

Minutes of the Design Review Panel Meeting 24 – September 24, 2009

The Design Review Panel met on Thursday, September 24, 2009 in Committee Room 2, City Hall, 100 Queen Street West, Toronto, at 11:35 a.m.

Members of the Design Review Panel

Meeting Regrets

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

Michael Leckman (Vice Chair): Architect, Principal - Diamond and Schmitt

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

Shirley Blumberg: Architect, Principal - KPMB

Paul Ferris: Landscape Architect, Principal - Ferris Associates

✓

Ralph Giannone: Architect, Principal - Giannone Associates

Peter Halsall: Engineer, President - Halsall Associates

Daniel Leeming: Planner, Partner – The Planning Partnership

✓

David Pontarini: Architect, Principal - Hariri Pontarini

Janet Rosenberg: Landscape Architect, Principal - Janet Rosenberg Associates

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

Sol Wassermuhl: Architect, President - Page + Steele / IBI Group Architects

Recording Secretary

Hamish Goodwin: Urban Design, City Planning Division

Meeting 24 Index

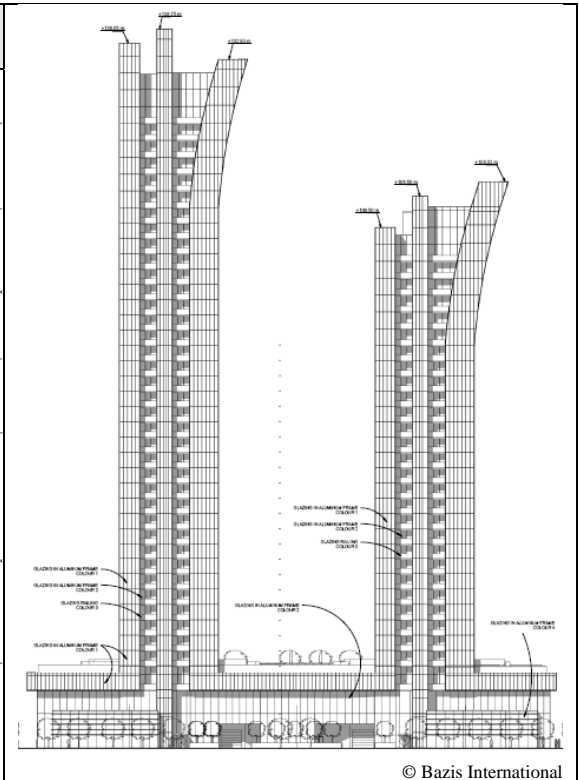
[Project 1: "Emerald Park" Condo, 4726-4750 Yonge Street](#)

[Project 2: Lansing United Church, 49 Bogert Avenue](#)

[Project 3: Evolution Condo, 5101 Dundas Street West](#)

[Project 4: Post House Condo, 105 George Street](#)

Emerald Park Condo	
Pilot Area	North York Centre
Application Status	Rezoning and Official Plan Amendment
Architect	Roy Varacalli, Bazis International
Developer	Bazis International
Review	Second (1 st held May 2008)
City Staff	Mark Chlon, Community Planning Rong Yu, Urban Design
Conflict of Interest:	Eric Turcotte
Evaluation	na



[\[back to top\]](#)

Introduction

City staff outlined the area context, history and area policy priorities. The applicant team described the design rationale and responded to questions from the Panel.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement

Sustainable Design

Continue to develop a comprehensive sustainable design strategy that is integrated throughout the project, including but not limited to:

- articulated passive means of solar control that addresses orientation of facades
- further development of tower skin to ensure optimum insulation properties
- develop commercial space floor plate depth and window strategy to increase natural light penetration

Site Plan Design

Further develop to address the following:

- Building edge and sidewalk design to more clearly respond to the usage and character differences of the four streets framing the site
- Along Bogert Avenue:
 - consider providing drop off area along street at residential lobbies
 - increase visual screening of vehicular access area
- Address circulation conflicts presently shown in design between bikes, taxis, cars and trucks:
 - including entering/exiting parking garage, bike storage and loading area

- consider condensing loading area to help resolve conflict (varying opinions amongst Panel members regarding condensing this area)

