

Minutes of the Design Review Panel Meeting 9 – April 24, 2008

The Design Review Panel met on Thursday, April 24, 2008 in Committee Room 2, City Hall, 100 Queen Street West, Toronto, at 12:00 p.m.

Regrets

Members of the Design Review Panel

Gordon Stratford (Chair): Architect, Senior Vice President, Design Director - HOK Canada

Daniel Leeming (Vice Chair): Planner, Partner - The Planning Partnership

Robert Allsopp: Landscape Architect, Planner, Architect, Principal - du Toit Allsopp Hillier

Paul Ferris: Landscape Architect, Principal - Ferris Associates

Ralph Giannone: Architect, Principal - Giannone Associates

Michael Leckman: Architect, Principal - Diamond and Schmitt

David Pontarini: Architect, Principal - Hariri Pontarini ✓

Sol Wassermuhl: Architect, President - Page and Steele

Shirley Blumberg: Architect, Principal - KPMB

Janet Rosenberg: Landscape Architect, Principal - Janet Rosenberg Associates

Peter Halsall: Engineer, President - Halsall Associates ✓

Eric Turcotte: Planner, Architect, Senior Associate - Urban Strategies

Confirmation of Minutes

On motion by Robert Allsopp, the Design Review Panel confirmed the Minutes of the meeting held on March 27, 2008.

Recording Secretary

Hamish Goodwin: Urban Designer – City Planning Division

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[Project 1 Corporate Drive & Consilium Place: Scarborough City Centre Pilot Area](#)

[Project 2 18 Lower Jarvis Street: St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Pilot Area](#)

[Project 3 2143 & 2147 Lake Shore Boulevard West: Humber Bay Shores Pilot Area](#)

Panel Business

1. Training Session - The Toronto Green Development Standard

Prior to the first project review, the Panel received a presentation from Joe D'Abramo, Acting Director – Zoning Bylaw and Environmental Planning Section – on the Toronto Green Development Standard (GDS). The GDS is an initiative of the City Planning Division, outlining how the City is approaching the issue of sustainable development.

The discussion that took place following the presentation included the following:

- how to deal with encouraging the retention of existing buildings;
- whether or not the GDS will be mandatory;
- methods to leverage financial support, including incentives;
- using the GDS as an awareness tool; and
- monitoring the outcomes of applying the GDS in order to promote its benefits.

Following the discussion, the Panel requested a follow-up session to receive instruction on the GDS cost-benefit analysis studies that have been undertaken.

2. Voting

In response to some uncertainty amongst Panelists about the voting procedure, Staff presented a revised voting format for the Panel's consideration. On motion by Michael Leckman, the Panel voted to adopt the revised voting disclaimer, which distinguishes between the two stages of review as follows:

Preamble

- The Panel is not a decision-making body – it provides advice to City Planning staff
- A vote is held to obtain an indication of each Panelists' position on the project's design
- It is generally expected that the project's for first review will return to the Panel for a second review, regardless of the voting outcome

First Review

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Refinement | The Panelist advises that the project's design should continue to evolve in the proposed direction, and include refinements that were recommended during the review |
| Redesign | The Panelist advises that the project should be redesigned to respond more appropriately to the issues that were recommended during the review |

Final Review

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Support | The Panelist advises that the project's design should continue and include refinements that were recommended during the review |
| Non-support | The Panelist advises that the project should be redesigned to respond more appropriately to the issues that were recommended during the review |

Project 1 – Scarborough District, Scarborough City Centre Pilot Area

| Corporate Drive and Consilium Place, south-east corner | |
|--|--|
| Address | There is no confirmed municipal address for this property |
| Use | Residential, Retail and Publicly Accessible Park |
| Zoning | City Centre Office and City Centre Residential |
| Application Status | OPA/ZBL app (July 2007, rev. Feb 2008); Site Plan app (April 2008) |
| Architect | Vladimir Losner, Page & Steele |
| Owner | Menkes Consillium Land Holdings |
| Applicant/Agent | Laurie McPherson (Bousefileds Inc.) |
| Review | Second (first review held October 2007) |
| City Staff | Russell Crooks, Community Planning; Robert Stephens, Urban Design |

