

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: November 22, 2006

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Walter Francl, Chair (Sat out Item #3)
Nigel Baldwin, Chair for Item #3
Albert Bicol (Item 1, 2, 4)
Shahla Bozorgzadeh
Tom Bunting
James Cheng (Sat out Item #1)
Eileen Keenan
Bill Harrison (Item 1, 2 and 3)
John Wall
Peter Wreglesworth
C.C. Yao

REGRETS: Margot Long

RECORDING SECRETARY: Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	833 Homer Street
2.	5909-5989 Oak Street
3.	SEFC 2A Site #2 (199 West 1 st Avenue)
4.	2636 East Hastings Street

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Francl 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:	833 Homer Street
DE:	410566
Use:	29-storey mixed-use building with Retail, Daycare and Office on 1 st to 3 rd Floors
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	IBI/HB
Review:	Second (1 st review September 13, 2006)
Delegation:	Martin Bruckner, Jennifer Stamp
Staff:	Francisco Molina (Ralph Segal)/John Greer

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-2)

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Senior Development Planner introduced this complete application which is a 29 storey mixed-used building with retail, daycare and offices on the first through third floors and is located at 833 Homer Street on the south west corner of Robson and Homer Streets. The building will also have four levels of underground parking and there is to be a restaurant and shops at ground level. Access to the residential tower and office levels are from Homer Street with loading and parking access on the lane. This application was not supported at the previous Urban Design Panel review on September 13, 2006.

The areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought include:

- Response to previous Panel concerns regarding:
 - Sunlight access to Daycare open space
 - The podium
 - Tower expression

Mr. Segal took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Martin Bruckner, Architect, gave an overview of the changes to the project since the previous review. Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect, gave a detailed description of the changes to the daycare and roof top garden with regards to the landscaping. The applicant team took questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to better organize the podium and the use of colour and materials on this portion of the building;
 - Further design development to clarify the tower expression; and
 - Concern about quality of design and materials in the public realm.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported this application and felt the project was greatly improved since the previous review.

The Panel felt the quality of the daycare had been significantly improved with more sunlight and an increase in the outdoor space.

Several members of the Panel liked the previous design of the podium as they felt the new design was more fragmented in architectural expression and material choices. They felt there were too many different materials and colours that were not from the same family. One member of the Panel felt the residential on the podium base was better and created a series of outdoor private and semi public spaces that enlivened the project. Another member of the Panel felt the brick arches seemed foreign to the project and would like to see the use of more modern materials.

The Panel felt the expression of the tower was a little weak and seemed detached from the podium. One member of the Panel felt the tower could benefit from more verticality with a stronger material reference to the materials used in the podium and a massing that brought the tower down to the street. Another member of the Panel had concerns about the environmental responses noting the amount of glass. One member of the Panel liked the overall expression of the tower and felt it was cleaner and made the suites more liveable.

The Panel felt that the entrance and entrance sequence had been much improved and the lobbies seemed to be a more reasonable size. The Panel also liked the improvement to the amenity room with the adjoining open spaces to the north of the tower on the podium.

The Panel felt the arch connection to Library Square worked but felt the use of brick might not be the right material. They liked the expression and the framing of the corner. Several Panel members expressed disappointed with the public realm improvements, especially given the adjacent context of Library Square. Another Panel member expressed concerns around the lane elevation.

- **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Bruckner thanked the Panel for their comments noting that they were committed to continuing to improve the design of the project.

2. Address:	5909-4989 Oak Street
DE:	Rezoning
Use:	31 Townhouse Units
Zoning:	RS-1 to CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Stuart Howard Architects
Review:	First
Delegation:	Stuart Howard, Senga Lindsay
Staff:	Abigail Riley/Dale Morgan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction:** Abigail Riley, Rezoning Planner gave a brief overview of the project. To change the zoning from RS-1 to CD-1 in order to develop the property for 31 townhouse units.

Dale Morgan, Development Planner gave an overview of the design review. There are five single family lots being consolidated into one lot. Across the lane is Montgomery Park. The form of development is for 31 townhouse units forming a courtyard in the centre. The units will be from 1200 to 1400 square feet in size with parking underground providing 2 parking spaces per unit.

The areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought include:

1. Does the Panel support the use, height and density for this project?
2. Comments are requested on the building interface with Oak Street and with regard to building setbacks, floor level elevations about street level and landscape treatment. Is there sufficient separation between the buildings and the street? Would the panel support a double row of trees along this street edge?
3. Comments are requested on pedestrian linkages through the site. Would the site and landscape treatment benefit from more place making nodes, places of rest, communal gatherings and special areas of emphasis?
4. Comments are requested on the relationship of the rear units with the lane and the park beyond. Should the rear units have a more frontal orientation to the lane and the park beyond in terms of unit identity and landscape treatment? What possibilities might be explored for "greening" the lane?