Pedestrian Realm

The Panel sees positive improvement in the design with the extension of the building closer to the property line. Further development is needed in the following areas:

- Pedestrian realm vs. retail edges of building:
 - articulate and give scale to retail uses, including entry conditions and weather protection
- Pedestrian realm vs. commercial edges of building
 - consider public/private transition relative to pedestrian circulation immediately adjacent to potential office uses

Building Form and Articulation

The Panel appreciates the design improvements that have been made since the project was first presented, including the development of:

- Podium placement/massing
- Stepped relationship between podium and towers
- Reduced height of towers
- Overall sculpting of the project

The Panel also appreciates the high quality of design clearly expressed in the fully rendering colour perspectives (the ones not included in the submission package), and has provided comments and support with the understanding that this quality will be maintained and achieved through to the completed project. Further to the above, development is needed in the following areas:

- General
 - develop high quality building skin to match intent clearly shown in fully rendered colour perspectives
- Retail/Commercial is given the same design along all street edges, although the streets are considerably different from each other:
 - develop design to address this difference (for instance: Beecroft frontage should be handled differently than Yonge frontage)
- Street level base presently has a “corporate” aesthetic which does not reflect intended retail functions:
 - develop a clear retail strategy and character including: different types/sizes of retail, entries, signage placement, canopies, etc...
 - articulate strategy for controlling the extent of opaque retail frontage, to ensure an animated clearly visible retail environment
 - provide design strategy for spaces that more likely will be used as commercial/office
- Tower
 - balconies are currently captured within the tower facades:
 - push out / express balconies to encourage views, create pattern in façades and become part of solar shading strategy
 - develop expressed passive solar shading to address sun path and provide aesthetic scale/articulation

Landscaping Strategy

Further develop the following:

- Landscape strategy and related pedestrian realm and public/private transition that addresses potential commercial, office and/or retail uses along Poyntz, Bogert and Beecroft

- Unlike Yonge and Poyntz, the design Bogert is primarily a residential street:
 - increase quantity and quality of landscape to address and enhance this use, while screening vehicular access/egress and articulating residential entries/lobbies

Submission Package

The Panel paid particular attention to the sophisticated contemporary design portrayed in the fully rendered colour perspectives presented during the session. We applaud the proponent's clearly stated intent to adhere to the design as shown in these perspectives.

Comments for City Staff

- The widening of Poyntz at Yonge does not create/support a high quality urban environment and safe, enjoyable public realm
- Assistance from the City is needed to coordinate with the TTC to create a better integration of this entry into the proposed design
- We recommend that Poyntz remain at a consistent width up to the corner of Yonge, using the road width shown at the corner of Poyntz at Beecroft.

Lansing United Church	
Pilot Area	North York Centre
Application Status	Rezoning and OPA
Architect	J. David McAuley Architect Inc.
Review	First
City Staff	Mark Chlon, Community Planning Rong Yu, Urban Design
Conflict of Interest	none
Evaluation	Refine – 0 <u>Redesign - 8</u>

[\[back to top\]](#)

Introduction

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

1. Does the east and north elevation of the proposed addition properly address the public realm, specifically the abutting park and Beecroft Road frontage?
2. Does the landscape feature at the southeast corner of the site successfully integrate the entrance of the building with the Poyntz Avenue and Beecroft Road frontages/intersection?

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

Sustainable Design

Develop a comprehensive sustainable design strategy that is integrated throughout the project, including but not limited to:

- minimized energy consumption by existing building
- building layout and form that optimizes natural light penetration into inhabited functions, including daycare facilities

Site Plan Design

The Panel appreciates the complexities of the site and functional programme, and steps the proponent team has taken to creatively address them. At the same time there is concern that the proposed site plan compromises the site's overall functionality, the relationship between building and site, the relationship to surrounding context and the quality of public realm. Further effort is needed achieve a coherent site plan design.

