



PLANNING A GREAT CITY TOGETHER

## CITY OF TORONTO DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES: MEETING 3– April 21, 2017

The Design Review Panel met on Friday April 21, in Committee Room 3, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West, Toronto, at 11:30am.

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	<i>Members Present</i>
<b>Members of the Design Review Panel</b>	
<b>Gordon Stratford (Chair):</b> Architect, Senior Vice President, Design Director – HOK	✓ <sup>^</sup>
<b>Michael Leckman (Vice Chair):</b> Architect, Principal – Diamond and Schmitt	
<b>Carl Blanchaer:</b> Architect, Principal – WZMH Architects	✓
<b>Calvin Brook:</b> Planner, Architect, Principal – Brook McIlroy	
<b>Dima Cook:</b> Heritage Specialist, Senior Architect & Senior Associate – FGMDA	✓
<b>Ralph Giannone:</b> Architect, Principal – Giannone Associates	
<b>Meg Graham (Chair-last item):</b> Architect, Principal – superkül	✓*
<b>Brian Hollingworth:</b> Transportation Engineer, Director – IBI Group	
<b>Joe Lobko:</b> Architect, Principal – DTAH	
<b>Jenny McMinn:</b> Sustainability Specialist, Vice President – BuildGreen Solutions	✓**
<b>Jim Melvin:</b> Landscape Architect, Principal – PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.	✓
<b>Adam Nicklin:</b> Landscape Architect, Principal – PUBLIC WORK	
<b>David Sisam:</b> Architect, Principal – Montgomery Sisam Architects	
<b>Sibylle von Knobloch:</b> Landscape Architect, Principle – NAK Design	#

*\*was absent for first item*

*\*\* was absent for first 2 items*

*^ was absent for last item*

*#Conflict of interest for first 2 items*

### Design Review Panel Coordinator

Janet Lee: Urban Design, City Planning Division

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### CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Panel confirmed minutes of their previous meeting which was held on March 2, 2017 by email.

### MEETING 3 INDEX

- i. Bloor West Village Avenue Study (1st Review)
- ii. 2442-2454 Bloor St West and 1-9 Riverview Gardens (2nd Review)
- iii. Yonge and Eglinton Built Form Study (2<sup>nd</sup> Review)
- iv. 908-916 St Clair Ave W Pre-Application (1<sup>st</sup> Review)
- v. 31R Parliament St – Cherry St Courtyard (1<sup>st</sup> Review)



# BLOOR WEST VILLAGE AVENUE STUDY

## DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION	First Review City Study
PRESENTATIONS	
DESIGN TEAM	DTAH – Brent Raymond
CITY STAFF	Allison Reid, Urban Design; Greg Byrne, Community Planning
VOTE	No Vote



## Introduction

The purpose of this review is to introduce the Bloor West Village Avenue Study, provide an overview of the Study Area and recent development activity and to receive comments from the Panel on the study approach, preliminary findings and emerging directions.

The consultants and City Planning staff provided background information, design rationale, a study overview and responded to questions.

## Chair's Summary of Key Points

The Panel appreciates the significant importance of this study as precedent-setting for the bigger picture of maintaining the distinct uniqueness of Toronto's neighbourhoods while accommodating growth. With this key issue in mind further design development is needed, including the following:

- Pay particular attention to identifying and maintaining the unique character of Bloor West Village (extending from Humber River to East Village inclusive) and High Park within this study area; including:
  - Distinct Village arrival points along Bloor (taking advantage of sight lines offered by existing built and natural context).
  - Built form scale and character.
  - Natural form topography, scale and character.
  - Access to sunlight and views.

- Sensitivity to existing property and built form context differences between the north and south sides of Bloor.
- Avoiding density strategies that negatively impact the unique character.
- Integrate this study with heritage and environmental studies to form a cohesive, holistic strategy.
- Include a strategy on how to avoid the negative impact of gentrification on the unique character of this area

## Panel Comments

Panel members were "keenly interested" in this important study. It was noted that the critical issue of how to maintain village character while allowing for development as well, affects many parts of Toronto due to rapid growth. A Panel member noted, "If done right this could be precedent-setting" for the city.

As one of the few areas in the city that is "richly supported by transit", a Panel member observed that there are huge opportunities for the study.

Panel members complimented the city's initiative for the study and the need for a framework so that the Panel can compare the goals and aspirations of the entire area in future development reviews versus evaluation as only individual projects.

## Sense of Place -Bloor West Village

Panel members recognized the distinct qualities of the area and the need to maintain these while still balancing the influx of new development. They made the following recommendations:

### 1. Specifically define village qualities:

A key consideration would be to determine the qualities that make the village to various stakeholders such as residents and business owners, and better define this, as advised by a Panel member. It was noted that the village is losing its "villageness" with gentrification due to changes in uses and types of retail. Stronger guidance could be provided in the study in delineating fine grain articulation in building form, as per the Mirvish Village application.

### 2. Consider topography and sequence of views

A Panel member noted the area is unique in that there is a sense of arrival and departure from Bloor West Village that is unlike other areas. Part of this is likely from topography and scale of buildings in the arrival and departure sequence. Recommendations:

- a. Provide study of views, and a series of sightlines as they relate to topography and contribute to the sense of the village, "Back up from study area and see how it opens up and compresses."
- b. Introduce soft density in strategic areas so you keep sense of entering and leaving village.

### 3. Consider a strategy for main street buildings:

- a. Study how Toronto main street buildings create value:  
Several Panel members noted that Toronto has a series of main streets that all share a similar character of existing two storey buildings and create value and identity for their areas. A Panel member noted, "Those buildings get lost because there is no intrinsic value but there is contextual value". The following suggestions were made:

b. Look at other studies to create a strategy:

It was noted that the City has a lot of individual studies of main streets. A Panel member advised forming a coherent strategy by looking at ideas and solutions from them and seeing how the studies cross over and relate to each other.

c. Consider the age of the building stock:

A Panel member noted that the pressures on the two storey commercial building stock should be a factor for consideration, "the uses and expenses that shop owners have to endure is greater than the value for the stock".

## **Built Form Massing Exercise**

Panel members were interested in the future built form massing exercise "to see what really can be done in the area" particularly for soft sites. A Panel member noted that it will be intriguing to see how the depths of sites affect growth, how lot consolidation may work and the transition possible to residential neighbourhoods.

