

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** October 26, 2005

**TIME:** 4.00 pm

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Alan Endall, Chair  
Robert Barnes  
Shahla Bozorgzadeh  
James Cheng (excused from Item #2 and #4)  
Ronald Lea  
Margot Long (excused from Item #1, #3 and #4)  
C.C. Yao (excused from Item #4)  
Larry Adams  
Edward Smith  
Peter Wreglesworth (excused from Item #4)

**REGRETS:** Nigel Baldwin  
Marta Farevaag

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** D. Kempton

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	700 Hamilton Street
2.	1011 West Cordova Street
3.	848 West Hastings Street
4.	Oakridge Workshop

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**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Endall called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

1. Address: 700 Hamilton Street  
DE: 409307  
Use: Mixed (addition)  
Zoning: DD  
Application Status: Complete after Preliminary  
Architect: Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden  
Owner: CBC Corporation  
Review: First  
Delegation: Peter Arbuckle, Joost Bakker, David Negrin, Walter Francl,  
Bruce Hemstock  
Staff: Ralph Segal

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

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner, presented this complete after preliminary application, noting that in response to the preliminary condition regarding tower floor plates the applicant has reduced the floor plate of the taller tower from approximately 7,900 sq. ft to 7,400 sq. ft., with the lower tower remaining substantially the same floor plate size as the preliminary application. The objective was to increase the separation between the towers and allow for more penetration of views for the neighbouring towers across Robson Street while more closely reflecting the floor plate sizes of the Downtown South District. Mr. Segal also noted that the antenna was permitted by the Development Permit Board.

Specific advice from the Panel is sought on the following:

- the Public Realm response on Hamilton, Georgia and Robson Streets and the public areas in general with respect to how successfully they have been handled in terms of pedestrian animation and activity, overall landscape quality and various uses and architectural treatment;
  - the overall architecture and expression, particularly with respect to how the residential podium element relates to the retail below;
  - the revised tower floor plate sizes in terms of impacts on views, shadowing and privacy.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Joost Bakker, Architect, said that since the last time this proposal was before the Panel, the applicant team has worked on refining the detailed concerns that have come forward from the Panel and the Development Permit Board.

Mr. Bakker provided an overview of the space and Walter Francl, Architect, described the material palette, the changes to the proposal and also the sustainable strategies incorporated into the application. Bruce Hemstock, Landscape Architect, reviewed the landscape plan and further expanded on the sustainable strategies for the site. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Greater attention and design development to the public courtyard area to integrate the project and existing building element in order to tie the whole site together;
  - Consider changing the dark red frame element on the inside facades of the towers for something more subtle and creating a stronger connection to the architecture, details and materials of the existing CBC building.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel said this will be a beautiful and exciting project that should be successful in terms of animating this downtown block. Generally the Panel supported the public realm response and thought there had been great improvements in the progression of developing the public spaces and street treatments. Overall it was felt that the landscape quality was good with a couple of Panel members suggesting better definition of private versus public space and more development to strengthen the landscaping and street trees. Another Panel member noted that it will be critical to make the Hamilton Street animation work twelve months of the year.

The Panel supported the tower floor plate sizes at the preliminary stage and supported the adjustments in this proposal, to the floor plate sizes, that were made to respond to the spirit and intent of the Downtown South District guidelines.

Several Panel members said that they would like to see more vertical articulation of the tower and a finer grain on the residential podium so that it reflects the grain, texture and scale of the CBC building, noting that the CBC building should dominate the residential building and not the other way around. It was also felt by several Panel members that there should be fewer colors incorporated in order to help simplify the look of the buildings.

With respect to sustainability, one Panel member asked that the applicant consider taking the heat from the existing building and using that in the domestic water system. The same Panel member also expressed concern for the livability of units that have a lot of glass and no air-conditioning and suggested that the applicant address that issue.