Conflict of Interest: Sol Wassermuhl

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Evaluation: Refinement (5-3) *NOTE:* The Panel supported this project with the proviso that it was reflective of the rezoning application (not Site Plan)

Introduction

City staff outlined the area context, history and area policy priorities, and sought the Panel's advice on the following:

- How does the current proposal connect to and enhance the fabric of the Scarborough Centre as a whole, and the potential development of the remainder of the block to the south, in particular?
- How does the latest design create an urbane environment for the site and how does it avoid generating activities which are largely inward-looking and, therefore, detrimental to the adjacent public realm?
- How does the site plan encourage pedestrian permeability and how do the uses in the lower levels of the building contribute to pedestrian activity on the adjacent streets and open space?
- How does the design of the base of the building create an appropriate podium/street-wall which is distinct from the towers, as per the City's Official Plan policies and the Design Criteria for Tall Buildings?

The applicant team described the design rationale and responded to questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement

Sustainable Design

- Build upon LEED Silver target to develop and integrate a comprehensive sustainable design strategy throughout the project, including but not limited to:
 - use of natural ventilation in garage areas

Site Plan Design

- Develop a strong street/block grid
- Create a cohesive, high quality urban environment *along edges of the site*:
 - creating east edge as public mews with limited vehicular traffic
 - creating street address for east public lobby
 - avoiding cul-de-sac conditions
- Create a cohesive, high quality urban environment *through the site*:
 - developing central street to provide continuous urban sidewalk
 - limiting vehicular traffic
- Develop internal courtyard to:
 - reduce extent/impact of vehicular traffic
 - provide high quality pedestrian environment
- Develop courtyard design option with the following urban features:
 - west half of courtyard with vehicular/pedestrian/landscape environment
 - east half of courtyard with pedestrian/landscape environment
 - central street continues north/south through courtyard, with continuous sidewalk along east edge of street
- Examine grade related functions including:
 - placing retail along Corporate Drive frontage, in place of present residential
 - considering introduction of other at-grade uses along Corporate Drive (e.g. small offices, neighbourhood services, clinics)
 - consider placing residential along Consilium Place frontage, in place of present retail
- Develop south edge of project:
 - anticipating adjacent future context
 - placing continuous residential along this frontage
 - improving quality of pedestrian environment

Pedestrian Realm

- Develop pedestrian realm along Corporate Drive and south edge of project
- Develop well defined transition between public realm in areas where residential uses are located along street frontage
- Develop retail uses closer to street edge to create an active, urban environment
- Place retail at same level as street edge sidewalk
- Develop high quality environment for residences along internal street

Building Form and Articulation

- Pedestrian bridge detracts street vista
 - develop option(s) without bridge
- Develop towers to achieve visual variety between buildings within project
- Develop south edge of project to:
 - articulate and enliven appearance and scale of south façade
 - screen parking with more active functions (see Site Plan Design comments above)
- Enhance material type to provide “human” / “hand” scale, especially at street/podium level

Landscaping Strategy

- Develop high quality landscape strategy beyond minimum currently shown:
 - to highlight main entries into buildings
 - throughout internal street/courtyard, including separating/defining vehicular and pedestrian zones
 - address need for landscape along south edge of project
- Ensure Publicly Accessible Park:
 - has sufficient soil depth for high quality, mature trees and plants
 - works effectively and attractively with adjacent ravine area
 - prevents underground parking garage grilles/vents from detracting from park setting

Submission Package

- Efforts made since the first review are much appreciated

Comments for City Staff

- Concern expressed by Panel members that City needs to clarify whether the package submitted is intended for Site Plan Approval application
- Further context information required to adequately place submission within the City's intended "big picture" urban design vision for this area
 - south edge of project cited as example, with insufficient information presented to be able to fully understand and comment on relation to proposed context

Related Commentary

The Panel was generally satisfied with the improvements that had been made to this proposal since it's first review in October 2007, and the Panel voted to support the project with the proviso that the vote was reflective of the rezoning application (not Site Plan). Some concerns and suggestions for improvement were identified as follows:

Sustainable Design

The Panel was appreciative of the sustainability checklist within the briefing materials, having requested to see this during the project's first review. The proponent was commended on seeking LEED Silver certification, although some areas for improvement – such as providing natural ventilation in the garage instead of mechanical – were still identified by Panelists.