1. Future Development - Consider differences in north and south lots and balanced street massing:

Many Panel members noted the difference in lot pattern in the north finer grain lots versus some of the larger sites on the south. Examples of the south soft site lots were noted by a Panel member particularly from Clendanan to Jane St as the No Frills site, Turner and Porter site, and the Medical building site. "If these sites were developed, what kind of street would we see?"

Panel members advised that strategies need to achieve a balanced massing on the street between north and south lots.

2. Consider importance of sunlight as a characteristic of the area:

Panel members advised that sunlight studies are particularly important for this area which enjoys sunlight on the main street. A Panel member noted that the "unique identity of this portion of Bloor has to do with that special character" and advised more height and bulk guidelines beyond what is typical in studies.

a. Destination retail and sunlight:

The area was noted to be a destination for shopping from the greater city. The sunlight on the street is a key factor in attracting people, as noted by Panel members. "Why are there so many people on a Saturday afternoon walking on the street? It's all about sunlight." The north side of the street was observed to be particularly pleasant because of the sunlight and draws pedestrians. Care should be taken to maintain the sunlight in the shoulder seasons.

b. South sites:

The larger soft sites on the south will need more thought on building form due to sun impacts, "it's counterintuitive because there are smaller buildings on the north and you want them on the south". Sun angles and studies were noted to need careful review.

c. Parks:

A Panel member noted that the parks located on top of the subway lands north of Bloor as shown in the presentation, will need sunlight to be preserved through built form guidance. It was observed that the shallow depths of the north properties along Bloor will limit height and should better allow for sunlight on the parks. The open spaces should also be improved so that they are better used by the community and were noted to be currently "sorely underused".

### 3. Soft Density Concept – Identify opportunity areas:

Several Panel members were intrigued by the soft density concept as a very respectful way of intensifying Bloor St. A Panel member advised looking for opportunities for that type of intensification, "Curious to know how many [opportunities] are located on the strip...It's a great concept – let's make sure there are places to actually implement them."

As per other comments above on sense of place, a Panel member suggested placing soft density sites at the arrival and departure areas of the "village".

### **Public Realm - Complete Streets**

Several Panel members advised that the Complete Streets concept would bring great benefits to Bloor St and as noted by a Panel member, "will help define what the village is missing now – its activities, bike lanes, street furnishings, will help define the street."

Another Panel member reinforced how cycling has become an important mode in the city. Opportunities to make more pedestrian-friendly streets would be appropriate in this area and could include ways to slow down traffic and reduce vehicular lanes.

# 2442 – 2454 BLOOR ST WEST and 1-9 RIVERVIEW GARDENS

## DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

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DESIGN REVIEW	Second Review (First review was Nov 2016)
APPLICATION	Rezoning and Official Plan Amendment
DEVELOPER	Plaza
<i>PRESENTATIONS:</i>	
DESIGN TEAM	Quadrangle Architects
CITY STAFF	Phillip Carvalino, Community Planning; Jack Krubnik, Urban Design
VOTE	No Vote

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## Introduction

City staff outlined the project history, existing and future context, and planning framework. Staff are seeking the Panel's advice on the following:

1. Massing & Contextual Relationships:  
Has the applicant sufficiently resolved issues related to scale & massing, compatibility and transition to the Neighbourhood and to its Bloor West Village context?
2. Public Realm & the Retail Experience:  
Have the proposed alterations successfully addressed the Panel's desire for an enlarged public realm, and addressed the Panel's concerns around the scale of the retail along Bloor Street West, and along both Riverview Gardens and the north lot line where the project transitions to the Neighbourhood?

The consultants provided background information, design rationale and responded to questions.

## Chair's Summary of Key Points

The Panel understands the site and context challenges that the proponent team has been dealing with, and commends them for their efforts since the 1<sup>st</sup> Review. The Bloor West Village Avenue Study underway attests to the importance of this project as a precedent for future development in the Village; and with this mind further design work is needed:

- Materiality and Connectivity:
  - Visually connect the new building with existing context; using materials that acknowledge existing older brick and stone context.
  - Tie material placement to built form scale at which it is used in existing older context along Bloor.
- Built Form and Connectivity:
  - Develop calmer, simpler and more streamlined massing and articulation; and develop a stronger connection with existing older context.

## Panel Comments

### General

The site was noted to be important, an "absolutely essential site" that is the western edge of the village. The opportunity of the site due to the sweep of the site geometry and its context was noted, as well as the challenges – "a tricky site".

Panel members thanked the proponent for the response from the last review and the progress made. While commending the new massing changes, they advised more revisions to the massing and refinements to articulation.

### Built Form

#### New Massing changes

Many members noted that the new massing is a successful direction and were appreciative of the new approach:

- "Stepping down the sawtooth articulation is dynamic and appropriate."
- "There have been some lovely advances in the work."
- "...impressed with changes...like the simplification and commend you on the simple strong move"
- The stepping of the façade was also noted to be an "intriguing way" to respond to the curve of Bloor St

The made the following recommendations:

#### 1. De-bulk the building:

##### a. Provide greater setback:

A Panel member advised that the setback at higher levels should be increased since at present they appear to be insufficient and don't achieve 'de-bulking' of the massing. The projecting balconies and angling of the massing were noted to erode the effect of the setback and should also be reviewed.

##### b. Consider creating a stronger base and lighter top:

A Panel member advised that articulating a stronger base and lighter top would help with both the setback and the need for more transition.

##### c. Consider lower height at west and massing stepping up to the east:

A Panel member reiterated comments from the first review to reduce the height at the west side. This would make the scale on Riverview Gardens more comfortable and attractive due to the already large existing 1 and 2 Old Mill buildings. The higher heights could then be placed on the east side of the site, stepping up from the west. "If some of the bulk on the west end was moved, it would shine."

#### 2. Simplify Lower Levels and Balconies:

Several members advised simplifying the lower portion of the building by reconsidering the balcony design and made the following comments:

-remove the protruding balconies and provide inset ones as per the first design, "the previous one without protruding balconies was more successful. It's the underside of balconies that make it a busy façade".

-study materials such as if transparent frosted glass balconies will change the character and provide enough simplification as per the rest of the building.



### 3. East Façade - Consider vertical expression:

A more vertical expression was encouraged to be looked at on the east façade as per the previous scheme, by several Panel members, to respond to the view terminus. "In this view there is just a flanking wall...the return is very big and bulky. Look at if you don't return and have a more vertical expression."

