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**URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES**

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**DATE:** May 31, 2000

**TIME:** 4.00 p.m.

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:

Paul Grant [Chair]

James Cheng

Bruce Hemstock [Item #1 only; conflict of interest re Item #2]

Roger Hughes

Jack Lutsky

Gilbert Raynard

Keith Ross

Sorin Tatomir

**REGRETS:** Lance Berelowitz

Tom Bunting

Alan Endall

Brian Palmquist

**Acting Recording**

**Secretary:** M. Penner

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<b>ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING</b>
1. 941 Main Street
2. 980-990 Station Street [Schroeder Properties Ltd.]

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<b>1. Address:</b>	<b>941 Main Street</b>
DA:	405027
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Gomberoff Bell Lyon
Owner:	B.C. Housing
Review:	First
Delegation:	S. Lyon, J. Jarvis
Staff:	R. Segal, S. Hein

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**EVALUATION: [7 - 0] Full Support****• Introduction:**

The Development Planner, Scot Hein, introduced Phase 8 of CityGate's development, as a Social Housing project at the northeast corner of Main and LaFarge Streets. This 'L'-shaped structure would contain 110 units of affordable housing, consisting of 92 family units of which 55 would be non-market and 37 units for low-end of market, plus 10 one-bedroom units. The size of these units would range from 588 sq. ft. for one-bedroom, to 1,520 for five-bedrooms; approximately 1/3 of the units would consist of 3-bedrooms, or larger. He also referred to the 12-13 storey residential tower [Phase 7] proposed for the Main and National Streets corner.

He advised this project would consist of 2 connecting buildings - a 4-storey, 65 ft.-high woodframe structure on LaFarge Street and a 7-storey, 85 ft.-high concrete building on Main Street; the residential entry would be on LaFarge Street, with a secondary entry off Main Street for the proposed daycare facility, facing the interior courtyard.

Mr. Hein indicated the proposed materials would include face brick, painted concrete, fibre-cement panels, Hardi Plank panels, and a metal roof.

Mr. Hein asked the Panel's advice on the following specific issues:

1. General response to the proposed design focussing on the family-oriented units and related private open spaces, including the townhouse expression fronting LaFarge Street.
2. The architectural expression as it relates to CityGate, its historical context and proposed materials, in order to maintain a consistency in quality.
3. The corner treatment at LaFarge and Main Streets, as well as transition to the proposed Phase 7 at Main and National Streets, regarding its massing, continuation of streetwall setbacks, and side elevation quality.
4. The Main Street setback - noting previous projects achieved a double row of trees within a generous setback, while this project proposes no setback.
5. Comments on the extent and design of open space for proposed daycare uses, and continuation of existing courtyard configuration.

Mr. Segal added that the City endeavours to maintain the quality of the CityGate precinct and referred to the proposed CD-1 by-law amendment to redistribute and add FSR to accommodate this Social Housing project.

In response to questions from the Panel, Mr. Segal confirmed this project would not exceed height restrictions; that the existing towers along Quebec Street [along with the approved tower, and proposed tower] are, and would be, separated by low-rise townhouses, similar in height to this project. Mr. Lyon confirmed that the proposed colour scheme and materials would be consistent with other completed CityGate projects.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:**

Mr. Stu Lyon added their project had inherited this 'L'-shaped site from the previously-approved CityGate CD-1, and stressed that the restricted site size and shape had been a challenge for their intended program. He advised Social Housing required 126 units to achieve the 20% requirement of the zoning, but due to the size of the site, they'd been able to achieve only 102 family-oriented units. He noted that the daycare facility would remain a "shell" space until such time as the City has the funds to outfit and staff it, and that the retail portion at-grade on Main Street was to be owned/leased by the City of Vancouver. The chateau style roofs were consistent with the existing phases of CityGate. Mr. Lyon advised that LaFarge Street had now been renamed Millross Street.

