

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: November 23, 2005

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Larry Adams, Chair
Nigel Baldwin
Robert Barnes
Shahla Bozorgzadeh
Marta Farevaag
Ronald Lea
Edward Smith

REGRETS: James Cheng
Alan Endall
Margot Long
Peter Wreglesworth
C.C. Yao

RECORDING SECRETARY: Carol Hubbard, Raincoast Ventures

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	2550 Maple (1996 West Broadway)
2.	1252 Hornby Street
3.	1022 Seymour Street

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| 1. Address: | 2550 Maple (1996 West Broadway) |
| DE: | 409749 |
| Use: | Mixed (6-storeys) |
| Zoning: | C-3A |
| Application Status: | Preliminary |
| Architect: | Brook Development Planning & Abbarch |
| Owner: | Staburn Property Group Ltd. |
| Review: | First |
| Delegation: | Laurie Schmidt, Mike Burton-Brown |
| Staff: | Mary Beth Rondeau, Dale Morgan |
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EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (2-4)

Two letters from concerned neighbours were distributed and circulated to the Panel for information prior to review of this application.

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this preliminary application in the Central Broadway C-3A zone. The site is at the southeast corner of Broadway and Maple Street, close to the Arbutus-Broadway shopping area. Immediate context includes an IGA grocery store and a Government Liquor Store directly west of Maple Street. The proposal includes a new Government liquor store on the ground floor which will replace the existing store to the west. This will be a "Signature" store, approximately double the size of the existing outlet. At the corner is a two-storey high open entry area, and escalators at the front of the building to access a proposed grocery store on the second floor. Residential use is proposed for the third to sixth storeys. The project also includes a 2,000 sq.ft. community police office which, while welcomed by Staff, is not considered a factor in earning the requested height and density.

In the C-3A zone the outright permitted height is 30 ft. and outright density is 1.0 FSR, which may be increased to about 70 ft. and 3.0 FSR, provided certain criteria are met. This application seeks a maximum height of 78 ft. and 3.0 FSR. Ms. Rondeau briefly reviewed the height and massing suggested in the recently re-written Central Broadway C-3A Guidelines and outlined how maximum height and density may be earned.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- whether the requested increase in density from the outright permitted 1.0 to 3.0 FSR is appropriate and has been earned;
 - whether the requested maximum height of 78 ft. is acceptable;
 - how the massing conforms to the guidelines and whether it is an appropriate urban design response, particularly the relationship between the lower and upper massing and its relationship to the neighbours across the lane;
 - the appropriateness of the glass roof and impact of the massing on the sun angle.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Mike Burton-Brown, Architect, reviewed the scheme in greater detail. He stressed that the requested height is very important to the success of the building and noted it is largely driven by the need for a certain height for the first and second floor retail uses. They also believe the height is appropriate in this location in order to achieve the presence and character they seek as a gateway expression to the neighbourhood. Mr. Burton-Brown also highlighted the corner entry area as an interesting and useful public space, and the inclusion of a community police office which will help to improve conditions in the area. He briefly described the landscape plan and responded to questions from Panel members.
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- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - While the Panel considered that the requested height and density can be achieved on this site, there were significant concerns about how the massing has been resolved. Notwithstanding that this is a preliminary application, there is need for extensive design development to reduce its bulky appearance and the impression that the proposal is "pushing all the envelopes";
 - Major design development is needed to the treatment of the lane, particularly in terms of its relationship to the adjacent RT-2 Zone.
- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel was unable to support this application. While some Panel members suggested that sufficient design development improvements could be achieved in the next stage of the design, the majority thought too much work was required for it to be acceptable as a preliminary submission. The Panel had no concerns about the requested height and density per se, but did not believe they had been earned by this proposal.

