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## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

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**DATE:** September 4, 2002

**TIME:** 4.00 p.m.

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

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Helen Besharat  
Jeffrey Corbett  
Gerry Eckford  
Richard Henry, Chair  
Reena Lazar  
Stuart Lyon  
Kim Perry  
Maurice Pez  
Sorin Tatomir  
Ken Terriss

**REGRETS:** Joseph Hruda  
Walter Francl

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Linda Arato

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING
1. Beatty Street Discussion
2. 900 Burrard Street (901 Hornby)

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1. Topic: Beatty Street  
Staff: Jonathan Barrett
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This matter was discussed In Camera (see attached In Camera Minutes).

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2. Address:	900 Burrard Street (901 Hornby)
DA:	406534
Use:	Mixed (24 storeys, 466 units)
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Brook Development Planning/Rafii Architects
Owner:	Bosa Ventures Inc.
Review:	Second
Delegation:	Chuck Brook, Foad Rafii, Jane Durante
Staff:	Jonathan Barrett

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### EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0)

- **Introduction:** Jonathan Barrett, Development Planner, referred to the previous Preliminary review which was supported 5-3 in April, 2002. The form of the development had general support with concerns about detailing, fenestration, and building character. There were suggestions for improving the glazing, better use of the blank end walls and problems with the residential organisation and the long corridors. The stepping down of the building was also a concern, and landscaping was thought to be in need of improvement. Major problems were seen in the porte cochère, its functions, operation, character and pedestrian safety. The Guidelines for the retail area are for 15 m frontage, although the Panel felt it should be market driven. The project went to the DP Board and was downgraded to a Preliminary with 3 major aspects to be resolved: porte cochère, building character and residential layout.

The focus of the Panel should be on the overall building character, its form. There have been major changes in the detailing and the character of the building rhythm and scale. The second item is the porte cochère where there have been major changes in the dimensions and the character and the function, including pedestrian safety. Thirdly, the residential system where the extremely long corridors have been broken up with light at the ends of the corridors. There have also been changes to the open space and the retail frontage.

In response to a question about FSR it was explained that the theatre component on top of the retail exacerbates the overall FSR. A previous application for this site had a larger theatre component and less FSR, but the building bulk was actually substantially greater. This scheme has more FSR but the building bulk has been reduced by approx. 17% because residential floors have replaced the theatres. Referring to the DP Board conditions to comply with Section 3 of the CD-1 Bylaw, Mr. Barrett noted that the CD-1 Bylaws did not anticipate a mixed use of this type in this area.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:** Foad Rafii reviewed the major changes to the project; principally the totally different character of the top of the building and the elimination of the stepping down concept which had been proposed by residents of the Electra. Most of the glass is now clear which has some soft reflections. The landscaping has been divided into 3 separate areas with the 4th floor area to be a visual green space only to mask the Dal Grauer substation. The 11th floor landscaped area will be segmented to avoid becoming a gathering place. The 24th floor will be for everyone.

The porte cochère has been widened to 42' with sidewalks. A gentle curve and traffic bumps have been introduced to prevent speeding. Visual interest in the lay-bys and the use of perforated sheet metal and drop ceilings with small lights to break up the space. It is hoped to use the wall of the Dal Grauer

substation building to drape a steel trellis with greenery to enhance the area. Tiles to be used are the same colour as used in the Electra and Dal Grauer buildings. The project is limited by easements to BC Hydro for the entrance to the porte cochère. The porte cochère has 2 functions, access to the parking and parkade and drop-off and pick-up for residents and visitors. There is no theatre access from the porte cochère as it was a stipulation by Famous Players that there be only one entrance to the theatre complex via the theatre lobby.

The green glass is only being used for corner features, the rest of the glass is clear. This is a tie-in to the adjacent Law Courts. Coated concrete is being used with a lighter colour for the upper portions of the building and darker for the lower portions.

The residential entries were set back from the street and the canopies changed. The corridors in the residential portion were broken up with drop ceilings and 10 suites eliminated to provide light to the corridors.

There are two major departures from the Guidelines: (1) The size of the floor plate. CD-1 Guidelines did not envision a residential/theatre complex. The theatres are 90,000 sq.ft. and there is a 6,000 sq.ft. loss in the residential component (the Guidelines envisioned office use).

(2) Instead of setting back 10' as required by the Guidelines, the project is set back 5' and 6' to give more open space to the Electra and cornices go to the property line except on our own property and relaxation is being sought to intrude cornices on to City property.

Jane Durante reviewed the landscape changes, noting that it is calmer overall than previously, with paving colours to relate to the use of the space. Large trees on Hornby & Burrard to be preserved and augmented.

