
URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: September 24, 2008

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Walter Francl, Chair
Tom Bunting (Items 1 & 2)
Maurice Pez
Douglas Watts
Bill Harrison
Martin Nielsen
Mark Ostry
Albert Bicol (Items 1 & 2)
David Godin

REGRETS:
Gerry Eckford
Richard Henry
John Wall

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	City Hall Steps
2.	26 East 1 st Avenue
3.	337 West Pender Street

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Francl gave an update on items previously seen at the Panel that went to the Development Permit Board on Monday, September 22nd. Mr. Francl called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. The Panel considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

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| 1. Address: | City Hall Steps |
| DE: | N/A |
| Description: | Proposal for new entry steps and improvements to City Hall Campus accessibility at West 10 th Avenue. |
| Zoning: | CD-1 |
| Application Status: | Complete |
| Architect: | Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects |
| Owner: | City of Vancouver |
| Review: | First |
| Delegation: | Garrick Bradshaw, Director, Facility Design and Management
Jane Durante, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects |
| Staff: | Anita Molaro |

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-2)

- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Development Planner, described the proposal noting that the plans are for a small intervention to deal with the edge condition along Cambie Street that's been modified by the construction of the Canada Line. Staff are looking at an opportunity to reinstate the edge condition and improve the entry stairs at the north end of the site (West 10th Avenue) which will be an important entry when the Canada Line station is completed. Facility Design and Management has also taken on the project to improve the entry experience at the corner of West 12th Avenue and Cambie Street. The plans are to widen the sidewalk area, improve the edge condition along the north lawn, to extend the double row of trees and to make the sidewalk wider for an improved approach into the City Hall campus. The proposal was brought to the Panel for advice to an important civic space. The Heritage Commission has looked at the proposal because the City Hall is a heritage site.

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

1. Public realm resolution of the corner treatments
 - Cambie Street and West 12th Avenue
 - Cambie Street and West 10th Avenue
2. Resolution of the north lawn edge condition along the Cambie Street frontage.

Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Garrick Bradshaw, Director, further described the plans noting that the proposal would create more open space and a plaza out of the Canada Line station that will slowly taper up Cambie Street to West 12th Avenue. The changes will also increase the visual and pedestrian connection between the street and the north lawn. The steps will be replaced at West 10th Avenue but the pathway to the hall will not be altered. The proposal is to feather the lawn down to the sidewalk on Cambie Street. As well the foliage along West 10th Avenue will be trimmed and parts will be removed as a way to invite residents of the city to enjoy the north lawn.

Jane Durante, Landscape Architect described the landscaping plans. She noted that the sidewalk will be widened at West 12th Avenue and while the oak tree will be kept the sign will be included in the reconfiguring of the edge. The flags will also be relocated. The landscaping will be simple while providing visual access. New lighting and benches are planned at the West 10th Avenue corner and new stairs will be placed where the existing stairs are currently located. The plan is to connect the plaza at the back of the Broadway Station. The colour scheme and street furniture for the City Hall campus will be the same as the new scheme in Cambie Village.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider expanding the entrance at the corner of West 10th Avenue and Cambie Street;
 - Consider replicating light standards currently on the grounds; and
 - Prune the trees and clean up the landscape along West 10th Avenue.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal it was appropriate and well handled.

The Panel agreed that improving the public realm at Cambie Street and West 12th Avenue was important. They liked the addition of the double row of trees. The Panel also liked the light standard being proposed although several Panel members didn't like the pole but did like the head. They suggested the pole should be concrete in keeping with what was already at City Hall. The panel generally supported not replacing the retaining wall along the length of the Cambie Street frontage but where retaining walls were provided, they should accommodate seating

A couple of Panel members suggested that the plans for the corner of Cambie Street and West 10th Avenue didn't seem to go far enough and suggested the stairs should be larger and should open both to 10th Avenue and to Cambie Street. They did like the general design theme in the Art Deco concrete walls. They also thought that linking from the Cambie sidewalk to the lawn was a good idea and was a nice response to what was happening elsewhere on Cambie Street.