The Panel had no concerns about the proposed uses. It was noted that both grocery store and liquor outlet offer public amenity and having them both in one building is not an issue. However, it was suggested that having these uses on two levels may not be the best solution. The community police office was not considered to be a significant addition to the neighbourhood, nor does it contribute to earning the requested density. It was also suggested that its proposed location on the site in relation to the proposed new liquor store may do little to address the conditions currently experienced around the existing liquor outlet.

It was noted that this building will be highly significant for the area and it is important that the neighbouring RT-2 zone is taken into consideration. The lane elevation feels massive and very much out of character with its neighbours. Greater attention should be given to the parking entry and the loading bays should be gated.

The Panel found the overall massing fairly clunky and presenting a form that appears too high for its width. It also contains no important characteristics of Kitsilano. While the regularity of the design is not an issue it seems out of character for the neighbourhood. There were also concerns about the lack of relationship between the retail and residential components which seem very foreign to one another. The massing of the residential superstructure seems too wide on Broadway and too deep on Maple. The large cornice also seems to add to the sense of bulk and is out of character with Kitsilano. As well, the sloping glass roof is an anomalous aesthetic that fights with the heritage references of the residential component.

The proposed liquor store was thought to lack street appeal. Further design development was also recommended to the canopies which add little interest to the building as shown. It was strongly recommended that the stairs and escalators be reworked, noting also that they do not contribute to an interesting streetscape. Given that continuous retail has not yet been achieved in Broadway, everything should be done to maximize interest and activity on the street. Concerns were also expressed about the corner entry area at Broadway and Maple and its value as a usable public space was questioned. More needs to be done in terms of public space as a contribution towards earning the requested increases in height and density.

With respect to landscaping, the Maple Street landscape treatment was thought to provide good pedestrian amenity and the private amenity is appropriately located.

The applicant was commended for inclusion of a sustainability strategy in a preliminary submission, which is a very appropriate stage for its incorporation into the design.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Burton-Brown explained that it is intended to gate the loading bays. He said they believe the community police office will improve conditions around the liquor store and provide eyes on the street at Maple and the lane.

2. Address:	1252 Hornby Street
DE:	409789
Use:	Mixed (15-storeys, 70 units)
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	GBL
Owner:	0719187 BC Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Stuart Lyon, Daryl Tyacke
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this complete application in the Downtown District, Hornby Slopes Sub Area. The site has a frontage of 100 ft. It was noted there are no criteria with respect to tower developments in relation to site frontage in this sub area of the downtown. The proposal is for office use on the ground floor and residential above. The application seeks 5.5 FSR (5.0 FSR plus 10 percent heritage density transfer) which is permitted in this zone. The height of the building is 150.7 ft., noting the maximum 300 ft. is not achievable on this site.

Areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought include its relationship to the existing building to the northwest and to the future development site to the southeast.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Stuart Lyon, Architect noted this project has evolved through discussions with the City and the applicant team and one of the major drivers has been to create a building with a simple expression. He briefly described the proposal and responded to questions from the Panel. The landscape architect briefly reviewed the landscape plan.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

The only minor recommendations were to reconsider the planting and integration of the canopy on the Hornby frontage, and to reconsider the amount of glazing in relation to energy consumption.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this application. It was considered to be an excellent, well crafted and interesting design.

The Panel found the landscaping and weather protection were not working well together at the entry and recommended reducing the amount of planting and increasing weather protection.

The Panel had no concerns about the relationship to the building to the northwest, nor did it think the future development site would be compromised by this building.

Another minor concern expressed by one Panel member was that the top of the penthouse needs greater differentiation, finding it somewhat ordinary for an otherwise expressive building.

One Panel member accepted the 6 ft. setback but found it somewhat troubling because it creates a temporary condition.

An observation was made that while this is a beautiful looking building it is lacking from a mechanical point of view. Reconsideration of the amount of glass was strongly recommended to take into account livability issues resulting from heat gain. Consideration should be given to the addition of shading and spandrels.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Lyon thanked the Panel for the feedback.

