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URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

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**DATE:** October 17, 2001

**TIME:** 4.00 p.m.

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Tom Bunting, Chair  
Jeffrey Corbett  
Lance Berelowitz (present for Items 1 and 2 only)  
Gerry Eckford  
Alan Endall  
Walter Francl  
Bruce Hemstock (excused Item 1)  
Jack Lutsky (present for Items 1 - 3 only)  
Maurice Pez (present for Item 1 only)  
Sorin Tatomir

**REGRETS:** Richard Henry  
Joseph Hruda

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	551 Beach Crescent (Tower 1M)
2.	596 East Hastings Street
3.	4175 West 29th Avenue (St. George's School)
4.	2048 West 41st Avenue

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1. Address:	551 Beach Crescent (Tower 1M)
DA:	406178
Use:	Residential (29 storeys)
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Hulbert Group
Owner:	Concord Pacific Group Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Fred Roman, Don Gurney, Bruce Hemstock
Staff:	Ralph Segal

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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Senior Development Planner, presented this complete application in the Beach Neighbourhood, being the mirror to tower 1D on the east side of Richards Street. A general review of the project took place around the model. Mr. Segal noted there have been some very subtle changes to the tower on which the comments of the Panel are sought. He explained that if these changes are considered to be an acceptable solution, the applicant will be seeking a Minor Amendment to Tower 1D. Staff have no substantive issues on the proposal.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Don Gurney, Hulbert Group, briefly described the design rationale and responded to the Panel's questions. The landscape architect, Bruce Hemstock, responded to questions about the landscape plan.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application and was generally very complimentary about this submission and the whole Beach Neighbourhood.

With respect to the variations from Tower 1D, the Panel agreed the changes were very subtle. Some Panel members thought the differences were too minor to be of significance; others favoured the tower being as identical as possible to 1D and saw no reason not to complete the pair. Given the subtlety of the differences, several Panel members suggested the interior floor plan should determine which way to go and to make it work as best as possible for the residents of the building. There was no strong preference for one tower design over the other. One comment in support of the changes was that the greater simplicity of the vertical element plays off the other forms in the building.

A suggestion was made to take another look at providing access to the roof decks. It would increase the livability of the units and improve the overlook. It was also suggested there may be a way of integrating the curve of the buildings into the roof patterning.

A recommendation was made by one Panel member not to mirror the slab projections on the brick facade facing the crescent and to remove them from Tower 1D as well.

Finally, a comment was made that it is rare for the Panel to see real urban design as opposed to just architecture. The Beach Neighbourhood has been composed in a very deliberate and ordered way and everyone involved is to be commended.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant confirmed it is their intention to seek a Minor Amendment on the first tower so that they are as near to identical as possible.
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2. Address:	596 East Hastings Street
DA:	406180
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	DEOD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Gomberoff Bell Lyon Architects Group Inc.
Owner:	Austeville Properties Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Tom Bell, Pat Campbell
Staff:	Scot Hein

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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Development Planner, presented this application for a social housing project for low income seniors in the DEOD zone. He briefly reviewed the surrounding development and zoning context. The zoning permits 3.0 FSR and 98 ft., the proposal is for 2.8 FSR and 43 ft.

The proposed 4-storey building has commercial and office uses fronting Hastings Street and 89 bachelor units above with 8 units at grade fronting Princess Street. The residential lobby is accessed from the Hastings/Princess corner and parking and loading are off the lane. The proposal has a commercial expression for the ground floor along Hastings Street and a punched window expression for the residential uses. Brick veneer with precast sills are proposed for the lower three storeys, and hardi-plank for the fourth. Ceramic tile is proposed for the corner element.

The Panel's advice is sought on the proposed architectural expression and quality, including its contextual response. Specific advice is sought on the transition and detailing from the third to fourth floors, as well as the general landscape quality of the second storey roof deck.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Tom Bell, Architect, noted the building is an expression of the narrow module widths of the 89 residential units, with a double loaded corridor in an L-shaped plan. He briefly reviewed the proposal and Patricia Campbell, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plan.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application.

