

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: November 26, 2003

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Stuart Lyon, Chair
Helen Besharat
Bruce Haden (present for Items 1 - 3 only)
Brian Martin
Kim Perry
Sorin Tatomir
Ken Terriss
Mark Ostry
Jennifer Marshall
Eva Lee (present for Items 2 and 3 only)

REGRETS: Jeffrey Corbett
Reena Lazar

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. 4050 Knight Street (Phase One)
2. 3638 Vanness Avenue
3. 628 Kinghorn Mews (1650 Granville)
4. 1144 Richards Street
5. 2228 West Broadway

1. Address:	4050 Knight Street (Phase One)
DE:	408036
Use:	Mixed (7 and 12 storeys, 206 units)
Zoning:	CD-1
Applicant Status:	Complete
Architect:	Rositch Hemphill
Owner:	Kingsway & Knight
Review:	First (Previously a Workshop and Rezoning)
Delegation:	Keith Hemphill, Chris Phillips
Staff:	Scot Hein

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-2)

- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Development Planner, presented this application for the first phase of the Knight and Kingsway development (the King Edward/Knight component), previously seen by the Panel at the rezoning stage. The rezoning was approved by Council following considerable neighbourhood involvement, using the C-2 regulations then in place as a baseline (3.0 FSR). The Panel's input in an earlier workshop led to the massing approach pursued in the rezoning, i.e., a two tower scheme with the primary tower marking the important Kingsway/Knight corner. Other objectives were the inclusion of large-format retail functions and provision of a unique quality lane to counter the harsh vehicular environment of this particular location. As well, a key amenity for the neighbourhood is the inclusion of a public library. At the rezoning stage, the Panel had expressed some concern about the density, then proposed at a little over 4.0 FSR. This has now been reduced to about 3.7 FSR.

Following a more detailed description of the project, Mr. Hein noted the following areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought:

- The quality and anticipated execution of the lane environment including treatment of the interior base of the project;
- Architectural expression: its quality, scale and articulation, and how it performs in terms of breaking down the scale and distinguishing the pieces. Also, its subsequent relationship to the phase two component which is expected to follow fairly soon.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Keith Hemphill, Architect, noted the Panel's greatest concern at the rezoning stage related to the operation of the lane as a combined vehicular and pedestrian environment. He briefly described the revisions that were made to achieve the desired quality of the lane, including some reorganization of the traffic pattern through the site, noting the intent is to create an oasis of calm amidst the three major arterial streets surrounding this site. He briefly described the design rationale, and Chris Phillips, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plan, including the sustainability aspects. The design team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application.

The bridge element was an area of concern for Panel members. Since it sets up an important focus it needs to be carefully handled in terms of what is on the other side of the bridge, which at present appears to be the servicing aspects of the project. While a bridge such as this can be a charming feature, it can also present problems with respect to noise reflection and shadowing impacts. Lighting under the bridge will also need careful consideration. Some Panel members would prefer to see the bridge eliminated altogether, with just a slot through

the two buildings, but certainly much more design development if it is to be retained. It was suggested that the bridge is adding to the massive scale of the development and it might have a more residential character without it. However, if it is to be retained, it was strongly recommended that the bridge should be more translucent and differentiated more from the building component it is connecting. Extending residential units over onto the west side of the bridge seems to be contributing to the massive feel of the building.

With respect to materials, the Panel questioned the need to repeat the brick at the base of the tower component. The Panel was also concerned about an apparent "disconnect" between the residential component and the commercial base, with suggestions to consider bringing down the residential in some places. The level of detailing at the corners also seems lacking at present, and the two retail entry canopies lack the detailed articulation of the rest of the building. Design development was also recommended to deal with the exit stair in front of the curved corner, to work it into the project in some way. In general, the Panel found the architectural expression of the tower component to be the more successful of the two pieces. Comments were made that the residential entry for the southwest tower seems a bit overlooked and could be grander for a building of this size.

The Panel strongly recommended that consideration be given to providing simpler roof forms, including some flat roofs which would be a much more urban solution than the proposed sloped roofs. The dormer pieces in particular seem like "tack-ons". Provision of some roof decks was also recommended.

