

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: May 6, 1998

TIME: N/A

PLACE: N/A

PRESENT: Joyce Drohan (Chair)
Sheldon Chandler
Patricia Campbell (not present for Item #1)
Per Christoffersen
James Hancock
Peter Kreuk (excused Items #1 and 4)
Sean McEwan
Peter Wreglesworth

REGRETS: Geoff Glotman
Joseph Hruda
Jim McLean
Norman Shearing

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	3500 Vanness Avenue (low rise)
2.	333 East Pender Street
3.	6184 Ash Street (Peretz Institute)
4.	6112-6138 Cambie Street

1. **Address: 3500 Vanness Avenue (low rise)**
DA: 402729
Use: Residential (4 storeys, 39 units)
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Howard/Bingham/Hill
Owner: Greystone
Review: Second
Delegation: Brian McCauley, Ron Howard, Peter Kreuk
Staff: Bob Adair
-

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-0)

Introduction:

The Development Planner, Bob Adair, presented this application. It was first seen by the Panel in February when it was reviewed at the same time as the high-rise proposal for the adjacent site. This application is for a 4-storey market apartment building for mature adults. Mr. Adair briefly reviewed the Panel's previous comments and noted how the concerns have been addressed in the current submission. Staff's concerns are now relatively few. The Panel's advice is sought on materials, detailing and colours and how they relate to the adjacent high rise building, the strength of the urban form, treatment of the semi private open space at the rear, and the streetscape.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Brian McCauley, Greystone Project Manager, said they have paid close attention to making the high rise and the low rise buildings more compatible at the same time as making a distinction between the different types of residential uses proposed. This also allows greater variety to occur in Collingwood Village. Ron Howard, Architect, described the design rationale, noting it is the first of several 4-storey forms that will be occurring around the balance of the Collingwood development. Peter Kruek, Landscape Architect, briefly reviewed the landscape plan.

Panel's Comments:

After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application and found the project considerably improved in terms of its overall character and fit with the adjacent high rise building. The unit plans seem to have been worked out very well to produce livable suites.

There were still some concerns about the sloped roofs, particularly in relationship to the projecting vertical elements. There was mixed response with regard to the exterior colour scheme, with some objection to extending the dark colour to the 4th floor but others favouring its consistency with the base of the adjacent tower. As well, there was recognition that the latest elevations seem to pick up on some of the dynamism of the tower that seems lacking in the more consistent rendering.

There was very positive response to the use of brick, particularly on Crowley Street and around the entrance. Greater use of brick if possible was recommended, perhaps in some of the landscaping elements. There was a concern expressed that the brick on the rear of the building looks somewhat appliqué and a suggestion that it be used in a stronger and more defined way.

With respect to continuity of the streetscape, it was suggested that the railing on the street be considered in the design of the balcony railings in order to achieve some consistency. Given the building is intended for mature adults, the provision of aging-in-place features was recommended for this project. The location of the crafts room in the parkade area was questioned.

The landscape plan was strongly supported and noted as being much improved since the previous submission. The pedestrian routes to the site are much better, and the connecting access through the building was seen as being a powerful element that helps tie the two buildings together quite well.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. McCauley explained the amenity space below is for a workshop (not a crafts room) so is appropriately located in the parkade. Aging-in-place features will be incorporated as the design is refined.

-
- 2. Address: 333 East Pender Street**
Use: Congregate Care (4 storeys, 56 SOR, 29 DOR)
Zoning: RT-3 to CD-1
Application Status: Rezoning
Architect: Isaac-Renton
Owner: Home Mutual Aid Society
Review: Second
Delegation: Bob Isaac-Renton, Steven Lee
Staff: Rob Whitlock, Eric Fiss
-

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (0-7)

Introduction:

The Rezoning Planner, Rob Whitlock, presented this application. The Panel did not support the project when it was reviewed on March 25, 1998, and since then staff have worked with the applicant to resolve as many of the concerns as possible. After completion of a Local Area Planning program in 1992 it was recognized by the community that the 300 and 400 blocks East Pender Street had largely lost the true character of Strathcona, represented by single family, two family and apartment buildings, mostly on 25 ft. lots. Only five such examples remain on these two blocks. This application attempts to follow the pattern of two rezonings that have already occurred. Following a review of the immediate site context, Mr. Whitlock noted the Planning Department supports the concept of the proposal but seeks assurance with respect to the detail which it is felt will largely determine the success of the project. With respect to the proposed congregate housing use, it was noted that Planning, Housing and Social Planning staff are framing guidelines that will more clearly define the use and establish minimum suite sizes, aging in place requirements, the amount of amenity space, and parking standards. A number of inquiries for this type of use have been received but no real criteria currently exists against which to evaluate them. The guidelines should be completed in a couple of months.

Eric Fiss, Development Planner, reviewed the key issues raised previously by the Panel. Since that time, the density has been reduced from 2.67 to 2.54 FSR, the number of rooms has been decreased from 85 to 82, the number of residents reduced from 114 to 97, and a 2.5 ft. setback from the adjacent houses has now been provided at the front. Mr. Fiss briefly described the architectural changes made to the design since the previous review. The size of the units is unchanged but four of the ground floor units have been converted to accessible units. Amenity space has been increased on the 4th and main floors. The Panel's advice is sought on the overall form and massing of the building including streetscape, and the relationship of the project to its neighbours.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Bob Isaac-Renton, Architect, noted this proposal is consistent with the form of housing directly across the street. He reviewed the changes made to the scheme since the previous submission, noting there is a very high ratio of amenity space compared to the net room areas (25 percent). Mr. Isaac-Renton concurred that the size of the suites is small (approx. 160 sq.ft. for the single rooms and 180 - 190 sq.ft. for the double rooms) but stressed it is consistent with the use and is based on the Society's experience with its present facility. He added, it compares favourably with the Zoning & Development By-law's 105 sq.ft. minimum requirement for sleeping units. He said they will continue to make further improvements to the project during the detailed design stage.

Panels Comments

After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel recognized the serious need for this type of facility, particularly in this neighbourhood. The Panel also supported in principle the concept of trading rezoning opportunities for achieving an increase in the housing stock. It is very important, however, that the City conduct a thorough financial analysis in order to provide some assurance that the public benefits to be gained are sufficient to earn the substantial density being sought. Without such assurance the Panel was unable to support the application. It was strongly recommended that the City's Housing Centre become involved with the project to offer some guidance. The Panel found it difficult to evaluate the application in the absence of any criteria for this kind of housing and was concerned that standards will not be developed to guide the project in the next stage of the design.

The Panel was very concerned about the livability of the building, particularly with respect to the size of the units for the target age group. Sufficient space for a comfortable bed and chair as well as personal possessions should be the absolute minimum for senior residents, and aging-in-place should be taken into account for people 75 years and older who will likely develop disabilities soon after moving into this facility. The shared bathrooms for the accessible units on the ground floor were seriously questioned. A number of Panel members thought the amenity areas were still not generous enough in relation to the small size of the units. The amenity area on the roof could benefit from some weather protection, and the amenity spaces on the second and third floors, which seem to be narrow extensions of the hallway, are inadequate for any kind of reasonable activity. It was suggested that some units on these floors could be eliminated in favour of providing more amenity space.