The Panel liked the idea of opening up the north edge along West 10th Avenue noting that it needed some major pruning of the trees and cleaning up of the landscape. They felt that by pruning the trees the view to the mountains would be opened up from City Hall and the north lawn.

One Panel member suggested that would be a good idea to rethink the north lawn because of the potential redevelopment of City Hall. It was also suggested that it would make sense to tread lightly in terms of the scope of the project considering a new plan could come forward in a few years.

One Panel member said he was disappointed with some of our civic projects regarding the quality of materials and level of detailing. There always seemed to be a lack of money and civic pride suffered. A higher quality of materials and level of detail was suggested. The final results should not look as if they were temporary. While the long term plan calls for the replacement of the East Wing building and a redesign of this entire area, elements such as the stair at the corner of 10th and Cambie are likely to remain as permanent features on the site.

- **Applicant's Response:** Ms. Durante thanked the Panel for their good comments.

2. Address:	26 East 1 st Avenue
DE:	412345
Description:	To develop this site with a 15-storey residential building and 2-storey townhouses at grade all over 4 levels of underground parking having vehicle access from the lane.
Zoning:	CD-1
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	Howard Bingham Hill Architects
Owner:	Pinnacle International (West First) Plaza Inc.
Review:	Second (First was rezoning)
Delegation:	Robert Duke, Howard Bingham Hill Architects Vito De Cotiis, Pinnacle Developments Jennifer Stamp, Durante Kreuk Landscape Architects
Staff:	Dale Morgan

EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (2-5)

- **Introduction:** Dale Morgan, Development Planner introduced the proposal for a 15-storey residential building with an overall height of 154 feet, with a partial 3-storey low rise and 83 townhouses at grade. The applicant is seeking a density of 3.5 FSR plus additional density not being used on the adjacent parcel. Mr. Morgan described the context for the area noting the proposal is located in the 3C area of SEFC known as the Rail Lands.

Mr. Morgan also described the proposed height and massing noting the amenity penthouse and the 2-storey townhouses. The proposal is to exceed SEFC Green Building Strategy of LEED™ Silver. Sustainable measures will include urban agriculture, solar shading on the south and west facades, solar collection panel, reduced south facing glazing, energy and water efficient fixtures and the building will be tied into the NEU.

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

Character & Massing:

- Does the building meet the ODP objectives for a “landmark” site?

Materiality & Expression:

- The material proposed for the curving ribbon of glass requires further clarification. What type of window system would be best suited for this undulating form?

Solar Response:

- Does the building adequately address solar response, in particular to the west elevation?

Mr. Morgan took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant’s Introductory Comments:** Robert Duke, Architect, further described the proposal noting the historical influences that helped develop the design. As well Mr. Duke noted that the design was strongly influenced by its location adjacent to the park. The location of the building on the site was chosen in order to give views to Science World. 2-storey townhouses will wrap Ontario Street and East 2nd Avenue. A large entry space is on axis with the park and will open up into a large atrium. Trees are planned for the atrium along with a water garden. Mr. Duke described the materials noting that masonry had been chosen to give an industrial quality to the building in keeping with the rail yard precinct. Mr. Duke also gave a brief overview of the sustainable measures planned for the proposal.

Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect, described the landscape approach which was to draw nature through the atrium from the entry to the lane. The park across the street informed some of the design. The water theme for the park is to be extended into the proposed development site with the bulk of the storm water from the site directed into the park. Water has been introduced to the front entry of the building and at the back courtyard. The site has about 50% vegetation which is a requirement for all parcels in SEFC. There are approximately 18 garden plots planned for urban agriculture. The children's play area has been paired up with the urban agriculture and will be adjacent to the indoor amenity space. Two areas of extensive green roof are planned; one over the parking garage and one on the top of the building.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Simplify the architectural expression of the building, particularly as it pertains to the undulating glass wall and explore using a curtain wall window system for the glass elements in the undulating form and simplify the material palette for the building;
 - Consider increasing the height to elevate the building for a stronger "landmark" form; and
 - The solar gain issues on the south and west façades need to be addressed in a way that informs the building design.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel did not support the proposal.