The Panel generally considered the lane had been handled fairly well. Suggestions for improvement included eliminating the "bump" in the surface treatment and creating better definition in the lane by dealing with the blank walls and recesses. It was suggested that street principles need to be applied to the lane to give it greater coherency. The canopy on the lane elevation also needs design development. There was support for extending some of the surface materials out to the curb, if this is acceptable to Engineering. There was a recommendation to redirect the parking entry from the library entrance, and to delete the lay-by next to the library. It was also suggested that a continuous row of street trees in the lane would improve the public realm. One Panel member recommended considering a stairway from the public terrace to the lane (by the water feature) to help make it part of the lane environment.

There was a recommendation to improve the visibility of the library entry from Knight Street, possibly moving it away from the parking entrance. There was a concern expressed about the viability of the CRU beside the library which seems to be away from the pedestrian flow. There was also a recommendation to relocate the stair coming down into the library area.

There was a concern expressed that some of the A3 units in the southwest building could be compromised for natural light, and that some of the north-facing patios may not be animated in spring and fall.

Some Panel members thought the sustainability aspects of the project could go further, including the addition of brise soleil elements on the south façade.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Hemphill noted the corners of the grocery store have not been fully articulated because the tenant has not yet been identified. He explained that the library entry has been deliberately pulled in from Knight Street and is an important aspect of vitalizing the interior space. Regarding the retail unit next to the library, Mr. Hemphill noted this is on a primary pedestrian route, next to the parking exit, and it is believed this unit will be very successful. With respect to the bump in the lane, Mr. Hemphill said it is an important aspect of traffic calming that has been negotiated with Engineering Services. It is

also an opportunity for landscaping, noting also it is anticipated that the adjacent C-2 zone will be redeveloped in the future. With respect to the grocery store windows, Mr. Hemphill noted the City requires long, single tenant facades to be treated like individual CRUs. He said he appreciated the Panel's comments about the roof form and treatment of the bridge. However, he did not fully agree with some of the comments about the relationship between the upper and lower portions of the building because they are significantly different uses. With respect to concerns about north-facing units, Mr. Hemphill noted it is a very wide street and the shadow diagrams illustrate it will be a well lit courtyard at most times of the day and at most parts of the year.

2. Address:	3638 Vanness Avenue
DE:	407942
Use:	Residential (4 storeys)
Zoning:	CD-1
Applicant Status:	Complete
Architect:	Rafii Architects
Owner:	Concert Properties
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Foad Rafii, Yesa Rock, Robert Kleyn
Staff:	Bob Adair

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-2)

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner, introduced this application. It was reviewed previously on October 15, 2003 at which time it was not supported. The Panel expressed concerns about the footprint of the building and its relationship to the tower immediately to the south. There were also some interior layout issues including the treatment of the corridors and some of the unit plans. As well, the Panel was concerned about the façade treatment, particularly along Vanness Avenue and the central portion of the building, and had general concerns about the handling of the concrete details. The Panel recommended weather protection over some of the balconies and over the main entry, and the addition of some additional amenity space.

Mr. Adair stressed that certain aspects of the project, including the general massing, the footprint and its relationship with the adjacent tower, were established at the rezoning stage and will not be revisited. The revised submission therefore retains the original footprint and site plan. However, to improve the livability and relationship between units the applicant has revised some of the glazing to refocus the outlook to avoid direct views into units. Adjustments have been made to the façade, including the parapet design which now emphasizes the central bay over the main entry. A canopy is proposed for the main entry. Changes have also been made to the enclosed balconies with the addition of a glass and spandrel expression which contributes to better organization of the façade. The balcony towers at either end of the building have been reduced in height by one storey.

Planning generally supports the revisions and believe the project has been improved. The advice of the Panel is sought on opportunities for further refinement of the elevations both in terms of the overall composition and the general streetscape.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Foad Rafii, Architect, briefly reviewed the revisions made to the submission. He noted a meeting room has been added for use of the building residents. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel supported this application although found the revisions fairly minor. The challenge of dealing with an unfortunate inherited situation was acknowledged by the Panel.

