

NEW WESTMINSTER DESIGN PANEL

**Tuesday March 23, 2010 3:06 p.m.
Committee Room No. 2**

MINUTES

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

GUESTS;

Findlay Gibbons	- Albion Consultants Ltd.
Jonathan Losee	- Albion Consultants Ltd.
Doug Massie	- Chercover Massie & Associates Ltd.
J.P. Thornton	- Via Architecture
Carmen Kwan	- Via Architecture

STAFF:

Lisa Spitale	- Director of Development Services
Stephen Scheving	- Development Services
Julie Schueck	- Heritage Planner
John Stark	- Social Planner
Michael Watson	- Planning Assistant
Donna Martin	- Committee Clerk

1.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

Agenda Item 3.3 – 1100 Block Ewen Avenue was removed from the agenda.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of January 26, 2010

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the New Westminster Design Panel meeting held on January 26, 2010 be received and adopted with the following amendment:

- *Item 3.3 – 401 Sixth Street – Tracey Mactavish was opposed to the motion.*

CARRIED.

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

3.0 DESIGN APPROVALS

3.1 1408 Fifth Avenue

File: REZ 036

Michael Watson, Planning Assistant reported an application has been received to rezone the property at 1408 Fifth Avenue from RS-2 to a Comprehensive Development District in order to allow a licensed group daycare facility which will provide for the care of 50 children.

John Stark, Social Planner advised the City's Child Care Strategy recognizes this facility could provide an essential community-based service and would make a valuable contribution to the social and economic development of the community.

Douglas Massie, Architect, reviewed the landscaping, parking and traffic issues, outdoor play area, sustainability and materials to be used. He pointed out that the goal is to keep this facility looking as residential as possible so as not to attract attention to the facility for the safety and protection of the children. The applicant is looking at maintaining all water on site

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

- What is the height of the ceiling in the building? *Ceiling height is 9 ft.*
- What material will be used for the pedestrian pathways? *The pathways will be concrete.*
- What type of signage will be used? *There will be a discreet sign over the door.*
- Is the south deck an exit? *There is no deck, just a walkway and required exit.*
- What is the height of the windows? *The windows will be installed at 2.5 ft.*
- Will the windows be inoperable? *The windows will be operable for ventilation.*
- Are the gym windows the same height? *The gym windows will be placed higher.*
- Is the entry hallway wide enough to accommodate people coming and going? *Traditionally the entry hallway and reception areas are small but children do not linger there. Children are moved through that area to their cubbies.*
- Is there any concern about the noise of 50 children in the area? *This is not an unusual number of children in a facility. A lot will depend on the care takers that are hired.*

- Do you have any concerns for the glass on balcony and stair rails? *Safety glass will be installed.*
- How will you manage air quality and noise? *The building will employ landscaping, filtering systems, and windows glazing which will minimize potential impacts associated with air quality and noise.*

Comments from the Commission:

- Building has residential character but suggest overhang for keeping building cool;
- Like facility – good transition for area, traffic low;
- Support proposal but encourage focus on facility for kids, i.e. windows;
- Encourage cover for drop off and pick up;
- Suggest south facing deck for children to work outside;
- Reconsider landscaping – no toxic plants;
- Try to make the building more fun and celebratory for kids;
- Suggest hiring landscape architect;
- Area for kids to plant in backyard;
- Extend paving to east property line for easier access;
- Suggest flattening out the front yard;
- Hard surface around the entry way;
- Building needs more whimsical character for kids;

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the application be brought back with the following considerations:

- *Residential character (windows, roof pitch etc.)*
- *Child friendly landscape plan;*
- *Larger palette of materials; and*
- *Context photos.*

CARRIED.

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

3.2 800 Boyd Street

File: DP 036 (Q)

Chris Block, Chair pointed out that this project is in violation of the Architects Act as the architect is not registered with AIBC. He has reported this project to AIBC. All AIBC members stepped down which resulted in the loss of a quorum. There was no discussion of this item. Ms. Spitale indicated there would be an internal review of the project.

3.3 1100 Block Ewen Avenue

File: REZ 027

This item was removed from the agenda.

