
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: September 6, 2000

TIME: 4.00 p.m.

PLACE: Committee Room #1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Paul Grant [Chair]
Lance Berelowitz
Tom Bunting
James Cheng
Alan Endall
Bruce Hemstock [Excused from Items 1 and 2]
Jack Lutsky
Brian Palmquist
Gilbert Raynor [Excused from Item 1]
Keith Ross
Sorin Tatomir

REGRETS: Brian Palmquist

**ACTING RECORDING
SECRETARY:** M. Penner

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	550 Burrard Street
2.	1499 Homer Street
3.	189 Ontario Place

1. Address:	550 Burrard Street
DA:	404803
Use:	Office
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete after Preliminary
Architect:	Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership
Owner:	Bentall Corporation
Review:	<i>Second</i>
Delegation:	F. Musson, D. Wuori, A Whitchelo
Staff:	Ralph Segal

EVALUATION: [7 - 1] Support**• Introduction:**

The Development Planner, Mr. Segal, introduced the complete application for Phase 1. Although the Panel previously suggested a temporary food court/pavilion be pursued in Phase 1 to activate the open space, the DPB decided that this could remain an open space in Phase 1. Mr. Segal pointed out various revisions which addressed the Panel's previous review of this project, and concluded that staff were supportive of these changes.

In response to a query from the Panel, Mr. Segal confirmed that in the advent of Phase 2, the open space would be dug up, underground parking would be installed, and then infilled again. [Parking is presently in existence under the YWCA (Y) and the north portion of the subject site.]

The Chair enquired if the relationship of the Y to Phase 1 would still be as strong as originally proposed. Mr. Musson stated that the original scheme had proposed a continuity with the Y building in terms of materials and architectural expression; however, their revised submission defined the Y as a neighbour, rather than an integral part of the Phase 1. He pointed out the slightly darker colour of the Y, would not compete with Phase 1.

Mr. Musson also confirmed that the food court would be built at the time of Phase 2.

It was also pointed out that the building had been reduced to 33 storeys, the elevators had been reduced to 6 and 5, from 6 and 6 and Phase 1 would be 2 storeys higher, providing 20 occupied floors and 2 buffer floors, striving for a taller, more elegant project.

Mr. Musson briefly detailed proposed materials, e.g, their selection of low E glass, the incorporation of aluminum spandrels with flush aluminum mullions on the "external wrapper", giving the appearance of a silver skin. He also confirmed that the temporary cap would be upscaled to the top of the anticipated Phase 2, the construction of which would be dictated by leasing demand.

Mr. Wuori, Landscape Architect, commented on the rationale and philosophy of the evolved interim plaza, with specific emphasis on the proposed planting of a significant landmark tree [perhaps a large evergreen magnolia] to anchor the corner of Dunsmuir and Burrard, dedicating approximately 20 ft. x 24 ft. for this purpose. He also felt a softer, green landscape approach would appropriately tie in with the landmark tree, as would a double row of honey locusts along Burrard Street. Also proposed was a pedestrian walkway

and promenade lined with benches facing both Burrard Street and onto the green itself, along with lighting at pedestrian level. Mr. Wuori advised the pedestrian walkways across the plaza would be in a criss/cross pattern which would enhance the ground plane.

The lane, which provides garbage/loading facilities for adjacent properties, would incorporate architectural detailing with the use of trellis work along the arcade, creating a hedge consisting of evergreen vines. It was also planned to utilize the 6 existing large maple trees which are on this site and presently screen the parking, by relocating them to provide a strong screen at the lane.

Mr. Wuori briefly described the high quality of architectural materials to be utilized - granite inside the arcade, using slate or limestone inside the building, and using concrete in a variety of finishes - sandblasted, light green finishes, etc. - in the planter detailing around the exterior, as well as using precast concrete pavers to create a banding effect along with a high-gloss finish around the proposed landmark tree location.

Panel viewed the model and posted materials.

- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel was unanimous in their concern that if Phase 2 did not proceed, Phase 1 could be capped off at 20 - 22 storeys, resulting in a proportionately squat tower. However, those who had viewed the first submission, approved of the Applicant's response to the urban design issues previously raised and found this presentation to be an improved scheme. Also noted was the elegant skin treatment and, with the completion of Phase 2 [33 storeys], a dramatic final structure. The Panel was also unanimous in its approval of the proposed planting of a landmark tree at the corner of Dunsmuir and Burrard and suggested that this area could be further enhanced by incorporating a circular raised seating plinth.

There were concerns, however, with the treatment of the north lane elevation which a few Members felt had missed an urban design opportunity; others suggested that the roofscape between Phase 1 and the Y could be strengthened; another felt the walkway from the Y to the green space should be strengthened. A Member pointed out that as the Y would now be treated as a separate building, the Applicant should go a step further to differentiate materials between Phase 1 and the Y.

