

NEW WESTMINSTER DESIGN PANEL

**Tuesday July 26, 2011 3:00 p.m.
Committee Room No. 2**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Eric Pattison, Chair	- Chair, AIBC Representative
Paul Goodwin	- AIBC Representative
Tom Morton	- Development Industry Representative (UDI)
Keith Ross	- BC Society of Landscape Architects

REGRETS:

Chris Block	- AIBC Representative
Mark Vance	- AIBC Representative
Steve Wong	- BC Society of Landscape Architects

STAFF PRESENT

Stephen Scheving	- Planning Consultant
Donna Martin	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 3:20 p.m.

1.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

2.0 NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

3.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Adoption of the Minutes of June 28, 2011

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the New Westminster Design Panel meeting held on June 28, 2011 be received and adopted.

CARRIED.

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

4.0 INFORMATION PRESENTATIONS

5.0 DESIGN APPROVALS

6.0 DOWNTOWN INFORMATION PRESENTATIONS

7.0 DOWNTOWN DESIGN APPROVALS

7.1 660-700 Columbia Street (Trapp Block)

**File: REZ00002
SDP00159**

The City has received an application from the Salient Group to amend the schedule for the Comprehensive Development Districts (Trapp Block) (CD-19) and to issue a new special development permit for the proposed mixed-use project at 660-700 Columbia Street. Mr. Scheving reviewed the significant features of the revised development proposal and ways the proposal differs from that approved in 2008.

Martin Brookner, IBI/HB Architects, reviewed the project streetscape, elevations, a typical floor plan, stepping at the top of the building, the shadow study, context plan, parking levels, retail space, podium roof plan.

Marina Rommel, Sharp & Diamond Landscape Architecture Inc., reported on the landscape plan for the roof level and the amenity areas. She noted the edible landscaping feature, the viewing deck, patio spaces and lighting, paving materials and furnishings.

Mr. Brookner described the materials for the outside of the building with the goal being a simple, clean expression.

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

- How does the number of parking stalls and parking levels vary from the previous design? *The number of parking stalls will remain the same even though the levels have been decreased by one floor.*
- Will the store fronts be constructed of wood? *Store fronts are being modernized but will be wood.*
- Are there guidelines for development of the Columbia Street area with respect to awnings and protection of pedestrians? *The OCP requires canopies on Columbia Street.*
- Will there be street trees on Columbia Street? *There are some existing trees. Any trees removed during construction will be replaced.*
- Are there any City guidelines regarding driveway access on Columbia Street? *The City discourages access off Columbia Street in this area, realizing there are some cases where it is unavoidable.*

Comments from the Panel:

- Want to see canopies on retail on Columbia Street; works well as a whole; will support;

- Reduced amenity should be included in description of project as being reduced. There is a lot of good usable outdoor space. Important for canopies to be worked into heritage façades.
- Concern about tower because of orientation; balconies could be close to other buildings if adjacent property developed. Making the tower wider puts it closer to any new buildings. Middle balconies will look straight into other buildings.
- Improvement on Front St. good. Frame seems to be hanging. Roof overhang could be larger with soffit lighting. Consider spandrel at top of window.
- Consider heritage canopies on Columbia to respect bays of Trapp Building and any historical characteristics. Random colour elements seem too arbitrary and distracting perhaps take up to top of tower or make them more Edwardian in style. Façade of annex to west looks unresolved, unarticulated. Front Street side - like approach but do not support orange keystones, needs more consideration with more subdued colours.
- Concerned adding trees will take away from historic features.
- General configuration of tower and massing is supportable.
- Complement developer on project and the price they have paid to keep heritage aspects.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the application from the Salient Group to amend the schedule for the Comprehensive Development Districts (Trapp Block) (CD-19) and the special development permit for the proposed mixed use project at 660-700 Columbia Street be supported with the following considerations:

- *Reconsider random façade colour elements;*
- *Holbrook/Trapp street level facades to be reconstructed as wood store fronts;*
- *Need more detail on annex façade on Columbia Street;*
- *Consider Front Street parkade façade as it relates to the alignment with buildings to the east;*
- *Trees on roof deck allow historic cornice;*
- *Canopies should respect historic aspects of Trapp Block;*
- *Parapet above east-west balconies need visual connections to massing below;*
- *West façade would gain from spandrel panels;*
- *Extend penthouse roof to north.*

CARRIED.

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

8.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

8.1 Sustainability Report Card – Update on Implementation

Eric Westberg, Planning Analyst presented an update on the implementation of the Sustainability Report Card which replaces the Smart Growth Development Checklist (2004 – 2011). He noted it is based on the same principles and objectives as the Checklist which are to:

- Assess how an application fulfils the sustainability goals of the City's Official Community Plan (OCP) and other policies.
- Address each of the three major areas of sustainability (Environment, Social & Cultural, and Economic).
- Be fair, easy to use, flexible, and not add time to the approval process.

Mr. Westberg reviewed the scoring process and the Summary Project Scoresheet.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised:

- Concern was raised about how qualified a planner is to score an item such as building energy performance. A technical area such as this would be covered in the proposed design by a specialized professional with much more expertise in the subject than the planner. There is the potential for added delay and cost beyond current practice if the planner asks for more detailed documentation on this type of specific question. Members anticipated that this new concept of scoring in the Report Card would create an inherent tension between applicant and planner on how to score a project fairly.
 - *Staff acknowledged that on items such as energy performance or other highly specialized aspects, planners would not have the same expertise as the applicant's consultants. In these cases, the planner's role would be to review the proposed rationale and supporting documentation, assess the rigor of the applicant's analysis, and identify any gaps/inconsistencies. As is the current practice with other design aspects, the planner may request more detailed documentation or analysis on sustainability items.*
 - *Staff noted the planner's first cut at scoring would be discussed with the applicant before the planner determines the final Report Card score. This will create an opportunity for clarifying and resolving discrepancies between the applicant's score and the planner's score. Nonetheless, as is the case with other design aspects, there may still be points where the applicant and planner are not in agreement. On these points, the format of the Report Card allows both points of view to be presented for consideration by the Design Panel and by Council.*
- Staff asked for guidance on how to score open-ended sections on 'Innovation' and 'Constraints'.
 - *Panel members suggested this could not be determined in advance, and assessing these aspects would be more intuitive in nature and could be resolved when the situation arises in relation to a specific proposal.*
- Members asked how the City could require achievement of the "Required" Environmental items given that a Development Permit only regulates form and character.
 - *Staff noted that formally the City cannot require these items in a DP application. The Report Card uses the term "Required" to communicate Council's strong expectation that lower-cost 'quick-win' items which are increasingly commonplace in BC be considered part of a baseline for environmental achievement in New Westminster. Staff also noted that the Local Government Act now enables cities to add environmental performance guidelines into their Development Permit Area Guidelines. In the upcoming update to its OCP, the City may introduce such guidelines city-wide. This would formalize some of these "Required" items.*

9.0 CORRESPONDENCE

10.0 NEXT MEETING

August 23, 2011 at 3:00pm in Committee Room No. 2 as needed.

11.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.



Eric Pattison
Chair



Donna Martin
Committee Clerk