



PLANNING A GREAT CITY TOGETHER

CITY OF TORONTO DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES: MEETING 4– May 18, 2017

The Design Review Panel met on Thursday May 18, in Committee Room 1, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West, Toronto, at 2:00pm.

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

**was absent for last item*

was in conflict of interest for last item

Design Review Panel Coordinator

Janet Lee: Urban Design, City Planning Division

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Panel confirmed minutes of their previous meeting which was held on April 21, 2017 by email.

MEETING 4 INDEX

- i. 1779-1791 St Clair Ave West (1st Review)
- ii. 101 Spadina Ave Pre-Application (1st Review)

1779-1791 ST CLAIR AVE WEST

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW	First Review
APPLICATION	Site Plan Approval
DEVELOPER	Graywood Developments
<i>PRESENTATIONS:</i>	
DESIGN TEAM	SMV Architects – Dan Cowling; Strybos Barron King – Bryn Barron
CITY STAFF	Anthony Hommik, Community Planning; Allison Reid, Urban Design
VOTE	Redesign - Unanimous



Introduction

City staff outlined the project history, existing and future context, and planning framework. Being mindful of the generous building envelope permitted by the St. Clair Avenue West Avenue Study, City staff are seeking the Panel's advice on the following issues:

1. **Articulation** including:
 - a. General approach and articulation of the long St. Clair frontage in particular
 - b. Relationship to existing and planned buildings
 - c. Pedestrian experience and views from surrounding streets
 - d. Location and design of entrances and balconies
2. **Landscape Design** including:
 - a. General approach
 - b. Outdoor amenity area
 - c. Accommodation for children and pets

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

Chair's Summary of Key Points

The Panel would like to thank the proponent team for bringing this project forward for review. The efforts made to conform to development guidelines and work with the existing mid-block laneway are appreciated, but further design development is needed in order to fully realise the potential of the site. This includes:

Improving response to surrounding context including the following:

Circulation:

- Include within design “desire paths” between adjacent existing residential and area amenities (e.g.: public transit, retail, etc.). This includes a north/south pedestrian connection through the building, linking with existing mid-block laneway.
- Rework laneway/entry/parking/service area circulation to improve circulation and be less crowded.

Programme:

- Improve diversity of uses at ground level.

Built Form:

- Built form presented is heavy, massive and very uniform in appearance. Design needs to be reworked to be lighter and more sensitively scaled/responsive to context.

Panel Comments

The great value of the proposed building to repair the existing fabric of the street was appreciated by Panel members. Panel members commended the positive elements of the project, the west-east pedestrian connection, courtyard, intent of ground level landscaping, conformity to angular planes that are "all in the spirit of a successful mid-rise building".

Panel members advised the proponent to make revisions to articulation, public realm/landscape design for this Site Plan application. A Panel member summarized that revisions should "consider fine grained context and scale. Life needs to come through the building. Consider the paths of desire and rethink the circulation."

Panel members were enthusiastic about the potential of the site, "when something is this big...it's a golden opportunity" and encouraged the proponent to consider revisions for this important project.

Public Realm

A Panel member noted that "the idea of an enhanced public realm is well-warranted and will be appreciated here."

In general, a more porous ground floor level was advised to be provided given the scale of the building:

- Develop the laneway elements further:
Several Panel members commended the proposal as the only project brought to Panel that has recognized the lanes as key components, and the way people in Toronto inhabit and use lanes as amenity. A Panel member noted that based on experience as a resident who lives on an arterial street, the lanes provide an important respite from the busy traffic of St Clair for future residents, "kids end up riding their bikes in the laneway". However Panel members urged the proponent to make improvements to better use the lanes and fulfill the intent as per the following comments.
- Midblock Connection: Provide a north-south connection:
Panel members noted the long length of the building and advised a north-south midblock connection. A Panel member noted that although the zoning on the site predated the mid-rise guidelines which recommend a maximum 65m length façade on the street, this is still advisable for the project.

The connection would link to the existing north-south lane and could allow for a design that combines the landscaped courtyard with this pedestrian connection. Additional outdoor amenity areas could be also found in other areas of the building.

- Improve entry locations: Several Panel members noted that a midblock connection would provide an improved entry location and would be better aligned with transit stops. A Panel member noted that the residential entry is "odd" on Osler and an entry on St Clair or on the west or northwest sides of the building should be considered.

