

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** October 27, 2004

**TIME:** 4.00 pm

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Mark Ostry, Chair (Items 1 and 2)  
Jennifer Marshall, Chair (Item 3)  
Larry Adams  
Jeffrey Corbett (excused Item 1)  
Alan Endall  
Marta Farevaag (excused Item 2)  
Margot Long  
Brian Martin

**REGRETS:** Bruce Haden  
Robert Barnes  
Steven Keyes  
Ronald Lea

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1211 Melville Street (575 Bute)
2.	1155 East Broadway (VCC King Edward Campus)
3.	525 West Broadway

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1. Address:	1211 Melville Street (575 Bute)
DE:	408162
Use:	Mixed (33 storeys, 147 units)
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Complete after Preliminary
Architect:	Hancock Bruckner Eng & Wright
Owner:	Mondiale Development Ltd.
Review:	Third
Delegation:	Peter Kreuk, Martin Bruckner, Mike DeCotis
Staff:	Ralph Segal

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#### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-3)

- **Introduction:** Ralph Segal, Development Planner, presented this complete application. The preliminary application was approved in principle by the Development Permit Board in July 2004 with a variety of architectural refinement conditions arising from the Panel's previous advice. The project contains commercial use, townhouses and a significant residential tower. The Development Permit Board approved the proposed height of 339 ft. as well as the density of 6.6 FSR, which includes a ten percent heritage density transfer.

After describing the context, Mr. Segal briefly reviewed the Panel's areas of concern at the preliminary stage which included the treatment of the top of the tower, the overly complex westerly façade, the scale of the Pender Street podium, geometry of the townhouses and relationship to the Melville/Pender diagonal, and how the tower met the ground on Melville Street. In addition to advice on the response to previous concerns, the Panel's comments are sought on the following:

- Response to the revised tower geometry;
  - Relationship of the tower to grade on Melville Street and the Pender/Bute corner at the podium;
  - how the end townhouse module meets the interior property line;
  - the Pender Street podium with respect to its pedestrian scale;
  - overall architectural treatment.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Martin Bruckner, Architect, described the revisions to the scheme, noting the height and footprint remains unchanged. The view analysis has been updated to take into account the new tower shape and a slight improvement to view blockage, in particular from the Orca building, is demonstrated. Peter Kreuk described the landscape plan, noting it has not changed conceptually since the preliminary submission. The applicant team responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

There was positive response to the general resolution of the tower. Design development was recommended all around the base of the building, particularly on the Bute and the corner with respect to the interface between the podium and the sidewalk. Also some further resolution of the Pender Street frontage with respect to improving the rhythm and relieving its monotony.

- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel found the tower much improved, including the top. The strengthening of the tower geometry and the overall simplification of the massing was appreciated. The elimination of the visible breaks in the tower has improved its vertical expression, and the colour of the glass and the black metal framing is a welcome and subtle change in the glazing palette of the downtown core. The further improvement to views was also noted and the applicant was commended on the sensitive approach to view preservation given the challenges of this site.

Concerns were expressed about the relationship of the tower to grade and strengthening the Pender/Bute corner was strongly recommended. In general, the Panel thought the clarity and articulation of the tower was not being followed through in the base of the building. The appropriateness of the tree at the corner was questioned by some Panel members who recommended more special treatment in this location (e.g., seating, public art).

The townhouse modules were generally supported but the Panel agreed there needed to be better reconciliation at the westerly end. The Panel also found the relationship of the townhouses to the tower to be a weak point in need of greater resolution. One Panel member thought the corner brick detail of the end townhouse should repeat the column expression of the other townhouses, and that the brick should continue around the corner. One Panel member commended the applicant for the very urban and somewhat non-residential appearance of the townhouse entries, noting this is still a business district. The expression of the townhouses as separate from the tower was also seen as a positive approach to breaking up the appearance of this large project.

The Panel was concerned that the podium level, despite the good quality materials, lacks some richness or attention to detail. The applicant was urged to consider this very carefully in design development noting that at present it seems to be giving very little back to any of the streets. The Panel also urged that the City should be giving greater consideration to the streetscape in this part of the downtown; something more than just street trees and medallions.

Design development to the building entry was recommended to strengthen the sense of entry and include some seating. It was noted that the large concrete element seems rather imposing next to the entry.

