

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** September 5, 2001

**TIME:** N/A

**PLACE:** N/A

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Tom Bunting, Chair  
Jeffrey Corbett  
Lance Berelowitz  
Gerry Eckford  
Alan Endall  
Walter Francl  
Bruce Hemstock  
Richard Henry  
Joseph Hruda  
Jack Lutsky  
Maurice Pez  
Sorin Tatomir

**REGRETS:** None.

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** M.K. Warwick

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### ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

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|----|---------------------------------------|
| 1. | 1005 Station Street (966 Main Street) |
| 2. | 1321 Richards Street                  |
| 3. | 1238 Burrard Street                   |
| 4. | 4802 Fraser Street                    |
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**BUSINESS MEETING****1. Address: 1005 Station Street (966 Main Street)**

DA: 405521

Use: Residential

Zoning: FC-1

Application Status: Complete

Architect: Nigel Baldwin

Owner: Van City Enterprises

Review: First

Delegation: Nigel Baldwin, Jonathon Losee

Staff: Scot Hein

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (11-0)****• Introduction:**

The Development Planner, Scot Hein outlined the project confirming that the proposal was in accordance with the Vancouver Agreement to provide additional low-income housing opportunities on the Downtown Eastside for singles, homeless at risk (including females) and noted that 10 units will be accessible to the disabled. He emphasized that there would be no onsite "full-time care" but it was a distinct form of housing - different from the conventional "Residential" accommodation and that BC Housing would operate the facility with nominal rents based on a 60-year lease between BC Housing and the City of Vancouver.

The project is a mid-block development with double frontage on Main Street and Station Street. Mr. Hein referred to various display boards to clarify the location in context with surrounding heritage buildings, Thornton Park and the Sky Train Station. He confirmed that the Zoning was FC1 (High Density Mixed Residential & Retail) with 3.00 FSR for the residential portion and 1.00 FSR for Commercial component - with a height of 75'. He also referenced the preliminary Techpark.com plans and elevations for the approved high tech campus project. The proposed mixed use building would be comprised of 6 storeys fronting Main Street and Station Street with retail and weather protection at street level. The residential portion will have an entrance and courtyard off Station Street with the loading ramp located to the North of the structure to minimize pedestrian crossings. Each floor of the residence will have double loaded corridors of studio units with one-bedroom units at each end.

Mr. Hein commented on the emerging context of the area, namely the Techpark.com proposal - which caused staff to consider the project in the context of the adjacent park area. DCLs will be collected on the Techpark.com and consideration will be given on how to "knit" the other projects together along the block given the challenges of double frontage and the initiative of social housing. Mr. Hein went on to explain the challenges and how the architectural expression was responsive to the area and the need to ensure provision of natural light for new and existing, adjacent units. Specifically, the Panel's advice was requested with respect to:

- the project massing - especially with respect to the lounge/courtyard/multi-purpose room functions, noting a minimum two storey Station Street context;
- Station Street - the materials proposed;
- general thoughts on how Station Street can be an extension of the Thornton Park public realm with street trees, etc. and the need to work with Engineering to ensure a high quality precinct;
- the potential for some retail on Main Street as well as Station Street, similar to Yaletown.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Mr. Baldwin commented on the difficulty of the site and noted that when the project commenced there was no "policy" in respect of the Station Street frontage and that he had worked with Mr. Hein to develop one which would address the several 100' deep lots, other potential uses in the area and the extension of sidewalks into courtyards, etc. Mr. Baldwin acknowledged that the fence of the courtyard could, perhaps, be moved back however there was concern with respect to the current "drug trade" in the vicinity of the proposed Station Street entry. He also expressed concern regarding the City's request for retail on the Main Street frontage but suggested that perhaps three small retail outlets could be included. Mr. Baldwin further suggested that at such time as Station Street becomes more important, it might be possible to look at another tower design at the end of the "T" street wall. He suggested that everyone else developing property in this vicinity would be using the Main Street frontage and reiterated that with the mid-block siting, and simple setbacks for a mid-rise tower, it was difficult to get more than single storey walls.

Mr. Lossee, Landscape Architect, illustrated the 25' sidewalk width and suggested that at this time, he had no particular solution, although a single row of street trees could be included. He also noted that the small courtyard was within a small walled space.

- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel unanimously supported this application and generally agreed that the project was very strong and that the attempt to solve an immediate social need outweighed many of the other comments. Further, the Panel suggested that one couldn't expect a modest project to set the stage for development of the rest of the area

With respect to Station Street, the Panel suggested that refinement of the frontage is required and, further, that consideration be given to carrying over some of the street treatment in the adjacent emerging Thornton Park precinct, such as double or triple rows of trees. Concern was also expressed regarding the understatement of the Station Street entry it was suggested that treatment of the "fence" as the property line and the addition of a 'beam' could make it look more like the building façade. This may help to create a more continuous presence and alleviate concerns regarding security as well as more clearly defining public/private spaces. The Panel also agreed that the treatment of the wall on Station Street in order to overcome the "back alley" perception was very challenging.

With respect to the proposed design and anticipated use of the courtyard space, the Panel queried the potential for combining the courtyards or, alternatively, if the North courtyard could be for more active use or used by other groups. Further, it was queried as to whether it was possible to reconfigure the courtyard and entrance to give more presence to the street at the South end and set up conditions for future development. It was acknowledged there may be programming or security reasons to separate the courtyards, but the Panel asked if a better size might be accomplished if the entry was moved to the North to give the courtyard more light. It was also suggested that the proposed fencing suggested a "prison-like" atmosphere and, like the separation, was unfortunate.

Architecturally speaking with respect to the "slots", the continuity of the street wall on Main Street was not seen as a problem because it is so narrow, however, a bigger issue is how it will be perceived by the tenants/occupants and the potential of excessive litter collecting. The Panel expressed some concern that because of the social housing use, some livability issues were being overlooked in favour of some unique architectural features and the applicant was encouraged to rethink some of the design issues from livability and lighting perspectives.

The Panel generally agreed that the Main Street frontage was very appealing but perhaps could have a stronger canopy design at a lesser height.

- **Applicant's Response**

Mr. Baldwin thanked the members of the Panel for their comments and responded to the specifics raised, namely:

- Re Station Street and courtyards - acknowledged that the design got weaker when they trying to respond to the axis issue.
- A single courtyard would be more favourable to the Budget, however, moving the courtyard and loading area more to the north may impact the design issues further
- They agreed that "slots" should be either shallower or wider

Mr. Baldwin concluded by indicating they will try hard to respond to the comments of the Panel but, due to budget constraints, may not be able to reorganize the layout as suggested. He also agreed that there was a balance required regarding how much of the courtyard area was hard surfaced and how spectators could be accommodated, as the overall area in question was not large.

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2. **Address: 1321 Richards Street**  
DA: 406078  
Use: Residential (12 storey, 87 units)  
Zoning: DD  
Application Status: Complete  
Architect: Neale Staniszki Doll Adams  
Owner: MCC Housing  
Review: First  
Delegation: Larry Adams, Don Droeker  
Staff: Anita Molaro
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#### **EVALUATION: SUPPORT (11-0)**

- **Introduction:**

Development Planner Anita Molaro briefly reviewed the application for a 12 storey residential building to accommodate rental units, for low-income urban singles with physical or mental disabilities. She commented on the sloping site, the parking requirements and the 3-storey podium for occupants' amenities use. Ms Molaro advised of the proposed relaxation requests for the rearyard(s), height and sideyards, including the 7' setback above the 3rd floor. The Panel's advice is sought regarding the appropriateness of the FSR of 5.0 and the further increase to 5.22, the massing - particularly rear and sideyard, the overall design and its affect on the site and potential impact on the neighbouring towers, the livability for residents, its public interface and the street character/landscaping.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Larry Adams, Architect, commented on the relaxation in the FSR and noted that Planning Staff had requested the podium level. He explained his rationale for his choice of access, parking and ramp and noted that, because of the FSR, they had been allowed to add the top floor of the building.
- **Panel's Comments**

The Panel unanimously supported this application. It was agreed that the applicant had dealt relatively well with the site and had taken a different architectural approach and choice of materials, which made it an attractive project in the affordable housing market.

The Panel had no concerns with respect to the massing of the project and generally agreed that the setbacks work for the site, although there was a suggestion that the applicant could explore the feasibility of pushing the building more to the south. Some members suggested that an extra storey would be acceptable if an increased sideyard would result. A further query was raised regarding the lack of rails on roof decks - despite the lack of access.

With respect to the Richards Street façade, entry and continuity with the adjacent properties, the Panel expressed concern with respect to the north setback and the weakness of the grade-level entrance on Richards and suggestions were made for consideration of more continuity with the commercial/retail in adjacent buildings. There were also queries regarding overall fenestration issues, particularly given the potential for limited view corridors and overlook of future buildings on adjacent properties.

There were generally positive comments regarding the FSR given the additional amenity uses provided. However, the Panel suggested that the Richards Street frontage needed some animation and suggested a patio off the TV/games room. The Panel also commented positively regarding the livability and 'fit' of the project within the context of the adjacent buildings.

