

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** October 25, 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  
Shahla Bozorgzadeh  
Tom Bunting  
Margot Long (Item #1, 2 and 4)  
Bill Harrison  
John Wall  
Peter Wreglesworth  
C.C. Yao (Item #2, 3 and 4)

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS TO THE PANEL  
Paul Merrick (Item #1)  
Jim Hancock (Item #1)

**REGRETS:** James Cheng  
Eileen Keenan

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1133 West Georgia Street
2.	256 East 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue
3.	168 Powell Street
4.	1777 - 1799 Kingsway

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**BUSINESS MEETING**

There was a short business meeting and then Chair Francl called the meeting to order at 4:25 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. The meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

Chair Francl welcomed Paul Merrick of Merrick Architecture and Jim Hancock of Hancock Bruckner Architects to the Panel to review the first item.

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|---------------------|--|
| 1. Address:         | 1133 West Georgia Street   |
| DA:                 | 410715   |
| Use:                | Mixed Use hotel/residential/retail                                   |
| Zoning:             | DD   |
| Application Status: | Complete   |
| Architect:          | Musson Cattell Mackey  |
| Review:             | Third (1 <sup>st</sup> March 16, 2005, 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 8, 2006) |
| Delegation:         | Arthur Erickson, Mark Thompson, Dane Jansen, Jennifer Stamp          |
| Staff:              | Ralph Segal/Alison Higginson   |
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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)**

Paul Merrick, Architect and James Hancock, Architect, were guest panellists for the review of this application, in accordance with the General Policy for Higher Buildings.

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner, presented the complete application after rezoning. Mr. Segal reminded the Panel that the application was unanimously supported at the rezoning stage by the Urban Design Panel. Mr. Segal asked the Panel to comment on the architectural expression. He noted that in the rezoning stage, the Palm Court interior public space was proposed. It was concluded that the Palm Court was proving troublesome and was abandoned. Mr. Segal added that at the lane there will be a bus and taxi drop off and access to the hotel functions. There will also be a complete upgrade to the lane.

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

1. Has the architectural design evolved appropriately in regard to:
  - tower's exterior design
  - podium as it related to the tower, adjacent buildings and Georgia Street
2. Quality of the Public Realm, specifically the plaza treatment and lane interface.

"Atrium" Enquiry: From an Urban Design/Architectural perspective, the Panel's opinion is sought on a Georgia Street glass atrium vs. the public plaza that is in the current Development Application.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Mark Thompson, Architect described the project in further detail and gave a history of the site. Arthur Erickson, Architect spoke on the changes made since the last Urban Design Panel. Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect gave an overview of the landscape plans for the site. The applicant team took questions from the Panel.
  - **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
    - There was general support for the atrium. The atrium roof canopy should be as light and refined as possible, with a thin fascia edge.
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- Design development to refine the glass atrium wall to enhance its transparency and permeability. It should minimize the restriction of movement and allow the atrium to operate as a public open space fronting the street.
  - Remove the planting from the 24<sup>th</sup> floor balconies.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel unanimously supported this application and commended the applicant for their hard work.

It was described as an iconic and elegant scheme and the Panel felt the design had developed well since the last Urban Design Panel review. The Panel was impressed with the resolution of the scheme and the rigor that has been applied to the structural system and to the façade. The Panel supported all the sustainability measures.

The Panel supported the height although one member of the Panel suggested the applicant might consider raising the building to the same height as the Shangri-la since it is close enough that they may be read as a pair. However, the Panel as a whole felt the height was appropriate. A couple of members did suggest increasing the height of the three curving glazed facades to the top of the roof to improve the proportions of this uppermost element of the building in relation to the rest of the tower, as well as enhancing the sustainability of the building.

Several members of the Panel felt that the landscape design could be further developed to integrate itself more closely with the motion and spirit of the building and to develop a stronger character for the plaza and podium levels. One member also had concern that the amount of hard surfaces to planting in the plaza space could yield a space that would feel hard rather than lush. The Panel also felt that the 24<sup>th</sup> floor balcony greenery took away from the simplicity and elegance of the building and suggested leaving the planting out of the design.

There was some concern around the liveability of the suites with the floor to ceiling glass noting that it might become uncomfortable without cross ventilation or resorting to air conditioning.