Although most of the Members felt the main entry to the tower needed to be more robust and suggested a larger, cantilevered canopy, others felt the main entry should be off Burrard Street, it being the primary ceremonial street. Yet others thought the plaza should be the main entry. A few Panel Members found the secondary door on Burrard to be confusing, specially if the main entry wasn't made more prominent and given that Burrard Street is the front of this building the edge should be more elegantly elaborated as an architectural statement along the street edge.

Various Member suggested the Applicant had a choice whether to make the Dunsmuir edge definition stronger, perhaps with the use of a stronger row of trees, or to remove the planting altogether in order to allow a bold view from Dunsmuir right to the strongest part of the building.

There were concerns about the angled tower line of the skin against the vertical prow of the building and could appear imbalanced with the completion of Phase 2. A suggestion was offered that the angle be reversed.

Regarding the proposed cap of the tower, one Member suggested that perhaps the articulation of the original scheme be revisited.

It was also suggested the landscaping be moved away from the "wrapper" on Burrard Street, which would emphasize the power of this tower coming down to the ground - perhaps doing away with the shrubs and presenting a strong clean base plane, and expressing this tower as a piece of sculpture.

The Chair concluded that the consensus was that all of the large scale urban design issues had been exceptionally well-handled on this scheme; reiterated that it was an elegant building - but that the Panel had voiced a number of worthy suggestions with respect to refinements and clarifications.

- **Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Musson expressed his appreciation for the Panel's comments and thought there were a number of issues which would be reflected in the minutes in terms of emphasizing the entrance, etc. He thought the suggestion of possibly deleting the planter on Burrard Street interesting and plausible. Mr. Musson commented on the diversity of the Panel's opinions of pros and cons; many were of single individual rather than the Panel as a whole, and that it would be interesting to read the minutes to see which were individual and which were common issues.

The Chair confirmed that this was an Advisory Panel and thought it was incumbent upon the Applicant to glean worthwhile comments and, if possible, attempt to incorporate them into the on-going design development of this building.

The Chair called the vote and advised the Applicant they had the support of the Panel

2. Address:	1499 Homer Street
DA:	405202
Use:	Residential [28 storeys, 124 units]
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Hewitt & Kwasnicky
Owner:	Concord Pacific
Review:	<i>Second</i>
Delegation:	D. Hewitt, D. Negrin, D. Wuori
Staff:	R. Segal

EVALUATION: [8 - 0] Support

- **Introduction:** The Development Planner, Ralph Segal, introduced the revised scheme and briefly reiterated the Panel's previous concerns which had focussed primarily on the tower entry identity, relationship of the mews to the rest of the precinct, as well as the garage entry ramp and loading area in conjunction with the court yard and landscaping. He noted that the Applicant had incorporated major revisions to this project, e.g., moving the tower from a mid-location between townhouses thereby giving the lobby more prominence on Homer Street which would also lend life and vitality to the mews. Mr. Segal advised that the loading bay, previously located in the courtyard, had been deleted and advised the Panel that the CD-1 By-law for this site did not require loading bays. The ramp had now been shortened leaving the remainder of the courtyard for landscaping.

In response to a question from the Panel concerning the mews, Mr. Segal confirmed the mews and the park locations would be coordinated in accordance with Concord's site plans.

Mr. Segal also confirmed that although this would be a non-market housing development at the start, senior building programs would follow, as per the guidelines.

- **Applicant's Opening Comments:**

Mr. Hewitt referred to their adherence to the urban planning issues previously raised by the Panel.

Mr. Hewitt noted that Mr. Wuori had developed a larger pathway, and although not to the scale of the mews, it showed the connection; the courtyard had been enlarged and raised which would now be more in keeping with the pathway. He pointed out the difference between the patios and street level; that the entrances to the townhouses had been articulated better and that the hard edge against property line would be treated with brick.

In response to a query if the Applicant's long-term contingent was to unite the 2 sites, Mr.

Hewitt confirmed their intent was to keep this as one large area with perhaps a hidden fence to define the properties, but that the seam would not be obvious between the two sites.

Mr. Wouri, Landscape Architect, referred to the revised scale of the court yard with the removal of the dropoff at the rear. In terms of incorporating animation along the curved pedestrian walkway, a water base along the tower had been incorporated to allow bridges into the building, as well as at the gated entrance way, which would lead to the courtyard and defined play area. He also referred to the rock outcrops which would form the plaza and court yard using textured pre-pressed concrete and cobbled stones, incorporating an island of trees, as well as provide more access from the beach and the residential area.

Panel viewed the posted materials and model.

- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel agreed unanimously on the vast improvements incorporated in this project from their first review, specifically the removal of the loading bay, and felt this development presented a unique, and strong clean statement. Various Members referred to the improved tower location in relationship to the townhouses and that the L-shaped townhouses improved the entry locations next to the pathway. The Panel also approved of the proposed landscaping which would reinforce the park. A Member noted that although the townhouses were well situated, it was difficult to discern the details due to the small scale shown and stated that the residential feel was always dependant on the details of townhouses. Several Members noted that although they approved of the material, felt the project could incorporate more brick.

