
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: May 3, 2000

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room #1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Paul Grant [Chair]
Lance Berelowitz
Alan Endall
Bruce Hemstock
Jack Lutsky
Brian Palmquits
Gilbert Raynard
Keith Ross
Sorin Tatomir

REGRETS: Tom Bunting
Roger Hughes
James Cheng

**Acting Recording
Secretary:** M. Penner

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. 1300 West Pender Street
2. 668 Powell Street

1. Address:	1300 West Pender Street
DA:	404571
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Howard Bingham Hill
Owner:	Pinnacle International
Review:	Third
Delegation:	J. Bingham, J. Wittle, D. Rose
Staff:	R. Segal

EVALUATION: [4 - 1] Support**• Introduction:**

The Development Planner, Ralph Segal, introduced this application, describing the proposed 33-storey residential tower's siting in relationship to the Westcoast Transmission Plaza, "The Pointe", the Harbourside Towers and the heritage building at the Melville/Pender Streets corner.

At the previous meetings, tower bulk had been an important issue, resulting in the floorplate being reduced to 6,950 sq. ft. [from the 2nd presentation of over 7,000 sq. ft.]; townhouses are now proposed fronting Jervis Street, as well as the Triangle West Public Realm [TWPR] treatment. As per the Panel's suggestion, the 5 townhouses on the lane have been setback further, and the greening of the lane has been expanded. With reference to the 3-storey commercial portion of this project which the Panel felt needed to have stronger expression, this revised configuration presented a covered plaza area with a skylight. Mr. Segal noted the tower treatment had been modulated and proportioned in order to lessen the bulk.

By incorporating the City's Pender Street right-of-way in terms of landscaping, the circular access had been relocated to the west side as a drive-through with some layby capacity. Mr. Segal referred to the positive changes that had taken place since the previous submissions, i.e., the diminishment of the floorplate, tower bulk reduction, incorporating townhouses on Jervis Street, the reworking of driveway access, as well as further design development on the commercial aspects of this project.

Mr. Segal requested the Panel's feedback on the tower, the Jervis Street interface with the townhouses, the proposed landscape concept, general response on the lane, and particularly to Panel's previous comments regarding the Broughton/Pender Streets corner, and whether the Panel's previous comments/suggestions regarding the townhouse setback and the greening had been achieved. He stated the Development Permit Board [DPB] had been explicit about the issue of privacy; one of the strategies being that the glazing on the rear of the tower which interfaces with "The Pointe" be diminished. Staff were also seeking commentary regarding the Panel's request for a unified architectural theme and whether that had now been achieved.

Mr. Segal advised that one of the reasons so much density had been placed in the tower was that there was an urban design objective to maintain views through and under the Westcoast Transmission Plaza, which had resulted in the low 3-storey commercial massing.

• Applicant's Opening Comments:

Mr. Bingham presented an overview of the significant changes since the initial submission for the benefit of the new Panel Members. He advised this project had progressed from a single tower with a large open space in the middle and some commercial space on the west side, to a development with strong emphasis at maintaining the view corridors between the surrounding towers through to the mountains; they had included townhouses not only along the lane, but also fronting on Jervis Street, linking the commercial space to the tower. Mr. Bingham confirmed they had bulked out the tower up to Floor 13 on the northeast corner which was seen as the lesser of the areas for view impacts. As a result of the Panel's comments and suggestions regarding the siting of this tower, they had configured it to be diagonal to Pender Street, with some of the development down Jervis Street, relating to a lower scale and also the design guidelines which respond to the area.

The Panel had also voiced concern regarding the verticality of the building and the size of the floorplate, which had resulted in the present maximum tower width of 85 ft [down from 91 ft.]. With reference to the privacy issue between "The Pointe" and this tower, they had provided more of a solid wall on the rear elevation.

The Applicant also referred to the water feature that comes down the Jervis Street side to the lower level which would provide some animation.

Mr. Bingham also referred to the concern regarding continuity between the residential and commercial vehicular accesses and had decided to combine these into one. In order to provide a palatable retail experience, he confirmed that the retail would be broken up with lower scale lighting all the way along Pender Street, terminating at the Broughton Street end.

He referred to the steep slope from the lane down to Pender Street, approximately 6 ft. to 15 ft., and in order to make this area more pedestrian-friendly, they would introduce stairs to create a more public space at the Pender/Broughton Streets corner.

The Applicant referred to the greening of the townhouses on the lane and that the townhouses along Jervis Street would have individual entrances and smaller bay windows in order to break down this scale. He also referred to the recreation area which would be the common element between the tower and townhouses.

