



NEW WESTMINSTER DESIGN PANEL

**Tuesday August 24, 2010 3:00 p.m.
Committee Room No. 2**

MINUTES

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chris Block, Chair	- AIBC Representative
Tracey Mactavish	- AIBC Representative
David Roppel	- UDI Representative
Marilea Schultz	- Community Representative
Doug Shearer	- BCSLA Representative
Jennifer Stamp	- BCSLA Representative
Alla Titenko	- Community Representative

VOTING MEMBER REGRETS:

Eric Pattison	- AIBC Representative
Mark Vance	- AIBC Representative

STAFF:

Jim Hurst	- Senior Planning Analyst
Michael Watson	- Planning Assistant
Judi Turner	- Assistant Corporate Officer

6.1 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

The following was added to the agenda:

- Distribution of Meeting Materials (added as Item 6.2)

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of July 27, 2010

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the New Westminster Design Panel meeting held on July 27, 2010 be received and adopted.

CARRIED.

All members of the Panel voted in favour of the motion.

3.0 DESIGN APPROVALS

3.1 609 and 625 Fifth Avenue

File: DP040 (UT)

Jennifer Stamp stepped down from the Panel, citing a conflict of interest as she is representing the project as Landscape Architect.

Jim Hurst, Planner, referenced a model of the project displaying the project and site context and reported an application has been received for a Development Permit Application with variances, to consolidate the properties addressed as 609 and 635 Fifth Avenue in order to construct a 24 storey mixed use building with 170 residential units and 6,564 square feet (609.8 square metres) of commercial floor space which would face Belmont Street, and a 20 unit four storey residential building which would face Fifth Avenue.

The applicant reviewed zoning in the rest of the parcels and has developed a development they believe will be appropriate for the area.

The existing medical building at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Seventh Street would be retained. The existing building at 608 Fifth Avenue would be demolished. The proposed project will require significant side setback variances to the abutting properties to the east and west along Belmont Street. Issues for consideration: appropriateness of the height and siting of the highrise, the desire to retain the pedestrian nature of Belmont Street. Parking requirements will be met.

Michael Alivojvodic of Chris Dikeakos Architects Inc., reviewed the application noting the project conforms to existing zoning and supports the OCP with neighbourhood professional development. It will encourage pedestrian circulation along Belmont, and will supply grade level access to residential development supporting the pedestrian realm. Public consultation included meetings with strata councils and business associations where the project received wide support. Mr. Alivojvodic displayed photos of the context, reviewed variances (predominantly side yard setbacks), identified 32 units of landscaped parking for the office building plus new parking within the development, elements of the proposed development, a common residential amenity, 168 residential units in the tower and 20 units in the low rise, elevations of the project within the context of adjacent buildings which will achieve a strong urban edge along Belmont and ?? Streets, building materials, sustainable material choices and energy efficient measures, waste and water management, septic system security, landscape designs to promote visual openness, well-lit underground parking with metal screens to allow daylight, signage, traffic study which is complete and identified no major issues with circulation around the site.

Jennifer Stamp, Landscape Architect, reviewed the landscaping plan, which will stress the pedestrian right of way, unit concrete pavers to the underground garage and along

Belmont, planters, townhouse patios on Fifth Avenue to provide eyes on the street, amenity decks, un-programmed lawn area, and private patios.

