

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: November 4, 1998

TIME: N/A

PLACE: N/A

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Joyce Drohan (Chair)
Patricia Campbell
Sheldon Chandler
Per Christoffersen
James Hancock (excused #2)
Peter Kreuk (excused #2)
Sean McEwan
Jim McLean
Norman Shearing (excused #2)
Peter Wreglesworth

REGRETS:
Per Christoffersen
Peter Kreuk

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:**
Georgia Dahle

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	C-2 Discussion
2.	301 Jervis Street

1. C-2 DiscussionStaff: S. Hein, R. Segal, T. French

Development Planner, Scot Hein, explained the intent of this C-2 discussion and the need to clarify the Panel's ongoing role with respect to the motion set forth by Council on June 2nd, 1998. As a consequence of the pending future study, additional advice is sought on the need for revisions in the C-2 zone. To date, eight projects have been reviewed by the Panel, focussing on the merit, benefits and site specific issues that each site faced. Detailed discussion took place regarding the specifics to the C-2 zone, in particular, the uses allowed in both the outright & conditional stream, height, FSR, and applicable aspects of the Design Guidelines.

Mr. Hein explained that staff were seeking advice from the Panel regarding the following:

- what defines good architectural quality and quality exterior materials;
- density, massing, and height;
- advice on building lines and encroachments;
- extent/intent of 'architectural language' in guidelines;
- advice on better livability;
- advice on use (home office/other); and
- neighbourhood specific or city-wide zoning.

Ms. French, Senior Planner, explained that the purpose of the discussion was to put C-2 in context and to clarify areas of concern. The history of C-2 was discussed, as well as the intent of the zone, and Council's goal of creating a livable community where a balance between commercial and residential use is achieved.

Comments from various Panel members included:

The need to acknowledge concerns raised by seniors living in C-2 zones regarding the lack of livability and balance. The need to provide both residential and commercial effectively has been voiced;

Serious financial constraints for producing viable C-2 developments given the current market situation;

Concern that the zone is not differentiating between proposals or the area context in which they are proposed. A need to properly address concerns for both residential and commercial was encouraged;

Providing continuity between lots is also very important, yet difficult. Consolidating 33 ft. lots in C-2 to make larger sites is extremely tedious and time consuming. The context needs to be included in the project review to make it more accurate;

One suggestion was made that the current regulations are set too indelibly with serious difficulties in providing effective and attractive buildings;

concern over the 40 ft. height requirements, limiting the type of floors permitted and what uses should be included in the buildings;

Ms. French explained that height restraints are subject to Building Code for combustible construction. Height relaxations are often granted for sloping sites, size of site, etc.

Ralph Segal, Development Planner, stated that granting height relaxations used to be a matter of course, but since Council introduced its motions, Planning has had to look more closely to the justification for height relaxations.

Ms. French observed that Council viewed the need for change quite seriously. They received many complaints regarding the C-2 zone, enabling them to justify the current review.

The City should encourage a variety of housing uses, to find the balance between commercial, retail and residential;

Marketing problems not limited to C-2 projects. The west side of Vancouver is limited in providing big box retailers and hotels in C-2;

creating a city-wide advisory group is scheduled for the C-2 rethink, allowing more people to take part.

Ms. French noted the importance of discussing design quality issues. Nothing in the guidelines discusses promoting 'good' design. Reducing the number of ugly projects in the city is possible, but would force the Panel to review more projects. The Panel affirmed that review by the UDP through this transition period for C-2 zoning would be valuable

2. **Address: 301 Jervis Street**
DA: 403667
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Preliminary
Architect: James Cheng Architect
Owner: Hillsboro Investment Ltd.
Review: First
Delegation: J. Cheng, J. Lee, C. Phillips
Staff: M. Kemble

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)**Introduction:**

Mike Kemble, Development Planner, presented this preliminary application. This uniquely shaped Coal Harbour site is surrounded by public open space on all four sides. Two major parks, a waterfront walkway, and a pedestrian walkway along Jervis Street abut it. Mr. Kemble briefly described the site context, the proposed surrounding buildings, and the severe grade slope that affects this development. Both the Coal Harbour ODP and CD-1 Guidelines are applicable to the site. Several key guidelines relating to the location of the tower, the street end view corridors, and maintaining a tower orientation to the downtown grid were reviewed.