## **Height**

### 1. Lower Height:

A Panel member advised that while the stepping in the massing helps, and there has been a lot of good work done, "the bottom line is that the building is still too tall". Several members raised concerns with the overall height which although reduced "is still 54m" where mid-rise guidelines allow for 30m. A Panel member noted that there is strength in the massing changes, but the building is "just too tall for the site".

#### a. Mitigate 'Slab Building' Massing:

Noting that the bulk of 1 and 2 Old Mill buildings are 'slab buildings' (buildings with elongated footprints versus those with slender upper levels), several Panel members advised that if the proposed is similarly a 'slab building', height should be reduced by at least a few floors.

#### b. Provide transition on Bloor St:

Another Panel member reiterated previous comments from the first review, that the proposed is too similar to the scale of 1 and 2 Old Mill which should not be emulated as they are "tall bulky buildings out of scale with the residential buildings to the north." A Panel member noted that the site requires a building that should transition down from the 1 and 2 Old Mill buildings to the existing lower scaled context on Bloor St.

### 2. Provide more transition to Neighbourhoods

a. Transition to the north: Several Panel members advised more transition be provided down to the neighbourhood on Riverview. Due to the building being on a hill when seen from Riverview Gardens, it appears more substantial, and a Panel member noted that there should therefore be more transition at the rear.

b. Transition down to the west: A Panel member advised more transition down to Riverview Gardens so that the west side of the building is at a comfortable lower scale as well.

c. Review the impacts to Neighbourhood of the rear façade for materials and lighting: A Panel member noted, "my concern is the presence on the Neighbourhood – there's lots of light and bright back there."

### 3. Further integrate lower and upper levels:

As the project progresses, the lower and upper levels should be further "married" to be a cohesive design.

## **Level 1 Retail**

Many members commended the revisions to simplify the design of the retail levels. A Panel member noted, "The retail façade is cleaner and lighter and is successful." The advised the following:

### Retail - Angled Façades in plan

There was uncertainty about the angled facades from several members who were concerned that it makes the retail uni-directional– "going east to west there is a nice sequence of storefronts but if you look from the other way it's all brick wall." However several members also commended the intent to articulate this façade versus having only flat glazing. A Panel member thought this to be an item that could be resolved as the design progresses.

### Retail - Scale

A Panel member reiterated comments from the previous review to provide a lower datum line that is more at an intimate pedestrian scale especially at the back of the building where the slope exaggerates the height. "Give a scale of retail in keeping with the neighbourhood."

Another Panel member commented that "the transparency and height feel comfortable – it's wonderful". Several Panel members commended the design of retail at the north of the building, "the retail at back is lovely".

## **Materials**

The material palette was noted to need development in colour, materials and how the materials are used. Stronger logic in the use of brick and colour was advised as well as more work in the materiality to reduce the height and bulk of the massing. A Panel member noted, it's "not as coherent right now as it should be."

### Brick:

Many Panel members were concerned that the brick was too sporadically used and should be used more substantively and in a "less piecemeal" way. A Panel member suggested the removal of brick on upper levels if the context does not have brick in these areas.

### Coloration – Use of white:

Several Panel members advised reviewing the use of white as a colour. "It's a very strong colour in architecture...it's often less light than one anticipates."

## **Public Realm and Landscape**

### Streetscape:

Panel members appreciated the larger sidewalk and new treatment on Bloor St. As noted by a Panel member, " The increased depth of the public realm is lovely and needed.... there's lots of generosity there."

A Panel member reiterated from the previous review that 7 m would be preferred and that there should be consideration for reducing the oversized vehicular lanes in favour of extra pedestrian width or bike lanes.

### Provide Midblock Connection:

A Panel member reiterated comments from the previous review on the importance of providing a midblock connection from the TPA lot to Bloor St that was alluded to in the previous drawings. This would also provide a more accommodating alternate route to the sloped walk on Riverview Gardens.

### Amenity

A panel member noted that the indoor and outdoor amenity spaces work well and that their linked spaces are 'fantastic'.



Rezoning Submission - April 2016



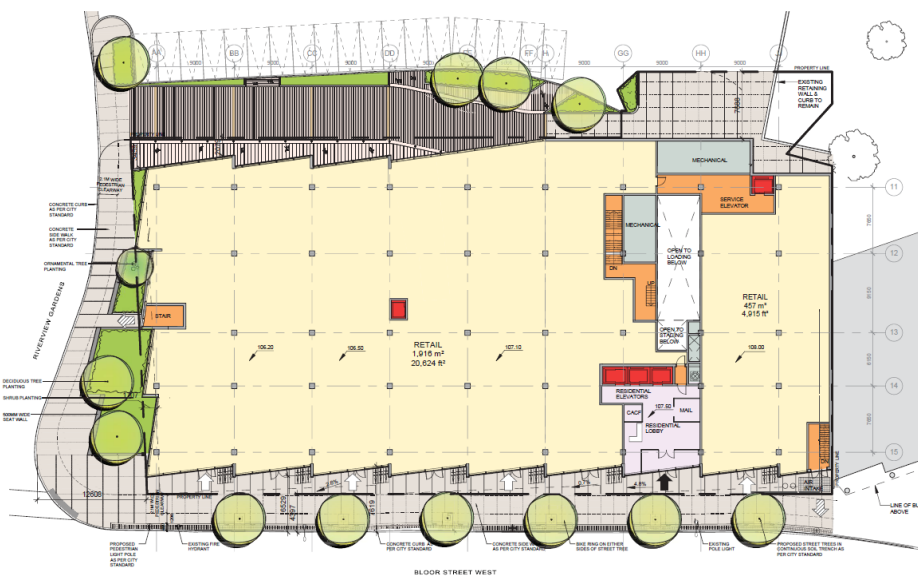
Current Revised Proposal



Rezoning Submission - April 2016



2 RIVERVIEW GARDENS - Current Revised Proposal



**DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

**MINUTES: Meeting 3 – April 21, 2017**



View from south of intersection between Bloor St W and Riverview Gardens

View from northwest along Riverview Gardens



# YONGE- EGLINTON BUILT FORM STUDY

## DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

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DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION	Second Review City Study
PRESENTATIONS	
DESIGN TEAM	Perkins & Will – Paul Kulig;
CITY STAFF	Paul Farish, Strategic Initiatives, Policy and Analysis,
VOTE	No Vote



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## Introduction

*(Last review was Jan 2016)*

The purpose of this presentation is to review and discuss emerging directions for three Midtown character areas as part of the broader Built Form Study and Midtown in Focus initiative. As staff begin to draft policy directions for an updated Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan, they are seeking the Panel’s advice on the following issues:

- 1) Do you think the character area visions and built form directions provide the appropriate level of clarity while allowing for flexibility and architectural creativity?
- 2) Does the emerging built form vision for the Eglinton Greenline area respond appropriately to the Eglinton Greenline open space concept?
- 3) Are there any additional built form and liveability issues that should be prioritized within this analysis?