Mr. Lyon referenced the BCHS guidelines as stringent, requiring 4- and 5-bedroom units, resulting in linear suites along the corridor. On the Main Street building, small roofs were introduced in order to cover the decks.

Mr. James Jarvis, Landscape Architect, mentioned the area's high crime rate and evidence of individuals loitering in the CityGate public space and, therefore, his prime concern was safety for the children, as well as to maintain the continuation of the public walkway through the CityGate sites. The proposed landscape intended to provide the same plant materials, trees, etc. used throughout the CityGate development and to maintain strong clear edges surrounding the courtyard/daycare area.

*The Panel reviewed the model and posted materials.*

- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel was in agreement with the continuation of brick at-grade and the majority of Members did not have a problem with the '0' setback; others felt it should conform to the setbacks of the south end of Main Street enabling a double rows of trees to be continued northward. There appeared to be no problem with the ground level access on Millross Street and most felt the building was well designed and the scale was appropriate. It was noted that the ground-oriented units on Millross Street needed more of an architectural expression and that the colour of the chateau roofs should be the same on both buildings. The majority also stressed that the Main/Millross Streets corner was too weak, needed more of an urban expression, and should be re-designed.

A number of Members suggested the small connecting portion between the two structures on Millross Street was too weak and should require improved delineation.

In the landscape area, it was agreed that the park could use some treatment to better define the space; the proposed courtyard was unsharing and that everyone should be responsible for eyes on the public walkway in order to make it more secure. The social housing project should connect the courtyards from Millross

Street with existing courtyards. These community spaces should provide benches, tough trees, and open garden space. Also, the courtyard/play area should not be separated from the rest of the area. The Panel preferred more trees and better landscaping, and agreed that the open space needed more integration, articulation and quality, matching the existing quality in CityGate gardens.

There was commentary of how the project's architectural expression defined this site as a remnant of the CityGate property and therefore would permit incorporating very simple buildings to make this project appear distinctive from CityGate. Others preferred an extension of the CityGate expression. The architect would have to decide to either totally differ from CityGate, or work with CityGate and become part of it which would affect the final design expression.

The Chair acknowledged the interesting comments from the Panel, noting that most of the Members found the massing to be quite acceptable and elevations, in parts, quite handsome. There appeared to be a division in comments on the Main Street setback noting that the building should be more distinct in its architectural expression if the '0' setback were to be maintained.

He confirmed the suggestion of redesigning a different connecting structure between the 2 buildings and the Panel's voiced mixed messages on the Main/Millross Streets corner expression being too weak.

The Chair noted that no comments had been made on the proposed Phase 7 building at Main and National Streets, and interpreted this as not being an issue.

- **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Lyon stated that they welcomed and appreciated the Panel's comments and would work to integrate them. However, with reference to the setback, he stressed this posed a difficult problem for them as they had not been aware that this was an issue until recently, when it was brought to their attention. Mr. Lyon stressed they had gone through the BCHS approval process regarding the number of units they had been able to squeeze into this project, and that setting the building further back at this time would pose a major hardship to the process, the developer, and result in the loss of units. He stated the zoning did not specifically indicate the extent of setback on Main Street for this site.

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

*Mr. Bruce Hemstock left the Panel at this time due to conflict of interest re Item 2.*

<b>2. Address:</b>	<b>980-990 Station Street</b>
DA:	405088
Zoning:	I-3
Application Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	Musson Cattell Mackey
Owner:	Tech Park Com Ltd. Partnership
Review:	First
Delegation:	R. Schroeder, M. Whitehead, D. Wuori
Staff:	R. Segal, S. Hein

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**EVALUATION: [6 - 0] Full Support**

• **Introduction:**

The Development Planner, Scot Hein, introduced the preliminary application encompassing all phases, with Block B as the first phase. He reminded the Panel of their key issues resulting from the previous two Workshops, including the proposed height and density; size of the floorplates; the need to put the application into a wider planning context; the relationship towards Pacific Central Station [the Station] in terms of its height and setback alignment; the need for an improved Thornton Park; the clarity of the Grand Boulevard [now “Linear Green”] endpoints; the future flexibility and conversion of some of the ground-floor areas that are interior courtyard-facing for alternative uses in the future; the need for design guidelines to assist in achieving the portrayed quality; the need to enlarge courtyard sizes; and the relationship to the Strathcona Neighbourhood.