Mike Watson left the meeting at 3:50 p.m.

Contract Planner Stephen Scheving joined the meeting at 3:50 p.m.

4.0 DOWNTOWN DESIGN APPROVALS

4.1 811 Carnarvon Street (Plaza 88 Retail)

Stephen Scheving, Planning Consultant reported the purpose of this presentation is to obtain feedback regarding changes and to present clarifications affecting the Special Development Permit for the retail phase of Plaza 88, approved in July 2008. The changes reflect the impact of the theatre tenants on the upper levels while the clarifications affect the Columbia street elevations west of McNeely Street, the interior pedestrian street and areas over the former Blackie Street.

Mr. Scheving reviewed the history of the project in great detail and at great length noting the Design Review Panel had considered this project in October 2007 and given approval for the overall form and massing. The Panel requested staff to resolve the questions surrounding the Columbia Street elevation, the interior pedestrian walkway, and the buildings over Blackie Street.

The Council in its deliberations of 2008 reaffirmed these areas and also requested resolution of the Mc & Mc Building, for which a heritage designation bylaw was approved in October 2008.

This project was to commence construction in the fall of 2008, but because of various concerns did not proceed. The owner has completed the first three residential towers and wishes to move forward with the retail project at this time.

There are five issues for the Design Panel to consider:

- The appearance of the Columbia Street elevation;
- The pedestrian street;
- The buildings over Blackie Street;
- The additional height of the building; and
- The appearance of the roof.

J.P. Thornton, VIA Architecture, reviewed the context plan, circulation, landscaping materials, and Columbia Street elevation. He noted the project is three-dimensional and very complicated. The site is 5 acres in size and will include besides the three towers already completed, this retail phase and at a later date a fourth tower.

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

- Explain the lighting, acoustics and planting strategy for pedestrian area on Level P5. *Lighting varies from natural to artificial lighting depending on the area, reflective panels on soffit, down lighting for animation. Benches with plantings intermittent along walkway. Grow lights will be used to keep things green. Acoustics are not expected to be a big problem. There may be some reflective noise.*
- Will there be design guidelines for retail spaces? *There will be a standard signage design.*

- Is clayburn brick being used on Columbia? *The exterior will be an external finishing insulating system (EFIS).*
- Why is there no treatment on the Columbia level? *No treatment has been proposed on the Columbia Street level. There is some concern the space at that end of Columbia Street will not be rentable because it is a heavy traffic area.*
- What is proposed for Phase 4? *Phase 4 will be residential and retail.*
- Why is there so much parking? *It is required for the retail space.*
- What is a green wall? *A green wall is a framework with plants growing up it.*
- Are there any canopies on top of the Mc & Mc building? *There is no plan for canopies.*
- Is there any security on the pedestrian street? *The City would like to see the pedestrian street open 24/7. After Safeway and the cinemas are built, the parking will be secured at night. Transit police will also be on premises.*
- Does the elevator take you to the retail? *Yes.*
- Are there any restaurants? *There will be some restaurants.*

Comments from the Commission:

- Like the breaking up of façade on Columbia Street but prefer calmer graphic in middle; changeable graphic is exciting;
- Encourage use of architecture to highlight Columbia Street;
- Don't support green wall or temporary graphics;
- Interesting and animated design for Columbia Street;
- Green wall could be more varied for interest;
- Don't like color graphics or clayburn brick color scheme;
- Comfortable with façade up until the theatre;
- Green screen has not been very successful in other areas;
- Suggest paying homage to some of the scale further down the block;
- Feel Blackie piece is key as gateway to the project and City;
- Mc & Mc building links to the past;
- Consider flagpoles for detail, and suggest resurrecting neon sign on Mc & Mc building;
- Bus loop entrance nice echo of Mc & Mc building;
- Signage above entrance good;
- Like whimsical lettering on building;
- Okay with green wall as a soft edge;
- Would like to see more emphasis on the architecture;
- Middle section might be more restful if it is horizontal;
- Create layers on the façade rather than all the colour; façade colors should be horizontal;
- Like façade on all levels;
- Sidewalk plantings not addressed; as a pedestrian, okay with green wall;
- More of a back lit façade on theatre level;
- Excited about project; will rejuvenate downtown;
- More on board with previous façade design; need to emphasize architecture;

