

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: September 21, 2011

TIME: N/A

PLACE: N/A

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Robert Barnes
Helen Besharat
Gregory Borowski
Jeff Corbett
Jane Durante (Items #1 & #2)
Alan Endall
Jim Huffman
Arno Matis (Absent for Item #1)
Geoff McDonell
Scott Romses (Chair)
Norm Shearing (Items #1)
Alan Storey

REGRETS: James Cheng

RECORDING SECRETARY: Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

1.	2298 Galt Street
2.	1600 Beach Avenue and 1651 Harwood Street
3.	1077 Great Northern Way

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Romses 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:** 2298 Galt Street
DE: Rezoning
Use: The purpose of the rezoning is to allow the construction of a 4-storey residential building consisting of four principal dwelling units and one secondary dwelling unit. A maximum floor space ration (FSR) of 1.19 and maximum height of 11.79 meters (38.7 feet) are proposed. The rezoning application will be considered in the context of the Norquay Village Neighbourhood Centre Plan.
Zoning: RS-1 to CD-1
Application Status: Rezoning
Review: First
Architect: PH5 Architecture
Delegation: Peeroj Thakre, PH5 Architecture
 Sarah Neault, PH5 Architecture
 Daryl Tyacke, Eckford & Associates
Staff: Paul Cheng and Grant Miller

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (10-0)**Introduction:**

Grant Miller, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a 4-storey residential building containing four townhouse dwelling units with the potential for one lock-off suite. Mr. Miller gave the land use policy background noting that the site falls within the Norquay Village Community Plan area which will be rezoned to allow for 4-storey low-rise apartments. Upon adoption of the Plan, staff were directed to develop a new district schedule for the area which would allow developments with a maximum height of forty-five feet and two or more exterior exposures per dwelling unit. Mr. Miller stated that since the application was received in June of this year, the City's Green Building's policy requires registration for LEED™ Gold with a minimum of 63 points including six energy points, one water efficiency point, one stormwater point and proof of application for certification. Mr. Miller added that the proposal should be considered as a response to a new transitional scaled apartment form for the zones between Kingsway blocks and nearby single family zones, applied to a small site.

Paul Cheng, Development Planner, further described the proposal and explained the future zoning context for the surrounding area. The site is wider than normal and all the units have at least three exposures for cross ventilation. The building on the lane is a little bit lower than the front building in consideration of the liveability for the adjacent properties across the lane. Two parking spaces will be provided off the side lane and two parking spaces will be provided off the back lane. Mr. Cheng added that because it is a rezoning the proposal is required to attain LEED™ Gold certification.

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

- Taking into consideration the intention for a 4-storey apartment building form in this emerging zone, is this proposal an appropriate model for single lot development, and that it will be visually compatible with the 4-storey apartment along the future envisioned streetscape for this new zone.

Mr. Miller and Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Peeroj Thakre, Architect, further described the proposal noting the height of their building will be four storeys however the main level floor to ceiling height is only eight foot eight inches whereas new buildings will be at ten feet so they will look taller than this project. In terms of materials they will be using stucco and wood siding as a transition between the character and materials of Kingsway developments and the adjacent single family zones. Ms. Thakre added that they are all three bedroom units with one unit having a legal secondary suite.

Daryl Tyacke, Landscape Architect gave a presentation on the landscaping for the proposal. He mentioned that they are wrapping the street treatment around to the side lane to give it more of a residential feel. All the plant material is either native or native adapted. Some small trees will be added to the courtyard to provide some summer time screening between the units. Mr. Tyacke added that they are looking at getting an irrigation designer involved in the project.

The applicant team took questions for the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Consider softening the expression on the north building to make it less boxy.
- Consider some design development to the courtyard to make it more useable.
- Consider allowing for flexibility of other uses for the garages.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the proposal and thought it was an appropriate model and would fit well into the emerging neighbourhood.

The Panel agreed that it was a well developed scheme and thought the two building typologies would fit nicely with the "alphabet" apartment forms that will be developed in the future. One Panel member noted that the form makes it look like two houses. A couple of Panel members thought the north building had a more articulated shape than the south building and could use some softening of the expression. Noting that it was a tight site, the Panel agreed that it was fortunate that there was a dual lane which helps with the parking accesses and amount of density achievable.

