

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: October 24, 2007

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
John Wall, Chair
Tom Bunting
Bill Harrison
Gerry Eckford (Item 1 only)
Maurice Pez
Douglas Watts
Bob Ransford
Walter Francl (Item 2 only)

REGRETS: Albert Bicol
Martin Nielsen
Mark Ostry
Richard Henry

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1239 Kingsway
2.	1255 West Pender Street

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Wall called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There being no New Business the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. Address: 1239 Kingsway
DE: 411334
Use: 4-storey mixed use
Zoning: C-2
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Francis Yau, Andrew Cheung Architect
Owner: Choi Shun Pong
Review: First
Delegation: Andrew Cheung, Francis Yau, Allison Good
Staff: Bob Adair

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (2-4)

- **Introduction:** Bob Adair, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a C-2 zoned site on the north side of Kingsway between Inverness Street and Clark Drive. Mr. Adair described the zoning and recent developments in the surrounding area.

The proposal is a four-storey mixed-use building, with ground level retail and three floors of residential above. Residential access is from Kingsway at the east end of the front façade. Parking is accessed off the lane, with separate gated entrances to commercial and residential parking areas. Mr. Adair described the materiality being used for the building.

The Neighbourhood Centres and Local Shopping Area initiatives are having an impact on several commercial nodes along Kingsway, including this one, and street improvements including a treed median and new street trees and sidewalks have recently been installed in the area. Staff would like the context to encourage a strong urban design and detailing approach, similar to that seen on other major arterials in the City in order to make sure that all new developments along Kingsway achieve standards equal to other important arterials in the City.

The C-2 zoning regulations & guidelines are quite thorough, and the applicant has solved most of the basic issues of form and organization. Planning staff do however have some concerns regarding elevation and landscape treatments at both the front and the rear. On the rear elevation, the C-2 Guidelines encourage covering all parking and service areas along the lane, using them as accessible residential roof decks. The Guidelines also encourage significant greening of the lane edge, through planting of a full-size roof deck, and a 2 foot setback at the lane edge. Staff are concerned that the proposed trellis structures and the limited opportunities for planting along the lane do not achieve these goals, and also expose neighbouring developments to additional light and noise from the open parking area.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

- The facade could perhaps be further articulated to better express masonry areas;
- The facade might benefit from raising the height of the brick to incorporate the guards at the fourth floor;
- A general comment on materials; and

- The expression of the fourth floor might also be improved by additional glazing and the use of the fascia as a stronger architectural element to shade the south facing windows.

Mr. Adair took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Mr. Cheung, Architect, further described the architectural design for the proposal. He noted the units have their primary living areas facing Kingsway or the lane with private open or enclosed balconies. Allison Good, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans for the site.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to the Kingsway elevation to achieve a stronger sense of solidity and architectural detail, strengthen the expression of the roof overhang and the third floor parapet;
 - Consider improving the landscape treatment to the public realm;
 - Design development to the lobby and strengthening the residential entry expression;
 - Design development to the six foot screened wall on the lane to address CPTED concerns; and
 - Consider improvements to the trellis and landscape treatment along the lane.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the proposal and thought there were elements that could improve the building and that Kingsway, as a principle street, deserves higher quality building details. They thought the railing along the top floor of the front elevation should be replaced by a brick parapet or better incorporated into the design. Several Panel members thought the quality of the canopies could also be improved. The Panel thought the overhang of the roof should have a stronger expression and they were disappointed that the applicant would not be applying an extensive green roof. Several Panel members thought the cornice line could be improved.

The Panel was also disappointed with the public realm and thought there should be a way to break up the linear pavement. They thought the landscape treatment didn't go far enough either. One Panel member suggested that the street trees could be aligned with the building elements. One Panel member suggested eliminating the retail parking area and adding more greenery on the lane. Also the Panel thought the base condition of the retail frontage could be strengthened by using better quality materials. Generally, the panel thought the building would benefit from the use of more robust materials and building details that achieve a more solid expression. One panel member thought fewer different cladding materials would help the design.

The panel felt that the brick material should wrap around the building corners on to the side party wall surface to help animate the blank surfaces and convey a sense of solidity.

The Panel had some concerns with the design of the lobby and thought it read more like a long corridor. They also thought the residential entry expression needed to be strengthened to give more interest to the street.

