

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: November 24, 2004

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Bruce Haden, Chair
Mark Ostry
Larry Adams
Robert Barnes (Items 2 - 4 only)
Jeffrey Corbett
Marta Farevaag
Steven Keyes
Ronald Lea
Margot Long
Jennifer Marshall
Brian Martin

REGRETS: Alan Endall

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

| ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. | 755/65 West 42nd Avenue |
| 2. | 3704/20 Welwyn Street |
| 3. | 26 SW Marine Drive (Canadian Tire) |
| 4. | 838 West Hastings Street |

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| 1. Address: | 755/65 West 42nd Avenue |
| Use: | Residential |
| Zoning: | RT-1 to CD-1 |
| Application Status: | Rezoning |
| Architect: | John Hollifield |
| Owner: | Mosaic Avenue Properties |
| Review: | First |
| Delegation: | Chris Barbati, Michael Patterson, John Hollifield |
| Staff: | Dale Morgan |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-1)

- **Introduction:** Grant Miller, Planning Analyst, noted the site is within the Oakridge-Langara Policy Statement area, adjacent to Tisdall 1 by the same developer and architect. The policy supports the proposed density. Mr. Miller briefly reviewed the area context and noted that most of the issues relate to the form of development. Dale Morgan, Development Planner, described the project which is for ground oriented townhouses parallel to the street with a centre court. The expression is the same as Tisdall 1 in its general mass and roof form. Materials include brick and siding. There is a hydro line easement through the property across the lane from the adjacent high school. Undergrounding the hydro line is considered impractical at this time although the City seeks provision to allow for it in the future. The advice of the Panel is sought on the following:

- whether the form of development is appropriate for the site;
- setbacks and courtyard widths
- material mix, in particular the side elevations.

The height is slightly more than recommended in the guidelines but is similar to the adjacent development.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** John Hollifield, Architect, described the project. He noted they have chosen to repeat the roof form of the Tisdall 1 development and pointed out that fourteen of the fifteen units have direct access to their garage. The minimum number of parking spaces is provided, in response to policy which encourages fewer parking spaces. The landscape architect briefly described the landscape plan and the design team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Extend the landscape strategy to the 42nd Avenue curb line including consideration for additional street trees;
 - Consider widening the courtyard by reducing the setback to 42nd Avenue while considering the setback of the adjacent development;
 - Design development to material distribution to maximize brick if possible and resolve material junctions, particularly at corners.

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- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel strongly supported this project and found it very appropriate for the area. It is a good example of how to successfully achieve increased density in the city.

The Panel recommended increasing the courtyard width as much as possible and reducing the setback on 42nd Avenue, provided there is no major impact on the front yard of the neighbouring house.

There were some concerns about the landscape along the street, in particular the squeezing of all the trees onto the private property and the lack of street trees. The Panel strongly urged that street trees be provided, and in general to give greater consideration to the pedestrian experience on the street. There was a comment that it currently has a very suburban character.

One Panel member thought the landscape plan had not been as thoroughly considered as the architecture, noting very little is being proposed for the front yards. It was suggested there needs to be another layer of richness added.

The Panel was generally satisfied with the mix of materials. There were, however, comments that the application of brick seems somewhat arbitrary, particularly on the east elevation (Building B) which seems unresolved. Some Panel members thought there should be more brick on the project, and there was a recommendation to use a contemporary approach to the detailing. It was noted that the transition between the vinyl and brick will need to be handled very carefully.

The Panel had no concerns about the height of the development.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Hollifield agreed the landscaping has been somewhat neglected on the boulevard and will be addressed. Further consideration can also be given to the resolution of the side elevation of building B. He noted the brick is very expensive and there are benefits to using the hardi panel because it has better reflective qualities. Mr. Hollifield said they would like to expand the courtyard and will look at reducing the setback.

