

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** May 9, 2007

**TIME:** 4.00 pm

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
John Wall, Chair  
Walter Francl  
Tom Bunting (Items 2, 3 & 4)  
Maurice Pez  
Douglas Watts  
Bill Harrison  
Albert Bicol  
Martin Nielsen (Excused Item 4)  
Mark Ostry (Item 1, 2 & 3)  
Gerry Eckford  
Bob Ransford

**REGRETS:** Richard Henry

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1304 Howe Street
2.	600 West 10 <sup>th</sup> Avenue
3.	1205 Howe Street
4.	388 West 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue

### **BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Wall called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. Mr. Wall reminded the Panel of the meeting with The City of Edmonton to share information regarding the Urban Design Panel prior to the next meeting. There being no other New Business the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

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1. Address: 1304 Howe Street  
 DE: Rezoning  
 Use: 30-storey residential tower, with commercial uses and amenity space at grade, with height at 286 feet  
 Zoning: DE to CD-1  
 Application Status: Rezoning  
 Architect: HB/IBI Architects  
 Review: First  
 Delegation: Martin Bruckner, Peter Kreuk, David Evans, Drahan Petrovic  
 Staff: Phil Mondor/Anita Molaro

#### EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (0-9)

- **Introduction:** Phil Mondor, Rezoning Planner, introduced the project for a rezoning in Sub Area C of the Downtown District at 1304 Howe Street. The height limit is 300 feet and the proposed application is for 286 feet. There are no view protection limits that apply to the site. The maximum FSR that can be approved on the site is 5.0 and the application is seeking 6.97 FSR. Rezoning to CD-1 means considering relevant City Policy including the Downtown South Guidelines even though the project is not in that area but since it is close the guidelines should be taken into consideration. The Downtown District Interim Policy does not apply to the project. In 2002, the City approved the Downtown Transportation Plan. Two items were referenced for future study. The first study is called Under the Bridges Area and is located between Pacific and Beach Avenues and Howe and Seymour Streets. The second one is the Granville Loops Area. A study was undertaken earlier this year to redevelop the City owned lands into a residential precinct. The loops are to be removed and the streets are to be reshaped. There are currently two proposals for the area including the rezoning and redevelopment of the Yale and Cecil Hotel sites.

Anita Molaro, Development Planner, using the model for reference described the development for the site and the surrounding area. Ms. Molaro noted the proposal is for a one storey podium topped by a 29 storey residential tower on the south side of the site and a six storey building consisting of double height lofts on the north side of the site. Pedestrian bridges connect the two buildings. The first storey consists of the entry lobby, an amenity room and townhouse units with street oriented front doors and raised patios.

Advice from the Panel is sought on the following:

- the urban design response developed for this site and its relationship within the surrounding context taking into consideration;
  - siting
  - tower form and massing, relationship to Howe Street
  - street wall/scale and articulation - both Howe and Drake
  - site access - noting emphasis for Rolston as a residential street
  - landscape
  - street uses interface
- any other comments that panel would like to provide;
- preliminary comments on the proposed materials;
  - clay tile cladding
  - transparency of bridge elements
  - glass color

Mr. Mondor and Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Martin Bruckner, Architect, and Drahan Petrovic Architect, explained in more detail the design of the project. They described the suite layouts, the materials being used as well as the sustainability features.

Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans for the project. Mr. Kreuk noted there will be a water feature at the front entry that will be sourced amongst the plantings, cascading in front of the entry and finishing in a linear channel with up lights and fountains.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

- Some general concern about the distribution of mass;
- Concern regarding site access, the loading access, the location of the entry and the distribution of open space around the site;
- Concern about the Howe Street frontage, uses and public realm interface; and
- Some concern about the bridge elements being too heavy.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the proposal. After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

Some general concern from the Panel members regarding the distribution of the mass on the site or perhaps the mass isn't distributed in a manner that suits the context. The Panel thought it would have been helpful to see how the building fitted into its potential future context. Some of the Panel was concerned about the proximity of the building to the other two towers and suggested that the tower plates be shaped on the upper floors to maximize the separation. It was also thought the building was too close to Howe Street. Some of the Panel thought there should be a sense of connection using a canopy or some sort of street front uses that would respond to the future pedestrian connection to False Creek. Some panel members thought that the Howe Street articulation and proposed uses did not respond to the context.

There was good support for the tower and for the general articulation. Some Panel members felt the tower could have a more slender massing and that more mass could be distributed to the corner of Howe Street.

Some of the Panel thought there was potential for a more pedestrian friendly street that connects to the mews to encourage pedestrian movement and slow down traffic. The mews in its current configuration is not convincing and it was suggested to have a less public location for the loading. The Panel suggested reworking the mews to provide more green space and public amenity. The Panel also thought the landscaping was on the dark side and was being shaded by the tower.

The Panel thought the water feature on the front entry felt too tight at the corner and suggested the building could be set back to make the entrance more gracious. Several Panel members thought the residential access should be from Rolston Street.