The Panel felt there could be CPTED issues on the north side of the building and that the six foot wall was the wrong height. They thought it was high enough to screen people but not high enough to keep them out of the development. The Panel had mixed reactions to the trellis and thought it would deteriorate over time unless a durable material was used.

The Panel thought the unit layout was well done although one Panel member thought the main living space seemed to be secondary to the rest of the space in the unit. One Panel member had concerns about the liveability of the units on the south elevation and suggested adding a sun shade device to those units. Some of the Panel had some concerns about the natural light levels in the north facing units on the lane.

Several Panel members expressed concern over the lack of sustainable measures and suggested the applicant consider passive solar design and other initiatives.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Cheung had no other comments.

2. Address:	1255 West Pender Street
DE:	411500
Use:	14-storey office/residential building
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	W.T. Leung Architects
Owner:	Cabmerl Industries Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Wing Ting Leung, Barry Krause, Henning Knoetzele, Gerry Eckford
Staff:	Sailen Black

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

Introduction: Sailen Black, Development Planner introduced the proposal for a 14 storey, office and residential building, with underground parking, two levels of commercial floor space facing West Pender Street, 26 residential units and two townhouses facing West Hastings Street. Mr. Black described the materials being used as well as the various developments in the surrounding neighbourhood.

The proposal has been designed using the Downtown Official Development Plan around buildings that respect existing developments and minimize private view impacts. The frontages need to maintain pedestrian interest through retail use or attractive building entries, displays, art and landscaping.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the proposed architectural and landscape design, including:

- Height and form as they relate to private views
- Whether the proposed height is earned
- Liveability of the units
- Detailed relationship with the Evergreen building, especially around the vertical profile

Mr. Black asked the Panel when they would like the project to return, and then took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Mr. Leung, Architect, described the submission in further detail noting the use of natural stone, architectural concrete and prefinished aluminium on the window walls. Translucent glazing and spandrel glass is to be used on parts of the east elevation to provide for privacy and natural light. Gerry Eckford, Landscape Architect described the landscape plans for the site. He noted the planting material being used for the green roof as well as the water storage for irrigation. He also described the water feature at the residential entry.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development of the north and south elevations to create a more sympathetic and singular expression that contrasts with the horizontal nature of Evergreen building
 - Design development to the residential entry on Pender Street to better relate to the adjacent recessed three storey Evergreen entry.
 - Better integration of the stone clad base with the overall project.

Related Commentary: The Panel unanimously supported the application. The Panel thought the building earned its height and density and agreed that it was a strong building on a challenging site. Liveability posed no major issues, and the 70' setback was accepted. The Panel recognized the thought that had gone into the design of the building, and thought the glazing on the east facing façade was interesting and imaginative. Members also complimented the parti and the level of presentation. They asked to have the application come back to the Panel at the DE stage.

Most members felt the primary issue remaining was the fine scale of residential building against the more robust commercial expression of the Evergreen building. Several members observed that the detailing on the north and south facades could be more robust and clean; that the concrete spandrels on the south, worked against the strength of form; and that a more robust and unified mass was needed, and that the sun-shading provided by the spandrels could be achieved by other means. One approach suggested for the facade was to wrap the glass around the southwest corner. One member requested a detailed drawing of the Evergreen next to the proposal, and felt that the proposed banding at the south elevation could have an unintended syncopation when seen in comparison to the Evergreen.

The Panel felt the entries were unresolved. Several Panel members had reservations regarding the skinny little wall next to the Evergreen Building and suggested it should have a more commercial expression. Other suggestions included opening up ground plane to work with the adjacent Evergreen entry plaza, and being less 'bitsy.'

One Panel member thought the stone box on the corner was somewhat unresolved and needed to be better integrated into the overall building massing.

The Panel liked the landscaping mirroring the ribbons of the windows and the landscaping at the entry. One Panel member suggested adding a water fall to the water feature at the entry. They thought it would be appreciated from the surrounding buildings. Other suggestions included adding a green wall along the interface to the Evergreen building, and adding trees to the east side to improve suite privacy and the appearance from nearby residences.

Individual concerns included the lack of insulation behind the spandrel and the unused slot space between the two buildings. One panel member thought the south-west elevation could use some shading.

The Panel congratulated the design team on their innovative design.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Leung thanked the Panel for their thoughtful comments and thanked Mr. Black for his help. He added that they will go back and rethink the design for the north and south elevation.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.