Related to the above please refer to response to Questions 1 and 2, and the following comments:

- General:
 - develop design to create an integrated and sensitive relationship between building, site and context
 - develop high quality formal “outdoor rooms” to create well defined uses throughout site
- South Area of Site:
 - create less suburban setting through further reduction of on-site parking
 - provide more landscape space between parking and building
 - create clear entry to building with strong street address
 - provide well defined, secure outdoor daycare playground with required connection to indoor functions
- North Area of Site:
 - further to response to Questions, focus more contemplative, park oriented uses in this area

Pedestrian Realm

- Develop a clear, high quality pedestrian realm that includes a well defined:
 - entry sequence to main address of facility
 - public / private transition of uses along north edge of site as they relate to adjacent park

Building Form and Articulation

The Panel supports the proponent’s efforts to maintain and enhance the existing church as a significant place within the community. To this end further design development is needed to fully realize the potential of the project, including the following:

- Form and Materiality:
 - proposed quantity and mix of forms and materials has potential to be visually confusing, and overwhelming of the existing church’s elegance and simplicity :
 - consider developing a simplicity and cadence that builds upon the existing
- New and Old:
 - develop design to coherently celebrate relationship between the existing church and new facilities
 - use building form to articulate this relationship externally and internally through exposure of existing church’s features
 - highlight and celebrate visual importance of existing church’s tower
- Key Functions:
 - express to the community the overall form of the Sanctuary “in the round” (e.g.: height, roof form, materiality) as a key civic symbol
 - develop clear visual presence on Beecroft and strong relationship to the park
 - further to Form and Materiality above, seek alternatives to curved metal façade expression

Landscaping Strategy

Provide a comprehensive, high quality landscape strategy as an essential part of the success of this project.

Comments for Proponent

The Panel is very appreciative of the extent and quality of material submitted, and the proponent team’s considerable efforts to date. We are excited to see a project of this calibre come before the Panel and look forward to seeing further progress at the next session.

Comments for City Staff

Work with the proponent team to develop a clear, safe pedestrian crossing at the corner of Beecroft and Poyntz.

Q 1 – Does the east and north elevation of the proposed addition properly address the public realm, specifically the abutting park and Beecroft Road frontage?

In addressing the above question the Panel's comments included:

- General:
 - both elevations need further development to more effectively address the adjacent public realm, with the following specific comments:
- East Elevation:
 - recommend turning Sanctuary's current north-south axis 90 degrees, resulting in an east-west axis and creating potential for a significant civic elevation along Beecroft
 - with this move existing meeting rooms would shift to be placed along north elevation
 - provide greater setback along Beecroft to create a spacious public realm and high quality landscape
- North Elevation:
 - the Sanctuary axis shift, and recommended functional changes outlined in Question 2 response, provide opportunity for a building elevation and edge use that will more effectively address public realm

Q2 – Does the landscape feature at the southeast corner of the site successfully integrate the entrance of the building with the Poyntz Avenue and Beecroft Road frontages/intersection?

In addressing the above question the Panel's comments included:

- General:
 - the Panel recommends further development of the south side of the site to improve building entry and functional use of the south east corner of site
- South East Corner:
 - recommend that the Daycare Playground exchange places with landscaped area at south east corner of site
 - this move places a function along the north edge of the site that has a more natural affiliation with the adjacent park
 - the Playground moves from a north facing area to a sunny exposure along the south edge of the site
- Building Entry:
 - recommend that parking area be reduced to provide more space for high quality landscaped entry sequence from street to building's front door

Evolution Condominium	
Pilot Area	Etobicoke City Centre
Application Status	Site Plan and Minor Variance
Architect	David Arsenault Arsenault Architects Inc.
Developer	BeaverBrook Homes
Review	Second (1 st review held May 2008)
City Staff	Pedro Lopes, Community Planning; Emilia Floro, Urban Design
Conflict of Interest:	none
Evaluation	Support – 2 <u>Non-support – 6</u>



© Arsenault Architect Inc.

[\[back to top\]](#)

Introduction

City staff outlined the area context, history and area policy priorities. The applicant team described the design rationale and responded to questions from the Panel.

Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement

Sustainable design

Comments

Reductions in glass area on the lower levels of the Dundas Street façade were appreciated, however these were relatively small with respect to the overall building. Therefore, concerns expressed in the first review regarding solar gain, solar shading, and the r-2 wall system, still remain. A comprehensive strategy on sustainability was not presented.

