
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: November 19, 2008

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
John Wall, Chair
Maurice Pez
Douglas Watts
Bill Harrison
Mark Ostry
Albert Bicol
Richard Henry
Gerry Eckford
David Godin

REGRETS:
Tom Bunting
Martin Nielsen
Walter Francl

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	15 & 97 East 2 nd Avenue

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Wall called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There being no New Business the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 15 & 97 East 2nd Avenue
 DE: N/A
 Description: To construct a 12-storey and an 18-storey tower as well as rehabilitate and redesign an industrial heritage building.
 Zoning: M2 to CD-1
 Application Status: Rezoning
 Architect: IBI/HB Architects
 Owner: Bastion Development
 Review: First
 Delegation: Jim Hancock, IBI/HB Architects
 Gwyn Vose, IBI/HB Architects
 Rob Barnes, Perry & Associates
 Kim Maust, Bastion Development
 Staff: Dale Morgan/Yardley McNeil

EVALUATION: NON_SUPPORT (0-8)

- **Introduction:** Yardley McNeill, Heritage Planner, gave some background for the area and the site. She noted that the proposal was a rezoning in the private lands for Southeast False Creek. The property is proposing an additional FSR based on its heritage effort. Opsal Steel, the heritage building is located midblock and will be partially restored along with two new towers. The entire block will not be developed as one of the lots is not under the ownership of Bastion Development. The heritage building which was originally twelve bays will be shortened by three bays along East 2nd Avenue and about four bays at the back of the building. The rest of the area in the back will be used as the framing system and a gantry crane which is presently inside the back barn and will be used for service parking. The 1940's two storey building on the lane will be demolished. The site has been identified as a minor gateway into the area by virtue of where it is located at East 2nd Avenue and Quebec Street. In addition to that, the site is located on one of the city's primary pedestrian routes coming from Quebec Street north-south and East 2nd Avenue east-west. Ms. McNeill noted that staff were looking for an architectural expression that created a landmark building because of its gateway presence for the area. She added that the site is also within the rail yards precinct for Southeast False Creek. Ms. McNeill added that it is a heritage building and is an A listed building on the register and is being retained in exchange for a bonus density of about 55,000 square foot for use on the site.

Dale Morgan, Development Planner, further described the proposal. He noted that the ODP recommended a height of 15 stories and the project was proposing an 18-storey building on the corner of Quebec Street and East 2nd Avenue with a 12-storey building at the corner of Ontario Street and East 2nd Avenue. Mr. Morgan described the surrounding buildings. He noted that three bays will be demolished fronting East 2nd Avenue in the heritage building to make room for the tower. There will be a partial demolition of the rear building. The lot in the middle of the block is currently a car wash and not part of the development. The development will have commercial uses at grade. Mr. Morgan noted that a tenant has not been identified for the heritage building. The applicant is proposing parking at grade along the lane with an entrance for the underground parking. The proposed materials are glass and painted concrete. In terms of sustainability, the proposal will meet LEED™ Silver and includes overhangs on the southern and western facades, light walls on the western façade, drought tolerant planting and stormwater management.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

Use:

1. A portion of the site is to be used for on grade parking off the lane in conjunction with commercial uses inside the heritage building, located beneath an open frame structure and beneath a portion of the Tower B. Is this proposed use supportable?
2. Confirmation of support for the proposed primary uses is requested.

Density:

1. The SEFC ODP recommends a density target 3.5 FRS, which may be increased through amenity bonuses, contributions towards affordable housing and heritage retention. Bonus heritage density may be absorbed on site or banked for use elsewhere specifically in the SEFC district. This rezoning application proposes a density of 4.3 FSR for the tower "A" site and 5.1 FSR for the tower "B" site. Is this density supportable?