Mr. Kemble described the proposal for this 29-storey residential tower, including the discretionary 10% increase for height that is being sought. The residential component includes 112-units with a three level podium base, and seven townhouse units on the ground and second floors of the podium. Commercial uses are required by the guidelines, but the applicant has chosen to forego commercial use and replace it with the townhouses. As commercial use is not included, the applicant has not utilized the 10,000 sq. ft. allocated for commercial space. 13,000 sq. ft. of amenity space has been proposed for the first, second and third floors of the podium base. Landscape provisions are included in the proposal, as well as extensive retaining walls to the north and south sides of the tower, providing the support needed for the sloping grade. The advice of the Panel is sought in the following areas:

- the grade level use along the waterfront edge;
- the grade level relationship to the very public edges of the site;
- the treatment of the vehicular area shown on the east side of the site;
- the residential townhouses and providing entrances from the walkway;
- the tower configuration and massing, and whether it should provide a more asymmetrical floorplate and form;
- the scale of the top of the tower; and
- landscape design with respect to the public space.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

James Cheng, Architect, concurred with staff's comments regarding the site, and its image as an orphan site versus a hinged site. Commercial use was not placed at grade level of the podium as the site is landlocked by public open space, and it would be difficult to lease out the units. Mr. Cheng explained that the creation of the pedestrian access from the site to the park would be beneficial for the area. Additional planting of landscaping was also proposed for the area, which will act as the emergency vehicle entrance as well. Access to the park and the surrounding walkways was discussed, and that by paving the eastern portion of the site's vehicular entry court, it would enable the fire department to access the open space surrounding the building.

Mr. Cheng clarified that the mechanical room on the main floor as indicated by Mr. Kemble was actually partially underground, and that the retaining wall mentioned had been initially proposed

by Richard Henriquez for the adjacent park space. The retaining walls are in fact acting as guard rails, at 42" high. A future consideration is to add planting to the walls, thereby reducing the unattractive view to potential buyers. Providing external entrances to the townhouses has also been considered by the applicant, but problems have been encountered with Canada Post in obtaining the necessary addressing. Creating a more asymmetrical building has also been a consideration.

Chris Phillips, Landscape Architect, briefly explained the challenges of the site in providing a balance between public and private realms while attempting to resolve the retaining wall/grade support challenge created by the location of the site.

Mr. Cheng explained that the purpose of the autocourt was to provide the necessary fire truck emergency access for the public walkways. Along with the paving of the autocourt was included an emergency service agreement for the park and building.

Panels Comments

After reviewing the model and posted drawings, the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this preliminary application with general support for the tower's slimness and proportion to the site.

Mixed views were offered for the orthogonal grid, as some members suggested that the twist to the grid might be subtly expressed while maintaining the current orientation of the building. Other members believed that the tower should not be compromised against the other surrounding sites along Cordova Street. The Panel strongly supported the height of the tower, and many recommended that additional height be granted to strengthen the street end view. The Panel suggested that the imposing angled element at the top of the tower needs considerable refinement. A strong level of discomfort was felt for the relationship of the tower to the other buildings to the east of the site and towards the shoreline crescent. The applicant was strongly encouraged to give careful consideration to the treatment of the west facade, recognizing its unique relationship to the curved esplanade and finding subtle ways of expressing it.

The townhouse proposal at grade was seen as a preferred use versus the commercial required by the guidelines, although live/work arrangements could be possible too. The placement of the townhouses received mixed support from the Panel. Several members suggested that the townhouses be redistributed to better integrate with the adjacent public spaces. For example, it was suggested that the terrace to the north be reduced to create a stronger townhouse expression addressing the adjacent park. The retaining walls and abrupt grade transition to the north were seen as uncomfortable, with suggestions of also wrapping the townhouses around to the north for park overlook. This would also alleviate the "orphan" character of the single townhouse at the northeast corner of the scheme. The Panel strongly felt that the south facade was a missed opportunity where integration of the open park space with the townhouses would have mutual benefits for both.

The Panel was strongly concerned with the vehicular access and its awkward relationship with the pedestrian walkway. It was suggested that both be reviewed closely along with the adjacent open space and that a concept plan for the entire Jervis street-end treatment be brought back at the complete stage. Several members suggested that more emphasis should be given to the entrance of the autocourt and the pedestrian walkway, creating a stronger physical connection between them at that point. Some members expressed concern with the proposed gated entrance, preferring a more open, public approach.