With respect to the Bute streetscape concern was expressed that although it is a wide strip of landscape it is being chopped up into different pieces which works against the attempt to achieve a generous public realm. Recommendations included reducing the grass strip and the large scale of the stepped planters. The planters also seem to restrict pedestrian movement on the sidewalk. Attention to the storefronts was strongly recommended, to ensure that different retailers will be able to adapt and use them in a way that contributes to animation on the street.

The Panel liked the patio roof decks but found the amenity courtyard quite bare and in need of more landscaping. As well as introducing some texture, attention should also be given to programming the space for the use of the residents.

Some Panel members commented on the helpfulness of the perspectives and modeling provided by the applicant but noted it also highlights the need for greater attention to the

public realm. In particular, the massive concrete infrastructure was seen as too harsh and overbearing.

Attention to the Pender Street elevation was recommended in terms of relieving its monotony. Street trees and paving alone are not sufficient to animate this frontage. A suggestion was made that the "eyebrow" needs to be stronger and more of a continuation of the façade to the west, both in the depth of the structure as well as the depth of the columns.

The appropriateness of the red element at the parking entry was questioned by one Panel member.

The sustainability initiatives were applauded. There was also a suggestion to consider extending the balconies as fins on the westerly façade which would help to address solar gain as well as add to the richness of the tower expression.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bruckner appreciated the Panel's comments and said they will work to further improve the project by providing a richer level of detail.

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2. Address:	1155 West Broadway (VCC King Ed Campus)
Use:	School
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Rezoning
Architect:	Stantec
Owner:	Vancouver Community College
Review:	Third (previous Workshops)
Delegation:	Peter Wreglesworth, Rainer Fassler, Larry Waddell, Linda Martin
Staff:	Anita Molaro, Daniel Naundorf

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)**

- **Introduction:** Daniel Naundorf, Planning Analyst, introduced this application, referring to the earlier workshop Panel discussions in March and April 2004. Previous advice of the Panel together with Council policy of protecting public views have informed the urban design principles for this site and these are contained in the policy statement adopted by Council in July 2004. These urban design principles are generally reflected in the form of development presented in this rezoning application. Staff and the applicant have recently completed a good and fairly positive public process around this application. The rezoning application includes two levels of design development: a more fully resolved design at a PDP level for Phase 1, and a more general form of development illustrated for subsequent phases. Subsequent phases will be developed over the next ten to fifteen years according to need and funding availability. The rezoning form of development will be set out in maximum building envelopes for each proposed expansion phase. The total floor area being sought in this master plan is about 63,640 m<sup>2</sup> (685,000 sq.ft.); 2.82 FSR at build-out.

The Panel's advice is sought on the overall density being requested. The application also proposes a variety of new commercial uses such as bookstore, coffee shop, hair salon, bake shop, mental/dental, wellness centre. If these new uses are realized they could contribute to achieving the City objectives of creating an animated campus and community-serving activity node along 7th Avenue. The Panel's advice is sought on these objectives.

Anita Molaro, Development Planner, focused on the form of development issues and briefly highlighted some of the general principles contained in the policy statement. Staff believe the rezoning is proceeding in a positive direction and seek the Panel's advice on some detail elements, as follows:

- the presence of the campus on the Broadway frontage and to what degree it should be incorporated into Phase 1;
  - the proposed services with respect to public interface with the community; whether they should be restricted to campus-serving facilities;
  - 7th Avenue: potential shadow impacts from the taller massing to the south; relationship of the pedestrian bridge to 7th Avenue and the height of the bridge;
  - overall campus legibility and permeability of pedestrian links through the project and connection to the transit links on Glen and Keith.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Rainer Fassler, Architect, briefly described how the Panel's previous advice has been incorporated into the proposal. He sought confirmation from the Panel on the general direction being taken on the massing as well as specific advice on the pedestrian bridge connection and the nature of 7th Avenue through the campus. He noted the issue of strengthening the presence on Broadway has been challenging given the need to preserve the view of the downtown skyline. Their proposed solution is to bring the spine and circulation and entry related functions to this frontage, as

a minor building component. The applicant team then responded to questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

The Panel unanimously supported the rezoning application and noted there has been considerable development and refinement to bring legibility to the campus.