Questions from the Panel: *(Response in italics)*

- Where will store entries be located? *Store fronts will face Belmont Street*
- Fifth Avenue side? *Two level townhouse units facing Fifth and central lobbies on levels 3 and 4*
- Why is high rise facing Belmont Street and the low rise building facing Fifth Street? *The site parameters would compel more variances if the tower were facing Fifth Street.*
- Explain the connection between Fifth and Belmont. *Can move from Fifth north and along a dedicated walk along the building where metal screen fences are proposed during business hours. Circulation can also move from west to the building and north again.*
- The feature wall on the landscape? *Will tie into architecture with more texture. There is a drop from the residential level to the amenity space which has been made into a feature space. Stairs will go down to the space from private patios.*
- Explain how vehicles will back up from parking stalls to the west of the building. *There is no wall to prevent back up movements for vehicles*
- What is painted concrete and what is brick on the Belmont street elevation? *Delegate identified both areas.*
- Explain placement of the prominent corner at the northeast corner of the building. *No particular rationalization for this.*
- Material on penthouse? *A two storey glass spandrel on the mechanical house but are also considering louvered element.*
- Are two accesses to underground parking required? *Seventh Street access is for the office building. The residential access will generally be from Belmont. This plan will help relieve congestion at either location.*
- Reason for not providing commercial parking on Fifth Avenue? *To respect the OCP and guidelines for the area.*
- Explain how the pedestrian realm is reinforced. *Belmont is identified as commercial and pedestrian – it is reinforced with paving and commercial openings; it also features the main front doors to tower*
- If sustainability a rationale for the building when all elevations are similar. For instance solar ingress would help. *Balconies are present. The building is not intended to be a LEED building. Use will be made of materials and lighting fixtures.*
- Entrance to residential – easterly corridor appears to have two accesses. *That is not an entry to the building but is an emergency exit.*
- It feels like it is a long way to get to the door. Could the front door be brought further forward? *The design is intended to differentiate between commercial and residential. This can be looked at.*
- Is there a plan to purchase more property and build another tower? *The building is relatively modest at 24 storeys. Due to the topography, the tower will not stand out. Efforts have been made to acquire adjacent sites – unsuccessfully.*

- **Were other shapes of towers investigated on the site?** *Yes, including without the office building. In the final analysis, this is the best overall location for the tower and requires the fewest number of variances.*

Comments from the Panel:

- Like the landscape courtyard idea between 2 building masses; it is calm; however relentlessly symmetrical in both directions; attempt to relieve this; resolve the symmetrical trees in the courtyard with other trees
- Supply more detail on Belmont Street elevations
- Too much painted concrete on Belmont and Fifth
- Overall tower is strong and well articulated; the roof expression is weak
- Delete the parking access to Belmont Street, as this does not enhance the pedestrian presence of that area
- The east elevation of the penthouse is strong with vertical elements
- The green strategy is quite limited/insignificant – revisit
- The common area seems to be lacking interest
- The location of indoor space is good
- Bike lockers over three levels – those in basement will not be used; move them to P1
- The one bedroom suites seem far back with 12 – 15 foot balconies, and may be very dark
- The west end of Belmont elevation and at east end of Fifth elevation are painted concrete and appear blank
- Resubmit the application with responses
- Support comments over parking at Belmont and its impact on pedestrian;
- Removed blank components to that façade
- Question the location of massing on Belmont; consider stepping back or pulling podium forward; this is a steep site
- Tower articulation is good
- The most prominent façade is facing the wrong way
- Support proposed front setback being larger; support general concept
- Good strong submission
- Expect it to be returned with more detail.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the application be resubmitted with the following considerations and additional detail and focus;

- *Moving massing of the tower southward*
- *Strengthen the pedestrian realm on Belmont by moving commercial and residential out*
- *Move bicycle storage closer to upper levels*
- *Strengthen the pedestrian connection*
- *Consider a pedestrian connection from Fifth to Belmont Street*
- *There is need for additional detailing and understanding of materials on the four facades*

- *Reconsider the courtyard – easing the symmetry.*

CARRIED.

All members of Design Panel present voted in favour of the motion.

3.2 97 Braid Street

File: DP 024 (S)

Mike Watson, Planning Assistant, reported an application has been received for a Development Permit to allow construction of a 17,849 m² (192, 124 ft²) 5 storey office building with some retail adjacent to Braid Street Skytrain Station. The construction is on the same site as a four existing warehouse buildings (including the former Woodward's distribution centre) totalling 47,266 m² (508,340 ft²). The proposal conforms to the Zoning Bylaw requirements and no variance is requested. Parking is beneath the building. The tenant is not identified therefore some questions may not be answerable. The business park provides a framework and mitigation of pedestrian corridors. Other City departments have not yet commented on the project. The project will be submitted to Council, at an Open House and to the local Residents Association.

Jim Hurst, Planner, noted the project is adjacent to two major trailway systems.