However, the Panel voiced a few concerns; a Member expressed discomfort with the proposed roof material and felt that the street corner could incorporate more architectural details, yet others thought the architectural expression needed to be simplified; it was thought the 3-storey height of the tower was resting on columns that were too spindly, which would require thoughtful resolution of this structure by perhaps gathering these columns into a stronger structural expression.

The Chair congratulated the Panel for being brief in record time! He noted the Panels congratulatory remarks on the excellent site planning re getting the tower in the right place in relationship to the townhouses, noting the Panel's gratification in having its proffered advice adhered to by the Applicant, and expressed his appreciation to the Applicant for bringing back this dramatically revised project.

- **Applicant's Response:** The Applicant thought it prudent not to respond.

The Chair called for the vote and advised the Applicant of the Panel's unanimous support.

3. Address:	189 Ontario Place
DA:	405105
Use:	Mixed
Zoning:	C-2
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Tomizo Yamamoto
Owner:	41 st /Main Development
Review:	<i>Second</i>
Delegation:	T. Yamamoto
Staff:	B. Adair

EVALUATION: [9 - 0] Full Support

- Introduction:

The Development Planner, Bob Adair, briefly reviewed the context of this revised project: reiterated that this was a C-2 site, which proposed commercial on the ground floor with some residential facing Ontario Place and 3 storeys of residential above. The Panel's concerns included the visibility of this site from all 4 sides; the facade design should also respond to the context on the 4 different elevations, given the adjacent uses; also, due to the prominence of the site this project should therefore be a more prominent building. Other concerns included the proposed materials, that the details needed upgrading and the need for larger scale drawings; whether there should be residential on the ground floor facing on Ontario Place, and the size and use, as well as height of the roof deck at the rear of the building and possible landscaping in order to ease the transition from this building to the adjacent single family development.

Mr. Adair pointed out that the lane situation had not been settled yet and that Engineering had decided they were not too keen on the city-owned dedicated lane being open behind the site, so as to discourage traffic cutting through from 41st towards Main Street, as well as neighbourhood opposition to the density and general scale of the development on this site. He pointed out the proposal was now for a shortened lane, allowing access to the parking and loading facilities, with 2/3rds of the lane to be landscaped. When questioned about the upkeep of the proposed landscaping in the lane, Mr. Adair advised this issue had not been resolved as yet. When questioned if the applicant/owner would be interested in purchasing this property, Mr. Adair felt that a larger building would probably not be supported.

- Applicant's Opening Comments:

Mr. Yamamoto pointed out the revised orientation and façades of the building, and had convinced the owner to extend the use of brick to the second storey. Their decision to use only 1/3rd of the lane for parking access/loading and landscape the rest of the lane had been encouraged by the neighbours, as this would discourage vehicular shortcuts and be a buffer zone.

The Panel reviewed the model and posted materials.

- **Panel's Comments:**

The Panel was unanimous in its approval of the substantial progress on this project from the initial submission, including the resolution of the angled canopy on 41st Avenue which presented a good elaboration on the design; also incorporating brick up to the 2nd storey as well as a suggestion that the brick could possibly wrapped around the corner. However, there was also unanimous concerns expressed about the lane and maintenance responsibility thereof and that Engineering had not yet reached a decision about treatment of this lane. The majority felt the lane should be closed off so as to discourage vehicular shortcuts, allowing 1/3rd for access to loading and underground parking; however, if the lane were landscaped who would be responsible for up-keep, certainly not the owner across the lane; others suggested perhaps it would be best utilized if it were paved providing a safe play area for the neighbourhood children.

The residential unit on Ontario Place caused extensive discussion - including the fact that no one could remember having made the suggestion to change this unit from commercial to residential, [one Member later confessed to this recommendation] and Mr. Adair confirmed this decision had been made at a staff meeting as it was generally attempted to get residential facing the flanking street of these type of developments and that the width of the boulevard could accommodate this unit. It was felt that this would be an awkward unit and that the entry was too dark; however, if it were to be treated as a residential facade that terminated in a commercial node at the corner, joining the unit and the entrance, could work. General agreement that the Ontario main residential entry should be more prominent.

There was also a suggestion that the 2nd storey roof could be landscaped making it part of a living space in order to provide a more urban design.

It was also thought that the ramp to the underground parking was too narrow and should be revisited.

The Chair summarized a few issues, stating the project was generally supportable; however, it was obvious that there needed to be more time spent on the lane facade in whatever form the lane takes and that it didn't answer the question as seen from 41st Avenue. Also, there was some gentle criticism of the Ontario Place facade and the nature of the canopy at the entry; there was mixed opinion of the residential unit - perhaps make it funkier? He also noted several comments about the parking ramp warranting further study.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant had no comments.

The Chair called for a vote and advised the Applicant he had the full support of the Panel.