Recommendations

Develop and integrate a comprehensive sustainability design strategy with respect to the energy footprint of the design, including but not limited to:

- solar gain, solar shading, energy conservation (in general it was felt there was too much glass)
- the sustainability strategy must go much further than small reductions in glazed area

Response to context

Comments

Context elevations were very useful in evaluating changes made since first review, including materiality of the east and south facades, the provision of a retail frontage, and a more prominent main entrance. The addition of brick was appreciated. However, general massing, transitions, separations, set backs, and relation to context were largely unchanged from the first submission.

Recommendations

Develop a more prominent distinction between the podium and the taller elements of the form:

- place greater emphasis on addressing all faces of the building
- use increased set-backs
- avoid elements that confuse the role of the tower

Site planning

Comments

Parking entrance and loading area reconfiguration create improvements to the programming of spaces near the street. The entrance on Dundas Street was found to be redundant to the one on Michael Power Place facing the park; entering off the park was considered to be more appropriate to the site. The entrance would be better if it were not next to parking, under a wide dark soffit. The garbage area appears to be problematic.

Recommendations

- review parking requirements, parking approach and loading strategy, to provide ground floor amenity space at grade
- review massing to provide outdoor amenity space at roof level
- review the property boundaries to ensure that the extent of glazing proposed is indeed viable on faces near adjacent development to the east
- develop a primary entrance facing Michael Power Place and the park; enhance the entrance with a canopy to mark the location and provide weather protection

Building form and articulation

Comments

- Continuous horizontal lines of the balconies contribute to the building feeling bigger, more imposing and less integrated into the context
- The narrow vertical band on the south face seems out of character with the scheme and reduces the clarity of the distinction between the podium and tower.
- The detailing of the brick on Dundas Street around the retail areas is too low, to appropriately include signage and glazing; the retail would be more successful if expressed for its full 4.6m height
- The south elevation could be more elegant and the massing more successful if the re-entrant corner in the brick (grid lines 1 - 3 between L and M, levels 2-4) were deleted and the corner was completed
- To fulfill the intent of a podium distinct from the tower, the set back and perceived difference at level 4 needs to be increased

- The entrance on Dundas is interfering with the successful expression of the brick base, and should be deleted
- The simplicity, clarity, mass and strength of the brick base should be emphasized

Recommendations

- Re-consider the continuous horizontal balconies and provide a scheme that reduces the impression of bulk on the Dundas Street façade
- Increase the height of the retail frontage on Dundas
- Improve the reading of the simplicity, clarity, mass and strength of the brick base
- Eliminate the double corner in the brick podium element at Dundas and Michael Power Place
- Increase the set-back from Dundas Street above the 4th floor

Landscape Strategy

Develop a clear and articulate landscape identity with focus on creating 'people places' on the site

Comments for City Staff

The approved area, heights and set backs for this site result in a building mass that does not fit within the guidelines for the area, and creates an unfortunate wall-like condition on the street. This scheme demonstrates that building designs with 14-storey walls fronting Dundas Street are not sympathetic to the local context.

- While it is understood that the density and height has been approved, the street building and point tower configurations on adjacent sites was a strongly preferred configuration to the street building and slab block in this proposal

Post House Condominium	
Pilot Area	King-Parliament
Application Status	Site Plan and Minor Variance
Architect	Rudy Wallman
Developer	Alterra Developments
Review	First
City Staff	Willie MacRae, Community Planning
Conflict of Interest	none
Evaluation	Refine – 3; <u>Redesign</u> - 4



© Wallman Architects

[\[back to top\]](#)

Introduction

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

1. How does the proposed building (and the podium in particular) respond to the surrounding heritage context, including the adjacent designated heritage buildings to the south?
2. Does the proposed courtyard successfully integrate the surrounding uses?
Has the courtyard design responded to the King-Parliament Secondary Plan's objectives for creating open spaces that promote greening, pedestrian access and personal safety?

