

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** November 8, 2006

**TIME:** 4.00 pm

**PLACE:** Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Walter Francl, Chair  
Nigel Baldwin  
Albert Bicol (Item #1 only)  
Shahla Bozorgzadeh (Item #1, 2, and 3)  
James Cheng  
Eileen Keenan  
Margot Long  
Bill Harrison  
John Wall  
Peter Wreglesworth  
C.C. Yao

**REGRETS:** Tom Bunting

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	5429 & 5439 Willow Street
2.	1177 W Pender/1180 W Hastings Street
3.	999 Seymour Street
4.	718 Main Street

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**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Francl called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. The meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 5429 & 5439 Willow Street  
DE: RZ  
Use: 10 Townhouse units  
Zoning: RS-1 to CD-1  
Application Status: Rezoning  
Architect: Stuart Howard Architect Inc.  
Review: First  
Delegation: Stuart Howard, Tim Castle, David Gompenoff, Senga Lindsay  
Staff: Dale Morgan/Abigail Riley

**EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (1-7)**

- **Introduction:** Abigail Riley, Rezoning Planner provided an introduction to the rezoning application from RS-1 to CD-1 to permit the building of ten townhouse units for two lots located at 5429 and 5439 Willow Street which is located in the Oakridge/Langara area.

Dale Morgan, Development Planner described the site and context referring to the models and presentation boards. Mr. Morgan noted that the applicant is proposing a height of 35 feet and a density of 1.0 FSR. Mr. Morgan took questions from the Panel.

- **Development Planner's Summary:** Mr. Morgan noted the following areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought:
  - The proposed use is multi unit ground level dwelling units at a density of 1.0 FSR and a height of 35 feet. Does the Panel support the proposed use, density and height?
  - A more detail question on massing and height is requested as it affects the liveability of the neighbouring properties. Should the end units, adjacent to the neighbouring rear yards, be lower and or with a greater side yard setback? Should the rear units be consolidated into one building mass to lower massing at the side yard? Has overlook into neighbouring yards been adequately addressed?
  - Comments are requested on the shared integration of parking and open pedestrian space, noting parking density at 1 stall/dwelling unit. Has the shared uses been sensitively handled?
  - General comments on the architectural expression are requested.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Stuart Howard, Architect described the design rationale and history of the site. He noted that they have designed a row townhouse development with single car parking on the ground floor of each unit. Senga Lindsay, Landscape Architect discussed the landscape plans for the development stating that the landscaping will be modern with contemporary elements. The treatment will be garden like and the paving material will have concrete banding and inset pavers with plantings to soften the courtyard so it is not just for cars. The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Concern about the shared integration of parking and open pedestrian space in the courtyard;
  - Concern about the lack of private and semi private outdoor amenity space; and
  - Neighbourliness to adjacent single family residential
  - Design development to reduce the apparent density and height of the project.

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

The Panel felt the project would not fit well into the neighbourhood and were concerned about the density and the height of the units especially the ones on the lane. One member of the Panel suggested bridging over the driveways to redistribute the massing of the end units to enable a more neighbourly interface. The Panel had concerns about the courtyard and felt it was difficult for cars to turn around. Several members had concern with the combined vehicle and pedestrian functions of the courtyard. Another Panel member suggested changing the rear units to coach houses with shallower depths to keep the same amount of density, with all parking accessed directly off the lane. Several members felt that it was challenging to get the 1 FSR and suggested that the applicant may want to use underground parking

Some of the Panel felt the relationship to the neighbours didn't work as well as the existing townhouse scheme on Willow Street, which seemed to better handle the transition in scale from the neighbours. The Panel liked the design of the units, colour and choice of material and felt they were very liveable. They were concerned about the lack of private amenity space and suggested adding roof decks or making the balconies more generous. The Panel also felt the chimney element on the street was too dominant.

The Panel liked the landscape concept, noting that it seemed to be very liveable. One member of the Panel suggested using permeable pavement in the courtyard.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Howard thanked the Panel for their comments noting that this was a unique project. He stated that they designed a project that reduces the dependence on cars and added that he felt it would be a mistake to do underground parking on this site. He noted that the new RAV line will have a station at Oakridge which is four block away from this development.

