

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: October 8, 2008

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
Martin Nielsen
Walter Francl
Gerry Eckford
David Godin

REGRETS:
Douglas Watts
Albert Bicol
Maurice Pez
Richard Henry
Mark Ostry

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	311 East 33 rd Avenue
2.	428 Terminal Avenue
3.	3333 Main Street
4.	Passive Design Best Practices Guide Presentation and Review 90% Draft

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: 311 East 33rd Avenue
DE: 412351
Description: To construct a 24-unit townhouse complex in 6 buildings all over 1 level of underground parking.
Zoning: CD-1
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Hywel Jones Architect Ltd.
Owner: Springbank Development (33rd) Corp.
Review: Second (after rezoning - July 18/07)
Delegation: Hywel Jones, Hywel Jones Architect Ltd.
Rod Maruyama, Maruyama & Associates
Alan Forrester, Springbank Development
John Ritchie, Springbank Development
Staff: Dale Morgan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (6-0)

- **Introduction:** Dale Morgan, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a Neighbourhood Housing Demonstration Project which includes 24 dwelling units contained in 8 row-houses, two triplexes and two five-plexes. There are a range of unit types (one to three storeys) and sizes (900 to 1500 sq. ft); 26 parking spaces, including 22 underground, two in a garage on the lane and two co-op spaces on the lane. Mr. Morgan described the site and area context noting the single family mix of older character homes in the neighbourhood. Mr. Morgan also described the rezoning conditions.

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

- Has the application successfully met the rezoning conditions, in particular Conditions 3 and 4:

Rezoning Conditions:

1. design development to improve neighbourliness by increasing the front and side yard setbacks and adding additional landscaping to the side yards;
Note to Applicant: The front yard setback should be a minimum of 16 ft (4.9m) to allow for a better transition between the deeper setbacks of the adjacent buildings. The side yards should be a minimum of 6 ft (1.8m) to improve separation and privacy between neighbours, enhanced with layered planting.
2. clarification on the drawings, indicating window size and location on the reflected elevations of the neighbouring buildings;
Note to Applicant: Proposed window locations facing the side yard should not align or overlook neighbour's windows.
3. design development to the roof form of the buildings facing East 33rd Avenue, reducing the mass and scale and with better integration of the third floor into the roof form;
Note to Applicant: Proposed window locations facing the side yard should not align or overlook neighbour's windows.
4. design development to the building character, improving the consistency of roof form, building massing, material treatment and detail for all buildings;
Note to Applicant: The buildings should all appear to be of the same "family", with similar building massing and roof form, high quality materials and detail embellishment, consistently applied to all building elevations. Proposed materials

- should have a dimensional thickness. Vinyl siding for example is not supported. Provide elevations of all building sides indicating proposed materials.
5. design development to improve on site pedestrian circulation and stair access to the parking level, increasing the circulation area at the top of the centre access stair and modifying the site plan to allow direct on site access to the access stair, north east corner of the site;
Note to Applicant: Enlarge pedestrian circulation area at the top of the centre stair without reducing or compromising landscaping or circulation area to the immediate north of the stair well. Stair at north east corner of the site needs to be accessible without leaving the site. Consider relocating stair and parking ramp to improve access and overall use of shared outdoor amenity space.
 6. design development to provide a weather protected cover over all open stairs and a trellis enclosure over the vehicle ramp to the underground parking structure;
Note to Applicant: The stairs and the exposed parking ramp should be well integrated with the overall landscaping.

Mr. Morgan took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Hywel Jones, Architect, further described the proposal noting that they have increased the side yards setbacks as well as the front yard setback. There is now more direct access through the site with a winding path that ties into the open space. The access to the parkade has also been made more legible. There is a garage on the lane with a couple of co-op stalls. The elevation on East 33rd Avenue was originally a single gable and has been reworked with a double gable roof. Mr. Jones noted that that the project will be built under the "Built Green" initiative.

Rod Maruyama, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans noting the garden plots and planters. He added that an arborist's report on neighbouring trees is pending.

John Ritchie, Springbank Development, explained the "Built Green" program. He noted that it is a program from the Canadian Home Builder's Association and has been included in the Vancouver EcoDensity Charter as one of the two programs the City is accepting under EcoDensity.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to the rear units;
 - Consider removing one of the garden plots to make more room for seating;
 - Consider improving wayfinding to the units for guests by more strongly signifying the unit's front entries.
 - Consider improving accessibility in the courtyard and to ground oriented suites.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the project and thought it was greatly improved since the first review.