There was strong support for the materiality with a lot of excitement around the proposed materials and composition. The Panel was impressed by the level of articulation and detail and also thought the liveability of the units was very well considered for this phase of project.

Most of the Panel liked the design for the smaller building. It was suggested that the applicant apply the same scale to both buildings and not distinguish them as two buildings. Most of the Panel felt the applicant should downplay the massing of the bridges as there was some concern about the bridge elements being too heavy.

Most of the Panel thought this should be an iconic building as people entering the downtown will see the building as they come across the Granville Street Bridge. One panel member thought the elevation facing Granville Street looked like the back of the building.

The Panel acknowledged that some moves had been made to respond to sustainability but there was general encouragement from the Panel to take the next step to work towards more passive design.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bruckner thanked the Panel for their comments stating they would take them into consideration. He noted that the tower location was set by the anticipation of the mews being developed.

2. Address:	600 West 10 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	
DE:	411164	
Use:	New landscaped plaza area to be developed over an addition to	contain a
	Cyclotron at the BC Cancer Agency	
Zoning:	CD-1	
Application Status:	Complete	
Architect:	Stantec/Vaughan	
Review:	First	
Delegation:	Merrick Hunger, Wilfred Lach, Stephen Saunders, Mark Vaughan	
Staff:	Sailen Black	

### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (10-0)

- **Introduction:** Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the application for a two level addition to the BC Cancer Agency building at the southeast corner of West 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Heather Street. The complete application is for a two-level addition to the existing building to house a cyclotron and associated equipment to be operated by BC Cancer Research with a pedestrian plaza above. The application tends to improve sunlight access, preserve park area, and slope the site up towards the existing building. Currently the site is a pedestrian plaza. The application tends to preserve the plaza with the Cyclotron underground. Mr. Black described the long term vision for the hospital precinct. The precinct comes with a set of guidelines and a detailed public realm plan. The main design challenge is inserting a windowless building into the site and while still preserving the public open space.

Advice from the Panel on this application was sought on the architectural and landscape design proposed with specific reference to:

- The visual openness and pedestrian paths from the middle plaza to Heather Street and West 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue;
- The integration of the new structure into the overall landscape, especially the handling of the grade;
- The design of the upper level, including its use and sight lines; and
- New ductwork and mechanical structures.

Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Wilfred Lach, Architect, gave an overview of the building and the landscape design. The focus on the project is the Cyclotron which is designed for creating medical images (PET scan).

Mark Vaughan, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans for the plaza. Mr. Vaughan noted the most of the year the plaza is in shadow. He added that the design will afford more sunlight into the plaza area.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Consider design development to the new duct chase;
  - Consider paying more attention to the sun orientation regarding the seating; and
  - Consider adding a large tree for more visual impact.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel unanimously supported the project and thought the design of the plaza was well executed and would provide for a peaceful and pleasant area. It was agreed that staff in the surrounding buildings would make good use of the space.

Most of the Panel thought there should be some stairs down the side that are well lit. They also agreed that there needs to be an event at the top of the plaza; a reason to go to the top of the slope. It was suggested that seating or a water feature would be a good solution. A couple of Panel members suggested having better access to the top of the slope with more lighting for security and CPTED reasons.

The Panel liked the double row of benches with one Panel member suggesting they could be turned to look at each other in order to make for a conversation area. As well the Panel noted the seating was more oriented to the north and suggested the seating be open more to the south and west.

The Panel liked the planting materials being used and thought the street trees would make the plaza even better. Several Panel members thought one big specimen tree would make for a nice visual display and they also suggested layering the trees to provide some shade. The Panel was mixed about the amount of green space with some member suggesting there could be more variety in the size of the grass areas. A couple of Panel members would like to see irrigation and rain water harvesting to keep the area green all year long. One Panel member suggested more contrast in the plantings. Another Panel member suggested some sort of shelter considering our rainy weather.

Some of the Panel thought there should be more design development to the mechanical shaft with the use of colour and texture. It was suggested that the shaft either be celebrated or completely integrated into the building.

A couple of Panel members thought there was a lot of concrete and suggested the Panel should review the concrete specs when the proposal comes back to the UDP as it was not dealt with in the current drawings.

One Panel member suggested more attention be given to handicap access.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Lach, thanked the Panel for their insightful comments.

3. Address:	1205 Howe Street
DE:	410934
Use:	14-storey mixed-use retail/residential building
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Howard Bingham Hill
Review:	Second Review (First Review: January 17, 2007)
Delegation:	John Bingham, Peter Kruek, George Steeves
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau/Alison Higginson

### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (10-0)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, described the proposed mixed use development with residential tower situated over commercial retail along Davie Street with the main residential entry on Howe Street and underground parking and loading accessed from the lane. A strong 6 storey street-wall is proposed on the south to allow for development of the adjacent site as social housing. The primary changes from the first visit to the panel addressed the livability of the residential units and the townhouse architectural treatment.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** John Bingham, Architect, further described the project noting that the suite layouts have been reworked with the elimination of the majority of inboard bedrooms. Also the care has been taken to eliminate or minimize privacy issues between suites.

Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping for the project. Mr. Kreuk noted that the seventh floor amenity area is connected to an "outdoor room" containing large planters, a lawn and urban agricultural plots.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Concern regarding the way the building meets the ground with an isolated planter at the retail corner at Howe and Davie Streets; and
  - design development to the top corner treatment of the tower.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel unanimously supported the project and thought the project was much improved from the previous review and that the concerns had been addressed.

Several Panel members commended the applicant for going to ten foot ceilings in suites. The Panel noted that the interior bedroom issue had been resolved with a diversity of unit types resulting in the improvement to the liveability of the units. They also thought the townhouse architecture had been greatly improved.

Regarding sustainability, the Panel thought the environmental response was well done and liked the passive features being incorporated into the glazing and the careful consideration for the three facades of the building.

The concern with the corner at grade was the proposed planter which seemed to block the natural opportunities for corner retail and some of the Panel expressing a preference for the previous version. There was also some concern regarding the top corner of the tower treatment and detailing and this would benefit from further refinement.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bingham appreciated the support of the Panel. It has been a challenge at the base and is an area that will be continued to work on. It's an important part of the streetscape.

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4. Address:	388 West 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue
DE:	411210
Use:	Retention and reuse of a 4 storey heritage building with the addition of a 6 storey residential building to the east
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Burrowes-Huggins Architecture
Review:	First
Delegation:	Mike Huggins, Robert Brown, Andy Croft, Mark Vaughan
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)**

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, introduced the project for South East False Creek private lands. Mr. Rondeau noted that half the site is taken up with a heritage building (Best Building) and the remaining half with a new addition. At the previous review (at rezoning), the Panel wanted to see a better relationship and junction between the new and the old. The applicant had changed the structural bay rhythm and revised the entrance to be more clearly expressed and taken from the front to the back of the building. The height has been increased to 6 storeys with the principal mass at 4 storeys. The project proposes a total of 68 units and the units in the new addition will be designed in the character of the old - loft-like living spaces with inboard bedrooms. The materials of the new addition are predominantly concrete, glass with some metal components.

Ms. Rondeau took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Mike Huggins, Architect, further described the plans for the project. He noted the loft concept for the design of the suites with inboard bedrooms that are bed alcoves. He added that there are more conventional units on the upper floors.

Mark Vaughan, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans for the project. He noted the treatment on West First Avenue will follow the South East False Creek plan and will follow a heritage treatment. The alley has been designed to speak to the adjacent development. The roof planting is on two different levels with an extensive green roof and some private terraces. The middle area is the public open space for the building. Drought tolerant plant species will be used and areas have also been allocated for garden plots as opportunities for urban agriculture.

Robert Brown described the sustainable initiatives noting the project will be aligned with the City's SEFC Green Building Strategy. Where ever possible sustainable objectives and LEED™ requirements have been applied to both the existing structure and the new building. The project will be connected to the City NEU which will meet the building space heating and domestic hot water needs. Hydronic baseboard heating will be installed in the existing building and in-floor hydronic radiant heating is planned for the new addition. Green roofs are planned and are subject to the approval of the new home warranty providers.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Design Development of the east party wall to reduce its visual impact on the neighbouring property and public realm.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel unanimously supported the project and felt there were a number of improvements since the previous review. They commended the applicant on the presentation and the clearness of all the documents.

The Panel appreciated the transition between the heritage building, the new building and the Polygon site. The Panel thought the rhythm of the new addition was a big improvement and that the landscape plan worked well. The Panel also thought the applicant had handled the inboard bedrooms well noting there were lots of people who like this kind of living.

A number of the panel members considered that the 6<sup>th</sup> storey should not terrace back as much from the 5<sup>th</sup> floor to be more in keeping with the block industrial form of the heritage buildings in the area. The eastern party wall required some design development on the setbacks and stair form at the property line. Decoration of that wall could also be considered. The roof trellis' could be scaled back or should be connected to the roof access and the Panel emphasized the visibility from the Cambie Street Bridge. Also, several members of the Panel thought there should be access to the sixth floor roof for an amenity and a purpose for the green roof. One Panel member suggested having some storage on the roof for garden tools. Some concern about the warranty issue if they lose the green roof with the Panel suggesting a habitable roof should still be provided.

The Panel thanked the applicant for a well thought out plan for sustainable initiatives in the project.

One Panel member suggested adding a curb on the lane to prevent cars from driving over the landscape. Also, one Panel member was concerned about the elevator tower element as it seemed somewhat blank.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Huggins thanked the Panel for a thorough review. He noted that it would be a challenge to step the upper penthouse as the units will probably sell over seven figures and they need to have a big terraces. He added that he would take it on as a challenge.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.