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- Develop the Courtyard and West-East Pedestrian Connection:

While appreciating the provision of the west-east pedestrian connection and the at-grade outdoor amenity, Panel members noted that a portion of the courtyard is taken up by vehicle movements and advised further revisions. A Panel member also advised "de-cluttering" the west-east connection.

- a. Reduce loading areas:

- i. Consider providing a through vehicle access west-east. This would eliminate a turn-around area which takes away room for landscaped open space
 - ii. Minimize the garbage turnaround area through design. A Panel member noted on other projects it has been possible to minimize and enclose the garbage area with a green roof structure while allowing for the lifting of the garbage to be outside of this.

- b. Carefully design public and private areas:

Several Panel members noted that the concept of what is publicly accessible is not defined at this point. The design team was urged to carefully work out what is public and private, "If you don't define it you won't be happy with the result."

Materials – Carefully consider materials for visual cues on what are public and private areas for pedestrians. As a Panel member advised, "provide a clear intuitive way through the site for residents and public."

- c. Simplify design of courtyard and also provide diversity of uses:

Several Panel members commented that the programming is too prescriptive, "strip out the overdesign of the courtyard – it tends to suggest language of defence rather than openness." Another Panel member also advised loosening the programming and providing for other uses in the courtyard such as elements for children.

Other Landscape refinements:

- Enhance patios at-grade:

A Panel member advised the team to enhance the patios for units at-grade and maximize this opportunity for landscape.

- Minimize sod:

A Panel member advised the sodded areas to be minimized since they will be "abused", especially for areas close to St Clair Ave.

Articulation

Panel members commented that the building is too heavy in its presence, and provided recommendations for improvement. A Panel member noted, "There's too much bulk - 90m is long."

-On the challenges of the building type, a Panel member noted, "Perimeter buildings can be very heavy...while I am sure it will be developed, it's difficult to understand right now."

- On language of solid wall buildings, another Panel member noted: "We are looking at an architecture of 40% glazing to 60% solid walls. We've been reliant on the other way so this represents new challenges to designers. At the moment it appears as a ribbon window building with articulation, and that is what contributes to sense of mass and heaviness on north."

Further Break down the length and height of the building:

a. Increase the gap:

A Panel member noted that the "break proposed here represented up to the 7th floor is not doing enough for the mass of the overall building... It still has heavy presence on St Clair." The reveal was noted to be intended to be 3m but with the balconies ends up much narrower at 1.8m.

b. Use the device of the north-south pedestrian connection to break up bulk:

A Panel member advised using the north-south connection as a strategy that would also break down the building façade on St Clair Ave.

c. Re-evaluate the 7 storey mass:

A Panel member advised more differentiation in height between the two heights in massing fronting St Clair Ave. However another Panel member was uncertain that any variation in heights is necessary and noted that the reference to the adjacent condo development is not a strong one.

d. Break down scale by further defining masses which take cues from context

Panel members advised re-evaluating the front façade and considering how to create finer grain articulation to fit with context, "There is a 7 storey massive podium and it's not articulated yet." A Panel member advised breaking the 90m façade down into "chunks" that are better aligned with context.

e. Increase Setbacks

A Panel member advised increased setbacks along the side streets to lighten and mitigate the presence of the building.

Balconies

Many Panel members were concerned with the balcony strategy of the building.

Reconsider expression:

A Panel member noted that at present the balconies are neither horizontal or vertical in expression, which is contributing to the heaviness. Consider having certain bays as horizontal or vertical; Also consider also more frequent vertical elements to break up the building.

South Façade: Panel members noted that while the north is solar protected, the south is not and is the façade that needs to be treated so that overheating will not occur. This device could be used in the articulation.

North Façade: Panel members commented that these balconies are contributing to the reading of the building as heavy, and in addition will make the units darker on the already shadowed north side of the building. A reconsideration of north and south treatments was advised for solar exposure.