The Panel remained concerned about the quality of the long corridors and strongly recommended the introduction of natural light wherever possible, particularly on the top floor which would be easy to achieve with skylights.

The Panel questioned the repetition of enclosed balconies on the ground floor which fails to fully take advantage of outdoor patio space.

The Panel generally thought more could be done to improve the concrete detailing, especially at the cornice level, noting this is a fairly rare opportunity to do a four-storey building in concrete construction. The detailing of the entry will be critical to the perception of the quality and character of the building. The Panel supported the awning over the entry.

Most Panel members thought an amenity room should be included, provided it is usable and adds animation to the building.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Rafii thanked the Panel for the comments and said they will do their best to respond. He noted that every ground floor unit does have outdoor space.

3. Address:	628 Kinghorn Mews (1650 Granville)
DE:	408001
Use:	Mixed (9 storeys, 26 units)
Zoning:	CD-1
Applicant Status:	Complete
Architect:	Busby & Assoc.
Owner:	Concord Pacific Group
Review:	First
Delegation:	Peter Busby, Bruce Hemstock, Fred Roman
Staff:	Jonathan Barrett

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-1)

- **Introduction:** Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, presented this application for the last building of the westerly portion of the Beach Neighbourhood, the guidelines for which are quite specific with respect to urban design principles. He briefly reviewed the context and noted a decision has been made to route the Seawall to the north of the building. There will also be a narrower public walkway all the way around the building, not to the same standard as the Seawall. Parking is accessed below grade and the building contains a small retail component at the corner. No issues have been identified on this project. The areas in which the Panel's comments are sought relate to the blank wall at the above-grade bicycle parking area, and the visibility of the retail space.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Peter Busby, Architect, briefly described the design rationale and Bruce Hemstock reviewed the landscape plan, including sustainability aspects. The applicant team responded to the Panel's questions.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application and thought it was an excellent project: a beautiful sculpture at the terminus of an ensemble of other very well designed buildings.

The Panel was concerned that much of the ground floor is taken up with residential use which tends to privatize the waterfront walkway, albeit a secondary route in front of this building. The Panel thought the café will be very successful. Most Panel members would prefer the rest of the ground plane to be retail use as well, although it was acknowledged it may not be commercially viable at this time. One recommendation was to increase the building height by one floor, possibly with a smaller footprint, and devote the ground floor to amenity uses, perhaps also revealing the structure of the building at the base, to provide some animation and give the walkway a more public feel. Another suggestion was to widen and emphasize the openings at the edge of the retail to make the space more public. One Panel member also noted there is an opportunity to locate the restaurant right at the waterfront, which would be a refreshing variation from the monotonous treatment of the rest of the seawall to date. Another member also questioned whether the ground floor units would be marketable given the lack of privacy in what will be very high end housing.

The Panel had few concerns about the bicycle parking area at the corner, and the water feature was strongly supported. There were no concerns about the wall as a backdrop to the moat. The Panel strongly recommended that the applicant and the City find a way to connect the water feature to the creek, via a bridge. Some concerns were expressed about crossing the bicycle route and connecting to the turnaround and urged that the City work closely with the designers to ensure its clarity and safety.

Other comments and suggestions included:

- investigate lighting on the roof;
- the geometry of the west façade is not as disciplined as the east and north elevations;
- the rail detailing will be very important;
- details of the elevator penthouse need careful consideration;
- suggest acknowledging the north-south direction of the bridge and the street grid by making the northwest corner orthogonal rather than angled;
- design development recommended at the top of the elevator stair wall;
- question whether this should be a LEED certified project.

The Panel commended the applicant on a great project and looks forward to seeing it built. Panel members stressed that the final detailing will be critical to the success of this building and urged that the current design team continue through to completion. Alternatively, that high quality dealing is a condition of the development permit.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Busby expressed his appreciation to the Panel for the suggestions. He noted there has been considerable discussion about the use of the ground floor. With respect to sustainability, the building will be at least LEED certification standard but at this stage there is no firm commitment until further cost impact studies are undertaken.