City staff outlined the area context and trends and the project’s scope, objectives and schedule. The consultants provided an overview of the study methodology, demonstrated the approach and emerging directions in three character areas and responded to questions with staff. The three character areas looked at were Redpath Park Street Loop, Eglinton Greenline and Yonge St. North Village.

## Chair's Summary of Key Points

The Panel commends the proponent team for a comprehensive and clear document, founded upon an elegantly effective multi-faceted design algorithm. The Study has the promise to be an exemplar guide for development, but further work is needed in order to realize this potential:

- Ensure that the study’s vision does not become overshadowed by the algorithm and resulting guidelines.
- Define the overarching envisioned character for this area (that makes it not just anywhere), and how to achieve that.
  - If the area’s existing greenness is its defining feature now, can “holistic greenness” become the vision for its future.
  - Tie green space and amenity quantity/quality to projected population growth.
  - Embed strong energy constraints analysis by building, block, neighbourhood with net zero goal

- Consider topographic built form typologies to supplement grade level parks, and gain green space/amenity above grade.

## Panel Comments

Panel members were appreciative of the impressive amount of work and detail in the project. A Panel member noted, "there's lots to digest and kudos...the package is well put together and clear". As per Bloor West Village study at the same Design Review Panel session, a Panel member noted the positive initiative to have a framework so future projects can be better evaluated and not assessed as standalone projects.

## Fit with Existing Main Street Context

- Address Toronto two storey main street buildings:  
As per the Bloor West Village Study, several Panel members advised further work on how to deal with the 2 storey main street typology that is omnipresent in Toronto and gives character to areas.
- Re-evaluate setbacks:  
Several Panel members recommended re-evaluating the locations and dimensions of setbacks derived from already established guidelines. In particular, the study should assess whether a 1.5m deep setback is enough. A test would be on a long street like Yonge St and look at if it's an appropriate setback or needs to be more.

## Comparative diagrams – Status Quo and Emerging Directions

The diagrams comparing the status quo and emerging directions were commended by many Panel members. "The diagrams are brilliant...The power and strength of studies allow us to imagine how the public realm and liveability of the area will be built out." In comparing the proposed directions versus the status quo, panel members were supportive of the improved liveability conditions:  
-solar access improvements were commended  
-the improvements in skyviews were noted to be good in that they provide significantly more sky view than the status quo

## Repetitive patterns of built form

- Be cautious of overly prescriptive built form and articulation:  
A Panel member noted that while the public realm, percentage open space and liveability standards should be required, the built form recommendations should not be overly prescriptive. Another Panel member also raised concerns about the "tyranny of guidelines", and observed that some of the images start to show that as an issue. A Panel member noted, "Where I find it less convincing and maybe worrisome, is that it tips into being overly prescriptive in architectural form and articulation."
- Allow for innovation and new typologies  
A Panel member noted that the renderings are "too much a snapshot of current conditions". There should be room to anticipate and encourage new forms and new typologies. For example future buildings could be lower in height, have deeper setbacks, and have massing that goes in and out. Different typologies and ways of living are possible that the market may embrace in the future.

Generally, "greater invention is possible" and should be allowed for in the built form - some of the scale and datum lines could be maintained but form can be permitted to vary.

- Show greater separation distances and variety in base building:

Concerned about built form patterns that are too repetitive, a Panel member advised, "We don't want a city that looks like this...tower after tower with a relentless podium. We lose the richness and poetry of the city."

It was also observed that the 25m separation between towers is uniformly shown in the drawings when it is actually a minimum dimension in existing guidelines. The consistent use of this minimum separation in the diagrams contributes to the issue and should be remedied.

- Implementation:

Several Panel members asked questions about what the ultimate implementation tool will be and that it should guide built form so as to encourage variety as well as fit with context.

- Provide more eye level diagrams without rendered trees:

The pedestrian level images were appreciated and noted to be good images to describe the public realm; the technique of 'ghosting out' the buildings was also noted to be effective.

However as a useful tool, a Panel member advised that diagrams at pedestrian levels should be studied without the rendered trees, so that you can clearly see the built form and assess if it's too repetitive.

## Open Space and Parks

A Panel member noted that this part of the city is known for its greenness and gives it character. Several members advised correlating the built form with the open space as the study progresses

- Consider open space opportunities and base buildings:

A Panel member advised looking at opportunities to create more open space within sites. The public spaces would give opportunities to deviate from the typical podium and provide richness in the built form.

- Integrate parks and open space with the whole built form study:

- Show parkland dedication related to density increase: A Panel member advised that with the anticipated growth (for example, the emerging scenario for the Redpath Park Street Loop included growth of approximately 28% above existing and approved GFA), the study should also illustrate how the parkland dedication rate would be met.
- 
- Map open space and built form: Clarify where the squares and open spaces are with respect to this built form study.
- Incorporate sustainability in the landscape in the study as well. "It's not just about open space and sunshine but also about greening the environment"

## Infrastructure and Energy

Integrate infrastructure and energy consideration earlier:

The infrastructure and community energy were encouraged to be looked at early on to inform the built form outcomes and not be tacked on at the end of the study. For the built form study next phases, a Panel member advised looking at what will be new TGS requirements soon, "What would growth look like if you had to achieve net zero on each block and neighbourhood?" If the community is "not grown properly", a Panel member noted that the city will have to invest in renewable energy elsewhere in order to meet its targets.

Consideration for elements such as photovoltaic application, how much sunlight is captured by the roofscape and maximizing potential output, could be looked at in order to enhance the community versus being only secondary items.