The Panel thought the suite layouts were well done. One Panel member suggested differentiating the glazing sizes based on orientation and as well increase the glazing on the lane side for more natural light. Another Panel member suggested adding more windows into the garage space. A couple of Panel members thought the garages could be used as an art studio or children's play area if the residents weren't using it to park their car.

The Panel liked the courtyard space and suggested the applicant push the design some more. One Panel member suggested giving the rear units more useable space by removing the stairs. As well, having less circulation and more plantings could improve the space. Another Panel member suggested roof decks or a green roof and as well the front yard needed to be a more personal and useable space.

The Panel agreed that the project was well handled and didn't need to come back to the Urban Design Panel at the development permit stage.

Applicant's Response:

Ms. Thakre thanked the Panel and said she appreciated the comments.

2.	Address:	1600 Beach Avenue and 1651 Harwood Street
	DE:	Rezoning
	Use:	To rezone 1600 Beach Avenue and 1651 Harwood Street from Multiple Residential District (RM-5A) to Comprehensive Development District (CD-1); to add a total of 137 dwelling units to these sites.
	Zoning:	RM-5A to CD-1
	Application Status:	Rezoning
	Review:	First
	Architect:	IBI/HB Architects
	Delegation:	Martin Bruckner, IBI/HB Architects Gwyn Vose, IBI/HB Architects Cameron Owen, IBI Group
	Staff:	Anita Molaro and Michael Naylor

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (4-6)

Introduction:

Ms. Molaro introduced the proposal to rezone the site from RM-5A to CD-1 to allow an increase in the density beyond that permitted under the current zoning. She gave an overview of the site noting that it was developed in the late 1950's. The rezoning is considered under the city-wide STIR initiative to increase the amount of rental stock within the city. Ms. Molaro added that the existing rental units on the site will be retained. Regarding the Green Rezoning Policy, the proposal needs to seek a minimum of LEED™ Gold or equivalent, registration with CaGBC is also required but certification is not. Ms. Molaro explained that the rezoning proposal consists of two sites: Parcel A (1600 block of Beach Avenue between Cardero and Bidwell Streets) and Parcel B (midblock along Harwood Street, across from Parcel A). The intent of the zoning is to permit a variety of residential developments with emphasis on achieving development with respect to streetscape character, open spaces, view retention, sunlight access and privacy. Ms. Molaro described the context for the sites noting the height of the surrounding buildings. She also gave a history of the site noting that Beach Towers is one of Vancouver's best known and iconic rental housing complexes. The existing complex has 607 rental units in the four towers on two sites. The existing towers range in height between 19 and 21 floors. The towers have distinct architectural expressions based on a similar sized floor plate, geometric floor plates (cruciform, octagon and decagon in plan, full height ribbed concrete walls and concave balconies). Ms. Molaro added that Beach Towers is on the City's recent Landmark List. While the application is not pursuing any heritage benefits, staff and the applicant are working together to have the sites added to the Heritage Register.

Ms. Molaro stated that the proposal will add 107,000 square feet of rental housing onto the sites (132 new units, 72 of which are 2 bedrooms) and an increase of 102 parking stalls.

Parcel A: This addition is for a 4-storey building fronting Beach Avenue with 2-storey townhouses filling in the frontage of the existing parking structure. The upper two storeys of massing will be pulled back to help maintain the slot views through the podium from Harwood Street. The larger building will be 9-storeys along Harwood Street with setbacks that will maintain the street views and views for the residents in the Dianne Building down Cardero Street. The amenity space, including a fitness centre and indoor pool, will be located in a below grade pavilion at the corner of Cardero Street and Beach Avenue. The existing outdoor pool will be removed.

Parcel B: This addition is modest with 2-storey townhouses attached on both sides of the tower along with another at the rear of the tower.

Ms. Molaro added that the ground plane landscape treatment will be upgraded throughout the sites with material treatments to unify the proposal.