John Cordonier representing, Bentall LP, who are operators of the municipal pension fund for the Province, are viewing the property as a long term hold. The proposal is the response to a Request for Proposals from a major tenant for the building. Mr. Cordonier introduced fellow delegates: **Dwayne Smyth Keith Holmes, of Bunting Coady Architects, and Guido Weimus and Randall Sharp of Sharp and Diamond Landscape Architects. Along with Gord Shimo, Energy Consultant,** This group has worked together for 15 years and developed 12 office buildings. The group addresses the following in these projects: building siting, form, envelope, materials, building systems, landscaping, building commissioning and operation.

Dwayne Smyth, Bunting Coady Architects, commented on the mandates for the project: sustainability and maintaining a gateway for New Westminster. Defining factors of the site include noise from vehicular, train and Skytrain traffic.

Mr. Smyth reviewed the site planning, the Phase 2 portion to the west, preliminary master planning options for the neighbouring warehouse, how the subject project will tie into existing development, the bike trail around the site and pedestrian and cycling connections to Hume Park and the area, context, site planning for Phases 1 and 2, atrium for shading, sustainability through heat recovery and natural lighting for the site, the north block positioning to invite pedestrians into the project, a land bridge which connects the atrium space, vehicular access into the site, east/west orientation of north and south blocks to maximize solar control and to control light, open and flexible open building with each office receiving daylight, shadow analyses, land bridge connection between phases, parking and loading obscured by landscaping on the south, atrium space treatment, three levels of underground parking, bicycle storage on P3, vehicular access from north and south ends, opportunity for a cafeteria next to the patio space, typical

floor plan, green roofs which occupy 50% of the roof, materials, explanation for raised plinth, and window treatment.

Randall Sharp, Sharp and Landscape Architects, reviewed the landscaping features of the project: to be welcoming to pedestrians from four corners, generous landscape setbacks on all sides, site sloping and stepping up of buildings, long views into the site benefits pedestrians and safety/security concerns, activation of the whole area, natural meadow to the west (Phase 2 site), high canopy trees suitable for CPTED principles, multiple layers of canopies to shade the buildings, seasonal effect from trees, rain water capture and rooftop run off management to be used for landscaping, water features, exterior spaces, CPTED treatment, mitigation of unattractive views to the south, site grading, furnishings and recycled materials use, pavers, lighting, planting plan, and green roof similar to Olympic Village with minimal ongoing maintenance. The LEED Gold checklist scores in the high gold range and this certification will be sought. Features will include: bicycle parking, access to a zip car, share a bike program, skylights and photovoltaic treatment, parabolic lighting, high efficiency heating, cooling and mechanical systems, water efficient fixtures, sustainable housekeeping practices and materials, and sustainability guidelines for tenants.

Questions from the Panel: *(Response in italics)*

- Is this project meant to attract Skytrain users? *There is a pedestrian and cycling sidewalk/connection to Skytrain which will be used by those arriving from the south. The facility itself is open to the public but the project is not meant to be a retail mall.*
- South elevation spandrel not clear. *It is variation between light gray and dark gray painted glass (demonstrated the material).*
- Where is cast in place concrete? *Only minimally used. Two storeys of columns are used.*
- The rendering from the west shows cascading green and does not seem to reflect in the elevation – which is it? *The green and waterfall both occur.*
- Why so many parking stalls when next to Skytrain and with bicycle lanes. *Are offering two stalls per thousand*
- Construction materials for skylights? *Painted steel beams with traditional skylight framing with insulated glass.*
- Clarify on the site plan access to the bridge from north and south. *Demonstrated on the landscape plan.*
- Will water features collect rain water? *Rain water will be used to top them but potable will be used to fill them initially.*
- Surveillance and security of the plaza – can this area be viewed from the north? Typically there is on site security, depending on the user. As well, cameras are installed and monitored. The tenant will be interested in high security and will overlay security measures. Will examine for the visibility element.
- Wheelchair access must be from the back rather than front door nearest front door. Can a ramp be installed? *Can enter to P1 and can access from the northeast corner to the front doors and elevators. Initially a ramp paralleled the east side of the north*

building, but there was a lot of vegetation loss. It is more practical to come in on a level.

