



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Planning Committee
From: Brian J. Jackson, MCIP
Director of Development

Date: April 1, 2008
File: 01-0083-01/2008-Vol 01

Re: Richmond Urban Design Awards Program

Staff Recommendation

That Council endorse implementation of the Richmond Urban Design Awards Program in order to enhance urban design principles in Richmond.

Brian J. Jackson, MCIP
Director of Development

BJJ:blg

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY					
ROUTED TO:		CONCURRENCE		CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
City Clerk		Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communications		Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N	<input type="checkbox"/>
REVIEWED BY TAG		YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
				REVIEWED BY CAO	
				Acting	
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

On February 22, 2008, Planning Committee requested the Director of Development to “submit a report to the Planning Committee outlining his proposal to create Urban Design Awards to celebrate good architecture design in the City of Richmond, including information on the process of judging, identifying and awarding winners.”

The City of Richmond recognizes and encourages the implementation of sound urban design principles. The City’s Official Community Plan (OCP) and urban design guidelines outline a multitude of policies and guidelines intended to promote urban design excellence. The proposed Urban Design Awards seek to raise the bar on urban design in Richmond by awarding projects that represent excellence, innovation and visionary thinking. Such awards are intended to inspire developers, architects, landscape architects, planners and designers to advance excellence in their own projects. Council’s goal is to emphasize the importance of outstanding urban design in establishing a City environment that is creative, engaging and attractive. This is an important piece of Richmond’s vision to be the most appealing, liveable, and well-managed community in Canada, which aims to attract people to Richmond through high quality city building.

The Urban Design Awards Program is intended to recognize and celebrate original design concepts and visionary thinking in the following categories: Residential (single-family), Residential (townhouse), Residential (high rise), Commercial, Industrial, Public Buildings, Landscape Elements, and Innovative Environmental Approaches.

Analysis

What is Urban Design?

Urban Design is the design of the city and all its visible components. That is, how buildings and the spaces between them – open spaces and parks, bridges and streets, sidewalks and walkways, bodies of water, trees and landscaping, lighting and signage, etc. are all designed together over time to create an attractive, memorable and safe city.

Purpose

The Urban Design Awards Program is intended to recognize, celebrate and inspire excellence in urban design in the City of Richmond. Design awards would be granted for exceptional projects that represent visionary thinking and “raise the bar” for design excellence in Richmond.

Eligibility

Private and public sector projects would be eligible for an urban design award where they are approved and completed up to three (3) years prior to the awards year. Submissions for awards would be submitted by a project owner, a member of the team that is associated with the project, a member of City staff, or a member of the general public. To be eligible for an award, submissions would have to be received by the City of Richmond Development Applications Division within a prescribed deadline date and all entries would have to meet submission requirements. It should be clear that public projects, including those developed by the City of Richmond, would be eligible for awards.

Submission Requirements

Submissions will only be accepted where they meet the following requirements:

- A brief abstract of the project to explain its design qualities and how this project significantly adds to the quality of the public realm in Richmond. The abstract should also touch on those items that are outlined in the relevant awards category descriptions. This abstract would be provided in the electronic format specified by the City.
- Two (2) display boards maximum (sizes will be specified).
- A photo slide show, not exceeding 50 photographs, illustrating the design qualities of the project described in the abstract. This slide show is would be provided in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) or Microsoft Power Point (.pps) format.

These submissions would allow for presentation on the City's website, and also allow for innovative display techniques for the awards ceremony and circulation of the awards.

All materials submitted to the City of Richmond would become property of the City of Richmond and would not be returned to the applicant. Furthermore, submission of materials would imply consent for the City of Richmond to disseminate such materials at the sole discretion of the City.

Awards Process

A call for submissions would be issued in August. Awards would be given out every other year, starting in February, 2009. The Development Applications Division would engage in a rigorous process to raise awareness in the community that the City has issued a call for Urban Design Awards submissions. This may include, but is not limited to, advertising in newspapers, use of the City's website, mail-outs to members of the design, architecture, landscape architecture, planning, and development industry. It may also include other vehicles, such as the preparation of a poster or other such materials, to raise awareness of the awards, and the agenda for urban design excellence in Richmond.

Judging

Judging of the projects would occur in October and November. This would allow for judges to view projects from amongst the entries submitted. The Development Applications Division staff would arrange for the jury to visit the sites of the projects on the short list. Thereafter, the jury would reconvene, in a "closed" meeting, to make its awards decisions and would submit its recommendations thereon, in a "closed" meeting, to City Council for final approval.

Selecting Winners

It would be at the sole discretion of the jury to determine whether or not awards would be recommended in any or all of the awards categories in a given year. Awards would be granted in February.

Awards Promotion

The Development Applications Division, with the assistance of Corporate Communications staff, would disseminate information relating to the award winning projects through the use of various mediums, including, but not limited to: website posting, posters, or other publications relating to the next Design Awards call for submissions, displays in prominent spaces, etc.

Awards Presentation

Awards would be presented to the Urban Design Award winners at a ceremony, which may combine other activities intended to advance the agenda for urban design excellence in Richmond. Those earning honourable mention will also be congratulated at this ceremony. Two (2) awards will be given to each award winning team.