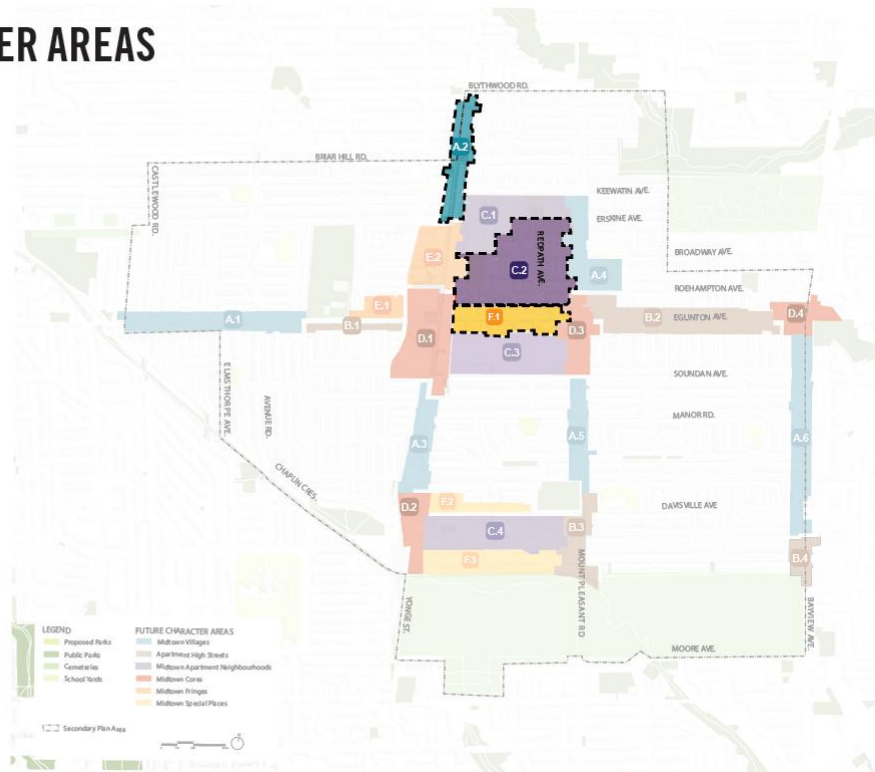
## Boundaries

### Expansion of areas:

A Panel member questioned if the transportation hub at Yonge and Eglinton could potentially grow, "Will character expand west on Eglinton? ...Curious to understand the forces that will stretch or move the boundaries of character areas."

## FUTURE CHARACTER AREAS

- Secondary Plan Area
- Midtown Villages
- Apartment High Streets
- Midtown Apartment Neighbourhoods
- Midtown Cores
- Midtown Fringes
- Midtown Special Places



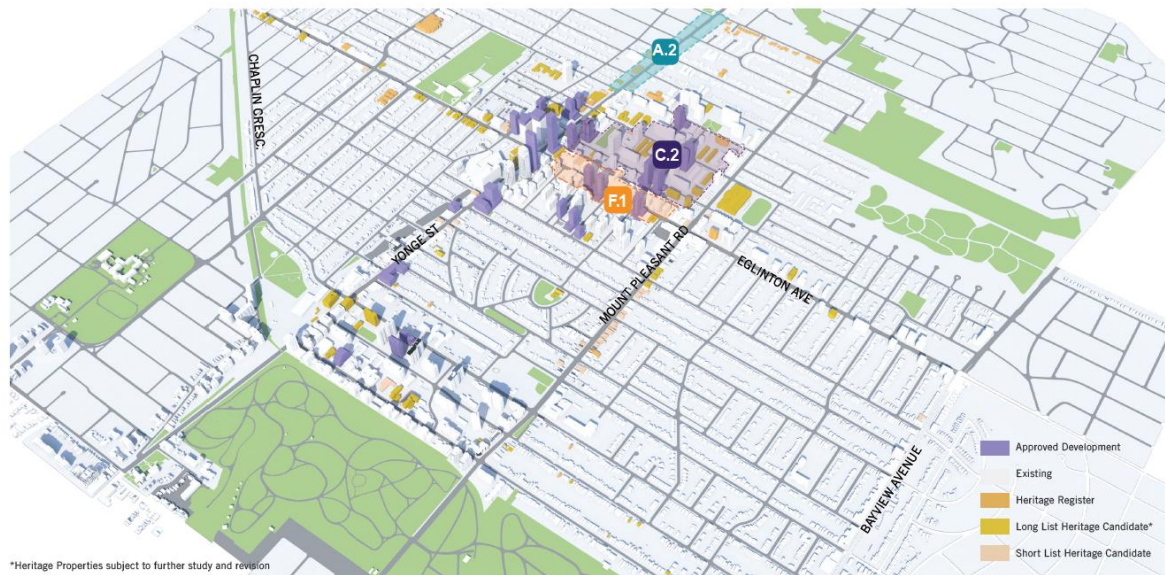


# BUILTFORM ASSESSMENT

C2. REDPATH PARK STREET LOOP

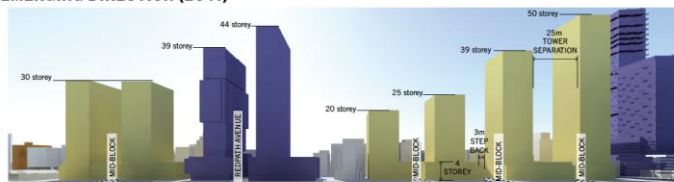
F1. EGLINTON GREENLINE

A2. YONGE STREET NORTH VILLAGE

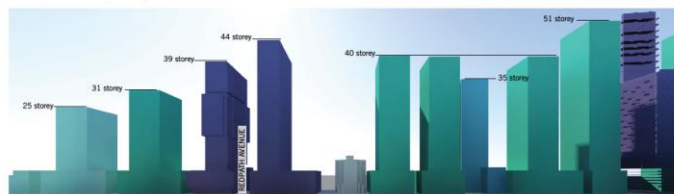


\*Heritage Properties subject to further study and revision

## C2. REDPATH PARK STREET LOOP ELEVATION ALONG ROEHAMPTON AVENUE LOOKING SOUTH EMERGING DIRECTION (2041)



### STATUS QUO (2041)



## C2. REDPATH PARK STREET LOOP

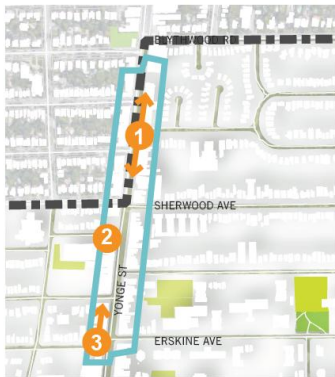


## F1. EGLINTON GREENLINE EXISTING CONDITIONS





**EXISTING BUILT FORM ANALYSIS**  
**A2. YONGE STREET NORTH VILLAGE**



**DISTINGUISHING FEATURES**

- 1** Continuous retail storefronts in low-scale, 2-3 storey historic buildings
- 2** St. Clements-Yonge Parkette
- 3** Transition down from tower form south of Montgomery and internal to the Yonge-Eglinton Centre