- *Can the still water be given movement? It is being circulated (recycled and cleaned as all water) without creating any wave.*
- *Colour blocks in the atrium are translucent? The tenant designers will have input on how the atrium area will work. The outside spandrel will be carried into the atrium. The atrium may have more lively colours dependent on the tenant.*
- *Is the bicycle storage on the P1 level large enough? Change rooms are on the ground.*
- *Have soffit materials and entry canopies been considered? Real wood and metal soffit are in consideration for soffits.*
- *How will you deal with noise levels in the atrium space? Do have an acoustic engineering on board.*
- *Do office windows open into atrium? No. The atrium will serve as a chimney; will cascade the air from the office space into the atrium from each floor level, therefore conditioning of the atrium space is not necessary.*
- *Why is the stair course large? Hope to encourage their use instead of using elevators. Natural light will be provided.*

Comments from the Panel:

- Full support for a spectacular building and its LEED standard
- No need to see project again
- Corrugated metal seems like a weak element among all other strong materials
- Development of upper plinth is well done; access from east side also well done; south side is narrow and pinched and landscape elements not well used; add landscape to this area and open stair case to be more inviting
- More texture in the paving
- Give more consideration to the pedestrian zone at the lower level
- Give thought to programming the atrium space for social types of activities to make it more successful; perforated edges would help
- Massing: atrium could be quieter from a massing perspective as it is the silent part between the two buildings
- Building and landscape are excellent
- The plantings along Braid Street – there is a problem with the retaining wall which linearizes the area and forces the lines of trees; go steeper than 3:1, perhaps 2:1 and remove the wall entirely or move wall closer to the street so back part can be wider and house conifers more naturally
- The step down at the bridge is fussy and enclosed – open it up a bit
- The central area with zigzag walk needs to be opened up as well
- The bridge is interesting and could have no plants at the sides and have tensile cables, or be heavily planted; the hedge achieves neither; think through more carefully
- See Phase 2 with something more interesting than the diagonal pattern – perhaps take the atrium line through or add interest somehow
- Landscaping and building are high quality

- Well integrated design.
- The roof collection can be used for water features.
- Could use water feature as was done at Olympic Village
- It is preferable for those in wheelchairs and those on their feet start and end in the same place.
- The social functions of cafeteria and gym might be more suited to the east side and Skytrain.
- Agree corrugated metal is a weak link.
- The pedestrian connections fall apart on the southwest corner by the drop off zone – make it wider and more inviting.
- Investigate handicapped access from the east side.
- Investigate how to diminish the retaining wall as discussed.

(The project is on agenda for information therefore no recommendation was made.)

4.0 DOWNTOWN DESIGN APPROVALS

No business.

5.0 INFORMATION PRESENTATIONS

No business.

6.0 NEW BUSINESS

6.1 Committee Membership Reminder

Panel members were invited to submit applications for positions on the 2011 Design Panel. Applications are available on line or from City Hall.

6.2 Circulation of Package Materials

Members raised concern with the late arrival of package materials, feeling this adversely affects their ability to fully absorb the details of projects and thus make informed comments/recommendations. In particular, materials containing significant differences from previously received information should not be received at the meeting. Other jurisdictions refuse late submissions – can New Westminster do the same?

Additional matters for discussion included:

- There is no standard format for submitted materials
- Full size plans are not suitable
- A City policy should be developed regarding when packages should be received

- Some presentations are excessive; 20 minutes should be sufficient for a presentation; the Chair was designated to begin each presentation by informing presenters that 20 minutes is allotted
- The Panel needs time to review and supply input
- The Agenda should make it clear which items are submitted for approval and which for information
- Do not submit projects twice to the Panel if the first submission is satisfactory.

It was suggested that if a quorum of panel members do not have package materials in hand by the Friday before the meeting, then the incomplete item(s) should be removed from the agenda. The Chair is designated to make this determination.

7.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

8.0 CORRESPONDENCE

9.0 NEXT MEETING

September 28, 2010 at 3:00pm in Committee Room No. 2

10.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.


Chris Block
Chair


Judi Turner
Assistant Corporate Officer