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**URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES**

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**DATE:** October 31, 2001

**TIME:** 2.30 p.m.

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Walter Francl (Chair)  
Jeffrey Corbett  
Gerry Eckford  
Alan Endall  
Bruce Hemstock  
Richard Henry  
Joseph Hruda (Item #2 only)  
Maurice Pez

**REGRETS:** Lance Berelowitz  
Tom Bunting  
Jack Lutsky  
Sorin Tatomir

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	1250 West 6th Avenue
2.	1050 Smithe Street

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| 1. Address:         | 1250 West 6th Avenue                        |
| DA:                 | 406186                                      |
| Use:                | Residential                                 |
| Zoning:             | FM-1  |
| Application Status: | Complete                                    |
| Architect:          | Nigel Baldwin                               |
| Owner:              | Listraor Developments Inc.                  |
| Review:             | First                                       |
| Delegation:         | Nigel Baldwin, Craig Rowland, Damon Oriente |
| Staff:              | Mary Beth Rondeau                           |
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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this application for a residential development in the FM-1 zone of Fairview Slopes. The proposal comprises a row of townhouse units facing the street and a second row on the lane, with a courtyard between. Access is from the street and the lane. The site has a frontage of 100 ft. and has a significant slope of about 20-25 ft. In FM-1, multiple dwelling is a conditional use and the maximum density allowed is 0.6 FSR, relaxable up to 1.5 FSR. The additional density may be earned by adherence to applicable policies and guidelines, consideration of the nature and size of the site, the adequacy of open space, overall design and provision of amenities that result in community benefits. The application seeks a relaxation up to 1.5 FSR. The main issue on which the advice of the Panel is sought relates to the guideline recommendation for a view slot for sites of 30.5 m. Although this site is less than an inch smaller than 30.5 m and therefore does not, technically, require a view slot, the comments of the Panel are sought given the relaxation being requested and the sensitivity of views in this area. The project does, however, provide a view “wedge” at the westerly end of the site, to the benefit of the three residential behind which will maintain views from their upper floor balconies.
- **Applicant’s Opening Comments:** Nigel Baldwin, Architect, noted this is a very traditional, mid-block 100 ft. site in Fairview Slopes. As such, they do not consider the view slot is necessary. He briefly described the neighbouring developments and noted that if the centre section of the building is lowered it will provide no view benefit to anyone. Furthermore, the increase in height at the sides that would be necessary to compensate would seriously impact the neighbours’ views. The proposed view wedge, however, preserves the view for the three units behind. Mr. Baldwin briefly described the project’s design rationale and noted that, at the inquiry stage, he received the Planning Department’s support for the proposed view wedge. Damon Oriente, Landscape Architect, briefly reviewed the landscape plan.
- **Panel’s Comments:** The Panel unanimously supported this application which it found attractive and straightforward. The project is well executed and it skilfully handles a difficult site by managing to step down the slope while considering the neighbours behind.

The Panel unanimously supported the applicant’s rationale for providing the view “wedge” as opposed to a view slot: It is more responsive and accomplishes everything and more that view slots are intended for.

The only minor suggestion related to the central outdoor corridor. At only 22 ft. apart, it is quite tight between the buildings and although the planting is contributing a lot to provide some character, the

building walls themselves might add to this with some modulation rather than being very “crisp” and aligned as proposed.

Overall, the Panel was very complimentary about this scheme and thought it would be a very nice addition to this part of West 6th Avenue. Panel members considered the application had earned the relaxations being requested.

- **Applicant’s Response:** Mr. Baldwin thanked the Panel for its comments.

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2. Address:	1050 Smithe Street
DA:	406228
Use:	Residential (20 storeys, 124 units)
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Preliminary
Architect:	Studio One
Owner:	Haro Hotel Development Ltd.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Tomas Wolf, Jonathan Losee
Staff:	Mary Beth Rondeau

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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-1)

- **Introduction:** Mary Beth Rondeau, Development Planner, presented this application, noting there are two previously approved development permits for this site (in 1996 and 1999) which were not pursued. The triangular shaped site is on the curved section of Smithe Street where it meets Haro Street, leading to the West End. The site is on a well used pedestrian route from the West End to the Downtown and while the site is part of the DD ODP, across the lane and many surrounding areas are in the RM-5 West End residential zone. The previously approved application was for a hotel with residential above. This proposal is an all residential project and its massing is very similar to the previously approved scheme. The application seeks the maximum FSR of 6.0. As well, an additional 10 percent heritage density transfer is being requested. This is allowable in the DD zone and was achieved by the previously approved application.