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| 2. Address: | 3704/20 Welwyn Street |
| DE: | 408943 |
| Use: | Residential (60 units) |
| Zoning: | CD-1 |
| Application Status: | Complete |
| Architect: | Stuart Howard |
| Owner: | Mosaic Avenue lands |
| Review: | First |
| Delegation: | Stuart Howard, Bob McCarthy, Ron Rule |
| Staff: | Dale Morgan |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction:** Dale Morgan, Development Planner, presented this application, previously seen by the Panel at the rezoning stage. The project is for 60 ground oriented townhouses grouped in four clusters, for a total FSR of 1.2. The project meets policy goals. Mr. Morgan briefly reviewed the conditions of rezoning and noted the following areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought:
 - street presence, especially the side wall elevation;
 - quality and character of the public amenity space;
 - material expression, particularly the reduction in brick since the rezoning application.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Stuart Howard, Architect, said the form of development is the same as at the rezoning stage and the concept is to achieve an expression of single family homes on the Welwyn elevation. He briefly described the project and Ron Rule, landscape architect, reviewed the landscape plan. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider replacing vinyl siding with a higher quality material;
 - Enhance the perceived public-ness of the public amenity space with consideration to enhanced signage and/or public art, differentiate the landscape at the entry, add seating and/or other methods;
 - Design development to add at least some additional front doors to Welwyn Street and consideration to add doors on the lane as well;
 - Design development to decrease the sense of side wall of the end units (this should involve plan revisions);
 - Add access doors from units to autocourts and from streets to autocourts.
- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this application. The Panel had no major concerns and thought design development had served the project well.

For the most part the Panel found the street presence well handled and resolved. However, most Panel members remained convinced that the project would be improved by having real front doors on the Welwyn Street, noting that even a few would add to the variety on the

street. It was thought they could be achieved without too much difficulty. There were concerns that the Welwyn elevation should not have "side of the house" elements. It was also recommended that consideration be given to providing doors on the lane elevation as well because it will make for a much richer project and add to the sense of community.

The Panel still had some concerns about the public amenity space, although in general it was thought to have been well handled and improved since the rezoning. Some additional elements to help reinforce its public nature were recommended, including seating and signage. There were concerns that it still feels somewhat private. There was also a recommendation to consider differing the arrangement of trees at the street so that it does not have the same appearance as the private courtyards.

The Panel recognized the challenge of this public amenity given it essentially goes nowhere. A question was raised to the City regarding the development across the lane not having its access align with this development, given the efforts this applicant has been required to make to achieve the public access as a condition of the rezoning. Without a meaningful connection that the general public will use, some Panel members suggested it would end up functioning as another private courtyard for the residents of this development.

There were a number of comments about the autocourts and several suggestions to include man doors in order to facilitate their use as children's play areas. As well, there should be the ability to get from one court to another and to the courts from the street. One Panel member also recommended greater variety in the surface treatment in the autocourts rather than just asphalt.

The telecommunications tower was thought to have been well integrated into the scheme, and the lane was thought to be considerably improved since the rezoning stage.

In general, the Panel thought the materials had been improved and made the project more in keeping with the neighbourhood. Some questions were raised about the material mix, with some suggestions that the brick and vinyl are not well matched. Some Panel members had a problem with the use of the vinyl siding and suggested it be replaced with hardi panel or wood. The amount of brick was generally thought to be satisfactory.

The lane was thought to be much improved.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Howard noted that seven of the nine units provide an exterior door expression on Welwyn Street. The concept was to make the massing appear to be individual buildings, not to create a lot of access points to the building along the street, noting the close proximity to the property line. With respect to the autocourts it was felt that having access from the street would cause confusion with all the entrances off Welwyn Street. They were therefore made more private and the street edge softened with landscaping. There would also be a security issue if there is too much access into the autocourts from the public realm. Mr. Howard pointed out there is still a fair amount of brick on the project. He said he believes that if the vinyl siding is detailed correctly it can be an appropriate material, also noting that affordability was a major consideration at the rezoning stage.

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3. Address: 26 SW Marine Drive (Canadian Tire)
Use: Retail
Zoning: I-1 to CD-1
Application Status: Rezoning
Architect: Kasian Kennedy
Owner: Canadian Tire Real Estate
Review: First
Delegation: Joanne Stich, Michael McDonald, Robert Lemon, Mary Chan-Yip
Staff: Scot Hein, Lynda Challis, Yardley McNeill
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EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (1-8)

- **Introduction:** This application was introduced by Lynda Challis, Rezoning Planner. In 2001, City Council approved policies and guidelines to consider highway oriented retail (HOR) uses on the south side of Marine Drive between Main and Yukon Streets. The objective is to achieve developments that improve and enhance the quality of the public realm through high quality architectural building expression, careful site planning, landscaping and circulation. The site is currently occupied by the former GM-Chrysler building which is listed on the Recent Landmark Inventory as a significant post-40's building. It is presently used mainly for warehousing. In front of the building is a long (approximately 200 ft. deep) lawn which separates the building from Marine Drive. The site covers almost 3 ha. (over 7 acres) and is zoned predominantly I-2 Industrial with a 40 ft. strip of RS-1 along the Marine Drive frontage to provide a landscape setback from the industrial area. The surrounding area is zoned I-2.

