
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: October 2, 2002

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Walter Francl, Chair
Helen Besharat
Jeffrey Corbett
Kim Perry
Maurice Pez
Richard Henry
Reena Lazar
Sorin Tatomir
Ken Terriss

REGRETS: Gerry Eckford
Joseph Hruda
Stuart Lyon

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. 977 West 22nd Avenue
2. 2780 Alma Street

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- | | |
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| 1. Address: | 977 West 22nd Avenue |
| DA: | 406967 |
| Use: | Mixed (4 storeys) |
| Zoning: | C-2 |
| Application Status: | Complete |
| Architect: | Gomberoff Bell Lyon |
| Owner: | Barrie Lunoch |
| Review: | First |
| Delegation: | Tom Bell, Damon Oriente |
| Staff: | Anita Molaro |
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EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Development Planner, presented this application for a mixed commercial/ residential development at the corner of Oak Street and 22nd Avenue, in the C-2 zone. The proposal is for 42 residential units above a commercial base. Ms. Molaro briefly reviewed the site context. The application seeks a height relaxation up to 45 ft. in various locations. It was noted the site has a cross slope of over 15 ft.

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

- height relaxation, given the context, shadowing and view impacts;
- relationship of the massing to the adjacent RS-5 zone which has a height limit of 35 ft.;
- relationship of the massing to the neighbouring C-2 development;
- architectural quality and proposed materials.

In accordance with current Council policy with respect to this zone, the height relaxation requires a report to Council.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Tom Bell, Architect, described the project. Materials are painted concrete and cementitious siding at the base, brick frames on the second and third floors and glazing/aluminum above. It is a simple, contemporary wood frame building, rectilinear in form. The upper glazed part of the building is set back 1.5 ft. from the property line. The rear of the building is stepped back in accordance with the setback requirements. Damon Oriente briefly described the landscape plan.
- **Panel's Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application.

The Panel found it a handsome, modern building, well suited to its location. It was considered to be a good solution for C-2. There were no concerns about the relationship to the adjacent RS-5 and C-2 zones. The floor plans are very well resolved.

The height relaxation was strongly supported.

The Oak Street elevation was seen as the most successful. One comment was that the side elevations look like a different building, lacking the clarity of the Oak Street elevation.

The Panel stressed the need for improved detailing, particularly at ground level on Oak Street. Some Panel members questioned having the painted concrete at the base where it has the greatest visual

impact, and the brick at the top. There were suggestions to bring the brick down to cover some of the concrete which would make it more successful at the pedestrian level. In general, the Panel found the building somewhat austere, and suggested that the level of detail that has been applied to the upper areas is lacking on the large concrete areas. The integration of reveals, lighting and details into the concrete was strongly recommended. Another recommendation was to consider recessed doors to the ground floor commercial units to improve animation.

Some Panel members thought the transition between the brick and cementitious material could be improved by making a stronger differentiation between the two materials.

Attention should be given to proportions, particularly the size of the windows, e.g., at the corner of the Oak Street elevation the reduction in window size appears to be accidental.

One Panel member suggested the stairs would be much more successful with the introduction of natural light.

One Panel member found the glazed corner at Oak and 22nd an unsuccessful corner gesture.

One Panel member thought the columns, especially in the centre, were too weak, making it appear as though the glazed canopy is supporting the brick above. With respect to the canopy, it was suggested it might be better if it were fractured rather than attempting one clear span which might be difficult to achieve successfully.

With respect to the units at the lane, some Panel members questioned their lack of direct access at grade, which was seen as a missed opportunity, both for the convenience of the residents of the units and for the neighbours who would also benefit from greater animation in the lane.

A recommendation was made to treat the windows in such a way as to avoid direct overlook onto neighbouring patios.

The landscape plan was supported, however, it was thought to be a lost opportunity not to do more with the upper terraces, particularly the one on concrete. It was suggested the unit could be marketed in a way that allows the initial purchaser the choice of how it is treated. There was also a recommendation to consider landscaping the gap between this building and the property to the north on Oak Street.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bell said all the Panel's comments were very constructive, which gives him a lot of direction and will help with the design development as the project proceeds.

2. Address:	2780 Alma Street
DA:	406948
Use:	Residential (4 storeys, 20 units)
Zoning:	C-2
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Rositch Hemphill & Assoc.
Owner:	Eric Fefer
Review:	First
Delegation:	Bryce Rositch, Wendy Armstrong
Staff:	Anita Molaro

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-2)

- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Development Planner, presented this application for an all-residential building in the C-2 zone. The site is located at the corner of 12th Avenue and Alma Street, across the street from Almond Park. Neighbouring context is RS-1, with an adjacent all-residential C-2 development and another C-2 zoned site currently containing two small scale duplex and single family houses. The Planning Department supports all-residential development on this site given its immediate context. The proposal is for a U-shaped development with a courtyard providing access to most of the units. The courtyard is 26 ft. wide at the entry, expanding to 30 ft. Most of the units have secondary spaces oriented to the courtyard and primary living spaces oriented externally.

The Panel's advice is sought on the following:

- massing arrangement, particularly in relationship to the neighbouring existing residential (likely to become a 4-storey C-2 development);
 - courtyard design, including entry sequence into the courtyard and location of the elevator;
 - architectural quality;
 - choice and use of materials;
 - massing relationship at the lane;
 - setbacks.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Bryce Rositch, Architect, briefly described the project, which has a small scale character with each unit having its own front door. He reviewed the design rationale and Wendy Armstrong briefly described the landscape plan.
 - **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application.

An all-residential solution for this site was supported. The Panel liked the ground orientation of the suites and that they have their own front doors. This will be an asset to the neighbourhood.

Several Panel members commented on the architectural style. While it was not strongly endorsed, it was thought it could be marketed successfully. The building appears somewhat massive on this site and it was recommended that every effort be made to tone it down given the amount of elaborate detailing which may detract from the overall scheme. The large expanse of dark, asphalt shingles on the mansard roofs was a concern to some Panel members and one Panel member questioned the roof's proportions.

There were a lot of comments about the courtyard. Some Panel members found the small courtyard created unacceptable privacy problems, although the majority found it satisfactory given there are no primary living spaces facing onto it. The elevator in its current location was considered to be a big imposition on the small courtyard. Suggestions included integrating it into some of the building mass or making it more open and glazed.

Serious concerns were expressed about the close proximity of this building to the neighbouring property to the east. Some Panel members found it a very insensitive imposition on the neighbour and were unable to support the project for this reason. However, the majority of Panel members found the 4 ft. separation acceptable given the existing conditions. Suggestions for improving the situation were to minimize the roof overhang to improve light access.

Some Panel members suggested orienting the courtyard to Almond Park.

With respect to Unit 16, one Panel member found the small balcony next to the stairway to be unnecessary.

The majority of Panel members had no concerns about the relationship with the neighbouring property at the lane. It was felt to be unreasonable to impose something on this property for some future unknown use next door.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Rositch said all the comments are valid and he noted they have looked at a number of different configurations for the orientation of the courtyard to Almond Park. Ultimately the current version was considered the best.