The Panel felt the new proposal (atrium) was a much more elegant solution with the full, site wide, canopy element referencing the neighbouring podium level of the adjacent site. It was suggested that the edge condition of the glass and the frame could be developed to appear lighter and more refined.

There was some concern that the proposed atrium would restrict the public use of the open space though it was also noted that Georgia Street is a very busy thoroughfare that does not lend itself to quiet open space use. Some members of the Panel felt that internalizing the space would make it a great public room for an art show or music and would be a good public fit for the project. It was also suggested that the atrium glazing should be as permeable as possible, especially during good weather, so that the ground plane can operate as public open space rather than hotel lobby. Pivoting or sliding glass elements that could be opened were suggested.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Thompson thanked the panel for their very interesting comments and added that they will take them on with enthusiasm. He asked for more commentary on the height of the building. Mr. Segal advised the applicant that Council most likely would not approve more height. The consensus of the Panel was that the height was appropriate for the floor plate.

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2. Address:	256 East 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue
DA:	410276
Use:	6-storey live/work residential
Zoning:	IC-3
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Christopher Bozyk Architects
Review:	Second (First Review July 5, 2006)
Delegation:	Chris Bozek, Craig Taylor, Dylan Chernoff
Staff:	Dale Morgan

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#### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-2)

- **Introduction:** Dale Morgan, Development Planner, presented this complete application for a live/work and residential development in the IC-3 zone along East 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue originally reviewed by the Panel on July 5, 2006. During the last review by the Panel there were concerns around the scale and massing, neighbourliness, and liveability, including below grade suite entries. There were also CPTED issues associated with the deeply recessed common entry and concerns about the lack of outdoor and indoor amenity spaces aside from the gallery.

Referring to the model, Mr. Morgan gave a brief overview of the project, describing the changes to the project since the previous review with the Panel.

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

- Has the revised submission successfully addressed the issues previously identified by the panel, including:
  1. Better response to sloping grades for unit entry levels
  2. Improved interface with neighbours, including spatial separation, natural light and view impacts
  3. Liveability issues of units
  4. Visibility of parking ramp
  5. Provision of common amenity spaces
- Comments are also requested on the proposed below grade amenity space and light well and the revised rear yard adjacencies with neighbouring live/ work development across the lane.
- Landscaping: Has the landscaping improved or have the revised plans compromised some of the desirable attributes of the previous scheme, including the lane interface? Should the outdoor circulation path, sixth floor be pulled further away from the edge to allow a landscape screening from neighbours? Have the outdoor amenity spaces been properly handled?
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Craig Taylor, Architect briefly reviewed the project in greater detail and responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Concerns about the liveability of the suites especially around the interior bedroom layouts;
  - Exterior architectural expression is better developed and appropriate for this neighbourhood.

- Design development to the parking ramp to make it less visible;
- Design development to improve the quality of the landscaping; and
- Concern around the location and usability of the below-grade amenity space.

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

The Panel agreed that the applicant had done a good job in addressing the sloping grade and that the interface had been improved with the neighbours although several members of the Panel felt the south façade was less successful. Some of the Panel felt that the landscaping was somewhat disappointing especially on the lane.

The Panel questioned the liveability of the units with the number of internal bedrooms without windows. They suggested redesigning the units, where possible, to allow for windows in the bedrooms for both natural ventilation and daylight. Several Panel members suggested increasing the ceiling heights which would also bring more light to the units.

Some of the Panel felt the parking ramp was too prominent and should be screened with additional landscaping. One Panel member suggested a trellis over the parking ramp.

Some members of the Panel felt the landscaping need more work and one member suggested adding a green roof.

Several members of the Panel felt the below-grade location of the amenity space would not be well used by the residents, with one member suggesting putting it on the sixth level with access to the roof top gardens.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Taylor thanked the Panel for their comments and agreed that some of the points the Panel raised would be revisited. He also mentioned that they would look at the interior bedroom layouts to see if they could redesign the plan.

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3.	Address:	168 Powell Street
	DA:	410717
	Use:	8-storey mixed use building containing retail and 90 residential units
	Zoning:	HA-2
	Application Status:	Complete
	Architect:	Busby, Perkins, and Will
	Review:	First
	Delegation:	Jim Huffman, Jeff Skinner, Bruce Hemstock
	Staff:	Dale Morgan

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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-0)

- **Introduction:** Dale Morgan, Development Planner, presented this complete application for an eight storey mixed use building containing retail and ninety residential units. Mr. Morgan took questions from the Panel.

