
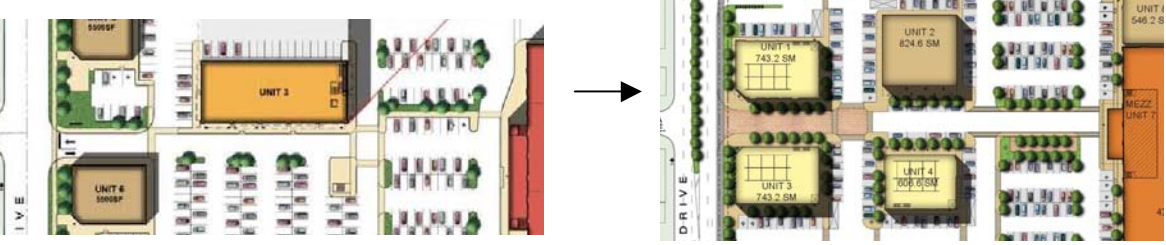
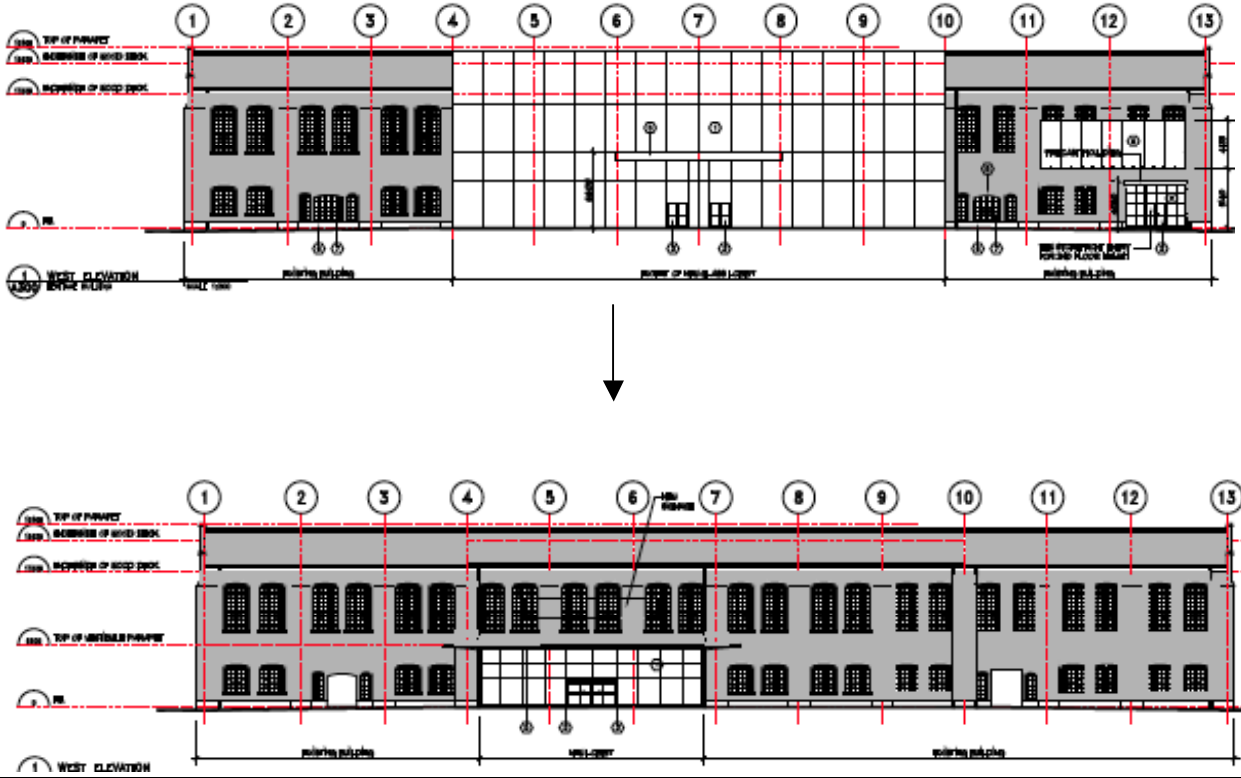