The Panel had strong support for certain elements of the building particularly the corner elements with the stepped balcony feature on the opposing corners of the building. The Panel also liked the townhouse portion of the proposal. There was general support from the Panel regarding the massing and the general disposition of the pieces on the facades. One Panel member thought the cornice line at the top of the penthouse could use some design development so that it meshed with the curving element.

The Panel had some major concerns regarding the curved glazing elements. They felt that the undulating wall was overly complex in its architectural expression and that the animation of this component competed with the other elements of the facades. The complexity of this undulating wall gesture was not enough to carry the landmark status of the project as it presents itself to the park. The Panel thought the façade should be simplified. Most of the Panel thought the window walls should be curtain wall in order to achieve the design intent of the curved walls. One Panel member suggested saving the money on the undulating wall and putting the money into a good window wall system. Several Panel members suggested increasing the height in order to elevate the building and give it a stronger reading as a landmark form in the neighbourhood.

The Panel had some concerns regarding the solar gain aspects of the building, particularly on the west façade. Several members noted that the percentage of glass was not well represented. Similarly, the effectiveness of any of the shading elements was not well documented. Several Panel members suggested some form of set-back or the addition of solar control devices or overhangs on the west façade in order to better handle the solar gain. Another Panel member was concerned with radiant comfort and thought more work needed to be done in terms of glass performance. They also suggested that the requirement to provide air conditioning suggested that the building envelope was not adequately addressing the issue of solar gain.

The Panel had strong support for the landscaping concept and thought the program had been well integrated into the building program. Several Panel members thought it was a lost opportunity not having the urban agriculture extended over the garage entrance. One Panel member thought the atrium and water expression was commendable.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Duke thanked the Panel for their comments. He added that their goal is to simplify the building

3. Address:	337 West Pender Street
DE:	412378
Description:	To construct a 9 storey residential building with 95 small units with associated amenity space, ground floor retail, all over 1 level of underground parking.
Zoning:	DD
Application Status:	Complete
Architect:	DYS Architecture
Owner:	City of Vancouver
Review:	First
Delegation:	Dane Jensen, DYS Architecture Bryce Gauthier, Landscape Architecture Inc.
Staff:	Anita Molaro

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (5-0)

- **Introduction:** Anita Molaro, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a social housing project on West Pender Street. The site is in the Downtown District Sub Area known as Victory Square. Ms. Molaro noted that the zoning allows for up to 5 FSR where social housing is provided. At least two thirds of the floor space on the site has to be social housing and the site has to have some retail continuity in order to earn that amount of FSR. The height limit in the Victory Square area is 70 feet but the height limit can be increased to 100 feet for social housing. The proposal is seeking LEED™ Gold equivalency.

The intent of the Victory Square Guidelines is to ensure the revitalization of the physical environment of the area is achieved through a combination of heritage conservation and sensitive new development. The main characteristics of the historic urban fabric in the Victory Square area is a dense, urban commercial pedestrian realm with narrow building frontages reflecting a 25 foot subdivision pattern, a characteristic saw-tooth street wall profile created by varying building heights, streetscapes of the late Victorian and Edwardian area, commercial buildings, cubic massing, dense site coverage, and robust street walls with internal setbacks for light wells and courtyards. Masonry is the predominate building material with features such as punched windows and projecting cornices at the roof line. The predominate building type in the area are low to mid-rise with continuous street frontages. There are a handful of taller buildings which include the Sun Tower and the Dominion Building.