Mr. Hein requested the Panel’s advice on the following issues:

1. How the height and massing of Block B [Phase 1] relates to the Station; its relationship to Thornton Park and the Thornton Park Annex, the appropriateness of the 7-storey corner of Block B - noting that the rationale for this building is to create an edge/corner for buildings fronting Thornton Park.
2. Advice on the extent and location of proposed retail uses at-grade [approximately 60,000 sq. ft.], with a maximum allowable under I-3 Guidelines of 10,000 sq. ft.
3. Proposed quality of the Linear Green, noting the 100 ft. RoW, and related endpoints of the Thornton Park Annex to the north and Atlantic Park to the south, as well as proposed pedestrian oriented qualities of the Central Square.
4. The Gore Street extension’s proposed width and setbacks, noting proposed height, massing and recessed arcades, and a street RoW of 66 ft.
5. Architectural quality and the approach to design guidelines noting the appropriateness of the images presented and specific comments on forms, articulation of the long blocks, service slots, facade breaks, variety of expression, and landscape elements.
6. Relationship of the proposal to the anticipated Atlantic Park regarding massing, setbacks, and facade treatment at the edge.

In response to a question from the Panel regarding the proposed Atlantic Park, it was confirmed that the Park Board has presented a program for this park, which the Applicant's proposal was based on. Their layout is awaiting the Park Board's response.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:**

Mr. Whitehead referred to the change of name from Grand Boulevard to "Linear Green" and its primary purpose was to connect the two green spaces - Thornton Park and Annex to Atlantic Park, noting that the Thornton Park Annex was 3 times larger and adjoins the main axis. He described the ground-oriented uses as active and animated retail, serving approximately 7,000-10,000 employees of this proposed development. Mr. Schroeder referenced the downtown Bentall Towers development [1 million sq. ft.], and that their development proposed the same type of retail, to serve high-tech companies. Retail would be located on Gore Street and the Linear Green.

In terms of architectural expression, they proposed to incorporate as much glass as possible for facades facing the Linear Green and the parks. Gore Street would have a more punched window expression.

Regarding arcades, Mr. Whitehead said they wanted a variety of expressions, noting a narrow RoW. Street trees would still be provided. The courtyards to Dunlevy and National Streets have been opened up to provide views into the development.

Mr. Whitehead confirmed the Prior Street edge has 3 buildings that are also potential sites for the development. Mr. Schroeder confirmed they were not I-3 and would require rezoning. He added that in looking at Prior Street's traffic patterns, it was proposed to set these buildings back, allowing a double row of street trees, and have 3-storey portions front on Prior Street, progressing to 7-storeys at the ends. He also advised the face of the north buildings of the development would be 100 ft. from the houses across Prior Street.

Mr. Whitehead explained their rationale to mark the endpoints of the Linear Green with 7-storey buildings which would also provide a strong anchor at the National and Station juncture. In order to give more prominence to the Station, the south-facing building had been reduced from 7- to 5-storeys and respected the Station's setback.

Mr. Wuori, Landscape Architect, noted that the Park Board owns the 8 acre Atlantic Park and that the proposal revealed their requirements, including a water feature, sports fields, park component, neighbourhood plaza, field house and play area. The proposal provided a passive park between Atlantic Park and the eastern quadrants which would incorporate a moat-like bio-swale along the property edge. The Applicant was awaiting a response from the Park Board on their Atlantic Park layout.