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With respect to the streetscape, the Panel suggested that the frontage on Richards Street did not address the 'Downtown South' streetscape guidelines and encouraged the applicant to revisit landscaping issues on the alley in order to make a stronger statement of the "front door". The Panel also raised questions with respect to the lane access vis a vis the variety of "vehicles" such as shopping carts.

- **Applicant's Response**

Mr. Adams thanked the Panel for their comments and acknowledged the points were well taken and briefly responded to the issues raised, namely:

- given the understanding that Commercial was not an available use, amenity spaces were created to try and bridge the gap.
- movement (south) of the building was interesting but would affect the windows and it was questionable as to whether or not the neighbours would agree.
- guidelines suggested an eclectic streetscape
- agreed to look at window treatments - in particular as to how many windows are needed/wanted in the 320 sq.ft. units
- landscaping on the street frontage will be re-examined.

**3. Address: 1238 Burrard Street**

DA: 405874

Use: Mixed

Zoning: DD

Application Status: Complete

Architect: L. Doyle

Owner: Incofact Consultants Ltd.

Delegation: Larry Doyle, Calvin Chan

Staff: Eric Fiss

Mr. Corbett indicated a Conflict of Interest and withdrew from the consideration of this item.

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-4)****• Introduction:**

Mr. Fiss summarized the application and noted this was the second review. The revised proposal is for a 14 storey residential building comprised of 102 units (8 per floor) with a second storey podium, with commercial at grade and amenity space on the 2nd floor. With the assistance of display and photoboards, Mr. Fiss reviewed the context of the 125'x120' site with a partially constructed building that had been initially approved in 1991, although the permits have expired. This proposal is for a building that fits the overall massing, density, use and FSR of the original application, which had previously been approved by the Development Permit Board, in 1998.

Mr. Fiss commented on the relationship of this proposal to the neighbouring office building. He outlined the concerns regarding livability, noting that the applicant had been requested to redirect the views and consider the ceremonial character of the location and how it 'fits' within the block. He then referred to the prior Panel comments and concerns and noted that the applicant had met with Staff on several occasions to address the issues, including:

creating an asymmetrical design, and making the base more asymmetrical to shift it away from the office tower.

- closing some apertures, and using more corner windows
- using modulation and colour shifts
- reconfiguring the penthouse - accenting the height by stepping down to the north
- decreasing one unit on the lower floor (for a total of 102)

Mr. Fiss indicated that the advice being sought from the Panel was with respect to how to properly respond to a difficult site but one that was an important "gateway" to the City.

**• Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Mr. Doyle commented that a number of changes had been made to the plans to address the issues resulting from the process, particularly with respect to the corner windows and views. In referring to the plans, Mr. Doyle specifically referenced the layout of a residential floor vis a vis the office building and how corner windows and balconies had been utilized in the design in order to try and create as much distance from the office building as possible. He also explained the rationale for the curves of the building and its affect on the overall scale of the building. He noted that on the top floor a 12' ceiling height had been used on the Burrard Street side while the other side drops off. Mr Doyle confirmed that articulation of the tower had been accomplished with terraces being used on the 3rd floor and amenity space on the front of the 2nd floor. The ground floor was asymmetrical with the lobby offset from the centre elevator and the amenities area off the lane landscaped to separate the area from the lane and, further, with retail on the Burrard Street side to match the adjacent building.

Mr. Doyle then responded to requests for clarification from the Panel members.

Mr. Hemstock withdrew from the meeting at this point.

- **Panel's Comments**

The Panel's support for this application was divided with 5 members in support of the application and 4 members opposed. The applicant's response to the previous Panel's review was acknowledged with respect to separation, quality, landscaping, integration of the penthouse and the ceremonial approach. There were comments, however, that if the project had not been previously approved, it would be a very different project but as it had been approved, there is now some pressure on the Panel

The Panel acknowledged the difficulty of the site and agreed that a lot of effort had been put in to modifying and improving the design since the last application.

With respect to the setback from the north there were concerns expressed regarding the tower and its proximity to the adjacent office tower and the oblique views etc., suggesting that there was still some fine-tuning to be done on the north side to alleviate the setback and overlook concerns. There was a query as to a possible shift to the North side face and a suggestion that perhaps the tower could go higher and the units moved to the south in order to deal with adjacency issues. However, given the certainty of what is on the north and the uncertainty as to the future of the south (i.e. views might not exist in the future), it may not be possible to shift the building dramatically to reorient it to the street and the sun. It was generally agreed that the Architect has made a good shift in massing of the building but the north face is overcomplicated. It is suggested that the Architect needs to work on making it more consistent. Work to date is considered to be generally in the right direction.