When new buildings are added within this historic fabric, there are number of key design principles within the Design Guidelines. Any new building needs to be respectful of the scale and character of the existing Victory Square urban form but should have a contemporary architectural expression. The distribution of height and massing on the site should be influenced by the scale and character of the existing streetscape. The maximum street wall height should relate to the existing streetscape in order to preserve and reinforce the saw-tooth profile of the streetscape. In a block that contains buildings with a consistent low scale street wall height, new developments should have a similar street wall height setting back any portions of the buildings above the predominate existing height. The Victory Square Guidelines state that for buildings over the 70 feet maximum height, they should be stepped back so the 70 foot height scale reads as the predominate elevation.

The materials being proposed are a combination of brick and metal panel. The units are taking a different approach than previous social housing projects. In this case they are not considered dwelling units but are housekeeping units and will be a minimum of 225 square feet. As a result there has to be a lot more amenity space provided throughout the

building, and in this case there are amenity spaces dispersed among the different levels of the building.

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

Urban design response including:

- Massing response including height increase, and relationships to adjacent buildings;
 - Overall building design/character including resolution of the elevations and their various orientations;
 - Liveability of the units;
 - Design of open space; and
 - Use and quality of the proposed materials.
- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Dane Jansen, Architect, further described the proposal. He noted that the project is sponsored by BC Housing and the units will be for at risk urban singles. The architectural form is for a 5-storey on West Pender Street stepping back to a 9-storey tower. The narrow street wall is set back with a glazed window wall. A number of roof decks are planned that will be accessible from a hallway or through an amenity space. Mr. Jansen described the sustainability strategy noting that they are committed to achieving LEED™ Gold and will also register the project with the Canadian Green Building Council. Some of the sustainable measures include reduction of overall water consumption, solar heating for domestic hot water, and recycled building materials.

Bryce Gauthier, Landscape Architecture, noted the landscape plans including the street frontage on West Pender Street as well as the roof decks. The decks are meant for social activities, private reflection, recovery and rest for the residents. Organized seating will be provided with planters and trellis elements. Sustainable measures have also been taken into consideration for the landscape and will include drought tolerant plantings and a long term irrigation system.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Consider trimming or simplifying the fins on the West Pender Street façade;
 - Design development to the West Pender Street façade;
 - Design development to better integrate the building with the existing streetwall and reduce the gap between buildings; and
 - Consider flipping the kitchen and closet in Units A, B and J.

Related Commentary: The Panel supported the proposal and thought the internal plans were well done.

The Panel thought the solar response was well handled although they thought the fins on the West Pender Street elevation were not working as sun shades. They suggested trimming them down as a way to simplify that expression. A couple of Panel members suggested having demountable fins that overhang the street.

The one area of concern for the Panel was the way the building responds to the streetscape on the West Pender Street façade. They were concerned that it did not fit in with the over all street wall. They noted that the current buildings were strong in terms of their reference lines and noted that the public realm datum with the height of the retail along West Pender Street was higher than what was being proposed on the new building. The Panel suggested the canopy should correspond more to the existing datum. The Panel felt the four foot setback hadn't helped the way the building fronts West Pender Street and suggested that the building be brought forward to match the buildings on either side.

Another concern of the Panel's was the gap between the buildings. The Panel felt that the building plan needed to extend the façade to the adjoining bldg. face and not use a two or three foot flashing as an infill.

The Panel suggested that brick is an appropriate material in this neighborhood and that the applicant might consider using a modern brick or arrangement of brick as a material that would be more appropriate on the west façade.

Several Panel members suggested flipping the kitchen and closet in Units A, B and J to improve liveability, as the entry door currently opens up against the kitchen.

The Panel thought the landscaping was well handled. The Panel liked the outdoor amenity spaces, although a couple of Panel members thought some weather coverage needed to be added along with some heaters. They felt the areas would be well used and suggested expanding the use by adding a built-in chess board, tables, and more outdoor seating.

The Panel did not have an issue with the relaxation on the amount of parking being provided.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Jansen thanked the Panel for their fabulous comments as he thought they were very helpful.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.