The Landscape Architect described the open corner plaza and the water feature behind it, as well as proposed planting along the Jervis Street side and that the tree planting would comply with City guidelines, with lower plants along the meeting rooms on the northeast corner.

The Panel viewed the model and posted materials.

- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel felt this to be a sophisticated building and that a 3-sided site was a complex design challenge; they felt this project had been well-handled and that many issues had been resolved since the initial submission. Some Members liked the massing, the treatment of the facades, the lane, and that the floorplate were right for the tower. They also noted that the architecture had been better unified and liked the entrance off Pender Street, and that the proposed glass wall curtain would create a dramatic presence. It was also noted that the plaza was a private feature at the northeast corner and terminates the Triangle West streetscape treatment down Jervis Street towards the waterfront - a real contribution to the public realm.

Some Members felt the landscaping was well-handled, specifically along Jervis Street and yet others felt the landscape should have a more formal urban character. Others felt the tower was still too bulky, but as the proposed materials and glazing were similar to the surrounding commercial towers, it should blend in. In response to the Applicant's proposal of a more solid rear tower wall facing "The Pointe", some Members disagreed with this approach and suggested opaque spandrel panels. There were numerous comments about the tower looking more uniform with a cleaner expression - more verticality and should respond contextually more to the neighbourhood. For security reasons, some Members felt there shouldn't be too much greening in the lane. It was also pointed out that placing the terrace off the lane, the exercise rooms would have no overhang and that the southeast elevation, as well as the park area on the west side, would be exposed to our inclement weather.

There were comments about how the tower was coming down to meet the townhouses, noting that this juncture appears to break up the grid of the tower along Jervis Street. More seating should be incorporated at the corner, under the fan-shaped glass cover. One Member suggested that the "pointed end" of this project at Broughton Street could consist of a separate element and still be tied to the major portion of the development. It was pointed out that the mechanical on the roof could be treated more sculpturally.

In summary, the Chair noted the 2 corners were well-discussed; suggested that perhaps the urban aspect of landscaping and some of the building forms be reinforced. There were mixed reviews on the punched window aspect of the south [rear] elevation of the tower, as well suggestions to perhaps rethink the concept of the townhouses on Jervis Street in response to the heritage building across the street, and that the proposed materials were too commonplace in the environment. The Chair noted positive comments about the urban resolution on the site regarding view ends, streets and landscaping, and expressed his own approval in that regard. He concluded by stating that it appeared the Applicant and Staff had finally come to grips with the site.

- **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Bingham referred to the Panel's interesting comments/information - noting some of it was qualitative - other comments like the notion of terminating Melville Street was an interesting process of how those streets should be brought together. He felt the comments regarding the south elevation could be positively responded to. The sky light issue, as well as the coordination of the roof forms was another issue to be reviewed. Mr. Bingham noted Planning's concern had always been to keep the view from the Westcoast Transmission Plaza - and thought the issues raised presented a clear program to define more of that corner and that this issue would be revisited.

The Chair called for a vote and advised the Applicant he had the support of the Panel.

2. Address:	668 Powell Street
DA:	404959
Zoning:	DEOD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Gomberoff Policzer
Owner:	First Pacific Development Corp.
Review:	First
Delegation:	S. Lyon, E. Schroeder, K. Boyes, K. Koroluk
Staff:	B. Adair

EVALUATION: [8 - 0] Full Support**• Introduction:**

The Development Planner, Bob Adair, described this project as a four-storey, woodframe structure containing 64 dwelling units, to be targeted towards low income single persons. The size of these units would range from 350-375 sq. ft. Six at-grade parking spaces would be located at the rear of the site with access from the lane. The site is in the DEOD Oppenheimer District, with an approximate FSR of 2.5. - located on the south side of Powell Street near the intersection of Heatley Avenue.

The neighbourhood consists of single family dwellings as well as low-rise 1- to 2-storey commercial buildings. Significant buildings in the area include the 6-storey Triage Centre at the northeast corner of Powell and Heatley and the Drake Hotel on Powell Street. The units would be situated around a central courtyard which most of the units look into, and the project would also have a large roof deck. The ground floor would contain a bike storage area, amenity space for the tenants in the form of a linear lounge across the front of the building facing Powell Street, as well as a larger amenity room facing the courtyard.

