

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: November 21, 2007

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
John Wall, Chair
Walter Francl (Items 2, 3 & 4)
Tom Bunting (Items 2, 3 & 4)
Maurice Pez (Excused Item 1)
Bill Harrison
Mark Ostry
Gerry Eckford
Marl Shieh

REGRETS: Albert Bicol
Martin Nielsen
Douglas Watts
Richard Henry

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	2000 West Georgia Street
2.	601 East Hastings Street
3.	1887 Crowe Street
4.	140 West 1 st Avenue

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Wall called the business meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. Mr. Wall advised the Panel members of an upcoming lunch date with the Director of Planning, Brent Toderian. Mr. Wall gave the Panel an update on 190 Prior Street that was seen by the Development Permit Board on Monday evening. Nicole Ludwig, City Clerks, advised the Panel on the length of their term and the updated By-law. After the business the Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 2000 West Georgia Street
DE: 411499
Use: Additions to the Vancouver Aquarium and expansion of the external pools and exhibits
Zoning: RS-1
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership
Review: First
Delegation: Mark Thompson, Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership
John Nightingale, Vancouver Aquarium
Bruce Hemstock, PWL Partnership
Staff: Bob Adair

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (1-4)

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner, presented the application for the expansion of the Vancouver Aquarium in Stanley Park which will include a new Artic Canada exhibit. Mr. Adair referred to the model and described the current layout of the Aquarium as well as the proposed addition. The plans call for a new plaza with the Bill Reid sculpture, a new washroom building, a new two-storey bistro, new loading facilities, life support offices and revamped pool areas for other sea mammals. Mr. Adair also described the exterior materials that will be used on the main building which will be a largely concrete composite panel called Swiss Pearl. The panels will be used in combination with fritted glazing.

Mr. Adair took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** John Nightingale, Vancouver Aquarium, described the evolution of the Aquarium and noted that the Aqua Quest, which is the new education centre, is the first LEED™ Gold building in a cultural institution in Canada. He added that the Aquarium has become a major force in conservation, education and communication. The facility is program rich with layers of public programming. Mr. Nightingale added that the Aquarium has taken a long term view regarding the uses for the facility which includes an artic exhibit, the BC wild coast exhibit as well as tropic exhibit.

Mark Thompson, Architect, further described the architectural plans for the Aquarium expansion. Mr. Thompson described how the proposal will unify the building by being both referential and deferential to the park setting noting that the building will need to respond to the functional aspects of the exhibits.

Bruce Hemstock, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans for the proposal. He noted that the area in the front of the Aquarium has been taken from a man-made landscape to a more natural form for Stanley Park. He added that the landscape is currently made up of imported exotic plantings and is not what the Park Board wants to see

in Stanley Park. Mr. Hemstock added that the critical root zone was an important element in planning for the landscaping.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to the public realm interface on Addison Way;
 - Design development to the north building façade to better respond to the public nature of the open park area around Lumberman's Arch;
 - Consider reducing the height of the proposed elevated plaza and walkways to lessen the perceived separation of the public from the landscape.

 - Design development to the proposed elevated plaza and walkways, with attention paid to retaining wall, guard rail and bridge details;
 - Consider moving the drop-off location closer to the front door of the facility; and
 - Consider design development to the exterior cladding to improve envelope performance in the west coast climate.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the proposal but did commend the applicant team on their work on an important facility for the city and a central component to Stanley Park.

The Panel liked the forms that unify the building and the public viewing opportunities as it will make the facility more accessible to those who may not be able to afford to visit the Aquarium.

The Panel had concerns that the connections to the transit system seemed to be more focused on the able-bodied. They noted that it is a good distance from Addison Way to the front door of the facility which may be a problem at times for the elderly, disabled and families with young children. The Panel also thought that a convenient drop-off on Addison Way needed to be considered to improve accessibility. A couple of Panel members noted that the public realm along Addison Way was too tight and suggested pushing the roadway over a bit to give more room to the sidewalk.

Several Panel members had concerns regarding the use of Swiss Pearl and how it will perform in the rain over time. Also, a couple of Panel members were concerned that the panel material being pushed in and out, creating ledges, would not age well over time as the edges would be vulnerable to the weather. The Panel felt that it was important that the facility age well over the next 30 or 40 years.

The Panel thought having the Bistro was a good idea although several members thought the outdoor seating area was rather small and that the thin triangular canopy may not be adequate for rainy or windy days. The Panel commended the applicant for restoring the salmon stream.

