

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: September 23, 1998

TIME: N/A

PLACE: N/A

PRESENT: Members of the Urban Design Panel:
Joyce Drohan (Chair)
Patricia Campbell
Sheldon Chandler (excused Item #1)
Per Christoffersen (excused Item #1)
Geoff Glotman (present for Item #2 only)
James Hancock
Joseph Hruda (present for Items #2 and #3)
Peter Kreuk
Sean McEwan
Jim McLean (excused Item #1)

REGRETS: Norman Shearing
Peter Wreglesworth

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Carol Hubbard

| ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. | 2079 West 42nd Avenue/2060 West 41st Avenue |
| 2. | 3637 West 17th Avenue |
| 3. | Southeast False Creek - Workshop |

1. Address: 2079 West 42nd Avenue/2060 West 41st Avenue

Address: 2079 West 42nd Avenue (current London Drugs)/

2060 West 41st Avenue (current liquor store/parking lot)

DA: 402626/402442

Use: Mixed (4 and 5 storeys, 59 units)

Zoning: C-2

Application Status: Complete after Preliminary

Architect: Chandler and Associates

Owner: London Drugs

Review: Third

Delegation: Sheldon Chandler, Jim McLean, Chris Phillips

Staff: Bob Adair

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-0)**Introduction:**

The Development Planner, Bob Adair, presented this application which was last reviewed by the Panel on September 9, 1998. It was not supported at that time. Mr. Adair explained that its speedy return to the Panel is to clarify any confusion that may have arisen as a result of the most up to date drawings not being posted previously. There were two sets of submission drawings, dated July 20 and September 2, respectively, and the Panel saw the older version. In addition to the most recent drawings, there are now also some revised elevations and other materials to address some of the concerns expressed by the Panel. The model is unchanged. Mr. Adair briefly reviewed the issues raised previously by the Panel and how they have been addressed

Planning staff consider the 41st Avenue façade has improved over the previous iteration but have concerns that the entire face of the building in the area of the pedestrian walkway has been brought forward to the street. Staff also suggest some stepping down next to the adjacent C-2 site might be appropriate. There is a continuing concern that the rear of the building projects into the lane farther than suggested in the guidelines, resulting in a blank wall situation for potential development on either side. On the 42nd Avenue site, staff have concerns about the reduced setbacks. The roof forms have improved considerably, but with some more fine-tuning needed. There are still some blank wall areas facing 42nd Avenue which are of concern, and it is recommended that the plaza be opened up more. The two-storey wall at the lane is also a concern, and the tightness of the courtyard at the east end of the site.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Sheldon Chandler, Architect, said they believe the revised exterior design now more closely matches the preliminary scheme. He briefly reviewed the revisions made to the project. He noted the wall in front of the cosmetics area has been reduced and articulated and will be a quiet seating area with the provision of a bench and planting. Chris Philips reviewed the landscape plan.

Panel's Comments:

After reviewing the model and posted material, the Panel provided the following comments:

The Panel unanimously supported this submission and agreed there had been a significant overall improvement in the project.

The Panel found the townhouse expression much more compatible with the single family neighbourhood across the street, and much more in keeping with the preliminary submission. It was, however, recommended that the blocks to the east of the 42nd Avenue elevation might be a

little bit less repetitive and fine-grained. Taking some cues from the ground level bays by extending them to the upper levels was recommended. The middle building beside the walkway was seen as being particularly awkward. It was recommended to simplify the structure to bring it more in scale with the London Drugs façade and its single family neighbours.

The London Drugs block was seen as the most successful of the latest elevations. The Panel found it to be quite an innovative approach to a London Drugs store and a good contribution to the streetscape. The solid wall in front of the cosmetics department was still considered to be a weak point that needs more work. As well, there was a note of caution to ensure that enough rain is able to reach any plant material that is included in this area.

The Panel was generally supportive of the revisions to the walkway from 41st Avenue, and particularly favoured the CRU's fronting onto it. There were still some concerns about making a better connection across the lane and a call for some other gesture to open it up more.

There was general support for maintaining continuity of the second level of the 41st Avenue façade. The Panel saw no need to cut it back, and thought the continuity of the streetscape should take precedence. It was, however, felt that the previously shown precast elements should be reintroduced to give that façade some relief and provide a stronger image on 41st Avenue. As well, it was recommended that some treatment be given to the corner of the building above the 40 ft. level, to avoid a blank wall situation to be dealt with in the future.

The Panel thought the linear landscaped open space between the townhouses had been adequately broken up by the north-south breaks to ultimately be a much more interesting space. While it was agreed that the 24 ft. width is somewhat tight, it was felt to have been adequately addressed to work successfully. The importance of ensuring there is adequate alternate outdoor space for the units was stressed.

The treatment of the lane was considered to be an improvement and the three-dimensionality of the approach was supported. There were, however, suggestions to reduce the scale somewhat by lowering the spring line of the arches on this façade.

The Panel generally thought the submission now responded very well to its context. The applicant was congratulated for a much stronger scheme than seen in both previous submissions.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Chandler thanked the Panel for the feedback and valuable input

2. Address: 3637 West 17th Avenue

DA: 403554

Use: Mixed (Commercial/Retail) (4 storeys, 21 units)

Zoning: C-2

Application Status: Complete

Architect: Nigel Baldwin Architect

Owner: Dunbar Heights Dev. Inc.