The exterior materials would be ground face block on the ground floor, with Hardi Panel and Hardi Plank on the upper 3 floors, facing Powell. Staff are generally supportive of the proposed use, form, and density of this proposal. However, staff have a number of concerns about some specific design issues: [1] the proposed organization of the plan for the main floor and the fact that it has the storage area, as well as the proposed shallow lounge at the front. Staff have been strongly encouraging the applicant to consider more active use of the ground floor facing Powell in order to promote interest along Powell Street, as well as more eyes on the street in terms of security. Staff expect more housing to be built in this area and would like to ensure that there would be an interesting pedestrian environment at the end of the development sequence; [2] staff have concerns about the proposed materials; the DEOD Oppenheimer District prefers a stronger use of brick, the material predominantly called for in the guidelines, as well as perhaps a somewhat more robust and traditional approach to the detailing of the building; and [3] the proposed use of the landscape strip against the front of the building, which is not typical in this area and would probably not work; perhaps having a grass boulevard between the sidewalk and the street would prove more successful.

The design guidelines describe a very traditional form of architecture, i.e., glazing materials, cornices, etc., and staff have encouraged the applicant to meet that intent.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:**

Mr. Stu Lyon advised they have been involved with a number of these types of projects, and were proud of how well this one had turned out. Mr. Lyon advised that Mr. Schroeder was involved in the design of this project and would comment on the proposed materials, Ms. Kathleen Boyes, from the Main/Hastings Society [the tenants of this project] would speak to the proposed amenity space regarding location and proposed use, and Mr. Koroluk would comment on the landscaping of this project.

Mr. Schroeder stated they had worked extensively with the Main/Hastings Society's proposed project and were pleased with the result. He noted the proposed walkway through the complex, with the notion of connecting the street with the inner courtyard. Mr. Schroeder pointed out that although a few units would face the street, the majority of the units would face into the courtyard which would be utilized by all inhabitants. This courtyard would be oriented towards the south so as to take advantage of the sunshine in the afternoons and evenings when tenants would typically congregate for social activities. Mr. Schroeder referred to a small portion of this outdoor amenity space which would be covered - allowing the residents more options in inclement weather.

Mr. Schroeder explained that the linear lounge would also include storage as well as office space in the lobby off the street, thereby providing eyes on the street. Another option entertained was to utilize this space for a sidewalk café, operated during set hours on weekdays and weekends, thereby making this a more active area than the amenity space and asked for Panel's support.

With reference to the architectural expression, Mr. Schroeder advised they had picked up on some elements currently in the neighbourhood, i.e., the typical stone on the ground floor, and as they already had some superior concrete blocks, they had been isolated to the ground floor with cornices at the top, to represent the difference between the commercial area of the project. The upper floors would be separated from the main floor by a solid beam; the courtyard side of the building would have a clean facade consisting of board or plank and incorporate some of the colour palette reflective of the front facade. Mr. Schroeder also noted the rotunda element would be the focal point with future landscaping on the roof deck.

Ms. Boyes informed the Panel that all the directors and community members associated with this project live in the neighbourhood [some work there] and know the downtown eastside. She confirmed they had worked closely with the architect on this project, and after numerous attempts had concluded that a coffee lounge, perhaps incorporating some art work, books, etc., would make the best use of that whole ground floor area. As there will be no door off the street, it is anticipated that tenants will congregate in this area and will provide self-generated eyes on the street for security purposes. Ms. Boyes advised this lounge area was 8 ft. at its widest point, tapering down to 5 ft. She advised they were aware of Health Canada's proposed addicts' rehab facility in the 500 block of Powell Street, thus making the security aspect of prime importance for this project. Their Society plans for card access, and camerad entrances.

Ms. Boyes mentioned that the establishment of this coffee lounge area on the streetside, would permit the courtyard to be utilized for more special outdoor events and tenant meetings, etc., most of which would take place in the evenings; however, should the lounge area be used for these type of events, usually held in the evenings, some form of drapery would be required on the street level, blocking everything out.

Mr. Koroluk identified the focal point of the courtyard concept as being the view from the street through to the courtyard by way of a diagonal walkway. This courtyard would have appropriate seating both under cover and outdoors, and be surrounded by a solid block wall. The landscaping of the courtyard would incorporate a small recess with a fountain with seating around the edges. The surface material would be

recycled granite with poured concrete on gravel, leading to the back yard garbage disposal area.

It is proposed that the courtyard would have a variety of plants at grade, shrubbery, higher planter boxes and perhaps a herb garden, and that the proposed rooftop garden would be accessible via a stair well only. The streetscape presently consists of 2 trees and a wide paved sidewalk to the boulevard.