# 908-916 ST CLAIR AVE WEST

## DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

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DESIGN REVIEW	First Review
APPLICATION	Pre-Application
DEVELOPER	Alberta and Main Urban Properties
DESIGN TEAM	TACT Architects – Prish Jain
CITY STAFF	Phil Carvalino, Community Planning; Julie Bogdanowicz, Urban Design
VOTE	No Vote



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### Introduction

City staff outlined the project history, existing and future context, and planning framework. Staff are seeking the Panel's advice on the following:

- 1) 908 St Clair and 898 St Clair are prominent sites identified in the St Clair Avenue study for the greatest heights. How can the massing of 908 St Clair make an effective gateway and respond to the context, including the large re-development site to the North?
- 2) How can the massing of 908 St Clair respond effectively to the neighbourhood to the north and strike a balance between the approved 39m zoning envelope at the property line, while providing a more suitable rear transition by reallocating approved density on the site?
- 3) How can the building at-grade, and its associated public realm, contribute positively to the area given that one of the Avenue Study's objectives was to identify public realm improvements along the segment of St Clair?

The consultants provided background information, design rationale and responded to questions.

### Chair's Summary of Key Points

The Panel thanks the proponent for bringing their project forward at the pre-application stage of development. The Panel also appreciates the eccentricities of the site and its adjacency to land that has a not yet defined future plan. Sensitive increase in density along St. Clair is important, and with this in mind further work is needed in the following areas:

- Redistribute density and height to the St. Clair end of the site; lowering building height at north end of site, and reducing overlook and shadow impact on existing houses.
- Simplify articulation of top of building.
- Consider providing north leg of site as a privately owned public-accessible park.
- Comment to City:
  - To help the proponent realize the best use of their site, strategize a potential future site plan and built form context strategy for the mid-block property to the north of the proponent's site.

## Panel Comments

Panel members thanked the proponents for bringing the project in early for review. The increased density on St Clair was noted by several members as a positive investment in the Avenue. The project was encouraged to come back for subsequent review.

Panel members asked questions on whether the building needs further density or building envelope increases. Staff response was that the building is not increasing the as-of-right existing permissions for the site.

While making recommendations on reducing the bulk of the building and its impact on the adjacent properties they noted the challenges in redistributing the massing on the site. A Panel member noted, "How to reallocate the approved density on the site? – don't know how much that is possible in terms of squeezing and moving things..."

## Future Block Plan

### Provide a block plan:

Panel members advised re-looking at the planning of the block including the No Frills Site and up to Glenhurst Ave. Design considerations such as the future development of the grocery store site, whether Alberta St will continue as a public or private street, and the future open space planning for the block were encouraged to be thought out with this application.

A subsequent presentation will need more context shown: As noted by a Panel member, "We need a better understanding of what the whole piece of land would be like...add in context and do a model so we can understand. If there's a POPS how does it fit in? One condition is that Alberta continues and one that it doesn't." (POPS is a privately owned publicly accessible open space)

### Consider alternate uses for the rear surface parking lot:

The block plan would help inform what should occur on the rear area of the lot where a surface parking lot is proposed. A Panel member questioned whether or not built form could occur in this area in order to redistribute massing.

Many Panel members commented that the surface parking lot is a waste of a "golden opportunity" since it would be a good location for an open space such as a POPS. This would better set up the planning of the block and future development along the north-south Alberta St spine. Retail parking was noted by a Panel member to be better accommodated on St Clair Ave.

## Massing

Panel members advised consideration for the following revisions:

- Increase in upper level setback dimensions:

A Panel member suggested that while early days, the upper levels may need more setback to "disappear" more from the street.

- Removal of "middle massing" along St Clair (levels 6-9)

A Panel member advised simplifying the massing along St Clair by removing the middle setback massing (levels 6-9). To reallocate the density, a suggestion was to study if taller height can be accommodated that does not affect the perception of the building and is well set-back and narrow.

- Reconsider location of setbacks along the façade:

The setback locations along the building as set out by the Avenue study and zoning bylaw, were noted by a Panel member as "somewhat arbitrary". It should have a better rationale that fits it into its specific context such as aligning it to existing context datum lines, particularly for the first setback location.

- Reduce the west side massing and set back the façade:

A Panel member advised anticipating development on the west adjacent site that could likely be taller than the permitted 7 storeys. A recommendation was to reduce the west side massing and set back the façade in order to create comfortable future conditions.

### **Impact to Neighbourhoods**

- Provide angular plane and setback from Neighbourhoods at pinch points:

A Panel member noted the proximity of the proposed to existing house properties and advised that the angular plane and setbacks be provided from properties at all areas along the western façade in particular. Also recommended:

- improve issues of shadows and overlook
- push the west façade to the east to mitigate impacts on residents
- reduce the building depth by moving the north façade to the south in order to make the condition at the northwest corner more comfortable to adjacent properties.

### **Other Comments**

- Site organization: The vehicle entry location and lobby location were noted to make sense.
- Noise mitigation: As the project progresses, more work on noise mitigation to the west adjacent neighbourhood will have to be considered.
- Articulation: A Panel member noted the early days of the design and that the use of masonry is positive.
- Sustainability: As the design evolves, design the envelope to be as comfortable as possible.

### **Public Realm**

- Provide as much setback as possible on St Clair Ave West:

Several Panel members commented that while the St Clair public realm is good, there should be as much breathing room as possible at ground level. The building façade should be pushed back from St Clair to align with the adjacent west building which appears to be 0.3m-0.6m to the north, and will be an impactful change due to the pedestrian activity being located there.