The application proposes a mixed use development to include retail and service uses including a Canadian Tire store and service centre, space for three or four other large retail stores and three stand-alone restaurants. Staff support the proposed uses which are consistent with the HOR policy for the area. At the south end of the site are a two-storey Canadian Tire store and a second retail unit. Along Ontario Street are three stand-alone restaurants. On the north portion of the site, in part of the former GM-Chrysler building, are three other retail units. Two levels of parking for about 600 vehicles are provided between the retail and commercial buildings. Vehicle access to the site is from Ontario and Marine Drive and from 69th Avenue primarily for loading.

As a public benefit for this rezoning the applicant proposes to retain the Chrysler building's north façade and a portion of the east side of the building, and to preserve about three quarters of the large lawn at the front. The application also seeks additional density for retail uses. Existing policy allows 0.6 FSR retail and the proposal seeks 0.68 FSR. The proposal also seeks additional height to compensate for the development being squeezed by retention of the lawn and retention of the heritage façade. Also, to allow the provision of loading beneath the parking area and to respond to the site flood plain. The HOR policy recommends a height of 12.2 m (40 ft.) for stand-alone retail but may be increased up to 18.3 m (60 ft.) for mixed-use development. The height is intended to provide for more usable open space. This proposal seeks a maximum height of 17.7 m to the roof at the south end of the site and approximately 19.7 m (65 ft.) for a few appurtenances.

Yardley McNeill, Heritage Planner, briefly reported the Heritage Commission's response to the application when it was reviewed earlier today. The project was supported with a number of concerns. The Commission thought there should be greater retention of the character of the site manifested within the architecture and expressed concerns about the relationship of the two-storey massing to the facade on Marine Drive. The Commission indicated support for greater height on the site in order consider pushing the two-storey

massing further back and trading places with the parking. Concerns were expressed about signage, in particular the pylon signs in the front, and recommended research into the design of the original Chrysler signs. Other suggestions were to consider a darker tone for the colour of the steel cladding, and to make the clerestory windows proposed for the additions more in keeping with the original style of the building. The Commission was also very concerned about the location of the drive-through at the front and suggested it be moved back in order to maintain an open vista across the front lawn.

Development Planner, Scot Hein, focused on the form of development issues, noting there are no major concerns with use and density. The areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought are as follows:

- Height relaxations;
 - The front lawn with respect to the pad building location; signage, landscape, massing with respect to the existing heritage building, access and entry and the irreversible intervention;
 - Ontario Street edge;
 - Overall form and quality;
 - Parking strategy.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Joanne Stich, Architect, described the design rationale and noted there is potential for five large format users on the site. Mike McDonald, Architect, noted the strategy they have used is to contrast the large boxes with the heritage building and draw from its material palette. He stressed the limitations of the site as a result of saving the large front lawn which restricts them to a fairly small developable area. The landscape architect, Mary Chan-Yip, briefly described the landscape plan and the applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Decrease the visual weight (particularly of the northern edge) of the new building relative to the existing building through an increased setback and/or use of more transparent materials;
 - Consider an overall simplification of building form in conjunction with the strategy of material simplification and increased material quality. This could include incorporation of restaurant pads in the major building mass, and further consideration of the material strategy relative to the dignity and materiality of the heritage building;
 - Increased prominence, authenticity and use of the historical front lawn space by relocating the northeast pad use to the south, configuring the landscape in a transparent and historically authentic way, if possible, enhancing links to the Ontario greenway, ensuring compatible signage and providing an actual use and access point to the heritage façade;
 - Incorporate sustainable design strategies at both the site and building level.
 - **Related Commentary:**

The Panel did not support this application, the main concerns relating to the form of development. The Panel recognized the considerable constraints on this site which include the big box use responding appropriately to the heritage building and retention of the large front lawn which is severely restricting the development site. Given its complexities there was a

strong suggestion that an early workshop discussion with the Panel would have been very beneficial to carefully consider all the options.

The Panel had no concerns with the height of this proposal and several Panel members suggested it could be higher if it results in a better solution for the site, noting the absence of any view impacts and the desire to preserve the lawn which sets the building back much further than anticipated by the guidelines.