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

Taking into consideration aspects of the neighbourhood context that includes streetscape character, open spaces, view retention, sunlight access and privacy, including the following specific aspects, is the development proposal a supportable urban design response for these sites that have been added to the recent landmark list:

Parcel A: (4-storey townhouses along Beach Avenue, 9-storey block along Cardero Street and amenity space at the corner of Cardero Street and Beach Avenue:

- Overall buildings(s) sitting, form and massing
- Buildings(s) - height and bulk
- Relationship and proximity with existing one-site buildings - building site coverage and open space
- Buildings(s) sitting and neighbourliness including:
 - The Beach Avenue frontage and podium interface response
 - Cardero Street setback and public views down Cardero Street
 - Views from the Harwood Street public realm through the site across podium to English Bay
 - Neighbourly view and shadow impacts
- Overall increase in density
- Increase from 3.4 FSR to 4.5 FSR
- Podium - reduction in podium open space and landscape treatments

Parcel B: (3-storey townhouse along Harwood Street and 2-storey townhouse at the rear of the site)

- Overall building(s) siting, forms and massing:
- Building(s) interface with adjacent properties
- Overall increase in density

Increase from 3.53 to 4.07 FSR

- Podium - reduction in podium open space and landscape treatments

Combined density (Parcel A and B) increase from 3.42 to 4.35 FSR

LEEDTM Gold Strategies (LEEDTM Gold and registration with CaGBC required)

Ms. Molaro and Mr. Naylor took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Martin Bruckner, Architect, further described the proposal and indicated that lately they have been working with the West End Mayor's Advisory Committee on the relevance of this type of development in the West End. He stated that the infill project was for new rental stock and that it would help revitalize the rental that already exists on the sites. Part way through their process they became aware that the four towers would be added onto the Heritage List of recent buildings. They changed some of their massing ideas to reflect the heritage character

that already exists on site. Currently Parcel A has a parking lot with landscaping at the corner of Cardero and Harwood Streets, and they thought this was an obvious spot to add density. The mid-rise building will have a similar height to the adjacent Dianne Court building, and they also propose the massing to be stepped at the top. On Beach Avenue the front is heavily landscaped and they thought there was an opportunity to improve the area with townhouses and two floors of suites above the townhouses. The first phase of the project will be to build a new pool and recreation facility at the corner of Cardero Street and Beach Avenue and to remove the existing outdoor pool.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Parcel A:

- Design development to Building B;
- Consider inserting a break in the townhouse/apartment massing along Beach Avenue;
- Design development for a more significant separation between Tower A and Building B;
- Design development to Building B to improve the expression, height and location;
- Design development regarding landscaping to keep a more "park like" expression.

Parcel B:

- Design development to the townhouses along Harwood Street;

Related Commentary:

The Panel did not support the proposal noting that it was a challenging project but felt that there was still more work to be done on the design.

The Panel agreed that the applicant had taken a lot of effort to mitigate view blockage and deal with existing conditions. As well the Panel supported the proposed amount of density being generated by the proposal, as long as they were able to address the Panel's concerns. They also supported the amount of rental being added under the STIR program. A couple of Panel members suggested that the proposal needed to have a uniqueness of its own that shows off the prominence of this site, and reinforces the West End's density and the people who live there.

The Panel noted that because of the existing parkade that runs along Beach Avenue that creates a poor urban condition, the addition of the row townhouses would improve the condition. However, a number of the Panel members thought the length and height of the upper two floors was a concern. They wanted to see it be more in keeping with the scale of the street, and the open through-view to the ocean concept established by the existing towers, and some thought there needed to be a break to the relentless zig zag pattern.

Some Panel members supported the setback on Cardero Street and thought it was respectful of the buildings to the north. However, they thought the proximity to Tower A was tight and suggested that the corner could be shaped so that aspect was improved on the southwest corner of the 9-storey block. They also thought the building was too low and squat and was also not in the right location. Most of the Panel would support a taller, skinner tower. Most of the Panel agreed that the 9-storey block needed some design development and a form that responded better to the existing towers and they wanted it to be more sympathetic to the heritage towers. Some Panel members suggested it could be better articulated and that if moved closer to Cardero Street, it would improve the current problems relating to Tower A.