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2. Address:	1177 W Pender/1180 W Hastings Street
DE:	410598
Use:	19-storey hotel with 220 rooms
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Downs Archambault
Owner:	Hayden Properties Partnership
Review:	Second (1 <sup>st</sup> review September 27, 2006)
Delegation:	Mark Ehmann, Shuhachi Naito and Graeme G. Barrit of Coast Hotels
Staff:	Ralph Segal/Sailen Black

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)**

- **Introduction:** Sailen Black, Development Planner introduced this application and briefly reviewed the Panels concerns from the last visit and the changes the applicant made to the project. This application is for a nineteen storey hotel with 220 rooms located mid block on Pender Street.

The Panel's advice was sought on the following:

- Choice of building materials
- Massing of the penthouse
- Systemic orientation of the units
- Articulation of the podium sidewalls
- Desire to lighten the building base on the Hastings Street side

Ralph Segal, Senior Development Planner also noted that there were concerns on the porte-cochere.

Mr. Black and Mr. Segal took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Mark Ehmann, Architect briefly outlined the changes since the last meeting with the Panel and stated that the applicant team took the Panels concerns to heart and addressed them in detail. Mr. Ehmann noted that the design of the building had certain restrictions due to the hotel program with the requirement of having sixteen guest rooms per floor. The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

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

The Panel had no substantial concerns with this proposal.

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

The Panel congratulated the applicant for taking the Panel's previous comments to heart and they felt the building was much improved. The Panel liked the change in material from the painted concrete to metal and noted that the material and colour palette of the building had improved.

The Panel agreed that it was a more refined building and appreciated having the model with the adjacent Shorehill building, enabling them to see the relationship between the two buildings.

Some of the Panel felt the project was still a bit over articulated. The Panel appreciated the change from the concrete to metal panelling as they felt the concrete was too stark

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against the glass. A couple of members of the Panel felt the ballroom elevation looked a little heavy and another member of the Panel suggested removing the heavy band of metal. One member of the Panel suggested removing the cornice around the screen on the mechanical penthouse to help with the scale of the building. One Panel member felt the skin of the tower needed to be regularized a bit to make the project better in terms of the tower form.

One member felt there was too much bulk on the one side under the swimming pool where there's a meeting room and needs some work on the swimming pool terrace and its associated change rooms. It was suggested that with a tiny change to the meeting room below there could be an equivalent set back the same as the west side.

The Panel felt the public realm on Hastings Street and the entry to the porte-cochere was improved and one member commented that the stone was a nice improvement. Several members of the Panel felt that the new Pender Street elevation was more successful in its transition to the adjoining streetscape.

Several members of the Panel were disappointed that trees were being removed from the street and suggested the applicant approach the Engineering Department at the City to suggest keeping the trees. One member of the Panel suggested additional planting along the property line sidewalk where the building steps back.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the Panel for their comments.

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3. Address: 999 Seymour Street  
DE: Rezoning  
Use: 21-storey mixed use project  
Zoning: DD to CD-1  
Application Status: Complete  
Architect: Acton Ostry Architect  
Review: First  
Delegation: Mark Ostry, Paul Williams, Peter Kreuk  
Staff: Francisco Molina/Phil Mondor/Ralph Segal
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#### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-2)

- **Introduction:** Francisco Molina, Development Planner introduced the application and gave a brief overview of the context and background of the rezoning application. The proposed development is located at the north west corner of Seymour and Nelson Streets. The application is to change the zoning from DD to CD-1 to allow for a residential density of 7.66 FSR.

The application seeks retail and commercial on the first through fifth floors with sixteen floors of residential included in the twenty-one storey building. Five levels of underground parking are also planned.

Referring to the model, Mr. Molina described the relationship to other sites on the street.

Mr. Molina noted the following areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought:

- Has the proposal earned and successfully incorporated the additional density being sought on this site?
- Does the overall massing and tower architectural expression adequately respond to its mostly residential urban context?
- Does the combination of deep decks and full height louvers (climate control) on the south side justify the impact on the Nelson Street urban design objectives related to buildings setback?
- Comments on relationship between mass of commercial podium and abutting podium/deck of The Spot, along Seymour Street and at the lane.

Mr. Molina and Mr. Segal, Senior Development Planner took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Mark Ostry, Architect described the design rationale and use of materials planned for the development. Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect gave a brief overview for the landscape plan. The applicant team took questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Mixed opinions as to whether the requested density is earned;
  - Concern with the relationship to The Spot;
  - Concern about the light penetration into the commercial spaces; and
  - Concern about the liveability and sustainability of the residential units.

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

The Panel was generally encouraged by the rational clarity of the building parti and its direct expression of a sustainable building strategy, particularly the southern balcony sunscreens. There were mixed opinions as to whether the requested density was earned, and the Panel had concerns about design development of the building, should a different architect take over the project.