Response to Context

The Panel commented that the revisions to the original plan would result in significant improvements to the public realm, indicating that the enhanced activities at-grade would lead to a more positive urban experience in the area.

Site Plan Design

Site Planning concerns related largely to the size of the property being developed, and the challenge this poses of addressing every aspect well. It was suggested that one way of improving the site plan conditions would be to strengthen the grid plan by introducing a north-south oriented mews or laneway between the eastern edge of the building and the publicly accessible park. This type of use beside the park would have the benefits of enhancing vehicular access around the site, providing a safer environment in that area of the site, and introducing a more "public" street address to the eastern residential lobby.

The Panel was also concerned with the identity of South Street, indicating that it should emerge as a successful residential street rather than the servicing lane that it currently appears as. It was suggested that planting trees along this street, and connecting it to the mews described above would help this condition.

Concerns were expressed about the quality of space for the units that are located on the central north-south drive aisle, as they do not have a public street address or entry point. Similar concerns were expressed with the eastern residential lobby, although there is one access point to this lobby from Corporate Drive.

Other Site Plan concerns related to the proposed at-grade residential uses along Corporate Drive. While acknowledging that this design was an improvement over the previous submission, a number of comments were made questioning why retail uses would be viable on the Consilium frontage but not along this Corporate Drive frontage. Subsequently, the Panel encouraged the Proponent to determine whether or not other uses, such as commercial services (medical,

banking etc.), would work in this location so as to generate a more animated and urban street-edge there.

Pedestrian Realm

Building upon comments from the first review, the Panel re-emphasized the importance of pedestrian connections within and around the site. It was suggested that the central north-south connection would be improved by installing a continuous sidewalk along an edge of the drive aisle. It was also suggested that the quality of pedestrian realm around the site would be improved by increasing the number of street tree plantings, particularly in the vicinity of the retail areas, which it was noted, is comparatively sparse in the current plan.

Building Form and Articulation

The Proponent was encouraged to develop the at-grade street edge of Consilium Place in a more urban way. Suggestions as to how this could be done included aligning the building edge with the street rather than having it peel away from the street (the south-west corner was used as an example for this), and ensuring that the retail entrances are at-grade rather than stepped up from the sidewalk.

The Panel also indicated that the proposal would benefit from an improved podium design, including the choice of materials. Specifically, it was suggested that south façade would benefit from a break in the pattern of articulation, and that the relationship between the residential entrances and the sidewalks should be strengthened. It was also suggested that the design would benefit from the use of varied materials; the use of EFIS (stucco) in the design was discouraged for reasons of both durability and character.

The Proponent was encouraged to further develop the varied tower expression of the proposal, indicating that this is necessary in order to diverge from the suburban condition of similarly styled buildings.

While not shown in the elevation drawings, the Panel indicated that the proposed 5th floor pedestrian bridge would likely interrupt the visual separation that is created by the central north-south connection, and suggested that it is counter-productive to breaking up the scale of the proposal. The Proponent was encouraged to remove this element from the proposal.

Landscaping Strategy

The Panel expressed a number of concerns with the landscaping strategy of the proposal, indicating that the overall plan is minimal and lacking of a unique expression. Specific concerns were expressed with the park over the underground parking garage – it was suggested that it was unusual to locate a park in the vicinity of a natural heritage area and that the vegetation in this location would not thrive as a result of limited soil depth there. It was also suggested that the amenity of this space would be reduced by the parking garage exhaust vents that would likely be installed in the park, and that the City should not permit the development of this type of amenity in response to these concerns.