The Panel supported the idea of having a formal plaza although a couple of Panel members thought it was a little austere, under programmed and did not follow the principal of connectivity and accessibility. Most of the Panel did not like the raised plaza as they felt it was disconnected from the landscaping in the park and challenged the applicant to integrate it better. They were also concerned about the details of the retaining walls and guard rails, as these would be highly visible and the dominate elements of the elevated plaza and walkways. One Panel member thought it was a lost opportunity to have nothing at the end of the axis and seemed to separate the entry point from the park. The Panel agreed that on the west side of the facility the applicant had successfully married the

landscaping with the exhibits. Several Panel members thought the north end of the building was a little weak and didn't relate to the public nature of the park at north of the building. It was noted that the north façade of the building is the most visible aspect of the aquarium. Also one Panel member thought some of the edge condition details around the exterior of the building were a problem and needed to be resolved.

The Panel agreed that the overall principles were appropriate and well thought out but thought the details hadn't been worked out and the project seemed disconnected from its environment.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Thomson thanked the Panel for their insightful comments particularly about the Addison way drop-off area. He said they were currently discussing the issue with the Parks Board. Mr. Thomson added that they are planning to use some of the storm drops from the 2006 November storm on Addison Way as a way to provide a significant element and mark the location as well as a way to relate to the storm that did so much damage in the park. Dr. Nightingale pointed out that there is a drop-off on Addison Way that doesn't show on the drawings or the model. Regarding the decks, Mr. Thomson said that the issue was to protect the roots of the trees and have committed to the park to look after them with the new landscape plans.

2. Address:	601 East Hastings Street
DE:	409938
Use:	Six-storey mixed-use SNRF/Residential/Retail building proposed by the Union Gospel Mission
Zoning:	DEOD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Orbis Architecture
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Raimund Littmann - Orbis Architecture Clark Kavalinas - C. Kavalinas & Associates Inc. Richard Corra, P.Eng of Stantec Consulting
Staff:	Sailen Black

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- **Introduction:** Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the application for a 6-storey mixed use building with a special needs residential facility, retail and residential uses to be operated by the Union Gospel Mission.

The Union Gospel Mission, as described at the July meeting, has similar existing programs operating at 604 East Cordova Street. The property is located at the corner of East Hastings and Princess Streets, one block north of the Strathcona Community Centre. The area is in the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer zoning district and has a distinctive urban grain, characterized by the use of historic buildings of tall, vertical bays, extensive use of brick as a finished material and strong, regular window placements. The design guidelines for the area suggest the general principle that new development should pay special attention to compatibility in terms of building height, bulk, frontage module, materials, roof and cornice lines, window detailing and landscaping.

The building is designed with each floor having a purpose and is organized with a vertical hierarchy, with accommodations and other services provided on a “moving-up” principle. The first floor will be for a community drop-in centre and dining room; the second floor for overnight shelter for the homeless and education facilities; the third floor will contain an access controlled environment for group living during alcohol and drug recovery; the fourth floor will be for self-contained, independent living spaces; the fifth floor will be for mixed use, including staff lounge, dormitories and 2-bedroom units; and the sixth floor will be used exclusively for administration including executive offices, accounting and human resources.

Mr. Black noted that the Panel had seen the project in July and did not support the proposal. Mr. Black noted that the applicant had addressed a number of the Panel’s concerns and provided new material for review. The presentation included a detailed model as well as a set of larger scale plans that shows the articulation. In terms of the design issues raised by the Panel, the applicant has simplified the corner at Princess Street and East Hastings; provided a brick face on the first floor and painted concrete at the mid section; expressed the top floor as steel and glass; and simplified the corner entry. The Panel was also interested in improvement to the public realm, and the applicant is proposing to add four street trees.

- **Applicant’s Introductory Comments:** Mr. Littmann, Architect, further described the proposal noting that the main entrance is now facing East Hastings Street. Also the building will have a brick face with individual glass canopies and recessed entrances. Sustainable features include operable windows for natural ventilation, light shelves on the top floor

with a maintenance free façade. Also the cornice has been designed for sun and rain protection and retail space has been added on East Hastings Street. Mr. Littman added that they are planning on obtaining LEED™ Silver with a potential for some additional points.

Clark Kavalinas, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans noting the moveable planters on the upper decks as well as the furniture and types of plants that will be provided.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider using a darker colour brick on the base of the building;
 - Consider adding some shelter/gazebo to the 3rd floor courtyard; and
 - Consider adding trees on the south side of the 3rd floor courtyard for privacy.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the new approach to the project and commended the applicant team for taking the previous comments seriously and working hard to address the Panel's concerns.

The Panel thought the applicant had designed a good background building that will find its place on the street and be a good, solid addition to the neighbourhood.