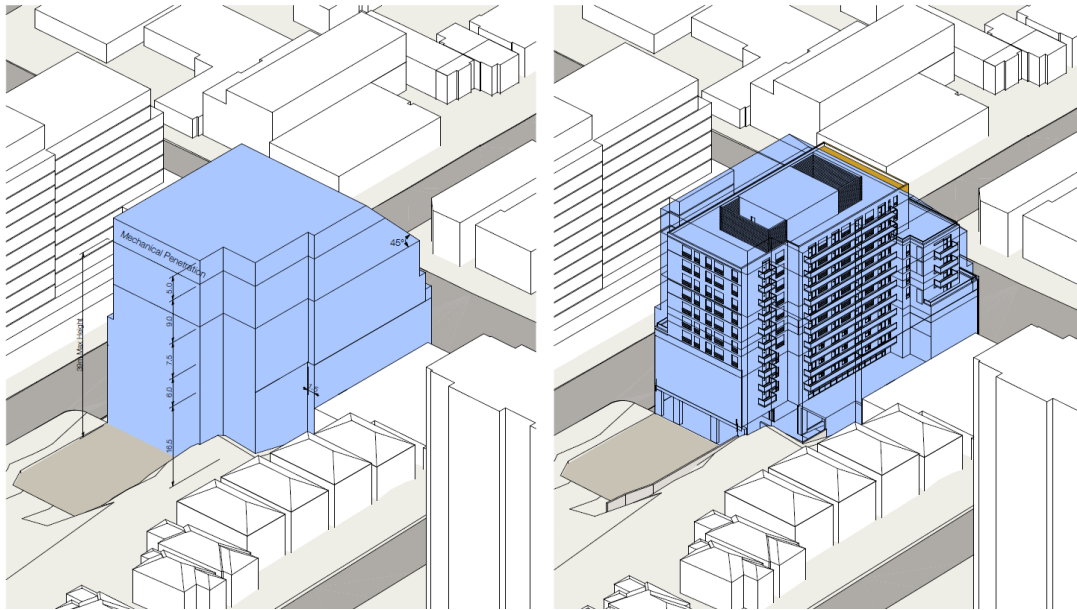
A Panel member commended the landscape architecture proposed and the widening of the boulevard on Alberta St, and was disappointed that this could not be achieved on the east side of the street as well.

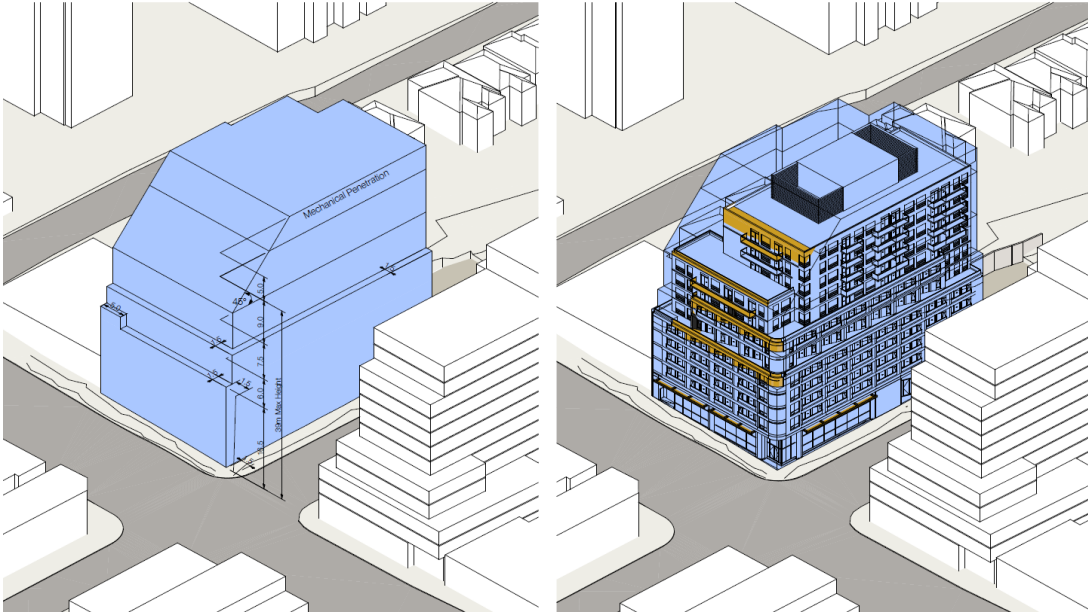
- Provide landscape buffers:

A Panel member advised better use of landscape as a buffer between buildings to mitigate impacts.









# 31R PARLIAMENT ST - CHERRY ST COURTYARD

## DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

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DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION	First Review Rezoning and Official Plan Amendment
DEVELOPER	Cityscape
PRESENTATIONS: DESIGN TEAM	Claude Cormier & Associes
CITY STAFF	Henry Tang, Community Planning
VOTE	No Vote



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## Introduction

This project has been appealed to the OMB and the review is part of the OMB process to report back at a subsequent time on specific matters.

*The "Cherry Street Courtyard" is an open space in the southeastern corner of the Distillery District, and is planned to be redesigned to accommodate TTC Wheel-Trans access, areas for sitting, and a small café/retail space among other programming needs. The redesign of the Cherry Street Courtyard is associated with the proposal to allow a residential tower and a 5-storey retail/office building along the southern portion of the Distillery District that has been appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board.*

Staff are seeking the Panel's advice on the following items:

1. Ensuring the quality and utility of the open space for both residents and visitors is maintained, while accommodating for Wheel Trans and fire route accesses.
2. Infrastructure (benches, trees etc.) and design elements to ensure the open space serves as a gateway to the Distillery District.
3. The configuration and area of a café/retail space.

The consultants and TTC provided background information, design rationale and responded to questions.

## Panel Comments

Panel members were appreciative of the overall approach to the design of the open space and the limitations of depth of soil and Wheel-Trans/fire route requirements. They recommended refinements to the character of the open space.

## Retail Use

- Consider viability of use:

With respect to the proposed retail café use, the majority of Panel members were supportive of the use provided that the café is viable and will therefore animate the space. A Panel member noted that the coffee shop is in the right location and hides the back side of the garage.

Another Panel member noted that some of the cafes in the Distillery District have struggled – "Is something going to survive here? Is there enough traffic?...There is the opportunity to do something rather than have an empty café that's going to fail. The owner has to feel comfortable they can lease the space and that it will be successful."

- Consider removing the café for a more public flexible use:

A Panel member advised that the café be replaced with a fully public and flexible use such as a raised platform in the corner and large walls could also be used as design opportunities. The retail use of the north restaurant was observed to be a private barrier and not publicly accessible.

## Landscape Elements

Panel members advised the following:

- Planting:

While recognizing the constraints of soil depth, many members advocated for as much planting and greenery as possible. A suggestion was to add a strip of planting on the north wall of garage will green the wall and help mitigate the "relentless brick everywhere".

- Tree focal point:

Panel members were enthusiastic for this focus of the square. This was advised to be provided at as large a size as possible. A previous similar situation at Hazelton Lanes was noted as an example where the tree was the reason to come to the space and was an "amazing" element. In this location it would also distinguish this space from the others in the area.