**FOCUSED RESPONSE TO DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS**

	DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS	FOCUSED RESPONSE
1	<p><b>Introduction</b> City staff outlined the area context, history and area policy priorities and sought the Panel’s advice on the following:</p> <p>1. Does the proposal provide for an appropriate streetscape and built form character for Laird Drive as an emerging pedestrian-oriented street? 2. Given the large amount of surface parking in the middle of the site, does the proposal provide adequate pedestrian linkages? Do those pedestrian linkages have adequate support and landscape amenity? 3a. How well is the Heritage Building incorporated into the overall development? Is the adjacent development compatible with the qualities of the heritage building? Is the heritage building enhanced by the proposal? 3b. Does the proposal provide prominent views of the heritage building from Laird Drive and secondarily from Esandar Drive? The applicant team described the design rationale and responded to questions from the Panel.</p>	<p>These questions are addressed below.</p>
2	<p><b>Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement</b> The proponent is to be commended for a scheme which elicited a lively discussion, and demonstrated the positive evolution of a commercial/retail development type. There was recognition that this particular site, at the threshold between employment lands and a stable, very well established residential neighbourhood west of the site, is ready for a very high quality, pedestrian focused public realm which also gives emphasis to the heritage building.</p>	<p>No comment – general statement</p>
3	<p>The Panel provided the following suggestions for improvement:</p>	
4	<p><b>Sustainable Design</b> - continue to evolve the design to improve the pedestrian realm and reduce sole dependence on cars</p>	<p>The pedestrian realm has been improved considerably by extending the public realm from Lea Avenue into the site and providing wide sidewalks with clearly oriented, active pedestrian walkways.</p>
5	<p>- develop and integrate a storm water management plan</p>	<p>A stormwater management plan has been developed, including the use of landscape islands for the irrigation of stormwater.</p>
6	<p>- explore other sustainable design options such as solar power and district energy</p>	<p>The project will be developed to LEED Silver standard or better. The use of Geothermal technologies is being seriously considered.</p>
7	<p><b>Response to Context</b> - provide a stronger built edge on Laird Drive</p>	<p>Built form along the laird Drive frontage has been increased with limited parking abutting the street. Where parking is located adjacent to the street, significant landscaping is incorporated into the design.</p>  <p>Building added at north end of site which was previously location of Pylon sign</p> <p>Additional floor area added along Laird and new central boulevard as well as Roof top terraces</p> <p>Parking area reduced in size and screening added</p> <p>Corner building increased in size and second storey office added whereas previous scheme had smaller one storey building</p> <p>The approach was to provide additional built form aligning both Laird and the internal boulevard while at the same time meeting the needs of tenants, which require parking.</p>

<p>8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- view corridors to the retailers can be as narrow as a typical street</li> <li>- give more prominence to the historic building</li> <li>- consider aligning the car entry on Laird with Lea Avenue, and enhancing entry route with boulevard quality landscaping and wide pedestrian paths focused on the historic building</li> </ul>	<p>Driveway location now includes a central boulevard designed like a street with wide pedestrian walkways and trees. The boulevard aligns with Lea Avenue. The entrance to the Heritage building has been moved to terminate the view of the realigned central driveway.</p> 
<p>9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- consider expressing the original function of the building when proposing alterations</li> </ul>	<p>- There are very minimal alterations to the building in comparison to the original proposal. The vestibule has been further reduced by over 70% surface area and 50% in length</p> 
<p>10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- consider more front doors, more seating, and more landscape on the Laird edge of the site</li> </ul>	<p>Front doors are located directly accessible to Laird with windows, landscaping and patios providing additional activity and pedestrian comfort along the street. 2<sup>nd</sup> floor terraces will provide further visual interest.</p> <p>Additional tree plantings will be located along the Laird street frontage.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p><b>Site Plan Design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- consider giving better identity to the underground parking entrance; currently it appears to be hidden on the north west corner of the site, near the servicing area</li> </ul>	<p>Underground Parking has been removed</p>

**12 Pedestrian Realm**  
 - develop a clearer pedestrian realm within the site; consider parking courts defined by bushes and straight-line sidewalks

The parking areas have been further broken up into small “courts” with perimeter plantings including a living wall along the northern boundary. Parallel parking has also been incorporated to contribute to the “urban” feel of the centre.

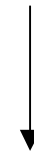


**13 Built Form and Articulation**  
 - the large glass wall and the signage proposed on the Heritage building were considered too big and overwhelming of the west façade

Vestibule substantially reduced as noted above.

14 - consider that the historic building itself is the sign, or that appropriately scale signage work more closely with the nature of the building.



The signage has been reduced considerably. There is only one wall-mounted sign above the vestibule which allows for the windows behind to be seen.



15 **Related Commentary**  
 The Panel was appreciative of the proponent’s initial efforts with the scheme but felt that more work was required in order for it to reach its potential. Noting that the development site is on the edge of an urban residential community, the Panel identified what they described as an important opportunity to move away from the vehicular-oriented “suburban” model for this type of development to one which is more responsive to its environment and which effectively becomes an extension of the urban fabric. It was the Panel’s opinion that if this opportunity could be realized, the result would be an extremely successful development which would benefit the local community and the wider City, not to mention the proponents themselves. The following additional comments were provided with this opportunity in mind:

Taking these comments into consideration, an effort was made to extend the urban fabric into the site with a grid network of drive aisles, widened sidewalks and reducing the size of parking areas. Buildings have been shifted to front onto the central boulevard that now aligns with Lea Ave. There is substantially less parking than in the previous proposal (reduced from 928 to 452 spaces). Also, additional density has been moved towards the Laird frontage.