The Panel thought the materials were solid and generally well placed although they thought there could be more articulation in the detailing. One Panel member suggested adding shadow lines to break up the façade or soldier coursing over the masonry punched windows. The Panel liked the darker brick colour although one Panel member liked the lighter colour. Some of the Panel thought the top two floors could be further articulated to read more as a penthouse. The Panel encouraged the applicant team to further refine the details and to look for opportunities to add depth, richness and texture.

The Panel appreciated the use of the 3rd floor courtyard and the proposed improvements although a several Panel members suggested adding some covered space to make the area more useable. Also a couple of Panel members suggested adding some trees on the south side of the courtyard for more privacy.

The Panel agreed that the passive ventilation and operable windows were more supportable.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Littmann thanked the Panel for their comments noting that they would follow the recommendation from the Panel regarding the colour of the brick. He added that the renderings show a more pinkish colour whereas the sample board is closer to the colour that will be used.

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3. Address: 1887 Crowe Street
DE: 411286
Use: Residential tower and townhouses
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete
Architect: IBI Group - HB Architects
Review: Second (First Review: July 4, 2007)
Delegation: Jim Hancock, IBI Group - HB Architects
Peter Kreuk, Durante Kruek
Vito De Cotiis, Pinnacle International
Diane Klein, Eco-Integration
Staff: Mary Beth Rondeau
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a development in South-East False Creek. The proposal generally follows the form of development from the rezoning stage. Ms. Rondeau noted that the ODP allows for five to seven storeys on arterial streets and the applicant has chosen six storeys which is a change from the rezoning stage.

Ms. Rondeau described the uses, urban form and massing and density. She noted that the proposal includes a 10% heritage density transfer. Specifically in SEFC, enhanced art should be included that expresses the character and features of the neighbourhood. Ms. Rondeau noted that the applicant had included a number of features in the project such as artefacts, bench design and pedestrian linked gates.

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

1. Additional storey proposed for mid-block massing; and
 2. Architectural Distinctiveness related to the character of the Southeast False Creek Neighbourhood and High Quality Architectural Materials and Treatments.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Jim Hancock, Architect, further described the proposal noting the live/work units all have two storey high work spaces. The top floor of the six storey building will also be two storey units.

Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans for the project noting the unique features including private roof top decks, areas for urban agriculture and also some private decks. The project will meet the ODP requirement of 50% green and for urban agriculture. There is also a children's play area in the courtyard. The landscaping in the courtyard has been coordinated with the Polygon project across the lane.

Diana Klein, Sustainability, noted that a vibrant community is being developed in SEFC with a rural, urban experience and a strong environmental commitment. On the building level, the project will incorporate daylighting, good window performance to meet the energy criteria, and will tie in to the District Energy System. As well the applicant is looking at providing hydronic heating to the suites. A co-op vehicle is proposed and also electric charges will be provided in the parkade. Ms. Klein added that a building envelope consultant is part of the applicant team and the project is solidly meeting LEED™ Silver.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

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

The Panel had no substantial concerns with this proposal.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel unanimously supported the proposal.

The Panel supported the additional storey but thought the mid-rise building was more successful than the taller building. Some of the Panel suggested softening the west elevation stair well to make it more interesting.

The Panel thought the colour palate was subtle and a couple of members suggested using more of the proposed red from the material board for more visual interest. One Panel member thought the colours faded to grey from top to bottom. One Panel member suggested warming up the palate with some wood soffits. Also, the Panel would like to see the applicant find more places in the building for public art and suggested adding a mural to the blank west wall.

The Panel supported the choice of materials but thought the transition of some of the materials from the second storey break was not yet resolved. A couple of Panel members thought the taller building could be animated more but thought the townhouses were the most successful part of the proposal. Several Panel members thought the detail where the Swiss Pearl meets the stone (concrete block) needed to be addressed.

A couple of Panel members thought the elevator penthouse was too prominent and could have more glazing or some other element to make it less boxy. One Panel member suggested getting some natural light into the stair wells.

The Panel liked the stairs to the roof decks and the angled part of the landscaping on the roof. One Panel member has some concerns with the public realm and the layout of the streetscape.

The Panel agreed that the landscaping in the courtyard was interesting but more could be done to make it more three dimensional. The area outside the amenity space was not well resolved and could be more detailed to make it feel more like a space and not a walkway. One panel member encouraged the applicants to work with the City to strengthen the public realm interface along the lane and try to include more sustainability elements to promote learning and public awareness in keeping with the SEFC vision statements.