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

Sustainable Design

Develop a comprehensive, highly sustainable design strategy that is integrated throughout the project, including but not limited to:

- minimized energy consumption
- rationalizing “glassy expression” with sustainability strategy, including passive means of shading from solar heat gain

Response to Context

Develop design to address potential future context north of site

Site Plan Design

The Panel appreciates the strong start regarding site design and circulation, especially given the complexities of the site and context. Further development is needed to achieve a high quality

solution. Related to this please refer to response to Questions 1 and 2, and the following comment:

- further develop ground floor to reduce space used for service access and functions, in favour of increased outdoor amenity

Building Form and Articulation

Please refer to response to Questions 1 and 2, and the following comments:

- set back east façade as per “As of Right” to avoid blank wall and provide vision glass

Landscaping Strategy

Please refer to response to Questions 1 and 2, and the following comments:

- set back east
- the site areas immediately adjacent contain mature trees that will be a valuable resource within the new development; these should be retained if possible within the design of this project

Submission Package

The Panel appreciates the extent and quality of material submitted by the proponent for this first review, especially given the unique heritage of the immediate neighbourhood. We are excited to see this project come before the Panel and look forward to reviewing further progress at the next session. At this time please provide information regarding:

- Potential future context north and east of the site, and design response relevant to this context (e.g.: elevations, sections)
- Rationale for use of accent colours on tower, and relevance to context
- Proposed courtyard design:
 - given complexity of site supplement use of plans, elevations and sections to provide clear sense of design intent
 - suggestions include: 3D physical model and/or computer animation that can be real-time tested during next session

Comments for City Staff

Provide complete picture of potential future context north, east and south of the site.

Q1 – How does the proposed building (and podium in particular) respond to the surrounding heritage context, including the adjacent designated heritage buildings to the south?

In addressing the above question the Panel acknowledges that the site is situated within a significant heritage context, which mandates a design concept that brings sensitivity and deference to that context. The Panel finds that the proposed design requires further development in order to meet this mandate, with the following specific comments:

General response to heritage

- Proposed Design vs. 2004 “As of Right” Approved Building Envelope:
 - it appears that height/density creep is resulting in a building that does not fit well within the heritage context
- Further develop design to create better massing, scale and presence; including:
 - reduced tower footprint
 - Adhere to “As of Right” tower height and massing stepping/setbacks from George Street

Podium response to heritage

- Further develop design to provide a more sensitive response to adjacent heritage buildings
- For opaque functions along south façade (e.g.: exit stairs, loading/services, parking ramp), use cladding materials appropriate to brick/stone palette of heritage buildings

- Counterbalance glassy “building on columns” with solid massing and articulation that addresses “solid mass” aesthetic of heritage buildings

Q 2 – Does the proposed courtyard successfully integrate the surrounding uses? Has the courtyard design responded to the King-Parliament Secondary Plan’s objectives for creating open spaces that promote greening, pedestrian access and personal safety?

In addressing the above question the Panel appreciates that a high quality public courtyard is an essential part of the success of this project, and in turn the overall neighbourhood. The Panel finds that the proposed design requires further development in order to achieve this success as well as meet the Secondary Plan’s open spaces objectives, and provides the following comments:

- General:
 - create a clear, cohesive identity for a courtyard that feels spacious, weaves new with old, ties together elevational differences, etc
 - rethink proposed uses along north edge of courtyard to create year-round use/animation (e.g.: shift condo amenity elsewhere in favour of providing space for tenants)
- Pedestrian Access:
 - ensure that courtyard is a non-gated, fully accessible year-round public realm
 - clearly define boundaries between public realm and private aspects of proposed condo
- Landscape/Greening:
 - provide a high quality landscape strategy worthy of the significant heritage and specific environmental conditions of the site and context
 - develop a sustainable strategy which responds to the courtyard orientation as a shaded environment
 - take into consideration four-seasons usage of space as a public walkway and place of relaxation/respice
 - consider potential for courtyard to tell its users a story about the history of its setting and sustainability features (e.g.: expressed storm water management, low water consumption species)
- Personal Safety:
 - design entry points into courtyard to be open, accessible and safe
 - widen entry from George Street through increased building setback from George Street and adhering to “As of Right” passage width
 - maintain opening from east without building above