16 **Does the proposal provide for an appropriate streetscape and built form character for Laird Drive as an emerging pedestrian-oriented street?**  
 The Panel questioned whether Laird Drive could ever become a vital pedestrian-oriented environment given the industrial and auto-dominated uses on its eastern side. The western side of the street, which has greater opportunity for retail uses which could support pedestrian frontages, was identified as having more chance to succeed in this regard. Because of this, the Panel felt that this project carried additional responsibility to address the need for a successful public realm, and suggested that this could be achieved through both thoughtful placement and organization of buildings and the creation of a strong landscape and streetscape along its Laird Drive frontage. Specific suggestions for achieving this generally focused on enhancing the urban experience, and included:

17	- locating front entrances of retail uses along Laird Drive	Front entrances are accessible from Laird.
18	- reducing the gaps between buildings	<p>An additional building has been included along the Laird frontage. There are only two small gaps, along Laird with substantial landscaping. These gaps have been reduced as compared to the original design</p> 
19	- intensifying the number of buildings along Laird Drive	One more building has been added (Unit 9) and the density along Laird has more than doubled from 14,320sf to 32,000sf.
20	- increasing the height of buildings along Laird, possibly through additional commercial or office space	<p>The 2 storey building has been shifted to the Laird frontage at Esandar. In addition, roof-top terraces are proposed at Laird and the central boulevard, adding to the second storey presence on the street.</p> 