The Panel also expressed concerns with the proposed landscaping for the interior courtyard, indicating that it would be unlikely for the vegetation to thrive there given the heavy convergence of vehicle-related uses in this location (including salting during the winter months). Removing the central median of the northern drive aisle for the purpose of creating more space in this location was suggested as one method to improve this condition.

Comments for City Staff

The Panel felt that more direction was required from the City to fully understand how the proposal would relate to this portion of the Scarborough Civic Centre, particularly the large industrial parcel to the south of the site.

Project 2 – St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Pilot Area

| Market Wharf, 18 Lower Jarvis Street | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Address | 18 Lower Jarvis Street |
| Use | Mixed Use, Residential |
| Zoning | Mixed Use |
| Application Status | Zoning By-law Amendment |
| Architect | Peter Clewes, Architects Alliance |
| Owner | Michael Gross Realty |
| Applicant/Agent | Context Development |
| Review | First |
| City Staff | Al Rezoski, Community Planning; James Parakh, Urban Design |

Conflict of Interest: none

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Evaluation: Refinement (8-0)

Introduction

City staff outlined the site context and area policy priorities, and sought the Panel's advice on the following:

- How well does the podium design and built form frame the proposed Crombie Park?
- How well is the above grade parking screened from view from Jarvis street?
- How does the overall proposal respond to its various frontages, views and vistas, particularly at street level?

Staff also requested the Panel to comment on the podiums' 7th and 8th floor continuous cantilever as it relates to the building design, Jarvis Street streetscape, and angular plane.

The applicant team described the design rationale of the proposal and responded to questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement

Sustainable Design

- Develop and integrate a comprehensive sustainable design strategy for the site, including but not limited to:
 - further development of solar control at south, east and west facades of tower and podium

Response to Context

- Develop design to address Crombie Park immediately north of site:
 - seen as key element in "perimeter and gardens" tradition of neighbourhood
 - look to precedent of parks/squares in neighbourhood to build upon tradition

Site Plan Design

- Develop potential alternatives to above grade parking:
 - to help reduce mass of podium and provide retail placement alternatives

- to increase residential use in podium
- Develop relationship of north edge of project to adjacent park:
 - create and support an active/thriving environment
- Explore options relative to the Shoppers Drug Mart:
 - shift Shoppers retail location southwards in order to provide space for more active, park-oriented retail uses
 - work with Shoppers to place engaging/active uses along north edge of project
- Explore improvements to the traditional Shoppers environment (high lighting levels, signage, blank walls at street etc) which are counter to urban quality being sought here

Pedestrian Realm

- Develop design strategy to enhance pedestrian environment relative to park
- Consider closure of Wilton Street for enhanced pedestrian connection to park
 - if needed intermittent vehicular use could be maintained through landscape strategy
- Improve relationship between loading/servicing and the pedestrian realm including:
 - combining loading/servicing areas
- Improve east-west pedestrian route through middle of project:
 - address increasing natural light penetration, sense of safety, width/height of route, etc.
 - create street/mews environment

Building Form and Articulation

Develop the design concept, including:

- Podium:
 - alternatives to current height, extent, cadence of glazing at ground level
 - alternatives to lighten presence of podium
 - articulate on façade pedestrian route through middle of project
- Cantilevered element at top of podium:
 - preference for partial angled cantilever, with greatest projection at south end of element
 - consider shifting cantilever to west edge of building instead of east to reduce massing/impact relative to context along Jarvis
 - develop luminous lantern strategy around all sides of element
- North façade:
 - reduce bulkiness and develop scale/relationship sensitive to adjacent park
- Tower:
 - develop alternatives to slab building to create point tower massing/presence

Landscaping Strategy

- Develop high quality landscape design strategy, including:
 - strategy along south edge of site to help mitigate adjacent rail corridor
 - urbane landscape along north edge of site, sensitive/supportive of adjacent park (e.g. double row of trees)

Submission Package

- Provide further information regarding sun/shadow and wind impact studies, including mitigation strategies

Comments for City Staff

- Provide guidance regarding:
 - whether required pedestrian route through centre of project can be deleted in favour of safer, more urbane solutions
 - plans for park adjacent to site
 - potential for alternatives to Wilton Street (e.g. full closure with space becoming part of park, limited use)

Related Commentary

Sustainable Design

The Panel was generally satisfied with the sustainable design elements of this project, including the inclusion of the Green Development Standard checklist within the submission materials. In relation to the tower design, it was noted that the balconies on the east and west façade will be effective for addressing solar heat gain, and that the narrow floor plate will be effective in reducing shadowing.