4. Address:	1144 Richards Street
DE:	407957
Use:	Residential (6 storeys)
Zoning:	DD
Applicant Status:	Complete
Architect:	L. Doyle
Owner:	Townline Homes Inc.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Richard Henry, Rick Ilich, Robert Emslie, Dylan Chernoff
Staff:	Anita Molaro

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Development Planner, presented this application to develop a 50 ft. wide site on Richards Street opposite the new Downtown South park. The proposal is for a six-storey residential building containing four 2-storey units on the ground floor with two single storey units per floor on the upper four floors. The application seeks 3.0 FSR and the maximum height of 70 ft. Materials include painted concrete, stone veneer and metal panel.

The advice of the Panel is sought in the following areas:

- relationship to the neighbouring buildings on Richards Street at the corners;
 - application of building materials especially the front façade; and
 - the level of entry identification to the ground level units.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Richard Henry, Architect, briefly described the history of the site which is one of the few remaining undeveloped small lots in the Downtown peninsula. He briefly reviewed the design rationale, noting the building takes advantage of the new park across the street. Mr. Henry responded to the Panel's questions.
 - **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application and considered it a very handsome piece of architecture.

With respect to the building's relationship to its neighbours, the Panel strongly recommended bringing the building out to the street by a couple of feet. This could also allow room for a bench, although the Panel was not convinced that a bench is necessary. It was suggested that the guideline for a 10 ft. setback might be revisited for these smaller sites. It might also improve the project by allowing larger terraces at the rear, which would help to address safety issues in the lane. Alignment with the adjacent buildings was not recommended, the preference being for some kind of recess so that the building looks entirely separate from its neighbours.

The Panel supported the high quality materials but had some concerns about their application, especially the stone veneer which could look "appliqué" if not detailed carefully. Close attention should be given to proportions, the ratio of solid to glass, and the detailing at the change between the different materials.

The Panel did not believe that stairs to front entries of the townhouses were necessary. However, if they are a requirement then the entries themselves need to be strengthened. The preference was for larger outdoor patios, without stairs.

Other suggestions and comments included:

- opposition to tree grates in the sodded lawn;
- the two rear units need some kind of front entry identification as well (not just signage);
- suggest widening the stone clad walls beside the steps at the side so that they match the width of the podium frame;
- look for opportunities for increasing "eyes on the lane";
- it would be nice to have a rooftop space for all the residents, not just the penthouse units.

The Panel found this to be a charming infill project and hoped to see more like it.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Henry thanked the Panel for its comments which he said will be pursued.

5. Address:	2228 West Broadway
DE:	407977
Use:	Mixed (97 units)
Zoning:	C-3A
Applicant Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	Hancock Bruckner Eng & Wright
Owner:	665428 BC Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Jim Hancock, Jim McLean, Sheldon Chandler
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (3-4)

- **Introduction:** The Development Planner, Mary Beth Rondeau, presented this application to redevelop the former ICBC Claim Centre site on West Broadway at Vine Street. The proposal is for a London Drugs store on the ground floor (about 35,000 sq.ft.) as well as a smaller urban gourmet grocery store (22,000 sq.ft.). At the second level, facing West Broadway, about 20,000 sq.ft. is proposed for medical offices associated with London Drugs. The remainder of the development, up to the maximum permitted 3.0 FSR, is residential use. A small public open space plaza is proposed for the corner of Broadway and Vine. The applicant proposes sustainability features, including a green roof and storm water retention, to LEED silver standard. An art feature is also proposed for the Broadway frontage.

This proposal is proving to be very controversial in Kitsilano, as is the concurrent Home Depot inquiry at Broadway and Maple. The major concern expressed by the neighbours with respect to this site relates to traffic. This is being addressed by Engineering Services and traffic consultants and the issue is expected to be resolved. The neighbourhood is also concerned about the impact of the London Drugs use in this location but the residential use is generally supported.