21	- increasing the width or intensity of the landscaping band along Laird Drive	The setback has increased along Laird to allow for additional landscaping
22	<p>The Panel also identified the broader opportunity to create a sense of place with this project, suggesting that if a good public realm was created, then people would want to be there – they would walk rather than drive, they would pause rather than move on. The inclusion of a space(s) where children could safely play and run around, and where adults could sit and relax, was one example of how this could be partly achieved. The creation of a grand and welcoming gesture to the residential community to the west of Laird Drive was another. In this regard, access to this project from Lea Avenue was identified as being vital to the project. It was suggested that the drive aisle should be aligned with and have the same width as Lea Avenue, and be designed as though it were public boulevard with sidewalks, trees and intimate lighting on both sides. The street-like experience of this boulevard would be further enhanced by framing it with an ‘urban’ edge, and the suggestion was made to shift unit 8 northwards in order to achieve this. The Panel noted that additional modifications required to achieve the widened boulevard would include moving ‘unit 6’ southwards, and ‘unit 3/unit 4’ northwards.</p>	<p>The pedestrian pathways have been substantially increased in size and the arrangement of buildings and drive aisles provides for additional space for benches, fountains, and other street furniture for adults and children to enjoy. Pedestrian pathways along the central drive aisle now range from 4.175 to 6.4 metres.</p> <p>The central boulevard is aligned with Lea Avenue and the face-to-face building separation reflects that of Lea Avenue.</p> <p>Additional built form has been located adjacent to the central boulevard. The building located along Esandar has been reduced in size and is now one storey. This change is reflective of the comment to shift unit 8 to the north.</p> <p>There are two landscaped areas in front of the heritage building which are 5 and 10.8 metres in width, which is substantial enough to accommodate seating, trees and other street furniture to complement the pedestrian realm. The provision of parking in proximity to the vestibule is also something which is sought as necessary by the supermarket tenant.</p>
23	<p><b>Given the large amount of surface parking in the middle of the site, does the proposal provide adequate pedestrian linkages? Do those pedestrian linkages have adequate support and landscape amenity?</b></p> <p>The Panel felt that the number of proposed surface parking spaces within the proposal was unnecessarily high, and rationalized this sentiment with the following observations:</p>	Parking has been reduced by over 50%, from 928 spaces to 452 spaces. The ratio is now below the City’s zoning by-law requirement.
24	- cues for parking demand for this proposal should be taken from the ‘power centre’ to the immediate north of this site, and the Don Mills Centre further north, both of which have a lower parking ratio than that proposed here;	This comment was provided in the context of the underground parking
25	the large investment and amount of site area given to one floor of underground parking could very likely preclude the possibility of any future intensification and limit financial return on the site;	Underground parking is no longer proposed.
26	- the degree of proposed parking would result in a fundamentally unsustainable auto-dependent development; and	The parking has been reduced substantially as described above.
27	- if a greater effort was made towards integrating this development into the urban fabric, the provision of fewer parking spaces would be balanced by an increased volume of pedestrians and cyclists. Despite the clear attempt to provide pedestrian linkages within the surface parking lot, Panelists were of the opinion that the design favored vehicles over pedestrians and therefore, that it was not pedestrian friendly. The likely challenging experience of navigating this space with children was used to illustrate this point. An additional concern was expressed about the quality of space, from a safety point of view, beneath unit 4. Subsequently, the Panel suggested greater control was required for vehicular movements in order to provide a better balance between cars and pedestrians. The suggestion was made to increase the level of soft landscaping in the interior, and to break down the surface parking into a series of spaces which could be comfortably navigated by pedestrians. These spaces should be well landscaped and well lit.	<p>The pedestrian pathways are wider with clearer site-lines allowing pedestrians to safely navigate the centre. Pavers will clearly mark pedestrian pathways, which cross vehicle drive aisles.</p> <p>The design includes substantial soft landscaping at the perimeter of the parking “courts”, including a living wall along the northern boundary. LEED Solara down-lighting will be utilized on all buildings.</p>
28	<p><b>How well is the Heritage Building incorporated into the overall development? Is the adjacent development compatible with the qualities of the heritage building? Is the heritage building enhanced by the proposal?</b></p> <p>The challenges of retaining and reusing the site’s built heritage were well understood by members of the Panel, and the proponent was highly commended for this aspect of the proposal. One Panelist felt that the view of the heritage structure was not so important given its historical railway context, where the ‘front’ of the building is now the ‘rear’. The majority of Panelists, however, were of the opinion that its significance warrants greater acknowledgement within the project’s design than it currently has. It was suggested, therefore, that the design should in some way assist people to interpret the historic relationships of the site (through site organization, access, historical interpretation etc).</p> <p>The Panel was not supportive of the proposed transparent glass wall on the main heritage façade, suggesting that it was both inappropriate to the scale of the building and to the way in which the building is articulated. The Panel also felt that the entrance to the building – which is currently located on a thin portion of sidewalk - should be a much richer and grander experience for the pedestrian. Finally, the Panel also felt that the heritage character could be further strengthened through the site plan design (drive aisle alignment etc.) and articulation of new buildings. The Panel was somewhat appreciative of the contemporary architectural expression within the new buildings in that they did not replicate, or mimic the heritage building. However, they also felt that the new buildings would benefit from the use of more cues from the heritage building, particularly its patterns of articulation and use of materials.</p>	<p>The site has been reorganized to represent an extension of the urban fabric. In regard to the historic relationship, the alignment of Lea and the central boulevard allow for the heritage building to represent a view terminus from the adjacent Leaside neighbourhood. Colours and materials will complement the heritage buildings, including the use of stone, masonry and glazing.</p> <p>The vestibule has been reduced substantially as described above.</p> <p>The pedestrian walkway is 3 metres as suggested by planning staff and will include plantings to enhance the pedestrian experience.</p>

29	<p><b>Does the proposal provide prominent views of the heritage building from Laird Drive and secondarily from Esandar Drive?</b></p> <p>The creation of a boulevard entrance to the site from Lea Avenue, as described above, would have the effect of positioning the heritage structure on a 'street', thereby enhancing its presence and giving it the appearance of having an 'address'. The main view of the building would then become the vista of it as seen from the intersection of Laird Drive and Lea Avenue. Views to the heritage structure from Essander Drive would also be enhanced by moving unit 8 northwards, as has also been described above.</p>	<p>The realignment of the Boulevard accomplishes the benefits suggested by these comments.</p>
30	<p><b>Sustainable Design</b></p> <p>The Panel requested to see a demonstrated commitment to sustainable design in subsequent reviews of this project. Particular concern with the current proposal was expressed about the unsustainable nature of its auto-dependency, and the apparent lack of a storm water management plan. Additional opportunities for sustainability identified by Panel members included solar power (on the large flat roofs) and district energy (related to the cooling requirements of the supermarket).</p>	<p>LEED Silver, Geothermal consideration.</p>
31	<p><b>Site Plan Design</b></p> <p>It was suggested that the underground parking ramp could have the appearance of being a service ramp when built and that as such, may not be used as much as anticipated. Subsequently, the proponent was encouraged to consider relocating the ramp to make it more visible, accessible and elegant in its appearance.</p>	<p>No underground parking</p>
32	<p>The Panel was appreciative of the inclusion of Office uses within the scheme, and suggested that it would be a useful exercise to examine the suitability of creating 2-storey buildings along Laird Drive in order to enhance the built environment and provide additional office space there.</p>	<p>Additional office space is possible. This depends upon leasing. 2 storey building now on Laird.</p>