He described the hard urban landscape elements that move through the Linear Green, including a 24 ft.-wide double row of trees along both sides, bollards to mark the pedestrian realm, the endpoints of the Linear Green, the 4 corners of the Central Square, which will have a major water feature, and site lighting effects including at-grade lighting. Mr. Wuori confirmed the scale of the courtyards were of significant sizes: ½, 1, and 1¼ acres. Mr. Schroeder confirmed their landscape budget to be \$5.5 to \$6 million.

*The Panel viewed the model and posted materials*

The Chair reminded the Panel of the issues concerning this project, specifically Block B and its relationship to the Station; the 2 options for the Thornton Park Annex; retail uses and the increase from 10,000 to 60,000 sq. ft.; concept of the Linear Green; the Gore Street extension through the project and its proposed arcades and 66 ft. RoW; the architectural expression and design guidelines; variety of forms and

design of view/service slots through the building and scale of buildings; and the concept of Atlantic Park.



- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel indicated that the project was well-designed and agreed with portrayed architectural expression. They supported the a less-structured approach to design guidelines, i.e., not too prescriptive, but rather relating to quality intent, thereby allowing the Applicant more design flexibility as the project evolved. They agreed with the generic approach site planning. They were pleased to see Block B opening into Thornton Park, as well as the 7-storey building fronting Thornton Park Annex. There were mixed feelings about the proposed arcades along Gore Street. Regarding the retail aspect, the Panel felt the City should be more flexible in accommodating the developer, as the size of the project had enough critical mass to support the amount of retail proposed which would help to animate the ground plane.

The Panel encouraged the Planning Department to permit the Applicant greater flexibility in height, allowing a number of strategic storeys to exceed the proposed 7-storey height, say to 100 ft., thereby adding variety to an evolving urban skyline. The Panel liked the revised Linear Green which gives continuity from Thornton to Atlantic Parks, as well as the Centre Square; and that Gore Street was the logical north/south continuation through this site. There were also favourable comments about National and Station Streets providing an interesting entrance into the Linear Green.

Some Members felt the Linear Green should be more public, and that the street trees should display immediate quality and maturity. That the storm drainage and permeability needed to be addressed. The design guidelines must be specific regarding acceptable materials. The west edge of the Atlantic Park design needed further development. One Member felt the Linear Green and Centre Square needed more light and felt in order to attain this, the buildings on the north should be higher and the south side buildings should be lower. Although retail was encouraged, it should be expanded to include other services, not just high tech, to ensure variety and avoid vacancies. Some Members felt the 66 ft. RoW on Gore Street could make it appear to be a dark alley, compared with the other 100 ft. RoW.

In summary, the Chair stressed the Panel's support regarding Block B and its relationship to the Station and Thornton Park issues; noted general acceptance of the preferred option for Thornton Park and the Applicant's notion of a 7-storey mass in the corner of Block B; although some Members would like to see it higher. The Panel supported the notion of larger retail components on the Linear Green; however, encouraged the scale of trees proposed for the Linear Green be more mature. The Panel made positive comments about the overall tone of the landscape. The Chair noted the Panel's mixed concerns about the Gore Street extension and proposed arcades, suggesting the massing at the south end of Gore Street be reduced so as not to create quite as long a canyon-like appearance. He stressed the Panel's strong feelings concerning the architectural expression and that the design guidelines be open-ended and more flexible, noted this was a good Master Plan and as the design guidelines are developed they should set the tone for the rest of the development, including the proposed material choices. However, the Panel encouraged flexibility in terms of how the buildings are designed. The Chair noted acceptance of Atlantic Park as it was presented, realizing that this phase of the development would require extensive negotiations with the Park Board.

- **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Whitehead thanked the Panel for their comments. He felt the need to respond to the landscaping of the centre median and referred to their parking plan, where they would be locating their mechanical and electrical systems, allowing for deeper soil in that area hence the trees would be quite mature.

The Chair called for the vote and advised the Applicant they had complete support of the Panel.

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