Review: First

Delegation: Nigel Baldwin, John Morrison

Staff: Bob Adair

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)**Introduction:**

Bob Adair, Development Planner, introduced this application in the C-2 zone. The site is double-fronting, located between 16th and 17th Avenue. Following a brief description of the immediate context, Mr. Adair described the proposal which is for one storey of commercial facing 16th Avenue, with parking and loading accessed off 16th, and three floors of residential above. There are four storeys of residential facing 17th Avenue set back between 5 and 8 ft. from the street, with a central internal courtyard between the two building components. The main issues on which the advice of the Panel is sought are the setback from 17th Avenue, the livability and general proportions of the internal courtyard, and whether the 16th Avenue elevation should be articulated more.

Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Nigel Baldwin, Architect, said they believe the setbacks and the courtyard provide good livability, and further that the C-2 guideline with respect to setbacks does not address double-fronting sites such as this. As well, the proximity to the nearest single family residences is far greater than is typical in the C-2 zone. Mr. Baldwin acknowledged that the 16th Avenue elevation needs more work. He distributed a view study board and sought the Panel's comments on the height relaxation being sought (up to 45 ft.), pointing out the significant cross fall (12 ft.) that occurs on the site.

Panels Comments

After reviewing the model and posted drawings the Panel commented as follows:

The Panel unanimously supported this application. Given the many constraints of this particular site the Panel felt it was an exemplary design solution.

The Panel did not regard the setback from 17th Avenue to be an issue, in fact some Panel members thought a 12 ft. setback would be inappropriate in this case.

The Panel had no concerns about the scale of the courtyard but there were some comments about its livability in terms of material choices. It was felt there needed to be better quality finishes given the tightness of the courtyard. In particular, it was recommended that alternatives be considered in place of the vinyl siding. Some Panel members suggested using wood. Further investigation was recommended for the bedroom windows which open up into the courtyard and the blank walls opposite the elevator, and one Panel member would have preferred the elevator to be pulled back into the body of the building. It was also recommended to ensure the plant material is shade tolerant.

There were no concerns about FSR. The requested height relaxation was also unanimously supported, given the strong cross falls on the site.

The 16th Avenue elevation was considered to be the weakest part of the scheme. The Panel recommended strengthening this elevation, particularly the ground level façade which could perhaps use some of the elements of the ground floor 17th Avenue façade. It was noted that the coloured rendering of the 16th Avenue elevation had a much stronger three-dimensional quality than indicated on the model.

There was a suggestion that the roof decks might be more integrated into the scheme, and a caution that the top floor balconies will require some careful detailing.

The thoughtful treatment of the party walls was appreciated, as was the overall quality of the design and the unit layouts.

The Panel found it a very handsome and successful scheme that could well become a model for the C-2 zone.

Applicant's Response:

Mr. Baldwin thanked the Panel for its comments. He noted that fire regulations preclude the use of wood in the courtyard but said they are looking at alternatives to vinyl.

3. SOUTHEAST FALSE CREEK - WORKSHOP DISCUSSION

Review: First

Delegation: Graham McGarva

Staff: Ian Smith, Mark Holland

Senior Central Area Planner, Ian Smith, described the progress to date in creating the draft Policy Statement for Southeast False Creek development. He explained the process that will be followed, including the Design Charrettes scheduled for October 20 - 23, 1998. Following an overview of the site, Mark Holland presented a series of slides, and Graham McGarva, Architect, spoke to the urban design and architectural concepts for the site.

It was agreed that the Panel's input would be sought again prior to submission of the ODP.

Following are some of the questions and observations made by the Panel in the general discussion:

- what is the involvement of Department of Fisheries & Oceans?
- how do you attract capital investment to a project of this nature, given the long term payback?
- it will be important to learn from the mistakes of the first False Creek development;
- a danger of such a large site is homogeneity and sanitization in the design and character;
- relationships to heritage buildings and adjacent character areas will be challenging given the extent of new building inventory that is occurring; however, these relationships can help to bring diversity to the design and character of the new development;
- pursuing the natural shoreline on this site will be a welcome relief to the False Creek water's edge conditions established to date;
- the approach to the streets needs to be considered very carefully, taking some lessons from the early False Creek development, including Granville Island. It was noted that part of Granville Island's success is a result of "blurring" the edges between pedestrian and vehicle, indoors and outdoors, etc. Also, a high degree of flexibility for public spaces should be a consideration;
- with respect to land use, what are the performance criteria for mixed use at a community level? Concern that it might preclude certain aspects of mixed use. We should explore mixed land use and what the standards and the density should be;
- the target of 25% for roof gardens seems a very conservative starting point;
- façade gardens should be considered;
- engineering issues must be considered very early in the process;
- many "green" projects don't get built as conceived because of the expense; hopefully, the technology will have advanced such that it is not the most costly option;
- it will be important to establish the transit links early - make sure it happens in step with the development.

The team was congratulated for an excellent body of work. The Panel looks forward to the next review.