This site is located at the westerly end of the C-3A zone which permits outright density of 1.0 FSR and 30 ft. height. The density may be increased to a maximum of 3.0 FSR, and the guidelines suggest a height of 55 ft. The application proposes a height of about 80 ft. at its highest point. There are already buildings above 55 ft. in the vicinity and staff believe a height of up to 65 - 70 ft. could be supported, depending on view and shadow impacts.

The Panel's advice on this preliminary submission is sought on the proposed height and massing, the retail treatment along Broadway and relationship with the sidewalk, and treatment and location of the open space.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Jim Hancock, Architect, briefly reviewed the project. He said a key issue is the height and he noted the proposal does not cause shadowing on the north side of Broadway. They have kept the higher massing towards the east end of the site, tapering down to the west end. He noted the programming for the two proposed retail uses is fairly inflexible and to make it work they need to overlap. However, there are some benefits because the grocery storey then has a direct connection to the adjacent underground parking, and the open plaza at the end provides an animated complement to the two-storey building across Vine Street. Mr. Hancock noted the London Drugs façade has considerable glazing and is reasonably transparent. While the grocery storey is slightly sunken there is grade level entry off Vine Street for disabled access. Another advantage of the below grade grocery store is that it offers greater visual permeability at the sidewalk level. The residential massing is basically in three clusters of about 150 ft. wide, with fairly

large recesses between so that they will read as three separate masses. Mr. Hancock added there is a considerable amount of green space included in the scheme.

Jim McLean, Developer, advised the program for the medical offices is not yet finalized at this stage but what is being considered is a new form of health and wellness centre including doctors' offices and some larger areas to accommodate fitness facilities and a clinic. It will not be strata titled as individual offices. Mr. McLean stressed that they are trying to provide goods and services for residents to be able to shop in their own neighbourhood.

The applicant team responded to the Panel's questions.

- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel did not support this submission. There was general support for the proposed mix of uses and the Panel indicated it believed the full 3.0 FSR could probably be achieved on this site.

General concerns were expressed about the length of the building and the need for it to be broken up, both at ground level and the residential component above. The very long corridors were considered unacceptable. Breaks in the corridor could be achieved by staggering the buildings. Several Panel members recommended exploring separate residential clusters with space between to offer some views through. At ground level, the 'big box' storefront was thought to be compromising the pedestrian realm. The Panel recommended inserting smaller CRUs in front of the London Drugs to provide animation on the street, maintaining the drug store entry on the street in a more subtle fashion. The Panel was confident there would be no problem with people identifying the London Drugs without being so obvious. It was stressed that signage will be very important and it will need to be integrated well within the overall project.

The Panel noted a significant disconnect between the residential portion and the commercial base which needs to be resolved. There were suggestions to bring the residential component out to the property line and perhaps bringing the residential down to grade in places.

The Panel had major concerns about the lane treatment, which it found 'brutal' and the high wall unacceptable. Resubmission materials should include analysis of development potential across the lane to ensure that neighbouring property is not jeopardized.

Other comments and suggestions included:

- care should be taken to properly integrate the art feature into the project;
- a more direct response to the small red building across Vine Street is recommended, possibly extending the open space along the full edge along Vine;
- design development is needed to the sunken plaza;
- the combination of uses is very positive but the distribution of the mass and treatment of the streetscape needs considerable design development;
- there are very few precedents for this kind of use engaging the street;
- greater consideration should be given to the nature of the medical office component;
- the intended retailers need to adapt to the neighbourhood they are in;
- Vine is an important street and some additional setbacks/open space might be appropriate;

- There appears to be an unused area in the centre of the underground parking that might be redistributed to achieve more lane width to help relieve traffic congestion.

The Panel stressed that this is a very important project in terms of the precedent it will set for future development in the area. Some Panel members questioned whether the somewhat convoluted arrangement for the retail tenancies is workable. The Panel generally thought the maximum density was achievable but that it needed to be handled in a more positive way to be earned. The Panel will look for greater evidence of earning the requested height and density at the next stage of development.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Hancock commented that the Panel has touched on every issue they have been struggling with.