Response to Context

The Panel indicated that the St Lawrence neighbourhood generally displays good urban design qualities, and suggested that the overall design approach for this project continued this display despite the various site difficulties (contaminated soil, proximity to the railway etc.). A number of areas for improvement were identified however, many of which related to the relationship of the ground-floor plane – particularly the proposed Shoppers Drug Mart - to its surrounds:

- Shoppers Drug Mart

The Panel expressed frustration with the development agreement condition that has resulted in the large and prominent ground-floor location for the Shoppers Drug Mart store. It was suggested that the prominence of this store could overwhelm the important Wilton Street frontage, and that it would be detrimental to the park opposite it, especially given that the height of the Shoppers frontage will be 6 metres. In response to the Panel's question about this condition, the Proponent indicated that there is little flexibility in relation to its location on-site. In order to address this problem, the Panel indicated that it will be necessary to develop the store's cosmetic treatment beyond the regular Shoppers model so that it emerges in a way that is complimentary to the fine grain character of the area.

Site Plan Design

Further to concerns previously identified with the Shoppers Drug Mart element of the proposal, the Panel encouraged the Proponent to explore the possibility of increasing the prominence of the smaller ground-floor retail portion and reducing the Shoppers prominence. Developing a finer grain on the northern elevation, and aligning the smaller ground-floor retail portion with the park were suggested as possibilities for achieving this.

Several Panelists expressed concerns with proximity of the southern portion of the proposed building to the railway tracks.

The Panel encouraged the Proponent to consider combining the two loading spaces in to one, noting that the existing loading arrangement, with numerous curb cuts, has a negative impact upon the pedestrian realm. Specifically, it was noted that these curb cuts interrupt the amenable promenade leading down Market Street towards the southern lobby.

Pedestrian Realm

The Panel devoted a significant portion of time discussing the merits and design of the mid-block east-west pedestrian connection within the proposal. While acknowledging that this connection has the potential to be a positive contribution to the pedestrian realm in this area and that it provides an important connection to the residential lobby, the Panel was in agreement that the current design of it requires improvement. Suggestions as to how this could be achieved included increasing its prominence, possibly by creating a shared-use mews there, and enhancing connections to the pedestrian realm beyond the site, and aligning it with the existing east-west street grid in the proximity of that location. Several Panelists questioned whether or not the connection was necessary at all, suggesting that its removal from the plan could result in greater benefits to the overall design, such as allowing for a ground-floor retail layout that reduces the prominence of Shoppers Drug Mart.

In addition to developing this connection, the Proponent was also encouraged to develop the quality of street edges around the building. In particular, it was suggested that more thought should be given to providing an enhanced pedestrian environment along the northern frontage, including Wilton Street. This would have the effect of reducing the traditional pedestrian realm boundaries in this location, and encouraging pedestrian activities between the market, the proposal and beyond.

Building Form and Articulation

The Panel was generally satisfied with the podium design, including the 7th and 8th floor continuous cantilever. The Panel felt the podium design related well to Lower Jarvis Street and was suitably aligned with the St Lawrence Market, although there was some disappointment that the podium contained above-ground parking rather than more residential units. The proponent team mentioned, however, that sightlines into the parking garage would be buffered by a suitable lighting and glazing strategy.

The cantilever was well received, having been described by Panelists as innovative, elegant and appreciated. There was an overall preference amongst Panelists for a reduced tapered design rather than a full extension along the Jarvis Street frontage, and there was some uncertainty as to how it would appear when illuminated.