Side Elevations

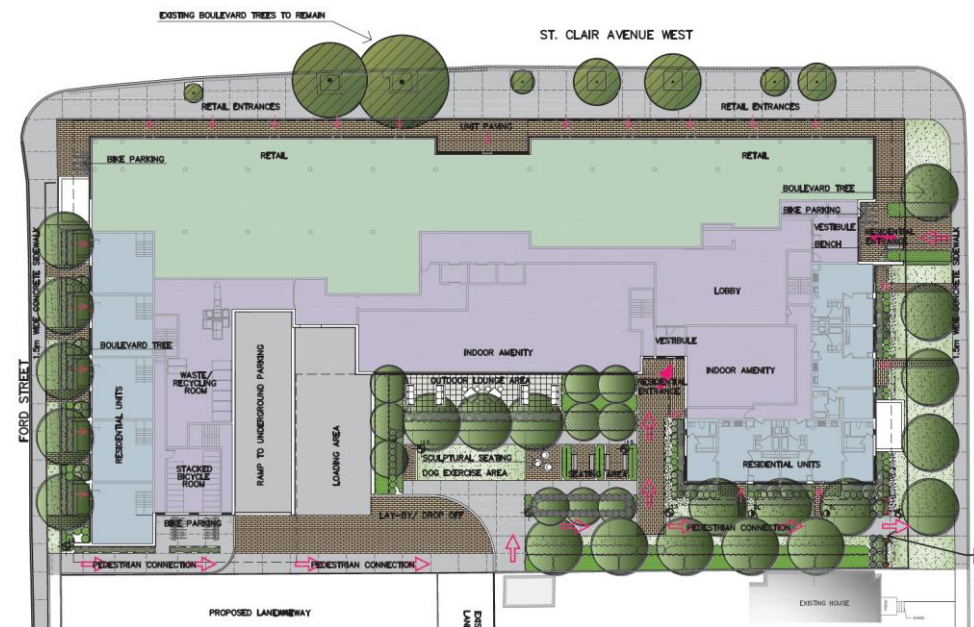
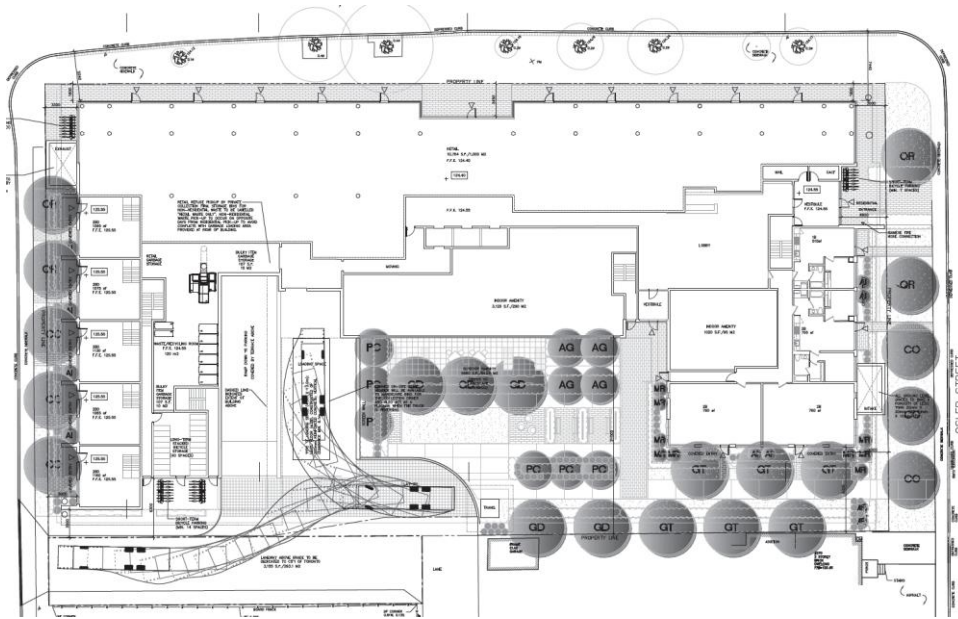
• Improve articulation:

Several Panel members noted that the elevations on the side streets were also in need of further articulation development. A Panel member commented that at present, they are "quite strong and foreboding". Another Panel member noted that due to the zoning and mid-rise guidelines, "we get lots of wedding cake buildings" as seen on the proposed west and east elevations, and advised more work on this.

- Consider shading strategies:
A Panel member noted that providing vertical elements on west and east would increase help with shading as well as provide massing opportunities.

Materiality

Several Panel members advised that more work needs to be done on the materiality of the building, "I appreciate the intent of the perimeter block building but it's hard to get there without better understanding of materiality of the building – The renderings don't convey that". Panel members advised more lightness in the reading of the building. A Panel member commented, "the facades feel very heavy and the masonry is contributing to that."





St. Clair Avenue West

Proposed Public Lane



101 SPADINA AVE

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW	First Review
APPLICATION	Pre-Application
DEVELOPER	DevGreat Inc
<i>PRESENTATIONS:</i>	
DESIGN TEAM	Diamond Schmitt Architects
CITY STAFF	James Parakh (for Nasim Adab), Urban Design; Lynda MacDonald (for Dan Nicholson), Community Planning
VOTE	No Vote



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. Architecture:

Staff are concerned with the height and will be making recommendations as the project progresses.