Form of Development:

1. The SEFC ODP recommends a height of 8 storeys for the tower "A" site and 15 storeys for the tower "B" site to meet urban design objectives. The rezoning application proposes 12 and 18 storeys. Is this height supportable?
2. Massing: Staff had advised to give greater emphasis to the vertical expression to reduce the apparent bulk. Has the massing been well handled and scale successfully reconciled?
3. Compatibility with the heritage building and tower: Does the interface between buildings work well? Should there be greater building separation and transparency through the site?
4. Vacant Site (car wash): Comments are requested on the future development of this site and its integration with the proposed development.
5. Character Expression: Does the proposed form, materiality and colours reinforce the industrial aesthetic of the rail lands encourage in the SEFC ODP?
6. Solar response: Comments are requested on the building response to its solar orientation.

Ms. McNeil and Mr. Morgan took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Jim Hancock, Architect, further described the proposal noting the distribution of the density between the two towers. The heritage buildings have been catalogued because the building will be dismantled and taken off site, refurbished, reassembled and brought back to the site once the underground parking is completed. Mr. Hancock noted that either a restaurant or high end food store is planned for the heritage building on East 2nd Avenue with some office space at the back. The surface parking will service the retail.

Rob Barnes, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans noting that they are following the SEFC public realm plan that dictates the arterial faces and the greenway face. He noted there is an opportunity for a bit of a rain garden on Ontario Street. They are planning to work with the City on the lane edge to determine the pattern of materials. Also they will be adding some landscape against the blank wall at the back of the ice cream shop. There are common amenity patio decks on the towers with an intensive green roof on top of the towers.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Improve the relationship of Tower B to the Opsal building, so that there is a clear landmark entry to the heritage building from the corner of Quebec Street and East 2nd Avenue;
 - Provide a clear separation between the old and new structures, so the warehouse character of the heritage building is retained. ;
 - Consider putting Tower B behind the Opsal Steel building and retaining as much of the existing heritage structure on East 2nd Avenue as possible. The east end elevation of the Opsal building should maintain it's historic connection to the corner of East 2nd Avenue and Quebec Street;
 - In keeping with the spirit of SEFC, change the surface parking area to a plaza.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the proposal although they appreciated the retention and restoration of the Opsal Steel Building.

The Panel supported the proposed use, density, height and general character and architectural expression of the project. However, they did not support the current form of development and noted that the relationship between Tower B and the Opsal Steel building was uncomfortable and compromised with too many revisions being proposed to the heritage structure. The panel noted that it is important the long façade and warehouse character of the heritage building be maintained.

The panel thought the overall architectural expression was better than most SEFC projects. However, several Panel members thought the residential floor plans were similar to many proposals already seen by the Panel for SEFC and given its location and the current market for residential, they thought there was an opportunity for something different in terms of a simpler building form which could offer more affordable housing units.

The Panel agreed that instead of putting the tower B on the corner that the whole heritage building could be retained on East 2nd Avenue by demolishing only the building on the lane and designing a more simple residential tower on the rear of the site. They felt that losing the building on the lane would allow for more flexibility in planning a different form of development. As well they suggested moving the entry of the heritage building to Quebec Street which would make for a truly landmark site. The Panel felt the Opsal Steel building was a great counter point to the other towers in the area with one Panel member noting that a long building would be more differential to the rail heritage in the area. One Panel member noted that the Opsal Steel building was fundamentally a warehouse building and chopping it in half destroyed the iconic structure.

Most of the Panel did not support the surface parking off the lane noting that SEFC was designed to encourage walking and a pedestrian friendly environment in the lanes. Another Panel member noted that the signage didn't reflect the history of the face of the building and as well the modern canopy at the end of the Opsal building changed its formal relationship to the street.

Regarding sustainability, most of the Panel thought the solar orientation was well handled but a couple of Panel members thought there was an opportunity for a better solar response if more suites were facing north and fewer facing south. One Panel member noted that shading on the north-east corner wasn't needed.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Hancock thanked the Panel for their comments noting that maybe the site was unique enough to put the new towers behind the heritage building.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.