The Panel liked the project noting that the East 33rd Avenue elevation was more elegant than the original "A" frame elevation at the first review. Several Panel members thought the rear units could use some design development as they looked a little sparse. They suggested bringing the apparent height of the side elevation down or skirting the rear units on the side or back. A couple of Panel members thought accessibility could be improved especially from the back lane.

The Panel thought people would live in the development for a long time and agreed that the privacy and livability issues had been improved. They also thought the unit layouts were well done. One Panel member suggested having an arrival area for guests and suggested adding one in the central courtyard. One panel member noted that the front doors to some of the units was hidden from the central common area and thought more work could be done to improve wayfinding and the legibility of suite entries. Another Panel member thought there needed to be more recycling bins.

A couple of Panel members noted that this type of housing was not likely to be built again in the city, although other versions may occur and they wanted to encourage this type of infill where ever possible. The Panel agreed that the architectural form was appropriate for the neighbourhood.

A couple of Panel members thought not having an irrigation system would be a challenge for the landscaping considering the number of plantings that are under eaves. It was also suggested that perhaps the planting at the front should be removed as it breaks up the front yard and does not allow for street trees. Several Panel members also suggested that the last garden plot be given to an area for seating and a place for residents to congregate. One Panel member thought a storm water management system should be considered.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Jones thanked the Panel for their good comments.

2. Address:	428 Terminal Avenue
DE:	412351
Description:	To construct a general office/information technology/wholesale building .
Zoning:	I-3
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Kasian Architecture Interior Design and Planning
Owner:	Rize Alliance (Terminal Building) Inc.
Review:	First
Delegation:	Joanne Stich, Kasian Architecture Interior Design and Planning Scott Douglas, Kasian Architecture Interior Design and Planning Jeff Cutler, Space2place Design Inc. Landscape Architects Rob Lin, Rize Alliance Properties
Staff:	Dale Morgan

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-1)

- **Introduction:** Dale Morgan, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a site in the False Creek Flats area. The proposal is for a 5-storey mixed-use structure comprising of office, information technology and wholesale uses with 2 levels of underground parking with some parking at grade. This is a phased development with the first phase seeking a density of 1 FSR. The development is seeking compliance with LEED™ Gold including geothermal heating. Mr. Morgan described the surrounding area noting that the site is an entire block surrounded by Terminal Avenue, Scotia Street, Thornton Street and the rail yards. There is also a bicycle route along the southern side of the site. Terminal Avenue has a mixture of building types from low-rise to high-rise with some older character buildings. The public realm is challenged as some of the building frontages are lacking windows and public amenities. Mr. Morgan described the uses under the By-law noting the intent for the area is to permit high-technology and related industry and also light industrial uses. An outright height of 60 feet and a conditional height of 100 feet is permitted for the site with the proposed height at 88.5 feet. The Guidelines call for continuous sidewalks, a double row of trees and street furniture which are being proposed by the applicant. In addition the applicant is supplying a pedestrian connection mid-block where two groupings of mechanical vents are located. The applicant is proposing capless glass (curtain wall system), architectural concrete for the base treatment and middle panels of various colours, sun louvers outboard of the exterior wall on the south, east and west exposures.

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

Massing:

- General comments are requested on the overall massing.

Expression & Materials:

- The main entry is not highly visible from the street, in particular looking from the east. Comments requested.
- Further clarification is requested on the "capless" windows, confirming this is a curtain wall system.

Public Realm:

- Exposed mechanical shafts are located mid block in the pedestrian linkage. Can these be better integrated with the landscaping or relocated?
- Temporary parking - is it well integrated with the landscape?

Mr. Morgan took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Joanne Stich, Architect, gave an overview on how they arrived at the architectural expression for the project. She noted that the Guidelines suggested the "area should take its queues from its industrial past and high tech future". The building will be experienced from Terminal Avenue, the SkyTrain, and by the user. Ms. Stich noted that they also work-shopped with the owner, leasing agents and marketing people who will be talking to the potential users. From a user point of view they are looking at the building as a business campus and decided to include an atrium space where people can interact. Since the area is a transportation hub with the rail-yard, Ms. Stich noted that the context for the area is containers which gave them the idea of designing a campus of containers. They were able to express something a bit more high tech on the front of the building. Smaller container expressions or forms are at the base of the building. The south and north sides of the building have been treated differently. The south side at grade is where the functional aspects of the building will be handled (recycling, loading area, etc). Ms. Stich described the sustainable aspects of the building which include the use of geothermal, sunshades along the south façade, high efficiency clear glazing and a roof system to minimize heat gain.