Some Panel members saw no problem with the transition between the third and fourth floors. But most thought it called for a stronger transition, to avoid the appearance that the developer ran out of brick at the top of the building. A suggestion was made to consider changing the scale of the windows or adding some other different detail on the fourth floor. There were a number of suggestions to change the colour of the fourth floor, to make it less dissimilar to the rest of the building.

The Panel liked the simple landscape treatment and supported the plan for future programming by the residents. There was a suggestion to consider adding larger shade trees on the lane edge to obscure overlook from across the lane. Other comments were to make sure the trees do shade the benches, and to consider seating clusters rather than a row of benches, to encourage social interaction.

A number of concerns were expressed about whether the corner element is an appropriate architectural response. Its shape may also be unduly affecting the corner units. As well, the materials that will have to be used to achieve this form may not be best in this location, noting that tile does not wear well. The Panel also thought the corner column was very problematic with the round shape of the corner element.

One Panel member suggested it was a missed opportunity, notwithstanding this is a difficult part of the city, not to create french balconies for the residential units. Another member also thought the residential units need to appear to be more "grounded" to Princess Street, possibly also moving the stairs in the lobby to achieve greater grounding.

In general, the Panel found the proposal to be quite well handled as a straightforward, background building.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bell thanked the Panel for the excellent comments which will be very helpful.

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3. Address: 4175 West 29th Avenue (St. George's School)  
DA: 406100  
Use: School  
Zoning: RS-5  
Application Status: Preliminary  
Architect: DGBK  
Owner: St. George's School  
Review: First  
Delegation: Chuck Brook, Sebastian Butler, Peter Kreuk  
Staff: Scot Hein
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#### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- **Introduction:** Scot Hein, Development Planner, presented this preliminary application for a master plan and alterations to St. George's school. He briefly reviewed the history of the site. The intent is to lock in a master plan to guide future development, noting that a number of somewhat unrelated minor improvements and alterations have been carried out over the past five years. The plan calls for three phases of development over 5 - 15 years. The option presented under this application was arrived at after a detailed long-range programming exercise and a rather involved community consultation process. RS-5 zoning allows the school use as a conditional approval, noting St. George's had occupied the site since 1964. Mr. Hein briefly reviewed the site context and noted the RS-5 zoning is written specifically for single family and becomes more punitive the larger the site.

Following a brief review of the proposed phases of development, Sebastian Butler, Architect, described the planning process. Chuck Brook then described the public consultation process, noting a major public information meeting is scheduled for October 25, 2001.

The Development Planner highlighted the following areas in which the specific advice of the Panel is sought:

- general comments on the siting of the new addition and the proposed height and massing with respect to the existing building;
- general advice on the proposed architectural expression noting existing quality inherent in the original building as well as recent additions. Appropriateness of proposed form, materials and related detailing;
- general approach to landscaping including how the exterior functions have been planned on the site. Comments on site circulation patterns, proposed planting adjacent to buildings and landscape screening, where appropriate, are also requested;
- the siting and expression of the proposed maintenance/studio duplex building - whether it should have a stand-alone residential appearance or take on more of an ancillary expression.

Peter Kreuk, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plan.

- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application. It was acknowledged to be a very challenging project, and the basic principles of the master plan were considered to be
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appropriate. The Panel felt this site could take what is being proposed and there was general agreement on the appropriateness of the scale, massing and siting of the project given neighbourhood concerns.

With respect to circulation on the site, the Panel found the entry and treatment of the existing buildings in general to be a reasonable response. Filling in the courtyard and creating more interior oriented spaces was strongly supported. The addition and relocation of the tennis courts also makes sense. There was a suggestion to consider roof decks.

The Panel noted both challenges and opportunities in the general architecture and landscape of the site. There is a lot of opportunity to use the character of the architecture and the landscape to further unify the site and, given this is a preliminary design, the project still has a long way to go in creating exterior spaces that both help buffer the neighbourhood and provide exterior social opportunities. Panel members did not support bringing elements of the junior school onto this site. Rather, it was thought it should take on its own character, building on what already exists, e.g., the battered concrete walls. It was felt there is an opportunity for the landscaping to address some of the outdoor activity requirements and foster a positive educational feel for the students, e.g. perhaps the secondary entrance to the school and the existing parking could be flipped in order to create some courtyard space.