The Panel agreed that the most concerns were with Parcel B, particularly with the townhouses that are being added along Harwood Street. One Panel member mentioned that they seemed to be tacked on and didn't seem to be integrated into the design of the existing tower. It was also suggested that the density could be moved to the west side of the lot where there was more room. Another Panel thought the unique experience along Harwood Street was at risk. Several panel members suggested that if the townhouses were to physically attach themselves to the existing tower, then some form of an architectural reveal or slot in the massing was required. Another panel member urged the applicant to try and match the depth dimension of the townhouses to the prominent solid wall element of the existing tower.

A number of Panel members commented on the landscaping along Beach Avenue as being "park like" that connects the waterfront to the city and bringing the new topology up against the sidewalk makes the landscaping even more critical. They thought the units needed to be setback as far as possible to allow for a sense of spaciousness along the sidewalk. One Panel member suggested there needed to be some semi private spaces created.

The Panel thought the new amenity space on the corner was a clever idea but needed to go further. One Panel member said he didn't support the setback along Cardero Street, as it privileges the private views of the Dianne building too much, and that this was causing the interface problems between the proposed Building B and existing Tower A. By moving Building B further to Cardero Street, it could improve this interface problem, and perhaps open up the through-view to the ocean to the west of the building as seen from Harwood Street.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Bruckner said they appreciated the Panel's comments and thought they had suggested some good ideas. He added that they want the project to be successful.

3. **Address:** 1077 Great Northern Way
DE: Rezoning
 To rezone 1077 Great Northern Way from I-3 Industrial District to CD-1 Comprehensive Development District, to remove restrictions on the amount of office space allowed. The density and uses would otherwise be consistent with the existing industrial zoning. The height of the building is proposed to be approximately 1.4 meters (4.6 feet) higher than is currently achievable. The proposal would see a three phased development with 1.1 FSR proposed in Phase 1, an additional 0.3 FSR in Phase 2 and an additional 0.4 FSR in Phase 3 for a total of 1.8 FSR.
- Use:**
- Zoning:** I-3 to CD-1
Application Status: Rezoning
Review: First
Architect: Proscenium Architecture
Owner: Mountain Equipment Coop
Delegation: Hugh Cochlin, Proscenium Architecture
 Ron Clay, Proscenium Architecture
 Randy Sharp, Sharp & Diamond Landscape Architects
Staff: Corin Flood, Mountain Equipment Coop
 Sailen Black and Nicky Hood

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

Introduction:

Nicky Hood, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal for a new rezoning application located in the I-3 “high-tech” zone in the False Creek Flats area. The purpose of the application is to rezone the site from I-3 to CD-1 to allow an increase in the amount of General Office space beyond what is permitted under the current zoning. This request is consistent with the existing False Creek Flats Rezoning Policy which allows applications for greater office uses, providing opportunities to intensify employment near rapid transit. The policy allows for General Office use up to the maximum overall density permitted in I-3 which is 3 FSR. Ms. Hood stated that in terms of the form of development, the False Creek Flats Rezoning policy intends that any resulting developments would remain within the built form parameters of the I-3 District Guidelines. These guidelines call for a maximum conditional height of 100 feet and a strong urban design and pedestrian realm. The proposal does exceed the I-3 height limit, by a modest amount. Ms. Hood noted that the Green Buildings Policy for Rezonings applies, which requires a building design that attains a minimum of LEED™ Gold. The project must also be Registered and ultimately achieve Certification.

Ms. Hood explained that the site which is 2.3 acre in size and as such is subject to the Rezoning Policy for Greener Larger Sites. This policy requires the applicant to implement strategies to manage storm water, divert solid waste and encourage sustainable transportation options. The policy also requires a review of a campus or district energy system potential. Under the False Creek Flats Rezoning Policy, rezoning projects are expected to be district energy system compatible, in the event a system is brought online in the future.

Sailen Black, Development Planner, further described the proposal noting that the site is located across the street from China Creek North Park, and Vancouver Community College is located to the south-east. He described the context for the area stating that the I-3 zone was

originally intended to support high tech industry. He noted that it is the City's goal for the area is to have an attractive, cohesive design for the area. Projects should have a high quality of urban design and architectural expression; with integrated greenways, pedestrian and bicycle connections that enhance the quality of the public realm. Mr. Black indicated that the I-3 District Schedule permits an outright building height of up to 60 feet and that higher building massings should respond to the scale of adjacent buildings, public and private views as well as shadow impacts. Side yards are not required, except that when a site borders a city street. Buildings should be set back a minimum of 3.0 m from the side property line so that a double row of trees may be planted. Mr. Black also noted that the long-term plan for Great Northern Way calls for additional bicycle and greenway development.