Areas of importance to the Panel included:

- The identification of the campus on Broadway is critical and should be established in Phase 1; this can be achieved with small gestures initially;
- Diversity within the functions and services within the campus should be encouraged (not only food and bookstores);
- If this development is respecting the view corridor the City needs to consider view impacts on the Finning lands;
- The location of the parking entries should be further explored because it seems to conflict with the quality being sought for 7th Avenue;
- Consider refining the higher building elements to the south of 7th Avenue to lessen shadowing on 7th;
- The Panel strongly supported the height of the pedestrian bridge as proposed (5 m);
- The proposed height of the massing adjacent to the park was supported but with advice not to soften this edge too much;
- Sustainability should be embedded in the rezoning.

- **Related Commentary:**

In general, the Panel found the massing to be very well resolved and commented on the positive results of having thorough workshop discussions before presenting the rezoning application. The Panel agreed that all the major issues have been adequately addressed.

The Panel considered the creation of a presence on Broadway to be key to bringing the whole campus together. This should occur in phase one and could include fairly modest gestures such as signage and bringing a canopy out to Broadway. The Panel agreed that currently the presence is very weak and this project needs to contribute much more to Broadway. It needs not only to announce the expanded campus but to provide a clear entry to the central pedestrian spine. The spine is the most important characteristic of the whole project and it is important that it not get lost in subsequent phases of the development.

The Panel supported the direction being taken on 7th Avenue. Its use as a pedestrian link and the heart of the campus should be encouraged and everything should be done to reinforce its pedestrian nature, including different paving materials and traffic calming measures. It must be made evident that it is not a regular street. However, given the objective of making 7th Avenue a pedestrian-dominant street, the Panel seriously questioned the location of the parking entries which will draw a large amount of traffic to the street.

The Panel strongly supported locating the pedestrian bridge as close to the ground as possible and urged that the proposed height of 5 m not be increased.

The proposed uses on 7th Avenue were supported by the Panel. It was agreed they should be campus related services but these can be quite broad given the diversity of programs in the college.

Stepping back the library was supported by the Panel with some concern remaining about its potential shadow impact on 7th Avenue. Further fine-tuning was also recommended to improve shadow impact from the taller office component.

The proposed setbacks adjacent to the neighbouring residential area were supported, as was the height of the massing on the Glen Drive frontage. It was stressed, however, that there is still a need to define the edge of the park, so this edge should not be softened too much.

The Panel fully supported the accessible green roof areas as an extension of the park.

With respect to view preservation, it was recognized that future development of lands to the north will have as much impact on views as this development. Preservation of the view corridor on these sites will also need to be taken into account by the City.

With respect to sustainability, the Panel suggested this educational facility should try to be a model for sustainable design.

- **Applicant's Response:** Peter Wreglesworth thanked the Panel for the thoughtful comments and said it is satisfying to have worked through workshops with the Panel to reach this stage. He agreed they will need to explore the potential for "less to be more" with respect to reinforcing a Broadway presence and agreed there is opportunity to look at it quite creatively. Mr. Fassler was also appreciative of the consultative process. He noted the location of the parking entries is difficult to resolve because their traffic consultant has determined it is not desirable to locate them on Glen or Keith, but he agreed it will be studied further.

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3. Address:	525 West Broadway
DE:	408752
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	C-3A
Application Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	Busby & Associates
Owner:	PCI Holdings Corporation
Review:	First
Delegation:	Peter Busby, David Dove
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

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**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)**

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this application to redevelop the site at the northwest corner of Cambie and Broadway. The project proposes a drug store (36,000 sq.ft.) on Broadway and a grocery store (54,000 sq.ft.) off the lower 8th Avenue corner, and three restaurants with associated outdoor decks. The existing Royal Bank branch will be relocated in a similar location. 1.0 FSR of office space is also proposed and 0.085 FSR residential use for a total density of 3.3 FSR which includes a ten percent heritage density transfer. Parking and loading is off 8th Avenue. The C-3A zone permits an outright density of 1.0 FSR, relaxable up to 3.0 FSR. The application also seeks a height relaxation from the outright permitted 30 ft. to approximately 95 ft. The site is affected by a number of view corridors which this proposal respects.