The Panel felt strongly that the front lawn is a major part of the heritage value of the site. It offers a welcome relief to passing motorists from the predominantly automobile oriented character of Marine Drive. It was stressed that the unusual vista the lawn presents from the street should be maintained and in this respect most Panel members found the pad restaurant on the corner to be inappropriate. It was also recommended that the lawn not be blocked off with trees. There were concerns expressed about the pedestrian pathway off Marine Drive which essentially goes nowhere. One suggestion was to add some subtle diagonal paths across the lawn, following a desire line towards the entries off Ontario Street, rather than an axial connection to the front door. Historical research into the front lawn area was also recommended.

Simplification of the overall landscape treatment was recommended to reflect the big box character. Attention should be given to the guidelines which recommend native landscaping.

Preservation of the heritage façade was strongly supported and the Panel endorsed the advice of the Vancouver Heritage Commission. The applicant was urged to involve a heritage architect in order to achieve a more appropriate response to the historic building. The Panel had concerns about the relationship of the heritage façade to the big box program behind it. Some considered it to be somewhat disrespectful of the building and thought it could be improved substantially in terms of materiality. There were suggestions to consider a translucent box - more of a contemporary industrial aesthetic - so that the heritage façade is quite distinct as an historical element and the big box retail strongly contrasting with its fine grain. Removal of the trees in front of the façade was strongly recommended. It was also recommended to consider integrating the heritage façade into a functioning use such as employee entrance or offices. There was also a suggestion to consider switching the Canadian Tire store with the other retail units, possibly with a component such as the garden centre making use of the front lawn.

The Panel had concerns about the signage and strongly opposed pylon signs and suggested that signage should be pulled back to maintain the sight line across the lawn. The signage should be in keeping with the character of the heritage building and less suburban.

With respect to Ontario Street, the Panel strongly supported the double row of trees and reinforcement of its treatment as a bikeway. In this regard a much stronger connection of this public realm to the front lawn was recommended. Integration of the seating with the Ontario greenway, away from the Marine frontage, was also recommended. There were suggestions to delete the three small restaurants and integrate them into the main building.

The Panel generally supported the parking strategy but with some suggestions to consider other options, including rooftop parking on a single storey structure. If the two level parking is maintained, ways should be sought to humanize the lower level and bring in light to the building entry.

The Panel felt strongly that sustainable design strategies should be incorporated into this project as an important component of its successful resolution, noting in particular the very large roof areas that can be used to advantage. A demonstrable commitment to sustainability

will go a long way to convince the Panel that this rezoning application merits support for the amount of density it seeks.

The Panel was generally quite disappointed with this response which some Panel members considered to be a missed opportunity, especially given the guidelines call for greater innovation in architectural expression. The Panel was, however, encouraged by the recent Canadian Tire development at Cambie and Broadway which achieved a much higher standard than the more typical suburban big box response.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. McDonald thanked the Panel for the comments. He said they have been working on the project for 18 months. He agreed it would probably have been beneficial to have had a panel review at the onset and noted the difficulty of conveying the depth of the work that has already occurred.

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| 4. Address: | 838 West Hastings Street |
| Use: | Mixed (37 storeys) |
| Zoning: | DD to CD-1 |
| Application Status: | Rezoning |
| Architect: | Walter Francl/Brook Development Planning |
| Owner: | Jameson Dev. Corp. |
| Review: | First |
| Delegation: | Nigel Dancey, David Nelson, Lee Hallman, Tom Pappajohn, Piers Heath |
| Staff: | Jonathan Barrett, Yardley McNeill, Phil Mondor |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-1)

- **Introduction:** Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, introduced this rezoning application. The development site comprises three properties and has a frontage of about 104 ft. The site contains the Ceperley Rounsfell building (Heritage "A"), the Chamber of Mines building (Heritage "B") and the Jolly Taxpayer pub. The physical context is very varied and notably includes the Credit Foncier building (Heritage "A"), the Stock Exchange building (Heritage "A"), the Terminal City Club and Hornby Plaza at the foot of Hornby Street. The application proposes the restoration and preservation of the Ceperley Rounsfell building and the façade retention of the Chamber of Mines building. A new 37-storey tower contains three floors of retail, eight floors of commercial office (up to the parapet of the adjacent Credit Foncier building) and 25 floors of residential (approximately 155 units). The floorplate is about 7,300 sq.ft. The overall density being proposed is approximately 21.2 FSR and the height is 376 ft. which is determined by a view cone.

The DD zoning does not permit residential use in this area; however, rezoning policy allows for consideration of residential when there are heritage resources on the site. Maximum density permitted under DD zoning is 7.0 FSR. The overall density being sought includes bonusing for heritage retention, residual density and the transfer of heritage density from Chinatown.