- **Panel's Comments:** The panel supported the application unanimously and provided the following comments:

#### **Form of Development and Building Character:**

- the building fits in better;
- simplicity improved, but not simple enough, the corner of Hornby & Smithe quite disturbing, it has too much importance which is unwarranted;
- character is much improved; removal of the stepping helps the rhythm, animation and humanity;
- opinion of neighbours (Electra) to not landscape the deck was ill-conceived;
- contrast of colours between upper and lower portions of the building should be increased;
- theatre entrance needs to be celebrated more, a stronger presence needed;
- theatre entrance to be set back slightly to provide more room for emerging patrons;
- cornices which go from the theatre up one or two levels into the residential, should stop below the residential level, might compromise residents' ability to look out sideways; the two levels are different so don't try and tie them together;
- tied in the top with the theatre; better sense of connection;
- glazing is improved and materials are more successful;
- an unnecessary anomaly to tie in the green glazing with the Law Courts?
- massing is enormous and encourage more work to pull some elements back or creating more shadow lines to help the building appear as a collection of buildings;
- blank wall facing the Electra is still a problem as it can also be seen coming down Burrard, maybe

- carry the cornice around to break up the façade somewhat;
- very visible space and will live or die on how well the cornice elements and how the canopies are put together;
- building should expand to the curb, Planning Department to exert influence on Engineering Dept. to allow this;
- differentiation of the top and bottom of the building is well done and breaks up the façade well;
- corner of Burrard and Smithe integration with glass panels is liked;
- L-shaped building and I-shaped building meet well, but disappointing that the base is not strong enough;
- too much beige-ness all over, need for more contrast - architect to come up with a different solution;
- clean defined base does not need to extend into the residential area;
- too much concrete on this site, a very important site in the City;
- all cornices, moulds are in concrete, try Alucabond or other material;
- I-shaped building could be in a different material, metal, pre-cast or stone;
- concern over vents penetrating the concrete façades;
- new way of integrating these details and vents to be found;
- Smithe & Burrard corner has two blank walls - opportunity to introduce some metal elements to give another dimension, cornices and details could be handled in a different way;
- missed opportunity to break out of the rectilinear mode with the theatres, in the glass chamber on Burrard corner, could be more exciting which would obviate the big panel on the Smithe Street corner which is arbitrary; look at the substation which uses its glass walls to open up to the public those things which are inside;

### **Porte Cochère:**

- different textures, lights work well;
- much improved, but needs theatre entrance;
- it looks like a street with retail which is to be commended;
- graphics in the space could use another cycling;
- landscaped light well may be problematic;
- the hanging walkway with light adds to the visual interest;
- connection to the theatres needed as people coming by car/taxi will be dropped off there and a walkway through would be advantageous/essential; this is a publicly accessed street and with 9 theatres in the complex Famous Players should be able to find a way to have access to the theatre - it won't work otherwise;
- the entry needs to be moved out closer to the street and with better early warning to traffic on Burrard;
- drive-way needs to be streamlined, simplify it;
- diagonal crossings might be a concern or safety issue, make the crossings as short as possible for the pedestrians;
- functional space, so bumps and curves do not contribute to its functionality;
- pedestrian activity will animate it;
- no theatre access needed as most people will come from outside, not from the driveway;
- retail store in beside the ticket office will be a tough sell, maybe extend the theatre hall over to the driveway for visual connection and animation;
- signage issue to identify the theatre entrance;
- lost opportunity to be a gathering place, with a different pavement such as Gastown, a lighted entrance that goes into the theatre lobby with a sidewalk with Hall of Fame stars;

- instead of landscaping the substation wall, use it for cinema advertising, well-lit, visual image;
- different images in the orifices like a film reel, which would be money-producing;
- white paint for pedestrian crossing is not up to the quality of other materials used;
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**Residential Development:**

- huge density to work with and it has been dealt with in a good way;
- interior atrium is unsuccessful; interior corners are difficult to use for suites but it would be better to switch and have interior corner used for suites and the exterior corner used for atrium; atrium space exacerbates the density of the building;
- redistribute the volume in the atrium corners to eliminate that space;
- corridors are more interesting than many;
- natural light has enhanced the corridors;
- livability issues to remain with the applicant and the developer but reconsider the 8'6" wide rooms and 32" closets, they may be difficult to market.

**Landscaping:**

- works well for the Electra residents as well;
  - encourage the landscaping to be a graphic rather than a useable exterior space;
  - question the use of a lawn on a roof deck;
  - question the view down onto the substation roof which is unfinished and a potential eyesore.
- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Rafii thanked the Panel for their comments, most of which he will try to take into consideration. The driveway crossing will not be white paint but pavers of exposed aggregate. He noted that they had tried to mimic the Dal Grauer glazing in the shape of the theatres and the concrete. The detailing of the concrete and penetrations, there will be none. As to contrast, appreciate the comments, we could not come up with a proper sample due to time constraints, but the applicant intends to create more contrast, lighter on the upper floor and keep the value of lower floor colour. As to corner animation, there will be a 4-storey interior feature which will be very visible behind the glazed façade. Famous Players sign will be featured.

The access to the theatres from the drive-way is not in the applicant's domain as Famous Players want one point entry only. It should be from the street. If we do provide it from the drive-way we will end up with a large chunk of retail separated from the street. The retail space next to the ticket office is the only one which is spoken for. Theatre car parking is only 88 spaces, most people will come by transit or on foot.