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

1. **Building Character:** Is the proposed building character complimentary with the historic Gastown area in terms of overall massing, architectural and material expression, including window patterns and proposed colours?
  2. **Retail Frontage:** Comments are requested on the detail treatment of the retail frontage; does it reinforce the visual language of Gastown's store fronts, including generous ceiling heights, transom lights, strongly expressed cornices and strongly expressed base treatments?
  3. **Liveability:** Do the dwelling units achieve a high degree of liveability in terms of unit configuration, access to natural light and ventilation, privacy and open space?
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Jim Huffman, Architect, referring to the context drawings and the model, reviewed the project in greater detail and Bruce Hemstock, Landscape Architect gave an overview of the landscape plan. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
  - **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
    - Concerns about the liveability of the suites especially around light and ventilation for the interior bedroom layouts; and
    - Concern with the height of the retail space especially on the east corner.
  - **Related Commentary:** The Panel unanimously supported this proposal.

The Panel agreed that this was a good looking building and the contemporary architectural character of the facades was an appropriate response to the historical architectural context of Gastown.

The Panel for the most part liked the red accent on the building however several members felt the colour might be too strong and one member suggested making it more of a terra cotta red or layering the reds to add a bit of richness. One member was concerned about the use of painted concrete, stating that it could require a lot of upkeep over time.

The Panel felt that the retail frontage was the weakest part of the project. They noted the limitations imposed by the building height because of the sloping site, especially on the east corner. While the Panel generally approved the modern character of the building façade, there was some concern that there be enough contrast between glazing and solid to respond to the robust texture of the building facades in Gastown. One member suggested having a continuous canopy along the front of the building. A couple of members of the Panel suggested having a stronger visual separation between the retail ground floor and the upper residential floors.

The Panel had some concerns around the liveability of the units especially with the number of light locked bedrooms without ventilation. They felt there was room for design development to relocate bedrooms and to move the study space to the interior of the suites. A couple of Panel members suggested moving the bedrooms to the corridor wall with high windows bringing light into the bedrooms. There was some concern that the courtyard was tight and deep and that there might not be adequate light for the courtyard landscaping.

Other comments included the need for continuous weather protection at the street and the need for greater articulation and depth of the front façade.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Huggman thanked the Panel for their comments and agreed to look at opening up the bedroom floor plans to add more light. He also stated that they would like to raise the retail and agreed that raising the canopy would help.

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4. Address:	1777 - 1799 Kingsway
DA:	410609
Use:	Mixed use building
Zoning:	C-2
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Allen Diamond Architect
Review:	First
Delegation:	Alan Diamond, Damon Oriente, Craig Mercs
Staff:	James Boldt

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#### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)

- **Introduction:** James Boldt, Development Planner, presented this complete application for a mixed use building on the Kingsway corridor. Mr. Boldt stated that the main concerns from Staff dealt with the materials being used on the exterior of the building, the liveability of the suites and issues with respect to the lane.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Alan Diamond, Architect referring to the context drawings and the model, reviewed the project in greater detail. Damon Oriente, Landscape Architect reviewed the landscape plans for the project. 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 and commended the architect on a well executed project. They felt that it was a benefit to the neighbourhood and would like to see similar buildings on Kingsway.

The Panel liked the massing and composition of the building and the use of the dark brick. A number of Panel members suggested making the canopies as substantial as possible. One member of the Panel had concerns about the scale of the columns at the building base and the corner fenestration of the retail.

The Panel agreed that the loading facility would not be used much but would still like to see some design development to make it more neighbourly. A couple of members of the Panel suggested the use of permeable pavement in this area and the addition of landscaping to screen the lane wall. One member suggested making it a green or living wall.

One member of the Panel thought the penthouse could be more expressive and playful while another member liked the swooping penthouse roof.

One Panel member was concerned about the fine scale of the retail expression on Kingsway noting that it could be of a larger scale to respond to the high traffic volumes of Kingsway. Other Panel members felt that the retail base was well handled.

The Panel felt the liveability of the units was well addressed.

- **Applicant's Response:** They are pleased with the commentary from the Panel.

The meeting concluded at 9:00 PM.

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