In relation to the tower, the Panel felt this element had generally been well handled and that it ably complimented the podium. One Panelist suggested that the tower was a beautifully disguised slab, indicating that a slimmer point tower would have been a more preferable design; the majority of Panelists were, however, satisfied with the proposed massing.

The Panel was also satisfied with the proposed material palette, commending the Proponent on the use of brick as well as fritted glass. However, concerns with the ground-floor glazing of the Shoppers Drug Mart element were expressed, including that it was out of scale with the area context, and that it needs more structure to it.

Landscaping Strategy

The majority of discussion relating to the landscaping strategy focused on the Crombie Park extension between St Lawrence Market and the northern edge of the proposal. The Panel was enthusiastic about this element of the strategy, indicating that it would create a strong sequence of spaces in this area, however the Proponent was encouraged to examine how the quality of this space should develop. Specifically, it was suggested that the composition and layout of the park should be determined through a study of its relationship with the remainder of Crombie Park, as well as through conducting a shadow study. It was also suggested that the park should be designed in a way that reduces barriers and promotes the movement and interaction of people beyond its perimeter boundaries. Designing the space as an extension of the market, and designing Wilton Street as a shared-use roadway were two examples of how this suggestion could be explored.

Related to the above discussion, the Panel was also appreciative of the proposed landscaping treatment for the northern portion of Market Street. It was noted, however, that this treatment – a double row of trees – ends before the mid-block pedestrian connection. Subsequently, the Proponent was encouraged to examine ways to ensure a positive urban experience continues southwards beyond this point. Combining loading and access points was one suggestion for helping to achieve this (see Site Plan discussion above); introducing an additional podium cantilever in this area was another.

Submission Package

The Panel requested to see sun, shadow, and wind studies related to this proposal

Project 3 – Humber Bay Shores Pilot Area

| Waterways Condominium | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Address | 2143 and 2147 Lake Shore Boulevard West |
| Use | Mixed Use |
| Zoning | Mixed Use |
| Application Status | Preliminary application – undetermined application type |
| Architect | Sal Vitiello, E.I. Richmond Architect |
| Owner | Conservatory Group |
| Applicant/Agent | n/a |
| Review | First |
| City Staff | Mike McCart, Community Planning |

Conflict of Interest: none

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Evaluation: Redesign (4-3)

Introduction

City staff outlined the site context and area policy priorities, and sought the Panel's advice on the following:

- Does the proposed development successfully implement the intent of the recently completed guidelines, including the Master Plan and Guiding Principles, for Humber Bay Shores?
- Can this proposal be successfully integrated within the overall block context, achieving appropriate heights and separation distances between buildings, a vibrant pedestrian environment, well articulated transition zones between public and private, and the positioning of the building on site with a view to optimizing opportunities for retail and restaurant uses?

The applicant team described the design rationale of the proposal and responded to questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement

Sustainable Design

- Develop and integrate a comprehensive sustainable design strategy

Response to Context

- Ensure positions of proposed tall buildings on site are not too close to:
 - existing buildings to east
 - proposed building context to west
- Synchronize proposed design within master plan for area to ensure continuity of urban design/framework

Site Plan Design

- Develop site plan strategy including urban clarity/connection of grade relation with streets:
 - push retail uses close to street edge to create an active, animated environment
 - avoid expansive open ground plane currently shown in design

- create street wall conditions with well defined, street scaled building bases/podia
- alternative to “buildings in a park” concept currently shown (see Response to Context above)
- Develop retail strategy:
 - consider grade related retail for commercial building along Lake Shore Boulevard West
 - continuity of retail along east side of site, from Lake Shore Boulevard West to Marine Parade Drive

Pedestrian Realm

- Develop design strategy to:
 - create a high quality pedestrian realm
 - comfortably size/shape pedestrian spaces to provide active, animated streets (see Site Plan Design above)
 - provide commercial building with stronger, pedestrian-friendly relationship with Lake Shore Boulevard West
 - articulate clarity of building entries throughout site, including residential, retail and commercial areas
 - screen service lane/facilities to separate from high quality pedestrian environment

