

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: September 9, 2009

TIME: 4.00 pm

PLACE: Committee Room No. 1, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Bruce Haden, Chair
Gerry Eckford - Excused Item #2
Richard Henry
Oliver Lang
Steve McFarlane
Mark Ostry
Douglas Watts - Excused Item #2

REGRETS:
Martin Nielsen
Jane Durante
David Godin
Vladimir Mikler
Maurice Pez

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	Georgia Steps
2.	1134 Burrard Street

BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Haden called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There being no New Business the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. Address: | Georgia Steps |
| DE: | N/A |
| Description: | To seek input and advice as to the best options from an urban design perspective. |
| Zoning: | N/A |
| Application Status: | N/A |
| Architect: | N/A |
| Owner: | N/A |
| Review: | First |
| Staff: | Michael Gordon/Ralph Segal |

EVALUATION: NON-VOTING SESSION

- **Introduction:** Michael Gordon, Planner, stated that the purpose for the High Level Review of the North East False Creek area is to open the door to rezoning applications on the land use in the area. With the review there is an opportunity to rethink the stairs at the BC Place Stadium. Council has requested Planning staff to look at the implications for pedestrians as well as people on roller blades or skate boards. Planning staff are looking for a perspective from an urban design point of view on how the stairs will work. They are also looking at the cost assuming there is some structure already in place. Mr. Gordon asked the Panel to comment on each of the options being presented.

Ralph Segal, Senior Architect/Development Planner, noted that the consultancy for the Georgia Steps has been done in two phases and the Panel would be looking at Phase One which is looking at the link from Beatty Street down to Pacific Boulevard. He added that the Georgia Steps project is the key to the success of the development of North East False Creek (NEFC). The idea is to encourage the flow of pedestrians to the NEFC area from the downtown. The foot of Georgia Street is an important public space and is a prime focal point leading from the downtown to the waterfront. However, Robson Street maybe more deserving and staff are taking a closer look at that option. In terms of BC Place, the plans call for thousands of people coming through the gate to an area that will be flat and broad above Pacific Boulevard. There is also an expectation that there will be a concourse that will make a link around the site. A major tower element is planned for the corner of Griffiths Way and Pacific Boulevard. Mr. Segal described the four options which include:

- A - Pedestrian (aligned stairs + elevator)
- B - Pedestrian - barrier free (aligned stairs + elevator + 5% ramp @ 4m width)
- C1 - Pedestrian - barrier free - cyclist
- C2 - Pedestrian - barrier free - cyclist (aligned stairs + elevator + 5% ramps)

Mr. Segal added that from an engineering stand point there aren't any plans to develop under the Georgia Street Viaduct in order to allow for Councils' decisions on the future of the viaduct.

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

- Contributing to "Connectivity" (extending the Downtown to the Waterfront)
- Helping to create a vibrant, active Public Realm

- Creating a sense of place

Mr. Gordon and Mr. Segal took questions from the Panel.

- **Related Commentary:**

- Having access to the water from Georgia Street is important; this should be part of the design exercise;
- Need to look at future developments (particularly on the water side of Pacific Boulevard and take into consideration the addition of the Vancouver Art Gallery;
- Need to add another form of animation to the plaza to make it an interesting and engaging place when not full of people;
- Make the plaza an engaging space perhaps by adding a sculpture garden or landscape elements;
- The plaza needs to be made a destination place;
- Need to add other elements in the space to get people to come down to Pacific Boulevard;
- The steam plant could be included and expressed as a viable element;
- The steam plant is part of sustainability and could be included in the design perhaps by showing what is under the plaza;
- Robson Street should be included in the design process and integrated into the design;
- Need to have full access for bicycles and pedestrians as well as people with disabilities;
- The options seem to be trying to make up the elevation in a timid way;
- People looking down Georgia Street need to see some activity in the area;
- Need to make something more iconic on the waterfront;
- There is an opportunity for programming with green spaces, water connections, integration of a world class art gallery;
- Elevation change is in the wrong place and wants to happen closer to the waterfront;
- The service access should not impede pedestrians;
- Whatever treatment that is integrated into the steps should wrap around to the Terry Fox Plaza;
- Need to create active edges around the stadium as it needs to be a place of significance;
- The most accessible plan needs to be chosen as it shouldn't be just about pedestrians;
- It is critical to relate the street grid down to the waterfront and this connection should be celebrated;
- Should be creative and not just about creating the steps;
- There are opportunities to play with the landscape and add something that isn't expected in the urban environment;
- The elevator needs to be better integrated and in a place that makes sense otherwise it won't be used;
- The options seem to be missing a big design idea that could guide any future design;
- The design could be helped by thinking of this area as a procession from one elevation to another;
- Retail or café's and other commercial activities would animate the edge; and
- There are critical urban design issues that could be addressed by exploring a bridge over Pacific Boulevard.