The Panel agreed that this was a challenging site and that a key factor to its success would be its relation to The Spot, next door. The Panel Members generally felt that the building elevations were exciting and showed promise but that some of the contextual information illustrating the developments impact on adjoining sites was insufficiently presented. Several Panel Members felt that the relationship to The Spot building may prove problematic, particularly at the podium level.

The Panel had some concerns about the light penetration in the commercial spaces on levels three, four and five. They felt the shallow light-well on the east property line could be better proportioned to allow more light into the units. The interior residential units all have bedrooms without direct access to exterior windows and while they are well designed for this unit type and faced south, the Panel has a concern with the proliferation of interior bedrooms in many of the new developments being reviewed. There was some concern that while the balconies provided good solar control for the south-western exposure, the south-east and north-west exposures were completely glazed and unprotected.

There were some concerns with the streetscape on the corner of Nelson and Seymour Streets and some Panel Members felt there needed to be a higher level of finish for the public realm at this prominent corner. The Panel was positive about the entire floor given over to amenity space and thought it was a great indoor/outdoor space. Several Panel Members had some concerns about functional aspects of the residential and commercial entries and felt they needed further development.

One Panel member would like to see public art incorporated into the building.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Ostry thanked the panel for their comments and noted that the commercial space facing the interior property line has access to daylight.

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4. Address:	718 Main Street
DE:	410755
Use:	9-storey mixed use commercial/residential
Zoning:	Ha-1A
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	GBL Architects
Owner:	Port Development (Main) Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Tom Bell, David Porte, Grant Gibson, David Mitchell
Staff:	Francisco Molina/Allison Higginson

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-2)**

- **Introduction:** Francisco Molina, Development Planner introduced this application for a mixed used development with commercial at the street level and residential above. Located at the south east corner in Chinatown with HA-1A zoning where there is no density limitation. The development will contain studios, studios plus den, one bedroom and one bedroom plus den units. There will be eleven two bedroom units proposed on the upper level. Referring to the context boards and the model for the site, Mr. Molina noted that the heritage hotel is to be renovated and will be part of a separate application.
- **Development Planner's Summary:** Mr. Molina noted the following areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought:
  - Does the massing treatment and overall urban design quality of the proposal support the requested additional height up to 90 ft?
  - Does the Main Street elevation relates to the basic proportions, appearance of heritage buildings in Chinatown, including vertical elements, windows and recessed balconies?
  - Comment on treatment and presence of the upper massing to define its secondary role in the proposed scheme.
  - Comment on treatment of the north and south facades.
  - Relationships along Main Street frontage between the proposed building and the Heritage hotel building.

Mr. Molina took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Tom Bell, Architect explained the design rationale and described the development in further detail. David Mitchell, Landscape architect discussed the landscape plans and noted the green roof and the various planting details. The applicant team took questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

Return the brick from the Main street façade onto the north façade. Add windows to this façade where possible. The south façade should requires further articulation of the massing and additional architectural detailing derived from the language of the Main street elevations. The most visible penthouse levels of this elevation should receive particular attention. The heritage references of the Main street elevation should more strongly reference the adjoining heritage buildings in the detailing and cornice alignment.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported this application and liked the idea of having the colours and materials proposed for the project. They felt this was a good project for Chinatown.



The Panel agreed that that the massing and overall design quality supported the request for the additional height and felt that in general the project responded well to the guidelines.

The Panel had mixed opinions as to the contextual relationship of the Main Street elevation stating that they were surprised that the architect had taken his clues from the Hydro Sub Station across the street. The neighbouring heritage buildings were felt to be a better source for contextual reference.

A couple of Panel members had some concerns regarding the height and articulation on the top two floors especially on the east façade and suggested a small set back would help to relieve the massing on the south elevation. Materials from the Main street façade should be brought around to this building face.

Several members of the Panel felt the relationship of the north façade over the heritage needed some work and one Panel member suggested adding windows. The Panel felt the north and south facades needed to show a stronger relationship with the west and east facades.

The Panel felt there were too many interior bedrooms. The units should be given as much access to natural light as possible.

One Panel member felt the landscaping was a bit too elaborate and needed to be simplified. The Panel felt the green roof was a good addition but suggested making sure access was provided to maintain it. One Panel member also felt that the landscaping in the lane needed additional work, particularly given the heavy use of the lanes in Chinatown.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bell thanked the Panel for their comments and noted that the north façade is a challenge but agreed that the upper part of the south façade did need to be refined.