The Panel had numerous questions about the expected age of the average tenants, whether the project landscape would be equipped with an irrigation system, the livability of the proposed units, accessibility to the rooftop garden, the width of the front sidewalk and how the boulevard would be treated, the number of storage units, etc.

Ms. Boyes advised of the 1,500 SRO residents in Vancouver, the average is 41 years of age with an average income of \$6,500 per annum and that compared with years gone by, the average age is getting younger and the income per annum was decreasing. She advised that no automated irrigation systems were incorporated in any of their projects, rather they preferred to give the tenants not only a responsibility to look after “their” courtyard, but also provide an opportunity for the tenants to interact with each other. Ms. Boyes confirmed no elevator would be installed in this project, due to limited funds and that this project would have one ground level, wheelchair accessible unit. With reference to the livability of these units, Mr. Schroeder explained there would be a ½ wall separation, approximately 4 ft. high, between the bedroom and the livingroom areas, to allow as much light as possible into the units. Mr. Koroluk advised that 10 ft. separated the curb from the property line, with a 2 ft. planting strip on City property and concurred it would be a good idea to reduce the amount of paving and have a 4 ft.-wide boulevard for greening. It was confirmed that although this complex would house 65 units, at present there were only 45 storage lockers indicated on the plans; however, it was in the works to have some of these stacked, in order to provide one for each tenant.

The Panel reviewed the model and posted materials

• **Panel’s Comments:**

Panel Members were pleased to review this project in that it gave recognition to the desperate need for social housing in the city and that it would fit in well with the single family homes across the lane and surrounding neighbourhood. The Members were aware of obvious budget constraints in selecting materials, etc., and felt these had been utilized in a creative manner and endorsed the material and colour palette, resulting in a rich building; also, it would be important how the glazing and window sill would be set up.

The Members concurred incorporating a lounge was a great idea, but felt it needed to be revisited with respect to making it deeper, if at all possible.

Although the Panel felt the design could tolerate some “fine tuning”, this project had made the basic urban design moves in acknowledgement of the views, shadowing, sunlight, etc., and had taken full advantage of the site.

The Panel was enthusiastic about the proposed courtyard and saw this as the cohesive factor in developing this project into a community in itself. However, they were apprehensive about only 2 units facing into the courtyard; and that only 2 units adjacent to the lane have direct access to the lane and if some parking were to be oriented along the lane, would increase the space for the courtyard. The Members were very supportive of the proposed lounge; however, had some misgivings about the narrow shape of it and that by pulling the building out to the property line, might improve the depth of the lounge.

Members raised various suggestions/questions. The question of canopies was raised and were advised that as people tend to congregate under them, they were discouraged. It was also suggested that the long corridor on the 3rd and 4th floors used for entrance to the suites could use more light, i.e., incorporate some windows. Some Members felt that perhaps a mixture of Hardi Panel and Hardi Plank could be used, rather than just the latter. A suggestion was made that the identity in the beam line be strengthened, which visually supports the upper stories, and perhaps this could be beefed up by incorporating some concrete block or pilasters to make it appear more robust.

There were also comments that the courtyard landscaping be simplified; incorporating more planter pots and maintenance free trees and shrubs, and that the edging of this area would need attention. The notion of an herb garden received negative comments. Several Members commented on the parapet at the back would need to be pulled back further onto some of the additional “wings”, in order to complete the circle at the top of the circular gazebo.

The Chair noted that the Panel supported the notion of a linear lounge but suggested it be widened, opened up more towards the entrance; the glazing aspect needed to be reviewed, and that the eyes on the street issue had been well-answered. He also noted the Panel’s approval of the proposed materials and colour palette and with the exception of how the weight of the building correlated with the proposed facade of the ground floor, the Panel found this to be a delightful project. The Chair also stated that although there were different opinions about the streetscape and the boulevard, the general consensus was to delete the planting strip and perhaps have the Landscape Architect revisit the suggested greening of the boulevard. He noted the notion of the courtyard was unanimously accepted with the possibility of more ground floor units having direct access to the courtyard and concluded that the roofscape would be a great potential space for the residents of this project.

- **Applicant’s Response:**

Mr. Lyon thanked the Panel for their comments and advised that with smaller projects like this they were able to incorporate more details, as compared with larger complexes. Referring to the various comments about how the top floors relate to the main floor, he noted that the bay windows sit on top of the beam which separates the two aspects of the building; however, the Panel’s feedback would enable them to step back from their entrenchment and give thought for possible adjustments.

The Chair called the vote and advised the Applicant he had the full support of the Panel.