Mr. Morgan took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**
Stuart Howard, Architect described the development in further detail noting that visitor parking stalls have been included due to the lack of parking available on Oak Street. The living space is facing the courtyard to improve the liveability and to reduce the impact of the noise on Oak Street. He noted the private outdoor spaces in the courtyard for the units facing Oak Street. The units on the lane will have their outdoor space face the lane and the park.

Senga Lindsay, Landscape Architect described the landscaping for the project noting that they took the principle of an old English garden with box wood and brick walls making for a traditional landscape. There will be an overhead arbour along the path in the courtyard and the two ends will be punctuated with a gate that will have a public art feature.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
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- Consider adding a double row of trees on the Oak Street boulevard;
- Treat the lane more like a street in the use of open space and landscaping;
- Consider reducing the continuous trellis coverage in the courtyard; and
- Consider adding skylights over the stair shaft.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel unanimously supported this application.

The Panel agreed that it was a successful and well executed plan and would support the height and density for the project.

Several members of the Panel suggested having a double row of trees on Oak Street

Several members of the Panel suggested moving the lane units back from the lane to give them larger yards. They also suggested adding paving and planting to improve the presentation of the lane as a primary entrance and to visually connect the site to the park.

The Panel felt the continuous trellis might be a little heavy and suggested breaking it up a bit to bring more light into the courtyard. The circulation nodes in the courtyard plan could also be more clearly emphasised.

One member of the panel felt consideration should be given to the uniformity of the street fronting elevations and suggested that the brick colour could be varied along the elevation.

One member of the Panel suggested adding skylights over the stair shaft.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Howard agreed that the greening of the lane was a good idea but stated that the lane isn't in good repair. However, he would be willing to talk to Engineering about softening the lane. He noted that they had put the entrance to the parking as far to the north as possible so it will have little impact on the park. He agreed to take a look at the trellis and the double row of trees on the street. He stated that it would important to have as much landscaping on the edge as possible and that this would go a long way to improve the liveability of the development. He also agreed to look at putting skylights over the stairs.

3. Address:	SEFC 2A Site #2 (199 West 1 st Avenue)
DE:	410840
Use:	Mixed-use project
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	GBL Architects
Review:	First
Delegation:	Tom Bell, Stuart Lyon, Peter Kruek, Hank Jasper
Staff:	Scot Hein/John Greer

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-2)

- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Development Planner introduced this application which is the first complete Development Permit application for the Panel's consideration on the Olympic Village after five workshops.

The areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought include:

1. Advice on the character framework presented in the submission noting that absent of guidelines, this framework is intended to be used in your consideration of all eight DP applications. Comments on the principles and how they have been applied/resolved.
 2. Your advice on how the project contributes to the anticipated context with respect to the 1st Avenue frontage (Playhouse), the west frontage (hinge park and westerly edge buildings) and north frontage with respect to what is being set up for Salt Avenue corridor character. The other applications specific to this question will be at the December 20th UDP so this question is about setting the appropriate test.
 3. Attention to the question of scale onto the hinge park noting the over all site response and anticipated future building scale for frontage buildings.
 4. Opportunities to integrate public realm plan intent noting emerging thematic water theme between three westerly sites.
 5. Response to roofscape treatment and urban agriculture.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**
Stuart Lyon, Architect reminded the Panel that this application was for housing with underground parking and using the context model described the layout of the project. He stated that they used the Principles that were determined at the workshop in October and presented several of the principles describing how they dealt with them in the design of the site. He noted that the market building still requires some design development.

Tom Bell, Architect reviewed the changes made based on the last Urban Design Panels comments as well the sustainability features of the project.

Peter Kruek, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans for the project as well as the public realm.

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

Major design development is required in response to the Panel's commentary.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported this application.

The Panel commended the team for where they have gone in such a short period of time with the project and liked the richness and diversity of the design. They also appreciated the applicant relating back to the principles that came from the workshop in October.

Some panel members were concerned that the completeness of the presentation material and the level of design development did not reflect the expected standard for a complete DP application. One member was disappointed in the lack of materials submitted in the booklet ahead of the meeting, noting that the project is too important for the Panel to not have all the information needed, which makes it more challenging to form an opinion.

The panel felt that the penthouse levels of the book-end building were poorly designed and required comprehensive re-thinking. One member was concerned at the increase in length of the 13-storey portion of the building against the zoning massing, and was concerned how the form would relate to the other book-end buildings in later applications.

The Panel questioned the location of the lobby of the book-end building on the corner and felt the entrance was squeezed. They suggested moving it opposite the elevators near the park so the alignment is set up with the courtyard of the non-market housing. One member of the Panel noted that the lobby for the non-market housing was open to the air but upstairs is enclosed and asked the applicant to consider making some adjustments for more weather protection. Several members of the Panel felt the amenity space needs some work around the entry.