Building Form and Articulation

- Develop design concept, including:
 - alternative bridge design to encourage pedestrian use of street level and remove shadow impact on site
 - tower design to create distinctive top element
 - alternative vertical planes to avoid mass wall impact at grade level and improve public realm quality

Landscaping Strategy

- Develop high quality landscape strategy, including:
 - creating alternatives to current large-scale hard-edge concept
 - addressing unique waterfront context
 - creating well-defined pedestrian-scaled outdoor spaces

Submission Package

- Provide the following:
 - show proposed design within existing and future context
 - identify impact of future development to west on proposed design
 - sun/shadow and wind studies and mitigation strategies for both

Comments for City Staff

The Panel notes that the “buildings in a park” urban design strategy of the proposed design concept differs considerably from the “towers and podium/street building” strategy envisioned in the new Urban Design Guidelines for this area. To achieve clarity of purpose, the Panel is seeking input from City Staff regarding:

- clarification of the urban design guidelines vs. varying individual site(s) ownership and resulting atypical development conditions:
 - in particular relative to the site in this submission, and its relation to future development west of the site;
 - whether the City considers the proposed design concept to be acceptable relative to the urban design vision and guidelines for the area; and
 - clarification to the Panel and proponent of conforming and non-conforming conditions

Related Commentary

Site Plan Design

Site Planning concerns were primarily focused on the street-making elements of the proposal, including the proposed massing and form of buildings which frame these streets. The Panel was supportive of ideas within the draft guidelines suggest a continuity of street wall lining many of the proposed new streets, and noted that this idea was not really emerging within the proposal. The result of this, it was suggested, is that the street making elements of proposal are not strong enough.

The Panel was also concerned about the grade relationship to “Street A”, noting that the quality of semi-private spaces – including the large at-grade plaza - would likely be very poor during the winter months. One Panelist commented that the large open spaces around the buildings could provide relief to the proposed massing, provided that these spaces were supported by a strong public realm; however, this Panelist also indicated that they would not like to see other blocks within the area develop in this way.

Further to the draft guidelines, the Panel commented that the concept of tower spacing did not really appear to be taking effect within this proposal, noting that the renderings within the submission package show two towers beside each other. The Proponent was also encouraged to examine this aspect of the proposal.

The Proponent was encouraged to consider allowing for retail uses at-grade along the Lake Shore Boulevard West element of the proposal, as well as along the north-south oriented street (Street “A”) leading down from Lakeshore towards Marine Parade Drive.

Building Form and Articulation

The Panel was generally appreciative of the building form and articulation, indicating that the overall complexity of the proposal was interesting and that the podium treatment had been well done. Several concerns with specific elements of the building form were expressed as follows:

Elevated walkways

The Panel disliked this element of the design for a number of reasons including that it was a suburban approach to facilitating pedestrian movement, that it could impose negative shadow impacts upon the public realm, and that this impact would worsen if the walkway design was replicated in other developments within the area. Further to this, it was suggested that pedestrian activity should occur at street level wherever possible.

Tall Tower

Although generally appreciated of the design of this tower, the Panel suggested that it could benefit from an improved design at its top.

Landscaping Strategy

Building upon concerns identified in the Site Plan section, the Panel indicated that the public realm quality and street-making elements of this proposal could be strengthened through the development of a targeted landscaping strategy. It was suggested that this strategy should build upon the elements of this area that differentiate it from other areas of the City, such as the boardwalk along Marine Parade Drive and the general proximity to the lake. Following from this, it was suggested that some of the more urban qualities of the proposal, such as the areas of hard surfacing, were not suitable treatments in this waterfront area. The Proponent was encouraged to develop publicly accessible areas where people feel comfortable conducting a variety of activities in all seasons.

Submission Package

The Panel indicated that sun, shade and wind studies would be helpful in conducting further review of this proposal.

Comments for City Staff

The Panel made comments to staff about the challenges of delivering vibrant and successful land uses along Lake Shore Boulevard West. These comments were similar to those originally made in response to the draft Humber Bay Shores Urban Design Guidelines (Meeting 4, Project 1, November 22, 2007).