One Panel member suggested making the sustainable moves apparent in the building design and suggested for example, tilting the bays in the lower building more to the west to improve solar shading. This expression of sustainability is what is missing from the architectural character of new buildings in the SEFC neighbourhood.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Hancock thanked the Panel noting that a wonderful series of ideas always comes out of the discussion with the Panel. Mr. Kruek added that there is a series of workshops scheduled with City staff to explore the public realm opportunities on the private lands in SEFC.

4. Address:	140 West 1 st Avenue
DE:	411503
Use:	Construction of a mixed use project including 399 residential units, retail space and cultural amenity space (theatre facility) with 4 residential towers all over 3 levels of underground parking.
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	GBL Architects
Review:	Second (First Review: April 26, 2006)
Delegation:	Stuart Lyon, GBL Architects Bruce Hemstock, PWL Partnership Bruno Wall, Wall Financial Development
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a site that will house the Playhouse facility that will include a small theatre, rehearsal halls, workshops and production facilities. The remainder of the site is residential with some retail on the ground floor focussed on Manitoba Street.

There has been an adjustment to the height of the towers and Ms. Rondeau asked the Panel for their comments as the proposal will return to Council with an ODP amendment to adjust the height. Mr. Rondeau noted that staff is supporting the adjustments.

As the development is on a very long block, there will be a pedestrian mews with a crosswalk across West 1st Avenue that links up to a walkway that goes down to the water.

Ms. Rondeau described the architectural design, massing, passive design and asked the Panel for their comments.

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

1. Adjustments to Site Massing:
 - increase in tower heights, reduction in podium heights.
2. Pedestrian Link:
 - amount of public access.
 - treatment of the link related to public art and residential liveability.
3. Response to Width of Westerly Tower Massing at Lane.
4. Response to Passive Design:
 - the western façade of the towers specifically the westerly tower.
5. Architectural Distinctiveness related to the character of the Southeast False Creek Neighbourhood and High Quality Architectural Materials and Treatments.

Ms. Rondeau took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Stuart Lyon, Architect, further described the proposal. Mr. Lyons described the evolution of the project noting the Playhouse Theatre Production Centre will remain on the site. The proposal integrates a new, larger space for their purposes. He added that the proposal includes a variety of housing types, including apartments and townhouses. Mr. Lyon added that the project will be a LEEDTM Silver equivalent and is not required to be certified.

Bruce Hemstock, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans for the proposal. Mr. Hemstock described the plans for the Playhouse Plaza and Mews. He noted the plaza's paving bands will refer to ship building templates and the mews retaining walls will be bent into a "hull" shape to represent the SEFC Shipyard Neighbourhood theme.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:** While the Panel had no major concerns with this proposal, several aspects were mentioned by the majority of Panel members;
 - provide a more meaningful passive response to the south and west facades of all the towers, but particularly the westerly tower facing the park; and
 - the tower design to be further refined to improve the overall architectural expression and increase the relative distinctiveness of the four towers.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal.

The Panel supported the adjustments to the heights of the towers with several Panel members suggesting the swoop of the tower heights could be more pronounced by adding height to the two end towers. One Panel member suggested better integrating the mechanical penthouses into the building massing. The panel had no concern about the width of the westerly tower and thought the proposed unit design would help mitigate any privacy concerns.

The Panel thought the public access was treated well but suggested the mid-block street and lane crossing needed to be handled well to make it work. The panel had no concern about the residential liveability of the units facing the pedestrian mews.

Several Panel members didn't think the approach to passive design was very strong and suggested increasing the solar performance of the south and west façades by further extending the proposed architectural projections or reducing the percentage of glazed openings. Also the Panel suggested increasing the size of the west facing balconies to achieve greater solar shading. One panel member recommended for this project, that the City relax the maximum 8% balcony FSR exclusion in order to achieve a greater environmental benefit.

The Panel felt the project would fit well into SEFC although one member thought it wasn't as successful as other projects in the area. Generally, the panel thought the expression of the four towers was too uniform and monotonous, and could be more distinctive. One panel member suggested using more depth and layers in the facade treatment to create a stronger architectural expression. The panel thought the two storey base expression was more successful than the towers above. One panel member thought the retail expression on Manitoba Street could be stronger, with the project's typical two story base expression continuing along Manitoba Street.

The Panel thought the lobby in the theatre was successful although one Panel member suggested adding more height as it deserved to be more distinctive. The Panel agreed that the lobby was a little jewel in the middle of the development.

The Panel thought the landscaping was the real strength in the project. They agreed that it was well thought out and liked the historical aspects suggesting they be emphasized more. Also, several Panel members suggested making the writing in the granite more obvious. The Panel also agreed that the mews would be a wonderful space and liked the roof top amenity spaces.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Lyon thanked the Panel stating he would be happy to continue working with all of their comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.