2. Address:	1134 Burrard Street
DE:	Rezoning
Description:	Rezoning from DD to CD-1 to develop a 16-storey building containing 141 units of supportive housing and replacing an existing youth resource centre.
Zoning:	DD to CD-1
Application Status:	First
Architect:	DYS Architecture
Owner:	City of Vancouver
Review:	First
Delegation:	Dane Jansen, DYS Architecture Gerry Eckford, Eckford and Associates Landscape Architects
Staff:	Grant Miller/Anita Molaro

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (4-1)

- **Introduction:** Grant Miller, Rezoning Planner, described the proposal to rezone the site from DD to CD-1 to develop a 16-storey building containing 141 self-contained units of supportive housing and the replacement of the existing “Directions” youth resource centre. The site is one of the 12 City owned sites to be developed for social and supportive housing with BC Housing. A Memorandum of Understanding between the City and BC Housing was approved by Council on December 19, 2007 supporting the development of the site for social and supportive housing for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness such as the mentally ill, people with addictions and residents of the City’s Single Room Occupancy hotels. Mr. Miller described the land use policy under the zoning and asked the Panel to provide comments regarding use, density and form of development.

Anita Molaro, Development Planner, further described the proposal noting that the site is in the Burrard Granville sub-area of the Downtown South Guidelines. She also described the context for the area noting the adjacent sites and neighbourhood buildings. The proposal consists of single units plus support and amenity space. The ground and second floor uses consist of a social service agency, the third floor is the amenity level for the residential component and levels four through fifteen are the residential dwelling units. The ground floor has to accommodate three entries along its frontage which include the residential entry, an administration entry and the entry to the youth centre. Ms. Molaro described the architectural plans for the site noting the orientation and the height of the building. She also noted that the unit sizes vary between 401 and 325 square feet. The City minimum is 398 square feet which can be relaxed to 320 square feet. Ms. Molaro also described the proposed materials noting that the applicant plans to achieve LEED™ Gold standard.

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

Does the Panel support the urban design response developed for this site:

- Tower form, massing, height and density (8.51 FSR);
- Building’s relationship to existing, proposed and future development with particular consideration given to the reduced tower separation;
- Building orientation and articulation of facades;
- Open space design and landscape treatments; and
- Preliminary comments on the use of and quality of the proposed materials.

Mr. Miller and Ms. Molaro took questions from the Panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:** Dane Jansen, Architect, noted that the proposal is for a 13-storey residential tower on a 3-storey podium. Due to the proximity of the Murray Hotel, the massing has been adjusted to allow for an increased distance between the two projects. Loading for the project will be accessed from the lane. The third floor is where the amenity space will be for the residential component. He noted that they had the challenge of LEED™ Gold and tried to keep the windows under 40% and will be operable. Mr. Jansen noted that they will be using a combination of dark brick and metal siding on the building.

Gerry Eckford, Landscape Architect, described the landscaping plans for the proposal noting the urban garden and the large landscaped area along the lane. Metal screening is proposed around the deck to provide security for the youth centre.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**
 - Design development to simplify the building including consideration to reducing the variety of materials; and
 - Design development to the Burrard Street elevation, especially at the lower levels.
- **Related Commentary:** The Panel supported the proposal as well as the height, density, use and form of development.

The Panel thought building acted as a constraint to the Murray Hotel site. They also thought the building would benefit from fewer embellishments, but they liked the material palette. A couple of Panel members suggested only having one material on the brick volume and not two. They also thought the Burrard Street elevation needed some design development as there wasn't a balance between what the façade and the glazing. They also thought that at street level, the façade presented too much blankness. The Panel thought the applicant needed to take a more sensitive approach to the building. Most of the Panel thought the lane elevation was the strongest part of the project. They appreciated there was a sensitivity regarding the price point but felt the money should be put into basic elements and better quality materials.

The Panel thought relaxing the rear yard setback to thirteen feet was too much and suggested removing the individual unit at the back of the building. One Panel member suggested pushing the building to the north east property line to give a larger side yard. The Panel supported the density with a few of the Panel members suggesting the building could go higher. One Panel member asked if there was an opportunity to take advantage of additional height with the review of the view cones. The Panel felt that the combination of the form and the bulk of the floor plate relative to a small site was a problem.

The Panel thought there was a lot of creativity in the landscaping but that there wasn't much outdoor space. One Panel member asked if there was an opportunity to do something on the roof noting that the space could be concentrated to the centre of the roof for security.

- **Applicant's Response:** Mr. Jansen thanked the Panel for their comments.

Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.