- Water feature:

The sound and presence of a small water element was also advised to be provided by several Panel members to complete the sensory experience of the square.

- Overall character of space:

Several Panel members were appreciative of the control in the design, "love its simplicity and lack of messiness – it's not that big of a space... The ground plane itself fills spaces. It's beautiful."

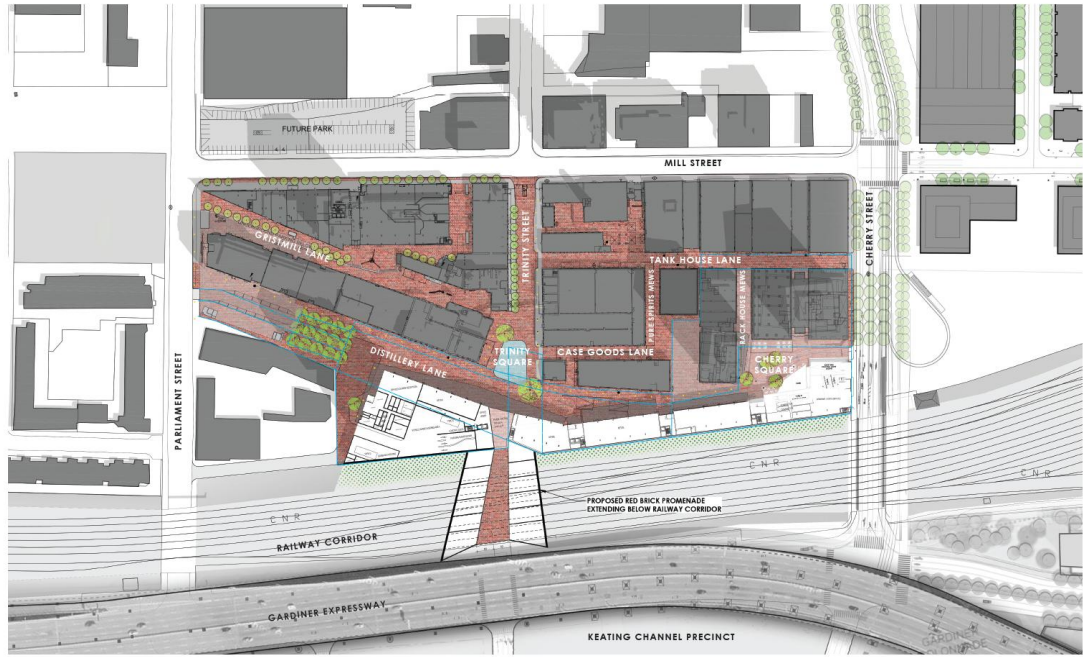
"However several other members advocated for "more messiness" in the design. A Panel member advised, "Everything should spill more and not be so controlled... The solution is correct but it just would be nicer if there was a little more animation."

Panel members advised as much liveliness as possible. The precedent example of the St-Emilion Square in France, was appreciated and a Panel member advised a similar quality of casualness, "Even if the chair is in the fire route just move the chair."

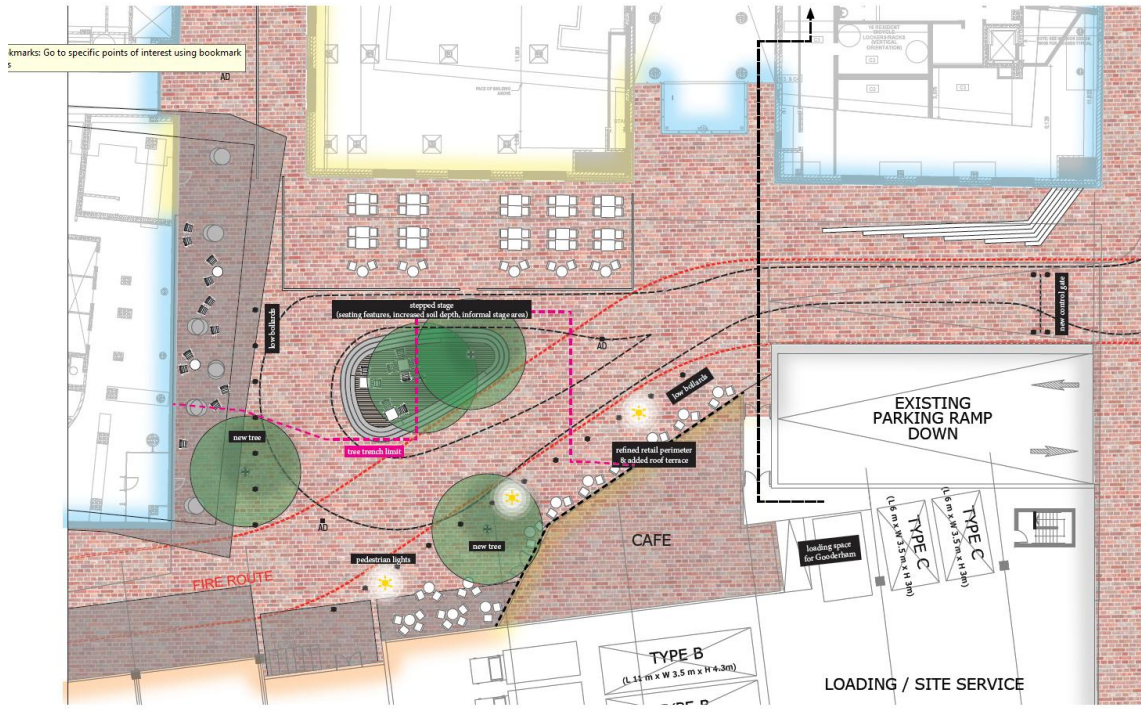
- Indication of pedestrian and vehicle zones

A Panel member advised that while bollards are not desirable, there should be a subtle indication of where pedestrians should stand when vehicles come through the square.

- Canopies: This was noted by several members as being an important feature for the space.



**DISTILLERY PUBLIC REALM**  
Open Space plan - 1:1500



**CHERRY SQUARE PLAN**  
Adjusted retail, added trees, added freestanding chairs & raised brick pavement (for increased soil depth & stage)



11 17.04.10  
31A / THE RIBBON BUILDING  
CLAUDE CORMIER ET ASSOCIÉS

**REFERENCE - THE VILLAGE ARCHETYPE**  
Place du Village, St. Emilion, France