Jeff Cutler, Landscape Architect, further described the landscape plans noting that the focus is the central courtyard. The landscaping will play off the hard edges of the building with softer, more organic forms. The entry is setback for a more private space with seating nodes. A series of berms have been introduced in the phase 2 site and provides screening for the parking area as well as some interest in the landscape. The planting choices are drought tolerant and change with the seasons. An outdoor roof deck integrates some precast planter elements.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider a stronger differentiation of the main massing elements especially around the atrium and entry;
 - Provide passive shading elements to the west facing all glass façade element;
 - Design development to improve the legibility of the entry; and
 - Consider adding more useable space on the roof.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal and thought the form and expression was appropriate for the location noting that the building would add a lot to Terminal Avenue.

The Panel supported the overall urban design concept and liked the idea of the skewed "containers" on the site responding to the different environmental conditions. However the panel recommended that the applicant team provide a design rationale for the courtyard and the future development on the east side of the site. It was noted that it was difficult for the panel to evaluate the proposed courtyard and main building entry with out understanding the site design for the complete project.

The Panel also supported the general expression of the building especially the southern façade. They strongly supported the stacking of the skewed box on top of the concrete box at the entry pavilion. As well there was strong support for the proposed materials. One Panel member suggested that the box form could "pop out" more as it seemed to blend into the base and thought it should be expressed more strongly. Most of the Panel liked the coloured wall with one Panel member suggested adding more colour in the building. Some of the Panel thought the atrium could use some work noting that there could be more differentiation between the pieces and that the slab edges would be visible outside the building. They thought the detailing was going to be important.

One Panel member thought the loading area could be better expressed. Another Panel member thought there was some confusion regarding the mechanical shafts. If they are flush to the ground they will have a negative impact on the integrity of the plaza. It was suggested the vents should be higher and be given a sculptural expression.

The Panel was not convinced that the entry was in the right location with several Panel members suggesting the atrium could be flipped around to the Northwest corner. The panel noted that northwest corner of the building read as an entry and there could be confusion for couriers and clients as they looked for the building's main entry. They felt the east facing entry was not visible to east bound traffic on Terminal Avenue and also didn't seem to be starting a relationship with the future building across the courtyard. Most of the Panel thought the north-west corner read as the main entrance. One Panel member suggested that either there should be a stronger courtyard entry or recognize the west corner as the logical address for the whole site.

Several Panel members thought it was a missed opportunity to not have more roof top access and also thought there should be a 50% green roof. One Panel member noted that the west façade looked like the east façade and thought there should be some fins to mitigate solar gain.

Regarding the public realm, most of the Panel thought the ground plane worked well. One Panel member suggested having a break in the trees on Terminal Avenue as a natural opening to the entry courtyard. Also it was suggested adding a temporary edge condition around the parking lot and orienting the parking to be parallel to the south access street.

- **Applicant's Response:** Ms. Stich thanked the Panel for their feedback. She said they would look at how to reprogram the roof as well as the entry way.

3. Address:	3333 Main Street
DE:	412221
Description:	To construct a new 5-storey mixed-use building with townhouses, 1 storey of retail and 2 levels of underground parking.
Zoning:	C-2
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden Architects
Owner:	Bastion Development Corporation
Review:	First
Delegation:	Joost Bakker, Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden Architects Chris Phillips, Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg Kim Maust, Bastion Development Corporation
Staff:	Sailen Black

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-1)

- **Introduction:** Sailen Black, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a five-storey mixed use building with retail at grade, residential above and seven two-level townhouses on the lane. Mr. Black described the surrounding area including zoning and site context. A small parkette owned by the City sits along the curve of Main Street and East 18th Avenue. Mr. Black noted that Engineering Services supported the removal of the road between the parkette and the curb and there is significant community interest in seeing the currently underutilized open space be developed into a real community amenity.

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

1. Earning of additional height;
2. Design of the townhouses facing the lane;
3. Proposed public and semi-public spaces, including:
 - use and treatment of corner open space, as well as roadway and parking lanes
 - east-west passageway through building
 - vehicle access along lane
4. Main Street façade character and visual scale.

Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Kim Maust, Bastion Development, said they were excited about the project as it's a unique location for their development company. One of the things they focused on in the building was to provide a mix of housing. There will be 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units to provide an affordable choice to the market. They will also be making sure there is viable commercial space. They are looking at a number of sustainable features and are at about a mid point LEED™ Silver and with four more points they will make LEED™ Gold. The solar panels and solar shading a large part of the sustainability along with heat recovery from the commercial space.

Joost Bakker, Architect, further described the proposal using the context and architectural models. He noted that Main Street is a unique and colourful street and their intent was to reflect that in the building design. Mr. Bakker added that they saw an opportunity to offer a variety of housing types including lane housing (townhouses). The entry to the residents is in the throughway which he feels is an important feature for liveability. The proposed building comprises a full block residential building using non-combustible construction (steel and concrete) with pre-painted anodized aluminum metal paneling and a spandrel glass treatment on the top of the building.

Chris Phillips, Landscape Architect, described the landscape plans noting the park along Main Street and the recent improvements to make the street more of a pedestrian friendly environment. The approach is to make for a friendly lane and they are looking at putting permeable pavement down the middle of the lane to make for a green lane. A green roof is planned for the south-west side of the building. They plan on making a statement on the Main Street side of the building using lots of pots with drip irrigation. There are a number of sustainable initiatives including collecting water from the roof and storing it for irrigation in the basement.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Work with Engineering Services for a viable solution for the slipway and pocket park;
 - Improve pedestrian experience in the passage way by diminishing vehicle conflicts; and
 - Design development to ground floor retail and to the architectural transition between ground and second floors.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the height conditionally on the quality of public realm coming through. The Panel thought it was an interesting and engaging solution and supported the long architectural expression of the building noting that anything else would have looked chopped up. They thought the end elevations facing the side streets were animated and well designed and that more of that language could be applied to the front facade. They particularly liked the application of colour and thought the project earned the additional height but it was somewhat conditional on the quality of the public realm coming through. They also thought the townhouses were attractive and liked the small courtyard at the front door but had some concerns regarding privacy. One Panel member suggested adding a privacy screen or additional plantings.

Several members emphasized the importance of working with Engineering Services to achieve the detailed design proposed for the pocket park area. The Panel thought there should be a fall back position for an approvable design that Engineering Services will support that looks at taking out the slipway or drop off and has a pocket park that engages the building.

The Panel liked the east-west passage way through the building but said more design development was needed to improve brightness and openness, and to reduce traffic conflicts. Some Panel members suggested segregating the car and pedestrian traffic and to consider the how car headlights would be disruptive to the pedestrian realm in the evening

Several Panel members noted that the project could benefit from some design development from the slab edge between the residential and retail noting that the retail didn't have much distinction and could use a stronger horizontal expression. The slab edge, the anodized aluminum and canopy are all the same colour. The applicant was encouraged to go further and think about improving the retail base of the building and to increase the height of the retail at the south end. A couple of Panel members suggested emphasizing the canopies and encouraged the applicant to try to get away from a single retail tenant. There was also some concern regarding signage noting that the applicant didn't indicate where they would be applied.

The Panel encouraged the applicant to find an opportunity to break up the corridor and make it shorter and also suggested they look for an opportunity to bring light into that corridor.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Bakker noted that this was their first time working with Bastion Development. He said he agreed with the Panel regarding working with Engineering Services around the slip way adding that he wants to make an interesting streetscape. He said they aren't there yet with regards to the retail and haven't looked at signage. There are glass windows at both ends of the corridor which should bring some light into the area and he plans to keep the colours of the floor, walls and ceilings the same colour to help with more light.

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4. Address: Passive Design Best Practices Guide Presentation and Review 90%
Draft
DE: Non-Voting Workshop
Description: Returning to discuss feedback and input regarding the Passive Design Best Practices Guide booklet.
Zoning: N/A
Application Status: N/A
Architect: Cobalt Engineering and Hughes Condon Marler Architects
Review: Second
Delegation: Michel with Hughes
Beth,
Staff: David Ramslie/Rachel Moscovich
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EVALUATION: NON-VOTING

Presentation was cancelled and moved to the November 5, 2008 Urban Design Panel meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.