Urban Design Awards Jury

An Urban Design Awards jury, made up as follows, would be established annually by the City:

Voting Members:

1. The Chair of the Development Permit Panel;
2. The Director of Development;
3. An architect from outside the community (who is not involved with any project under consideration);
4. A landscape architect from outside the community (who is not involved with any project under consideration); and
5. A planner/urban designer from outside the community (who is not involved with any project under consideration).

The Chair of the jury would be selected from (3), (4) or (5) above.

Limitations:

- No member of the jury would serve for more than three (3) consecutive Design Award terms; and
- No member of the jury would be related, in any substantive way, to any projects under consideration.

Chair:

- The jury would elect from amongst its members, a Chair and a Vice-Chair at its first meeting each year.

Designates:

- Designates from any of the above groups would be accepted by the City where jurors disqualify themselves from serving on the jury, where a jury member has already served three (3) consecutive Awards terms, or where the above-identified person cannot make himself/herself available for serving on the jury.

Program Support:

- Development Applications staff would administer the program with the assistance of Corporate Communications staff.

Awards Categories and their Criteria**Categories****Buildings:**

1. Residential (single-family, coach house or duplex)
2. Residential (townhouse)
3. Residential (mid rise)
4. Residential and Mixed-Use (high rise)
5. Mixed-Use (non residential)
6. Commercial
7. Industrial
8. Public Buildings

Criteria for Categories 1 to 8 would include:

- Relationship to public realm (roads, parks sidewalks, lanes)
- Massing
- Detailing
- Pedestrian amenity
- How the building contributes to the quality of place
- How the successful project results from an integrated approach to the design solutions
- Architectural excellence
- Demonstration of fulfilling a clearly articulated urban design intent

Categories

- 9. Public Open Space
- 10. Private Open Space
- 11. New Landscape Elements

Criteria for Categories 9, 10 and 11 would include:

- Open space or landscape elements, such as stand-alone elements or objects or small-scale pieces of buildings which contribute significantly to the quality of the public realm.
- Providing a memorable image, reinforce the human scale and enhance the character of the surrounding area.
- An open space should relate to and be defined by adjacent buildings or natural or manmade elements which provide an extension to the public realm in an exemplary way.

Category

- 12. Innovative Approaches to Save Trees or Landscape Elements

Criteria for Category 12 would include:

- Citing buildings to provide adequate room for existing significant trees or vegetation to thrive.
- Innovative measures taken to ensure survival of trees that are retained or relocated on-site.

It should be clear that these categories ARE INTENDED TO:

- Explain what types of projects are eligible for an Urban Design Award;
- Describe, in very general terms, how these projects will be evaluated; and
- Help to encourage submissions that are of a very high quality.

It should be clear that these categories ARE NOT INTENDED TO:

- Limit the number of awards that can be granted within a single category;
- Require that an award be granted in every category where there is no a submission that warrants an award, and
- Limit a submission to competing only against those projects that are within their category.

Where the jury deems it to be appropriate, honourable mention would be given to those projects that did not win an award, but exhibited many excellent design traits worthy of recognition.

Judging Process

Judging of the projects would occur in October and November. This would allow for judges to view projects. The jury will review submissions in all categories and rate each project based on criteria put forth in the awards categories descriptions. Based on this evaluation, the jury would compile a list of projects that provide exemplary examples of urban design excellence. The Development Applications Division would arrange for the jury to visit the sites of the projects on the list. Thereafter, the jury would reconvene, in a "closed" meeting, to make its awards decisions and will submit its recommendations thereon, in a "closed" meeting, to City Council for final approval.

It would be at the sole discretion of the jury to determine whether or not awards will be recommended in any or all of the awards categories in a given year.

Where the jury deems it to be appropriate, honourable mention would be given to those projects that did not win an award, but exhibited many excellent design traits worthy of recognition.

Important Dates for the first Urban Design Awards

Call for Submissions:	August, 2008
Submission Deadline:	October, 2008
Awards Decisions:	December, 2008
Awards Reception:	February, 2009

Next Steps

Planning staff will need to work with Communications staff on developing an image or "brand" for the awards and prepare more detailed program material. A "catchy" name for the awards should be proposed so that everyone is aware of the award. Staff suggestions include "The Lulu's" or "The Richies".

Financial Impact

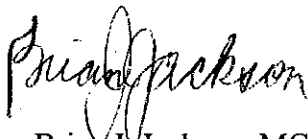
The financial impacts related to the proposed Urban Design Awards would be minor and could be accommodated within existing budgets. The specific financial impacts would be:

- (1) Production Centre staff time to prepare the award logo and background information related to submissions.
- (2) Production of the submission requirement packages estimated to cost \$500.
- (3) Development Applications Division staff time to initially review the applications and assist the jury as required.
- (4) The cost of the awards themselves, estimated to be \$500. to \$1000.
- (5) The cost of the Council reception at which the awards would be presented. Graphics and beverage costs would be in the order of \$1000. to \$1500.
- (6) Production costs associated with the Awards Publication estimated to be \$500.

Total costs would be approximately \$3500. every two years.

Conclusion

The Urban Design Awards would give another tool for Council and staff to persuade the development community to "raise the bar" for the urban design of their projects.



Brian J. Jackson, MCIP
Director of Development
(Local 4138)

BJJ:blg