Two Panel members said they would like to see further refinement to the Cambie Street interface.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bakker thanked the Panel for their comments and said that this project has been difficult and at the same time has come a long way. With respect to animation of the public spaces, Mr. Bakker said he is confident that this proposal will provide an enormous transformation from what exists there now and will make it a friendlier space. Mr. Negrin added that this project is a new Concord brand and the applicant team wants it to be as good as or better than other Concord projects.

2. Address: 1011 West Cordova Street  
DE: 409730  
Use: Mixed  
Zoning: CD-1  
Application Status: Complete  
Architect: James Cheng  
Owner: Westbank Projects Corporation  
Review: First  
Delegation: Ian Gillespie, James Cheng, Adeline Lai, Chris Philips  
Staff: Ralph Segal

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

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner, introduced this application for the second tower in the Burrard Landing sub area of Coal Harbour, noting the recent text amendment to allow mixed use for hotel and live/work on this site.

Mr. Segal said the project meets or exceeds the objectives for the Burrard Landing Guidelines; noting that Council has given approval for the upper most appurtenances of the building to intrude into the view cone. This proposal is attempting to minimize the extent of that intrusion both in terms of height and width.

Specific advice from the Panel is sought on the following:

- the overall architecture and massing;
  - the overall landscape response;
  - the articulation of the tower and the podium, as well as the proposed scale of the podium element;
  - the public realm treatment in terms of pedestrian interest and the streetscape;
  - the relation of scale and volume of the Burrard Street frontage to the Marine building;
  - the treatment of the top of the building, noting the view cone intrusion of 2-3 floors.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** James Cheng, Architect, reviewed the history of the application and changes made to the proposal after the rezoning. Mr. Cheng described the history behind the shape and height of the proposed building. He described the setbacks, retail frontage and electronic information board, as well as noting that there will be a public art piece on the corner that may be the largest in Vancouver.

The Landscape Architect reviewed the landscape plan and sustainable strategies for the proposal such as green roofs and possibly tying into the Convention Centre and Pan Pacific cooling systems for shared geothermal. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - Further design development to the northeast plaza at Burrard Street and Canada Place, including extending the special paving on Burrard Street across to the Convention Centre.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this application and commended the applicant for providing an excellent presentation. The Panel felt the proposal was skillfully handled and strongly responded to the urban design context through architecture, massing and pedestrian level treatments.

With respect to the detail design execution of signage and the public art aspects of the project, the Panel hoped that those would be followed through with as they expected. One Panel member asked the applicant to ensure that the public art piece does not become commercial.

Two Panel members were in agreement that the silhouette at the top of the tower would be stronger without the proposed trees and suggested replacing those with short bushes or lawn. One Panel member felt that the landscaping and size of the layby seemed too small for a large hotel. It was also suggested by a Panel member to move the street trees, on the Burrard Street side, onto the site instead of having them on City property.

In terms of sustainability, the applicant was commended for putting sustainability at the forefront and addressing the facades from the north to the south, as well as east and west. A Panel member noted that geothermal was being explored for this site and said that is a must.

Two Panel members were not supportive of the building height encroaching into the view cone, stating that view cones should be protected. It was also stated by a Panel member that the top of the building needs more work to get the proportion right without pushing more into the view cone. There were several other minor comments for more attention to the horizontal banding of concrete projecting from the balconies, the corner of Burrard and Canada Place, and façade element details.

**Applicant's Response:** Mr. Cheng thanked the Panel for their comments and said that he intends to do more work to the top of the tower. He stated that a signage package will be submitted separately as per City requirements.

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3. Address:	830 West Hastings Street
DE:	409808
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Walter Francl/Foster Partners
Owner:	5177 Investments Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Nigel Dancey, Lee Hallman, Tom Pappajohn, Bruce Hemstock, Walter Francl
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (7-1)

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner, introduced this proposal on behalf of Mary Beth Rondeau, the Development Planner for this application. Mr. Segal stated that this is a very challenging project attempting to incorporate a 376 ft. high tower on a small site. The additional density on this site was earned through a rezoning and by virtue of heritage retention initiatives.