One Panel member had concerns around the minimal street setbacks, especially on the north street where the units were at street level and would receive little light. The Panel member also felt there were privacy and liveability issues with several units on the mews and the bridged section of the courtyard.

The Panel liked the west façade on the book-end building with the pull down shades as it gives a rich reading. They liked the wave units on Columbia and would like to encourage the applicant to be more playful with the project where ever possible in the façade treatments and in the landscaping. The panel felt other elevations of the book-end and non-market buildings required more development.

The Panel suggested playing with the fritted glass on the non-market housing building and one member suggested using warmer colours on the north side and lighter colours on the south side to give some fun and richness to the building. One member of the Panel felt the use of bricks on the non-market housing looked heavy over the delicate glazing.

One member of the Panel felt the day-lighting through the buildings could be stronger

The Panel felt the space in the courtyard and the flows into the mews could be capitalized on even more and to make the ground plane more permeable. They liked the courtyard on Salt Avenue but felt the playfulness of the centre courtyard was the least playful. One member of the Panel suggested greening the parapet. Another member of the Panel felt the landscaping might be high maintenance and not sustainable.

The Panel felt the base had a strong connection to the amenity space with a great connection between the private and semi private spaces.

Several members of the Panel noted the sustainable features but would like to see them continued through the buildings. One member of the Panel thought the water management system was commendable.

- **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Lyon thanked the Panel for the excellent commentary. He noted that some of the items are still being worked on and they will continue with the design development. He added that they have discussed moving the entry and will continue to review the project.

4. Address:	2636 East Hastings Street
DE:	410730
Use:	Mixed-use commercial/residential
Zoning:	C-2C
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Jordon Kutev Architect
Review:	First
Delegation:	Jordon Kutev, Fred Liu
Staff:	James Boldt

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (0-8)

- **Introduction:** James Boldt, Development Planner, introduced this complete application for mixed use on East Hastings. The building has a retail/commercial base with three stories of residential comprising of 45 units with under ground residential parking and commercial parking handled at grade off the lane. Mr. Boldt explained the history of the site noting previous attempts to develop the site. Mr. Boldt noted that the buildings across the lane are single family houses. A height relaxation is being sought to allow for a full four storey street wall. Staff's position is that in exchange for granting this relaxation, the applicant should earn this relaxation in terms of massing and articulation addressing the street frontage Staff is concerned with the liveability of the suites and the borrowed light bedrooms as well as the units fronting on East Hastings which haven't any outdoor amenity.

The areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought include:

- Has the project earned the height relaxation and conditional FSR in terms of massing;
- Issues of liveability including comments on outdoor amenity and landscaping; and
- And whether the impact on the houses across the lane has been reasonably addressed.

Mr. Boldt took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**
Jordon Kutev, Architect further described the project using the context models and gave an overview of the history of the development. He also described the materials and colour palate of the building.

Fred Liu, Landscape Architect discussed the landscape plans for the development.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

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

Major design development is required in response to the Panel's commentary.

- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support this application unanimously.

The Panel was very concerned with the liveability of the suites and the lack of balconies on the suites fronting East Hastings as there will be no sound buffer from the street noise. The Panel felt the suites would not be sustainable in the long term given the lack of private open space and the sheer number of borrowed light bedrooms. There will be a problem with light penetration and ventilation in these suites. The Panel felt the lane units were better than the ones on Hastings and one Panel member suggested changing some of the suites to three bedrooms. Most of the Panel felt the elevation on the lane was well developed and supportable.

The Panel felt that the height restriction on the Zoning did not help the project and that the scheme would be more liveable with nine foot or higher ceilings. The Panel would also support a higher relaxation to have more height at the retail level. Several members of the panel felt the height should be closer to 45 feet to have good retail. The Panel felt the elevations were poorly developed and they didn't think that the proposed development had earned the height relaxation or the conditional FSR.

The Panel felt the planting proposed on Hastings Street was poorly planned and wouldn't survive.

The Panel encouraged the applicant to make the lobby more generous as it is too narrow and deep.

The Panel felt the commercial parking at the rear of the building had limited access through the building to the street.

The Panel felt the materials being used were good and that there was a good colour palate.

Several member of the Panel felt that City Staff should look at the C-2 Zoning and change the guidelines to allow for proper ceiling heights in both residential and commercial projects.

The Panel felt it was a tough project and that what was working best was the south elevation with long shading balconies.

- **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Kutev thanked the Panel and agreed with their comments. He would like to see the City change the guidelines for C-2 zoning to maximize the square footage.

James Boldt added that there was a new program that just started to look at C-2 Zones with a pilot project at Norquay Village.