With respect to the form of development, the Panel acknowledged the improvements achieved by decreasing the height and density and the general expression of the front façade. The introduction of balconies on the upper level was supported. These improvements were tempered, however, by questions about the response to historical context. For example, concerns were expressed about the introduction of Tudor forms on the upper areas of the building, and it was felt that the attempt to respond to the adjacent houses has been at the expense of the units on the top floor which now have some very difficult spaces in terms of usability. There were strong suggestions that perhaps a more contemporary architectural expression would alleviate these problems, as well as the lack of cohesiveness between the front and the rear of the building which was also commented upon.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Isaac-Renton agreed the units are very small. Since the committee that is reviewing standards for congregate care facilities has only just begun to meet, however, they have worked to the only standards that are available, namely those for sleeping units referred to in the Zoning & Development By-law. In view of the fact that standards for seniors sleeping units have not been published, they have an understanding with the Planning Department to proceed with the rezoning application with the unit sizes as proposed. Council will consider the application and may apply whatever conditions it finds necessary, including a recommendation with respect to unit size. Mr. Isaac-Renton stressed that this is a market project with no subsidies and the Society is attempting to provide much needed housing as economically as possible.

- 3. Address: 6184 Ash Street (Peretz Institute)**
Use: Residential/Institutional (3 storeys, 50 units)
Zoning: CD-1 Text Amendment
Application Status: Rezoning
Architect: Nigel Baldwin
Owner: VanCity Enterprises
Review: First
Delegation: Nigel Baldwin, Richard Rosenberg, Rene David
Staff: Ralph Segal
-

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

Introduction:

The Development Planner, Ralph Segal, presented this rezoning application. The site is currently occupied by a single storey classroom block and a small gymnasium, both of which will be demolished to develop the proposed residential/institutional project having a 249 ft. frontage on Ash Street. Following a brief review of the site context, Mr. Segal noted the Planning Department have no major concerns with the proposal. Retention of the existing institutional use is seen as a public benefit which contributes to earning the density being sought. In terms of the Oakridge/Langara Policy Plan, the proposal is considered an appropriate transition for this site.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Nigel Baldwin, Architect, provided some clarification with respect to the height of neighbouring buildings.

Panels Comments:

After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel found this to be a very handsome proposal and unanimously supported the rezoning application. The transition from the institutional to residential uses was considered to be very well handled. The quality and comprehensiveness of the presentation material was also very much appreciated.

The minor suggestions made were to pay careful attention to detailing when dealing with the lane spaces at the rear of the building, and to ensure the landscape more closely reflects the lushness of the Langara area.

There was also a recommendation to the Planning Department that the adjacent site could be increased in density in order to achieve a better transition.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Baldwin advised it is the intention to have one or two feet of planting on the north lane.

4. Address: 6112-6138 Cambie Street

Use: Residential

Zoning: RT-2 to CD-1

Application Status: Rezoning

Architect: W. T. Leung

Owner: Cambie Oakridge Properties Inc.

Review: First

Delegation: W.T. Leung, D. Richardson Staff: Rob Whitlock

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)**Introduction:**

This application was presented by Rob Whitlock, Rezoning Planner. The site is located at 45th/Cambie across from the St. John's Ambulance site. It is one of the many sites along the arterial routes identified as high priority for rezoning within the Oakridge/Langara Policy Plan. The CD- 1 zoning would allow the development of 16 ground oriented townhouses with underground parking and access off the north-south lane. Proposed density is 1.0 FSR. Height is 30 ft. with minor intrusions into the envelope from the pitched roof elements. The Planning Department seeks the Panel's comments on the overall design.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

W. T. Leung, Architect, briefly described the proposal and the access arrangements.

Panels Comments:

After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application for rezoning. In general, the Panel thought it was a very well resolved and well detailed proposal.

The Panel found the project somewhat of an anomaly and expressed some concern about whether the character was appropriate for this arterial street. Given the transitional nature of the street it was concluded, however, that the fine detailing of the project will set quite a handsome precedent for what may ultimately occur. In this respect, the City was urged to work with the adjacent property owner to ensure that an appropriate complement to this project is developed.

There was one suggestion to decrease the amount of private open space in favour of creating some children's play space

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Leung acknowledged they struggled with the character of the project given it is on an arterial street with institutional buildings to the west and northwest and also required response to the single family residences immediately to the east. He said they believe it is appropriate for this transitional area.