With respect to sustainability, Mr. Segal said the applicant intends to achieve LEED gold. There are no significant issues from a staff perspective, although scale-wise this is an aggressive building.

Specific advice from the Panel is sought on the following:

- the east elevation in terms of livability and spatial separation;
  - whether the application maintains the standard that was set at the rezoning stage.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** The applicant described the concept for the design of the building and went into detail regarding some of the sustainable initiatives they are trying to achieve. He noted that the landscaping was a challenge with a modern building being proposed onto of an existing older building while also taking into account roof treatments that would respect the view cone limitations.

The applicant stated that the proposal received unanimous support from the Vancouver Heritage Commission. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - The Panel stressed the importance of details to earn the extra density on this site;
  - Further consideration of the proposed shared entrance lobby for commercial and residential uses. Consider not only the shared use aspects but also in terms of identification and prominence;
  - The Panel expressed some discomfort with the amount of density on this site;
  - Concern about the limited indoor amenity provided and difficulty with the fact that no outdoor amenity is provided;

- Consideration should be given to how the architectural expression of the building might better be achieved. The building reads as striated, strongly articulated and separated vertically. Give consideration to how it is visually sympathetic to the heritage context and work to tie it together from top to bottom.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel commended the applicant for a thorough presentation and rational design response. The Panel also commended the owner for achieving a high degree of quality in materials and design in order to earn the extra density being requested for the site.

One Panel member suggested reconsidering the bamboo screening on the roof, stating that he would prefer to see landscape screening shared rather than all against the other building.

Another Panel member expressed concern about the straight out views from the mid-residential units. A Panel member noted their concern with the architectural expression of the retail base.

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

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4. Address:	Oakridge
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Workshop
Architect:	Stantec
Owner:	Ivanhoe/Cambridge Ltd./Omers Realty
Review:	First
Delegation:	Gordon Wylie, Peter Wreglesworth, Alan Whitchelo
Staff:	Michael Mortenson, Pat St. Michel, Michel Desrochers

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**Introduction:** Michael Mortenson, Project Planner, provided an overview of the history of the site in terms of development and context. Mr. Mortenson explained that in 2004 Cambridge Ltd. came to the City seeking a planning policy that would consider a much more substantial redevelopment of the site. The 1995 Oakridge/Langara policy statement anticipated a rapid transit line running down Cambie Street and asked the question of whether this site should be considered a municipal centre with a more significant mix of housing, employment, shops and recreational facilities. The City and Cambridge agreed to embark on a planning program for redevelopment of this site which would respect sustainable concepts, achieve a vital neighbourhood centre and integrate the Oakridge site with the fabric of the surrounding community.

Mr. Mortenson stated that a primary question for the Panel to consider is how does the concept that has evolved, integrate with the surrounding site to create a more vibrant, more animated, and more community serving centre. The policy states that any expansion of the Oakridge Centre property must consider, first and foremost, its community serving features.

Mr. Mortenson described the proposed mix of uses for the site, changes to the mall and the ground plan; which would include new streets. The Oakridge site is currently at approximately 620,000 sq. ft. and the owner is seeking to expand up to 900,000 sq. ft. All surface and rooftop parking will be placed underground and there will be a significant increase in residential uses in the form of townhouses, mid-rise forms and a number of towers.

In terms of public consultation, Mr. Mortenson stated that people in the area were generally very supportive of the preliminary concept. He acknowledged the desire to balance the city's need for densification while honoring the interests of the people who live around the site and stated that a significant group that was supportive of this proposal and liked the towers, were also anxious about the towers and how they would fit in with the neighbourhood character. Mr. Mortenson asked the Panel for feedback on the towers and mix of housing, retail and community facilities. He also asked the Panel whether the design, in terms of circulation and permeability, maximizes the transit orientation intention of the site.