Mr. Black reiterated the purpose of the rezoning to remove restrictions on the amount of office space allowed on the site while the density and uses will be consistent with the existing industrial zoning. The height of the building is proposed to be approximately 4.6 feet higher than is currently achievable. The proposal is for a three phased development with a 5-storey building with 144 car stalls and 172 bicycle parking spaces in the third phase. Vehicle access to be off Glen Drive and the applicant intends to screen the surface parking with the building and low landscaping. Also, a landscaped setback will cover most of the south frontage, which will benefit Great Northern Way.

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

In addition to any comment on the overall form of development proposed for this rezoning application, the Panel's advice is sought on the following questions:

- Does the proposed design effectively screen the surface parking lot?
- How well does the public realm interface along the two street-facing sides create pedestrian interest and express the main entrance?
- How well does proposed height work in this context?

Ms. Hood and Mr. Black took questions from the Panel.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Hugh Cochlin, Architect, gave a little history of Mountain Equipment Coop (MEC) noting that they have been leasing office space and thought it was time that they had their own space. They selected the site because of its proximity to their existing site and as well a number of the staff live in the area and there are good transit links to the site. The objective was to create an efficient and fun work environment that reflects MEC's values. Along with an office component there will be design areas for product development. From a sustainability point of view, MEC has been building green buildings for the past sixteen years. This is their second opportunity in the lower mainland to do that, and they will meet LEED™ Gold. Mr. Cochlin noted that as they have an impermeable site, storm water will be retained on site and there will be a series of rain gardens. They are looking for a rich landscape response as well as green roofs with external areas for staff and the public.

Ron Clay, Architect, further described the proposal noting that they will be holding the Great Northern Way street edge with the massing of the building. He noted that the orientation of the building was based on wind angles to catch wind in the solar chimneys which will be part of the passive system. There were a number of strategies to open up the site for wayfinding to the front door. There is a courtyard and a green buffer between the building and street. The rain gardens and berm will help mask the parking area. The floor plates were designed to allow for maximizing daylighting of the space. The top roof will be a "blue roof" for water retention, with a green roof on the lower roof. An orchard of roof trees is also planned for the lower roof. The interior is planned as typical office space except for the four storey climbing wall planned for the lobby.

Randy Sharp, Landscape Architect, further described the landscape plans noting the proposed plants. The roofs will be accessible for a wide range of staff recreational and social activities to take place. As well urban agriculture is planned for the roofs.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- The Panel had no substantial aspects needing improvement.

Related Commentary:

The Panel supported the project and the height of the building.

The Panel agreed that it was a well thought out project and that the sustainability strategy drove the design. They liked the proportions of the building and commended both the architect and landscape architects for a well designed project. The Panel felt that it wasn't necessary to bring the proposal back to the Panel at the Development Permit stage.

The Panel thought the public realm was well handled and some suggested there be more False Creek features included. One Panel member said he hoped the Mountain Equipment Co-op look which is more of an outdoorsy expression was stressed. Another Panel member thought there should be more playfulness in the design that addressed the culture of MEC and that perhaps adding a public art piece would be a good addition to the design. A couple of Panel members thought the entrance was hidden behind the stair shaft and suggested something should be done with the design to make it visible from Great Northern Way.

The Panel supported the landscape plans however one Panel member thought the bio pond was too large and cut up the parking lot. A couple of Panel members suggested that there could be a gravel swale as well as more greenery added even if that meant losing some parking spaces. Another Panel member suggested the bike path could weave more through the landscape to make it a more enjoyable ride and that areas could be added for a place to sit.

Applicant's Response:

Corin Flood said they are going to express MEC culture throughout the building internally and thought it was a good idea if that was expressed in the landscape treatment as well. He added that they will look at other elements including a public art piece. Hugh Cochlin said he would also like to see some public art on the site.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.