At this point please provide other comments on:

- general massing design including stepbacks to consider fit with context
- base building design
- articulation and expression
- integration with the heritage fabric of King-Spadina

2. Public Realm and Open Space:

-General comments

-Staff would like to see an open space contribution and public realm enhancement on this site.

Please advise on location and other design considerations.

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

Panel Comments

The Panel thanked the proponent for the thorough presentation with clear context, and noted the amount of work in the massing that has been undertaken. It was observed that many Panel members work in the area on a daily basis and have a keen interest in the project.

In future submissions, a Panel member advised more critical dimensions and statistics to be provided.

Public Realm

Parkland dedication

Panel members advised that open space should be provided on the site particularly given the quantity of development in the area and this should be designed for at the outset. A Panel member noted, "King St West is now rapidly becoming the densest district – there's a paucity of public realm. ..it's a good spot to put in a park." Additional comments:

- "Public space is critical - People so starved for somewhere to sit outside"

- "With a big site like this you have opportunity to do it and try to formulate a response... maybe not massive but connected."

It was observed by a Panel member that the "bones of a connected small space network" has evolved in the area and more public realm planning is occurring with the King-Spadina district study and TO Core study.

Location:

With respect to the best location, Panel members advised looking at sun shadow impacts very closely for the whole area – good access to sun was noted as key to finding the best location for open space. South exposure was noted as important to achieve. The less successful example of open space at Richmond and Peter streets was raised by a Panel member, as one that has insufficient solar exposure – the proponents were encouraged to learn from that example.

- A preferred location was noted as fronting onto Spadina and Adelaide streets versus Oxley, but it was advised that the building massing has to be integrated with it so it's not just a plan exercise.
- A Panel member expressed preference to a Spadina Ave location to allow the street to "breathe more with open space", providing that solar access is comfortable.

Midblock connection / Galleria

"The midblock connection looks promising and will be a great element of the design": Panel members were supportive of the notion of the midblock connection/Galleria as a public space. In addition, a Panel member noted, "The Galleria is a great idea will help animate life and shops trying to thrive to the east Oxley street."

They advised the following:

-Scale: Consider width and volume of the Galleria, and ensure it is of a scale to be inviting.

-Connection: Consider how to best connect to Oxley Street and to the future open space on-site.

-Publicness: A Panel member advised the City and proponent to understand the management and operating of the space so as to be a truly public space.

-Sunlight: A Panel member noted that the rendering along Oxley does not show the building to the south and the Galleria may appear to be a lot brighter than it would be in reality. The space should have adequate sunlight so that people can use the space and gather there

-Transparency: A Panel member noted that in addition to greater generosity, greater transparency in the Galleria is desirable.

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-Oxley façade: This area should be made more welcoming and draw the public in. Consider texture or architecture that makes it feel public.

-Consider increasing exposure of heritage building: A Panel member encouraged more exposure of the existing heritage building particularly to the interior space of building. The proponent was encouraged to be "braver" with the raw face of heritage façade and advised to look at Richmond and Peter on the other side with "its exposure of multiple floors – it makes a better end result."

Built Form

In general the massing was noted to be thoughtful and well-considered at this point in the process:

Sunlight Impact

Generally there was a concern on Panel's part of the impact of the building from a solar perspective. Panel members advised that careful sunlight studies should be undertaken as the project advances and as it relates to the final height proposed.

A Panel member noted that the location of tower is sensitively placed and is likely in the right location. However it was observed that the existing parking lot does provide a lot of light and that the moment for light on Adelaide St will be removed by the project.

Base Building and Heritage Context:

Panel members commented in general that the base fits in with the context. Several Panel members noted that the building is respecting the heritage building and appears to be sensitively integrated.

A panel member observed that the articulation at the base is interesting, and the 2 storey detail of brick is elegant and will relate well to surrounding heritage.

Consider datum lines further:

A Panel member noted that there is a strong datum line to north adjacent buildings which gets lost in the proposed – more work on respecting the Adelaide datum lines should be looked at.

Stepbacks

A Panel member noted that at preliminary view, the Spadina Ave stepbacks of the tower appear well considered and introduce variety in massing. Another Panel member noted the effectiveness of the stepbacks in that tower is not appearing to be overbearing at street level from the renderings.