The Panel generally agreed that the landscaping has improved but was still concerned regarding the quality and suggested that the applicant was not taking advantage of the opportunities available to address the conflict between the public and private areas.

Concern was expressed regarding the entry which as result of the existing base, seems to be overly contorted. A number of issues remain to be resolved with respect to finding a practical entry solution. A more pronounced canopy was suggested as a possible means of strengthening the entry.

There were also concerns expressed with respect to the staircase to the lane given the potential maintenance and security problems.

With respect to the street edge, although this proposal was better, the Panel still had reservations regarding the landscaping quality and the failure to address the streetscape standards for Vancouver.

- **Applicant's Response**

Mr. Doyle responded to the comments of the Panel as follows:

- Site situation - the existing development constrains a legitimate development site.
- With respect to the Panel's comments that the project has improved but issues still remain, he suggested that there are issues that have been talked about but not really dealt with by coming back to the Panel again.
- He would appreciate having the project being looked at as an existing site with some direction being given as to where to go. He suggested he needed to get a better design, not have the Panel kill the project.



The Chair broke with tradition and responded to Mr. Doyle's comments and emphasized that Panel members express their individual opinions and the vote remains to be taken. He suggested that many of the comments leave the door open and more discussion is required.

The Chair reiterated that the Panel was an Advisory body only. The Minutes would render all of the comments, not just a consensus. The Planning Staff would then have to take the comments into consideration.

**4. Address: 4802 Fraser Street**

DA: 406053

Use: Mixed

Zoning: C-2

Application Status: Complete

Architect: Pavlina Ryvola

Owner: Filipino Canadian Support

Review: First

Delegation: Pavlina Ryvola, Tim Avendano, Eleanor Guerrero-Campbell

Staff: Eric Fiss

Messrs. Endall, Hemstock, and Hrudá were not present for consideration of this application.

**EVALUATION: (SUPPORT (8-0))****• Introduction:**

Mr. Fiss summarized the application noting the subject property was owned by a non-profit society, funded through fundraising and government support. He confirmed that the two-storey with basement development was within height regulations and was located on 32nd Avenue across from the Cemetery. The application is required because of the proposal to include one dwelling unit on the upper floor. With the assistance of a site model and photoboards, Mr. Fiss explained the terrain of the site as well as the proposed uses, which include office and counselling space on the main floor (street access) with kitchen and service areas in the basement. He advised that the access to the dwelling unit would be from Fraser Street and that although only two parking spaces were required, five are proposed. The Panel's review and advice was requested by Council resolution however Mr. Fiss requested specific advice regarding form, massing, streetscape, window/wall compatibility, weather protection for pedestrians, material proposed for the rear and side walls and the landscaping off the lane/32nd Avenue.

**• Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Ms Ryvola confirmed that funds for the construction were raised from donations and government grants resulting in a simple, yet functional design of which the group can be proud. She advised that had funds been available they would want to build something approximately three times the size of the proposed structure. Ms Ryvola acknowledged the corner of the building by slanting the design and by using a small canopy for weather protection. In order to be more modern (and to take advantage of the mountain views), storefront glazing had been utilized along with the culturally significant traditional colours of Filipino textiles. She confirmed that landscaping was minimal because of the limited space and suggested that it was more advantageous to the neighbours to have additional parking rather than extensive landscaping. The interior was based on an open plan to maximize flexibility of use and provide accommodation for the resident caretaker. In response to comments from the Panel, Ms Ryvola addressed various issues including the feasibility of tandem parking, the potential for future expansion of the building, the exterior finish proposed and the rationale for retention of the retaining wall in its present location.

**• Panel's Comments**

The Panel unanimously supported this application. It was agreed that the applicant had provided a nice, "fun" and modern addition to the block.

The Panel suggested that reduction in the amount of asphalt proposed and increased landscaping - continuing the bright traditional colours of the façade - would improve the overall project, as would the inclusion of street trees. The use of tandem parking with appropriate screening should also be explored.

With respect to livability, some concern was expressed regarding the common family space proposed and the lack of exterior open space (deck).

There were some comments that the applicant may wish to seek expert consultations with respect to the removal of the retaining wall and, further, regarding the potential for water damage to the structure.

- **Applicant's Response**

Ms Ryvola indicated appreciation for the Panel's comments and agreed she would pursue the possibility of using tandem parking with Mr. Fiss.