- Happy Mc & Mc façade will remain as original as possible;
- Suggest rounded column to mimic Mc & Mc building;
- Opposed to coloured graphic on Columbia façade;
- Like to see one colour scheme in complex;
- Consider historic signage for Mc & Mc
- Like idea of embracing transportation;
- More substantial planting at grade on pedestrian street;
- If open 24/7 encourage enhancing variety of way of accessing the space;
- Need for good way-finding system;
- Pedestrian street is lively and acceptable;
- Will change movement patterns in City;
- Support the pedestrian street concept;
- Consider what the end of the street will look like;
- Suggest larger slabs for pedestrian street, pavers are too rough and difficult to clean;
- Uncomfortable not seeing details represented;
- Next phase of Blackie Street should step down;
- Character of roof paving, animating features;
- Support the height, try to come up with a motif;
- Continue design on to Mc and Mc roof;
- No issue with height; and
- Suggest a way from tower residences to roof of theatre and better use of the roof.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the application for a Special Development Permit at 811 Carnarvon Street (Plaza, 88 Retail) is supported in concept with a request to the applicant to consider the following comments from the Panel:

- *Intensity of graphics on Columbia Street;*
 - *Use architecture of building to create the interest;*
 - *Consider historic signage for Mc & Mc building;*
 - *Add smaller detail elements such as flag poles;*
 - *Present more detailed elevations along street front (i.e. Materials, lighting, canopies, etc.)*
 - *Advocate roof design be brought forward with more detail;*
 - *Consider creating an amenity on the roof;*
 - *Recommend extending interior pedestrian street to Columbia Street; and*
- THAT the application be resubmitted to the New Westminster Design Panel.*

CARRIED.

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

Recess 6:10 p.m. Reconvene 6:15 p.m.

5.0 INFORMATION PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Westminster Pier Park

Lisa Spitale, Director of Development Services, asked the Panel for feedback on the Westminster Pier Park project noting the Master Park Plan must be complete by the end of March.

Bruce Hemstock, PWL Architects outlined the project noting one third of the park will be on water, one third on a floating deck, and one third on land. The area will reflect historical references to be experienced, cultural events that may occur at the site, and ecological characteristics of the New Westminster waterfront and the Fraser River including a riparian habitat that becomes a part of the park. He reviewed the ten design principles for the project.

Questions from the Panel:

- Will there be access at Fourth and Sixth Street at the time of opening? *The City is working on a series of interim measures to accommodate access at Fourth Street to make it workable.*
- Will there be integrated art? *Some money will be spent on art and opportunities will be provided for future art projects as well.*
- Is there a way to articulate the diversity so people know they are walking on land and then on water? *There are ways to articulate the diversity. However, budget will be the guiding factor.*
- Is there a problem with access for fire trucks? *The Fire Department will use a smaller vehicle to access the pathway that is being widened for emergency vehicles.*
- Could you go up in grade on Merrivale? *That is a possibility.*
- Will there be railing along walkway? *There will be safety railings, lots of benches, good lighting, picnic tables, canopies, etc.*

Comments from the Panel:

- Like to see diversity of material, grades, plantings etc. on the pathways;
- Amazing amount of diversity in this plan;
- Like floating park idea;
- Habitat is great for fish;
- Commercial nodes are good ideas;
- Delivered on design principles;
- Beach is an inspiration;
- Elliot Street end of park is weak;
- “Pile forest” in two areas may be too much;
- Suggest trees on boardwalk;
- Concern about native plants taking over;
- Don’t be afraid of commercial buildings and other structures;
- Concerned about the view at the back of the park;

5.2 Heritage Revitalization Agreements Policy Guidelines

This item is deferred to a future meeting.

6.0 NEW BUSINESS

7.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

8.0 CORRESPONDENCE

9.0 NEXT MEETING


April 27, 2010 at 3:00 p.m. in Committee Room No. 2

10.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.



Chris Block
Chair



Donna Martin
Committee Clerk