**Applicants Comments:**

Gordon Wylie, applicant team, described some of the issues with developing this plan and stated that there is a need for density in this neighbourhood. Mr. Wylie noted that at the recent open houses there was some concern expressed about view impacts from the towers, however, people were generally supportive of the concept.

Peter Wreglesworth, applicant team, identified some of the underlying context issues for this proposal acknowledging that over the next 6 months the applicant team and city staff will have to work through policy and try to define what some of the principles and objectives this development will have to address in the rezoning process.

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Mr. Wreglesworth stated that this site is a regional centre for the city and has a strong following, in terms of neighbourhood users, that want to see Oakridge improve and broaden the store offerings. He noted that the applicant team is not seeking a lot of additional retail density in this proposal, at 200,000 sq. ft., so the retail has to work but this proposal is really about turning the site into a transit oriented mixed-use development. Mr. Wreglesworth also stated that 75 percent of the Centre will need to keep operating during the implementation of this plan so that commitments to leases can be honored. He further stated that the need to keep parts of the mall open will define where the opportunities to develop are and where they are not.

The principles of what the applicant team wants to achieve on this site are: successfully addressing density, a strong street oriented environment, improved public realm as it relates to the sidewalks of 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue and on Cambie Street, increased permeability into and through the site to break down the monolithic aspect of the project and reflect more the urban grain of city blocks, new streets to come into the site, new parks which would represent 2.83 acres in total and 1.1 acre site for non-profit housing.

Mr. Wreglesworth described the evolution of the scheme to fewer towers that will be higher. He also described the costs associated with redeveloping this site and putting the parking underground to allow the opportunities for parks. A commitment has been made to double the amount of amenity space on this site, as well as make improvements to the public realm.

Mr. Wreglesworth described the existing site context, scale, and configuration. He stated that the proposal will have two levels of retail and all edges of the project will be externally street oriented with retail and shops so that the High Street, on both sides, will be animated at grade. In terms of permeability, the applicant team is looking at cuts through the site as ways of accessing from 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue through the park and back into the community.

With respect to parks, Mr. Mortenson noted that they have been substantially delivered in this full concept scheme.

Mr. Wreglesworth described the traffic, loading and parking scheme for the site. He also indicated that some form of screening for the parking structure is being considered from an overlook perspective.

Mr. Endall asked what stage this application would be at the next time it was reviewed by the Panel. Pat St. Michel, Project Planner, responded that the application would be at the formal rezoning stage the next time the Panel reviews it.

The areas in which the advice of the Panel is sought include:

- comments on views, heights and massing;
- advice on opportunities to address where form and massing should occur and whether the form and height are appropriate at this location;
- where form and massing might be located to respect views existing from the south;
- whether the height appropriate for the site and if it is, then where would the taller forms best be located;
- the best location of density;
- the general form of massing on Cambie Street;

- the general configuration, extent and location of retail uses. Does the Panel see potential difficulties in bringing retail onto the site on High Street in the sense of competition with Cambie Street. Is there desire for other uses such as residential at grade;
- general site permeability, and how well does the pedestrian connection integrate with the surrounding community. Comment on the opportunities it provides and what kind of qualities staff should seek to make these public and amenable connections;
- RAV station safety and security issues. Whether this development takes full advantage of that corner of the site and supports Cambie Street as becoming a strong street-focused shopping area;
- the location and nature of the parks and how the surrounding buildings relate.

### Discussion & Comments

Mr. Endall said staff and the Panel need to step back and clearly document what the issues are in the surrounding neighbourhood at present and for the future. We need to determine what the basic principles are and then assess and articulate those and look at how to respond and address those issues.

Mr. Smith stated that the proposal needs to be considered from today's perspective and the perspective of 20 years from now. In terms of energy, this proposal would be designed differently, it would be passively designed.