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3. Address: 1022 Seymour Street
DE: 409843
Use: Mixed
Zoning: DD
Application Status: Complete
Architect: GBL
Owner: ONNI Development Corp.
Review: First
Delegation: Stuart Lyon, Chris Evans
Staff: Mary Beth Rondeau
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-2)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this application in Area 1L of the DD zone (Downtown South). At a width of 275 ft., this site meets the necessary criteria for a tower development but the height is restricted by a view cone to a maximum of 166 ft. The maximum overall tower dimension is 90 ft. The application seeks the maximum permitted density of 5.0 FSR, plus 0.3 FSR heritage density transfer, noting the full ten percent is difficult to achieve given the height restriction.

The application proposes retail use on the ground floor on Nelson Street, wrapping around onto Seymour Street. Office use is proposed on the first three floors on Seymour Street. The remainder of the building is residential use, including six townhouses on Seymour Street.

Areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought relate to the lane elevation and the relationship of the development to the residential building across the lane and the massing of the office space in relation to Nelson Street and the lane.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Stuart Lyon, Architect, briefly reviewed the design rationale, noting the tower location is largely fixed on this site and the intent is to achieve an asymmetrical tower form. He noted that the developer intends to accommodate its offices in the building. He said they have no concerns about the width of the retail space and think it will work. Mr. Lyon explained that the amenity space will be programmed for the use of both residents and commercial occupants of the building and will include fitness rooms. Chris Evans, Landscape Architect, briefly reviewed the landscape plan and the design team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to the lane elevation is recommended to address concerns about the setback of the office from the lane; improvements to the drop-off area including stronger integration into the building and possibly adding a canopy;
 - Stronger integration of the office building into the building is recommended;
 - A sustainability strategy should be investigated, noting that having the owner's business office in the building presents a unique opportunity to pursue some interesting sustainability measures;
 - Consider simplifying the building by reducing the number of materials;

- The tinted glass as shown should be reconsidered;
- The location of the amenity and its glazing should be revisited to investigate raising it to provide more eyes on the lane.
- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel supported this application with a number of suggestions for further design development.

In general, the Panel found the building skillfully massed and expressed and supported the “big moves” of the scheme. The challenges of a view cone site were acknowledged and the Panel generally found the project a good fit with its neighbours.

The inclusion of office use was strongly supported although its massing creates problems, particularly at the lane where it is very unfriendly to the neighbours. There was a suggestion that the second and third storey office space should be reduced to make it livable. The expression of the office component was also thought to be unproven, with concerns expressed about the need for it to be better integrated into the building. The proposed dark glass was also seriously questioned.

One Panel member was disappointed by the static nature of the tower and suggested the balconies should be of equal size to strengthen the form. With respect to the base, the single storey expression of the retail and the way it wraps onto the lane was questioned.

There were concerns about the brick expression and in general the Panel thought it could be put to better use on the building. The Panel generally thought the building needed to be simplified and the number of materials reduced from four to three.

The Panel was disappointed with the lack of response to the drop-off and thought it should be strengthened in some way, perhaps adding a canopy and bringing it closer to grade. There was also a recommendation to create a setback at the lane and soften it with landscaping. Treating the amenity to present eyes on the lane would also be helpful.

There were no concerns about the depth of the retail at 20 ft.

With respect to the amenity it was stressed that it will be important to get some assurance regarding its shared use, otherwise it will be necessary to include some good common outdoor space for the residents, possibly on the 9th floor.

With respect to sustainability, it was noted that the project would benefit from considering how the building will operate in the long term. The lack of consideration for sustainability issues at the early stage of the design is disappointing although opportunities still remain, noting the mixed use and presence of the developer offer advantages for shared energy. The need for attention to glass detailing was stressed to ensure livability of the residential units. Thermal bridging might also be considered.

Applicant’s Response: Stuart Lyon thanked the Panel for its suggestions which he said they will consider incorporating into the scheme.

The meeting adjourned at 7.00 pm.