The advice of the Panel is sought on the use, built form and density, with emphasis on the following:

1. Residential use: whether there is sufficient amenity for residential, both on the site and in the neighbourhood.
2. Height in relation to the city scale and the neighbourhood scale.
3. Shadowing, principally at the equinox on Hornby Plaza (which contains public art).
4. Setbacks, particularly east, west and south.
5. Adjacent development potential.
6. Built form and response to the heritage properties on the site and adjacent forms in the surrounding context.
7. Density: Can the site accommodate 21.2 FSR?
8. Sustainability.

Mr. Barrett noted the project was reviewed earlier today by the Vancouver Heritage Commission when it enthusiastically supported the scope of heritage retention, the relationship of the tower to the heritage buildings and the street, and the interior relationship.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** The applicant team briefly described the project in greater detail, with emphasis on the proposed mixed uses and sustainability measures. The

intention is to seek LEED gold certification. The proponents then responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consideration of additional architectural and political analysis of the adjacent sites with respect to impact of this proposal on future development potential, particularly to the east and south. The concerns may be addressed in part by additional architectural analysis and by some direct conversations with the neighbours;
 - Strong support for the overall density but several concerns about whether it is pushing slightly too hard;
 - Consideration of additional public amenity including possible roof access;
 - Very strong support for the commitment to sustainability and recognition that this project has the capacity to "up the ante" in terms of sustainable design in Vancouver. Any mechanisms that can be incorporated into the building to demonstrate the sustainable aspects of the building to the public would be welcomed.
- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel was very enthusiastic about this project and strongly supported the rezoning application. The applicant team was also commended for the excellent presentation package which thoroughly addresses all the issues.

The proposed mix of uses was strongly supported and most Panel members welcomed the residential component in this location, noting the project also achieves the maximum commercial FSR which it acknowledged is important to maintain in the Central Business District. The Panel also agreed that mixed use is a major component of a sustainability strategy. There was some discussion about the adequacy of amenities for the residential use and it was noted there are currently few residential services in the immediate area. However, it was felt that this location would appeal to some residential purchasers, noting its relatively close proximity to the waterfront. There were suggestions that some consideration should be given to providing more amenities given the site's relative isolation, particularly at night, and noting also that common amenities contribute to a sense of community in the building. More usable on-site open space was recommended and it was noted the common rooftop amenity is north-facing so will likely be little used. In addition to on-site residential amenity, there was also a recommendation to offer more to the public, possibly a publicly accessible roof deck.

The Panel had no concerns with the height, noting the site is limited by the view cone in any event. Response to city and neighbourhood scale was considered satisfactory and a good contextual fit.

The Panel agreed that the amount of density being sought is extremely high and is reaching new heights for Vancouver. Nevertheless, most Panel members agreed it appears to fit into the context and feels appropriate. The Panel considered the project meets the criteria for good urban design and the majority of members endorsed the requested 21.2 FSR. There were, however, some concerns raised about precedence and the pressures on the City that this may stimulate. It was agreed this is a political question that may be beyond the purview of the Urban Design Panel. It was stressed that support for the requested density is firmly based on the very high quality of the proposal which promises an exceptional development. In this regard, it was noted the quality of the detailing will be essential to the success of this scheme and a much different development could occur if the site is sold after it is rezoned.

Most Panel members had no issue with shadowing on Hornby Plaza. Comments were that it is more of a throughway than a park for lunchtime users, the public art piece can sustain itself regardless of shadowing, this is a very dense part of the CBD, and much of the shadowing is already created by the Terminal City Club.

The Panel supported the built form and found it very respectful of the heritage buildings, particularly at street level. There was a comment that the stepped form is quite foreign to the formal qualities of the surrounding buildings and will definitely stand out as a result. It was noted there is a bigger challenge in terms of the building's orientation and proximity to neighbouring sites. The Panel thought the proposal very successfully saves two special heritage buildings that are quite vulnerable given their scale. The building is also very respectful of the Credit Foncier building.

The Panel generally considered the setbacks to be acceptable but noted there may be Building Code issues close to the property lines. One Panel member suggested the relationship on the easterly setback might be improved with a party wall condition. The Panel strongly recommended greater analysis of the development potential of the neighbouring property, including consultation with the property owner. Every effort should be made to ensure the neighbouring site is not unduly limited by this project.

The Panel strongly endorsed the sustainability contributions of this project and encouraged the applicant to seek LEED gold certification.

The applicant was commended for the global approach being taken to this site. It is hoped it will encourage other Vancouver developers to take a wider perspective.