An entry to the future RAV line is expected to be incorporated into the corner of this development. It is also proposed to treat the Broadway/Cambie intersection as an open plaza to enhance the public realm.

The Panel is asked to consider how this application earns the relaxations being sought, including residential livability, as well as comments on the variation from the guidelines with respect to the massing on Broadway. Staff are seeking some aspect of sustainability such as storm water retention. Building character is expected to be resolved at the complete development application stage.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Peter Busby, Architect, stressed the project is a "work in progress" at this PDP stage, with a number of issues not yet resolved, including the character of the urban edge from the second floor down, the corner entry area and resolution of the entrance to the major retail function. He sought the Panel's advice with respect to the height and basic composition of the buildings, the use and density. With respect to sustainability measures, Mr. Busby advised this is being discussed with the client and will be determined at the complete development application stage. He briefly reviewed the project and responded to questions from the Panel.
- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
  - The streetscape treatment should be maximized, including street trees wherever possible and to ensure that street trees are not sacrificed in favour of private entrances or bus stops;
  - There is a need for realistic development of the private open space, particularly the space between the two building forms;



- Some suggestions to maintain the existing pedestrian short-cut through the site, especially given the shape of the building forms seems to set this up; other suggestions to consider creating a quiet oasis for general public use;
  - Interest and potential support for the concept of special treatment of the intersection but noting a preference that funds are spent on the pedestrian realm as opposed to vehicles;
  - Major concern about the storefront treatment and a need to ensure interaction with the public, noting the tendency for large retailers to close off their storefronts; Signage will also need to be carefully considered;
  - General concern about the impact of RAV on the design of the building. This could be a positive impact provided care is taken to ensure the best location and treatment and to address conflicting pedestrian traffic movements and way-finding.
- **Related Commentary:**

The Panel unanimously supported this application and had no concerns about the proposed density and height. Some Panel members suggested it could be higher from an urban design point of view although acknowledged the view corridors preclude this.

The mix of uses was strongly supported and the Panel thought the project had the potential to be a vibrant and energetic place. One Panel member questioned the appropriateness of residential use in this location but the majority supported it as a good transition to the neighbouring Fairview Slopes residential neighbourhood.

The Panel strongly supported the proposed setbacks. The variation from the Guidelines with respect to the percentage of massing on the Broadway frontage was also supported. A stronger streetwall on Broadway was seen as very positive. There was a recommendation to look at ways to punctuate the façade on Broadway, at the next stage of design development.

Concerns were expressed about the streetscape and the ability to achieve a double row of street trees and street furniture given Translink's tendency to discourage these elements at major transit nodes. The Panel urged the applicant to do everything possible to ensure that as many trees and other elements as possible are included to help animate the street. Careful attention should be given to tree spacing, noting that some of the gaps appear to be created for the benefit of retail entries, which is strongly discouraged. As a contribution to sustainability, measures should also be taken to ensure the ongoing health of the trees at the time of planting.

The Panel was intrigued by the idea of special treatment at the intersection but was unsure what form this would take. The Panel will look forward to seeing this concept more fully developed at the complete application stage. It was agreed that this is currently an unpleasant intersection in need of some calming. Several Panel members suggested reducing lane widths rather than decorative paving in the middle of the street which may not be effective.

The Panel had concerns about the semi private and private open space and suggested they are not very usable. The applicant was strongly urged to give more attention to this aspect of the scheme. In particular, the space between the two building forms is neither very usable nor well programmed. Some concerns were expressed about potential livability issues created by the 80 ft. separation.

The potential of the RAV station in this location raised some concerns for the Panel because it could dramatically alter the public realm as currently shown. There was some frustration expressed that it is difficult to comment on this aspect of the scheme when its precise location and treatment of pedestrian flows to and from the station to the bus stops is not clear. Some Panel members recommended pulling the building back at the corner to create a plaza with sufficient room for seating and a place where RAV passengers can get their bearings before entering the pedestrian flow on the street. Other suggestions were to move the RAV station away from the corner in favour of a less prominent location.

Some members of the Panel regretted the loss of the existing pedestrian connection through this site. The plan seems to indicate a memory of the walkway and the wedge shape itself creates this expectation. A comment was made that there is also the beginning of what could be a very inviting landscaped open space which, if accessible to the public, could be an urban oasis.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Busby thanked the Panel for its input.