Mr. Endall said the approach has been illustrated and it automatically begs certain questions in terms of character, retail, whether roofs are green, whether roofs are accessible and how people would move through the site.

Mr. Wylie stated that the specific nature of the policy plan keeps coming up as an issue. He expressed concern about getting too specific so that there isn't enough flexibility in the end. Mr. Wylie stated that it is important that the end point is what everyone intended and that it will actually work.

Ms. St. Michel said due to the programmatic needs of the site, staff have asked the applicant to illustrate for them, and the public, how that might look. She said that staff cannot begin to create policies and consider the extent of retail this site can accommodate without showing the public how that would play out. This is more like a preliminary application than a typical policy plan.

Mr. Endall said there are some inherent things that work well in terms of locations of green spaces and connections coming back to the corner. As a result the proposal immediately starts to draw attention to issues such as what is the character of the site and uses required on the street to make it work as intended and how does that differ from the character of these streets, and how will they be animated, and what will be the character of the streets and edges.

With respect to the streets, Ms. St. Michel stated that the applicant team and staff have been sensitive to where streets enter the site. The goal is to work with the mall and not just into the mall but through it as well. Keeping the mall at two levels will honor the needs of the community.

The applicant team said the main issues to get direction on from the Panel are: forms of housing and density locations. This is an opportunity to have a retail strategy for the City that

doesn't currently exist. Excavating underneath the existing mall is problematic and that, along with other site constraints, will result in the need to phase the project, with parking being one of the main drivers.

Ms. St. Michel informed the Panel that height is also an issue; with 50 percent of people at the public meetings stating that the proposal was too high. Staff and the applicant team need advice, rather than simply having less massing, to get the extent of development on this site that the community will find more palpable. Staff are supportive of greater densification of the site, however they also take into consideration the neighbours and the need to honor their concerns.

Mr. Wylie described the mall as high end and noted that store count is a major consideration. With only 119 stores currently this is one of the smallest malls in the region and the expansion will allow the mall to accommodate some of the larger retailers that have sought space at elsewhere.

Mr. Mortenson stated that there is a unique opportunity on this site. The issues tonight come down to tower form in order to make the project viable and how do those forms get arranged. Mr. Endall responded that as he sees it, the issue is not what form the housing should take but rather how you build in flexibility to respond to the market over time and what would be appropriate to build over the next 20 years.

Mr. Smith asked what the arguments were against having taller towers. Mr. Wreglesworth responded that the applicant would be interested in smaller floorplates and taller towers. Mr. Mortenson said that staff are prepared to consider thinner towers. He noted that all residential buildings will need a street address and the only opportunities for street addresses are on the proposed new street, which is one of the constraints of the site.

Mr. Endall stated that the applicant team should also take into consideration issues for the next 20 years such as energy use and plan the building locations, heights, etc. with that in mind.

Mr. Lea said the scheme needs clarity, readability and legibility; especially at the retail level. In terms of pedestrian routes and site permeability, Mr. Lea said he feels there is real loss in not getting vehicles onto High Street in terms of the legibility of retail. Mr. Wylie responded that the applicant team wants to bring retail use to the street and that will meet the City's needs as well.

Mr. Endall said the height and density are fine and the streets make sense but the community will need to be shown a range of options and what each option means in terms of view impacts, shadows and privacy, before the community members will accept the proposal. Mr. Mortenson responded that staff anticipate workshops with the public.

Mr. Wylie said many of the details are still being worked out such as the roof treatments, amenities, etc. and some of those details will need input from the community so that the applicant team can respond to what the community wants.

Mr. Lea said it would be nice to have a town center, in terms of outdoor spaces, rather than a linear street like Broadway.

Mr. Endall asked everyone to wrap up the discussions. Mr. Wylie concluded the meeting by stating that this site is beyond a destination, it is one of the regional shopping centres of Vancouver and needs to operate as a retail centre.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.