10th Avenue where the Panel did not support cutting the corner 45 degrees. While a major "statement" would be inappropriate, more attention is needed to this corner. It was noted that neighbouring historic buildings generally have very strong corners. There was a recommendation to provide the potential for a coffee shop on this corner.

There was a safety concern expressed with respect to the deep recess near the residential entry on 10th Avenue.

A recommendation was made to bring the retail units closer to the sidewalk for a stronger public interface. As well, to consider increasing the number of CRUs. A suggestion was also made to deepen the retail units in favour of improving the residential units behind.

With respect to the balconies, one Panel member thought there may not be enough of them. Another supported their deletion in favour of providing accessible open space on the roof, and another suggestion was to consider french balconies on the Main Street frontage.

The Panel generally supported the treatment of the residential units on Watson Street. A positive aspect of setting back the units is that it creates an opportunity for a more usable and furnishable outdoor space, which adds to the “eyes on the street”.

With respect to the marking of Brewery Creek, the Panel generally thought it should be strengthened in some way. Suggestions included making it more linear, bringing a part of it to the surface, if possible, identifying it at night, and providing a means of being able to hear the water below.

The Panel agreed that the transformer presents a major challenge to this site and hoped the applicant would strongly pursue a solution with BC Hydro. One Panel member thought its resolution should be a condition of allowing the maximum FSR. Another suggested camouflaging it as an art piece.

In general the Panel thought there were too many different materials. Concerns were expressed about the painted concrete and suggestions to replace it with brick cladding. Another comment about the materials is that the differences in the brick samples may be too subtle.

- **Applicant’s Response:** Mr. Bingham agreed they can work to incorporate many of the Panel’s suggestions. He noted the two facade approach was a direction from the Planning Department.

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3. Address:	351 East 11th Avenue
DA:	407567
Use:	Residential (81 units)
Zoning:	C-3A
Application Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	Rositch Hemphill
Owner:	Soma Development Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Bryce Rositch, Keith Koroluk, Smitjka Stankovic
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-1)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau introduced this preliminary application in the C-3A zone, noting there are a number of sites in this area that are likely to be redeveloped in the near future. She briefly described the site context. The proposal is for loft-like residential building with floor to floor heights of 10 ft.-6 in. The maximum height of the building is 70 ft. and the application seeks the maximum density of 3.0 FSR. Ms. Rondeau stressed that C-3A developments are required to earn the maximum permitted height and density. A strong streetscape presence is sought on Prince Edward Street.

The Panel's comments are sought on whether this proposal earns its requested height and density, whether the 70 ft. height is appropriate in this context, and on the treatment of the Prince Edward Street ground level façade.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Bryce Rositch, Architect, described the design rationale and responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application as a preliminary submission and generally found it to have earned the height and density being sought. This site can take the maximum density and this proposal is sensitive to the transition from the lower density residential neighbourhood. One Panel member thought it could be stepped down somewhat to the east.

Some Panel members said they found it quite difficult to comment on this proposal because of the lack of criteria upon which to evaluate it. A comment was made that while there is a place for this kind of dramatic architecture, it is not clear whether or not this is the right location for it. It is possible, however, that this site could be the opportunity to take a different approach and do something funky and unique off the arterials. It was noted that this area is badly in need of study.

The Panel was divided on whether this should be a signature building or more of a background building. In general, the Panel found there was too much happening on the building, with too many different forms and materials. It was hoped that more analysis of the site would result in some simplification of the building, but without compromising on its boldness.

Further exploration is needed on the 11th Avenue façade. The appropriateness of the large corner canopy feature was questioned. This elevation is implying there is a change occurring at the 4th floor whereas the suites above the metal cornice feature are no different than those below. It was suggested the higher suites could differ in some way that can be expressed on the façade, perhaps with some stepping.



Concern was expressed about the amount of open space on the project and the need to provide more communal space in the courtyard rather than just private patios. As well, the size and location of the amenity at the corner was questioned.

More work is needed to improve the entry experience for the ground level units facing the street, especially for residents who may choose not to have a car and for whom this will be their primary entry.

With respect to materials, one Panel member thought red brick was inappropriate in this location.

The livability of the units was questioned by some Panel members. While it was agreed the proposed unit layouts are exciting and worth pursuing, there are clearly places with awkward corners that will be extremely difficult to furnish. Some Panel members suggested investigating built-in furniture.

Overall, the Panel supported the proposal as a preliminary submission noting it will be returned for further review at the next stage of development.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Rositch expressed appreciation for the Panel's comments.