Given the all-residential use now being proposed there are a number of issues relating to the ground plane. The hotel proposal had a circular driveway and restaurant use on the ground floor. In this instance, staff support access from Smithe Street as opposed to the lane because it is higher, but recommend only one curb cut. This application proposes amenity space on the ground floor and while staff acknowledge this to be a questionable location for retail, it raises some concerns about street animation. Open space has been provided on the narrow end of the site, also noting a peculiarity of this site is the existence of a BC Transit rectifier station in this location, mostly underground, for which there is an easement. A similar open space was proposed in the earlier scheme but is slightly enlarged in this proposal given the residential use.

Areas in which the Panel's advice is sought include:

- general comments on use and density;
  - appropriateness of the resolution of the building massing; and
  - ground plane resolution.
- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Tomas Wolf, Architect, explained the design rationale. The landscape plan was also reviewed.
  - **Panel's Comments:** The Panel strongly supported this application provided there is the opportunity to see it again at the complete stage. In a separate vote, the Panel unanimously supported the complete submission being returned to the Panel.

The Panel supported the proposed density, including the proposed heritage density transfer.

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There was a lot of commentary about the importance of the view down Smithe Street from the downtown. While acknowledging that this is a preliminary scheme, some Panel members commented that the previously approved application had addressed this very well in its massing and detail. In general, it was felt that greater attention should be given to finding a creative way to visually terminate the Smithe street-end vista. One suggestion was to look at the southernmost edge of the building at the southeast corner where the vertical bay could be more strongly pronounced to mark it as close as possible to the centre of the Smithe Street alignment.

The Panel also stressed the importance of reinforcing the street edge along Smithe Street, with some Panel members recommending a strong architectural expression with some vertical dimension, as well as landscape. The suggestion was for some element, perhaps a colonnade with large punched holes, extending from the north edge to the south edge of the property. This could also serve as a subtle screen and create a semi private space for the residents. It was noted that Smithe Street is a strong pedestrian route which needs to be acknowledged.

There was general support for the principal residential use although a number of Panel members suggested restaurant use at grade would be a viable option in this location. Several Panel members questioned whether the amenity patio would be of much benefit to the building, suggesting it would likely be largely unused. There was one suggestion to move the amenity spaces up onto the second level, perhaps cantilevering over the BC Transit rectifiers, then terracing down into the public open space at the corner.

The Panel was divided on the issue of the curb cuts, with some members seeing no problem with the two cuts proposed and others preferring one. The Panel acknowledged the necessity to come in off Haro Street as opposed to the lane. Several members recommended offsetting the driveway entrance and avoiding the straight-in approach to the parkade. This would provide an opportunity to create a landscape buffer along the street edge. Other suggestions were to narrow the driveway and have one-way in and one-way out.

In general it was thought the operation of the entry, loading and garbage was unresolved and needed to be looked at more closely at the next stage. With respect to garbage, one suggestion was to consider having the garbage drop-off at the P1 level.

With respect to the massing, the Panel found the overall massing and density to be acceptable. There were, however, some reservations expressed about the architectural expression, particularly relating to the top of the building, and some of the materials currently presented. At the next stage of development, the Panel will be looking for more development of the architectural expression both at the top of the building and at grade.

The Panel acknowledged that this is a difficult site with a number of challenges. It is an unusual peninsula with a peculiar intersection of streets diverging from one grid to another. Although this is a very preliminary submission, the Panel had concerns that the architecture had not achieved the level of sophistication of the previous scheme. Given the prominence of this site the design details will be very critical at the complete development permit stage.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Wolf had nothing to add and thanked the Panel for its comments.

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