There were some concerns expressed about phase three and its impact on the clerestory space of the library which is a significant emblem of the school, specifically that the phase three elements might diminish the significance of the older building and begin to conceal it too much. In general, it was thought there needed to be much more unification of the architectural elements, notwithstanding the programmatic requirements of the school's interior. There should be some common elements - perhaps a family of roof forms or some common vocabulary to tie the pieces together. Likewise with the landscaping where it was felt there is an opportunity to organize elements to help connect the large and sometimes disparate areas of the site. For example, the edges of the site could be drawn together to create a vernacular edge condition using the existing trees.

With respect to the maintenance building, the Panel felt strongly that its character should reflect its connection to the school. There were no problems with its location, although it need not necessarily be on the same grid as the neighbouring houses. The Panel did not support it taking on the character of the residential buildings but stressed that it should take on the nature of the architecture of the school, both architecturally and in the landscaping.

In general, the Panel was comfortable with the way this project is proceeding and noted that every effort has been made to make the addition as compact and unobtrusive as possible given a lot of program is being added.

Finally, there was a comment that more contextual information would have been helpful, e.g., a large scale aerial.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Butler thanked the Panel for its comments, adding that, being a preliminary proposal, they are very valid. They hope to work on all the issues as they move forward.

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4. Address:	2048 West 41st Avenue
DA:	406162
Use:	Mixed (3 storeys)
Zoning:	C-2
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Vladimir Cervenka
Owner:	Mei-In Chan
Review:	First
Delegation:	Vladimir Cervenka, Raffaele Funaro
Staff:	Anita Molaro

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#### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-1)

- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Development Planner, presented this complete application for a mixed-use project in the C-2 zone. The 33 ft. site is located mid-block, adjacent to the pedestrian mews that connects 41st and 42nd Avenue. The application proposes retail at grade, office on the second floor and residential on the third floor. The applicant did pursue discussions with the adjacent owner in an attempt to take advantage of parking access; however, these negotiations were not successful. Proposed materials include painted concrete on the two side elevations, with green glass on the front and rear elevations.

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

- relationship of the proposal to the pedestrian mews;
  - the massing response;
  - party wall condition at the rear;
  - material and articulation;
  - landscape treatment; and
  - overall materials and response to the West 41st Avenue streetscape.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Vladimir Cervenka, Architect, briefly described the proposal and the design rationale and responded to the Panel's questions.
  - **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application, although there were suggestions that it could be developed further.

With respect to the pedestrian mews, the Panel agreed it is difficult to address when the neighbour is unwilling to negotiate and perhaps little more can be done than provide an attractive wall. Some Panel members, however, thought more could be done to create a better relationship between this project and the mews in order to improve the pedestrian experience. Suggestions included trellises and more articulated architecture.

The Panel generally liked the massing of the project and the majority of Panel members had no problem with the materials. There was one suggestion to warm up the colour somewhat. The majority of Panel members found the modernist response to the area to be quite appropriate. It was stressed, however, that the success of the glass curtainwall will depend heavily on how it is executed - it has to be very carefully done and nicely articulated. The majority of Panel members considered the streetscape response to be appropriate.

With respect to the rear party wall, there were some comments that not enough had been done although others thought the textured concrete painted wall was appropriate.

Some Panel members thought more could have been done with the landscaping. Even though it is a private courtyard, it is so unprogrammed there was a concern that it might remain that way, and it might benefit the tenants if a little more is done. One suggestion was to provide some kind of small water feature to add some interest. Some Panel members also strongly recommended providing a roof deck.

The Panel agreed it was unfortunate the project needs to provide the loading bay. However, it was suggested its impact could be softened if the area is designed as an open plaza with the loading bay marked on the site plan so that as much open space as possible is provided as an amenity to the people in the building.

In general, the Panel found the project to be very well handled.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Cervenka said they intend to use US aluminum which they believe will make or break the building. He thank the Panel for its comments.