Proposal: Erection of Office Development at 220 Broomielaw, site bounded by McAlpine Street, Carrick Street.
Architects: Make Architects
Status: Pre-application

Illustration indicates images of scheme as presented to the Glasgow Urban Design Panel 8th March 2007

Presented by:
Jason McColl Make Architects
Also in attendance:
Poh Kit Make Architects,

The panel thank the architects for presenting their proposal for the phased development of 389,000sqft of 'A' Grade office space in a series of three blocks rising to 11, 13, and 15 storeys respectively over a podium of underground parking, at the pre-application stage.

The panel noted that the current intention was to submit a detailed planning application for the 11-storey Broomielaw fronting block only. Panel felt that given the strengths of their proposals for the entire site consent should also be sought for the masterplan.

The panel welcomed the architects' thorough analysis of the site and commend them for the consideration that has gone into the bold massing of the three buildings with their respective heights increasing away from the river in contrast to current riverside planning policy. In particular the panel applaud the way in which the building set backs and floor plate configurations have been adjusted to maximise views from all buildings to the Clyde and the southwest at the same time maximising light and sun to the back of the site.

The panel also commend the architects on their refreshing approach to the façade design with an emphasis on incorporating solar shading devices as well as minimising heat loss. The mixed layering of panels of exposed external gold coloured mesh, mesh integrated with the glazing system, and translucent oxalux panels will hopefully create a richly nuanced contemporary façade with depth and modelling. The committee felt this had potential to be a source of delight.

The panel also commended the architect's approach to the public realm. The inclusion of retail elements on the ground floors of each of the buildings added interest and activity to the public realm as well as supplying an element of casual surveillance. This was in welcome contrast to many of the other developments fronting the Broomielaw.

The panel also noted the high level of aspiration for the public realm and welcomed the quality of the materials and landscaping. However certain members were concerned about its attractiveness to skateboarders. The panel noted that the design team, with Strathclyde University, had modelled the impact of wind on the site and then incorporated a screen of oak trees along McAlpine Street to mitigate its impact. However the impact of wind should also be lessened with the intended hotel development on the vacant site to the west.

The only note of caution certain committee members would sound was that due to flooding issues, and the way the podium terraced away from the river to mitigate this, it was unfortunate that there were no retail outlets fronting directly onto the Broomielaw itself. If flooding issues could be overcome this might assist in spreading some much-needed vitality to the currently sterile riverside promenade.

As the quality of environment for pedestrians is key to the success of the surrounding IFSD area, the panel would also appreciate more evidence that the level of thought and nuance, which had gone into the design of the upper façade levels, was also present at ground level.

Finally, certain committee members noted that when the original Broomielaw masterplan was drawn up in the 1980s there was a policy that a third of all developments were to be residential. This policy seems to have been sidelined in recent years but it might be helpful for Glasgow City Councils' goals for the regeneration of the Clyde waterfront if it were resurrected. A proper 24/7 urban quarter with a better mix of uses, and hence greater vitality, might be preferable to the night time sterility, of a 9 to 5 office quarter, that the International Financial Services District currently exhibits. In the case of 220 Broomielaw the committee felt that the masterplan should be flexible enough that in the event the market moves on later phases of the development could be changed to residential.

In conclusion the panel welcomed this commendable proposal, which they felt had the potential to set a new benchmark for the development of the Broomielaw. However they would request that given the strengths of the architect's proposals for the entire site consent should also be sought for the masterplan.

Glasgow Urban Design Panel members in attendance:

Alistair McDonald	Glasgow City Council
Gerry Grams	Glasgow City Council
Rob Hay	Strathclyde Police
Pauline Megson	Historic Scotland
Roger Guthrie	Alexander Greek Thomson Society
James Spence Watson	Landscape Institute
Guy Pettigrew	New Glasgow Society
Neil Pirrit	Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland
Murray Russell	Glasgow Institute of Architects
Jim Dick	Glasgow Institute of Architects
Niall Murphy	Pollokshields Heritage
Betty Sneddon	Old Glasgow Club
Angus Kerr	Glasgow Institute of Architects / Glasgow Architecture Committee
Gill Stewart	Glasgow Building Preservation Trust
Angela Williams	Architecture + Design Scotland