

CITY OF TORONTO DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

MINUTES: MEETING 4 – March 11, 2021

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday March 11, 2021 at 12:20pm.

Members of the Design Review Panel	<i>Members Present</i>
Gordon Stratford (Co-Chair): Principal – G C Stratford – Architect	✓+++
Michael Leckman (Co-Chair): Principal – Diamond Schmitt Architects	✓+++*##
Meg Graham (Co-Chair): Principal – superkül	✓+^
Carl Blanchaer: Principal – WZMH Architects	✓
Dima Cook: Director – EVOQ Architecture	✓
George Dark: Design Partner – Urban Strategies	✓#
Ralph Giannone: Principal – Giannone Petricone Associates	✓
Jim Gough: Department Manager, Transportation Planning – WSP	✓*##
Jessica Hutcheon: Principal – Janet Rosenberg & Studio	
Viktors Jaunkalns: Partner – MacLennan Jaunkalns Miller Architects	
Joe Lobko: Partner – DTAH	✓
Jim Melvin: Principal Emeritus/Advisor – PMA; Owner – Realm Works	✓
Juhee Oh: Director, Sustainability & Energy – WSP	
Heather Rolleston: Principal, Design Director – Quadrangle Architects	✓
David Sisam: Principal – Montgomery Sisam Architects	✓
Sibylle von Knobloch: Principal – NAK Design Group	✓
<i>+Chair of First & Third Sessions</i>	<i>++Chair of Second Session</i>
<i>+++Chair of Last Session</i>	<i>*Absent First Session</i>
<i>#Conflict First Session</i>	<i>^Absent Second Session</i>
<i>**Conflict Third Session</i>	<i>##Conflict Last Session</i>

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Panel confirmed minutes of their previous meeting which was held on February 11, 2021 by email.

MEETING 4 INDEX

- i. Canada Square – 2180 Yonge Street (1st Review)
- ii. Hotel X Phase 2 – Exhibition Place (1st Review)
- iii. 2444 Eglinton Avenue East – Housing Now (1st Review)
- iv. 158 Borough Drive – Housing Now (1st Review)

CANADA SQUARE – 2180 YONGE STREET

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW First Review

APPLICATION Rezoning

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Alex Teixeira, Community Planning; James Parakh, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Hariri Pontarini Architects, Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects, OJB Landscape Architecture, Purpose Building



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 key issues:

This project builds upon the Council Approved Plan and is being brought forward to the Design Review Panel at an early stage for comment.

Please comment on the general directions of the current proposal and the composition of the plan's key elements including the transition and placement of the built form, the location of the new park, the configuration of the new public road, the Duplex-Yonge midblock connection, and the new plaza at Yonge and Eglinton.

We look forward to any comments that you have on how the Plan can be improved.

Chair's Summary of Key Points

The Panel would like to thank the proponent team and the City for bringing this project to the Panel. It is a complex project, requiring the holistic planning and synthesis of large urban design, landscape, architectural and transportation components and considerations, at the heart of the Yonge-Eglinton city centre. The Panel noted that this project is the most significant and prominent proposal seen for this area by the Panel.

The Panel noted that the spirit of the 2009 Study and Guidelines was evident in the proposal, and that generally the proposal had magnificent ambitions, provided a remarkable amount of open space and represented a great start. It is critical that this landmark, prominent Project is well integrated with the surrounding neighbourhood and city fabric both physically and from a programming perspective; many of the comments that follow are concerned with this integration.

Specifically, further development and refinement of the design are warranted, in the following areas:

Response to Context (including local character and heritage)

- The public park is currently hidden; create better connectivity of it to Yonge;
- The height of the towers and their transition to the surrounding residential areas is questionable and requires further study; it is likely that reducing the height of the Phase Two towers would benefit the scheme and the neighbourhood.

Site Plan Design

- Further study of the nature of the open space is required; the design presented is neither clearly an urban space nor a park – greater clarity of design and use intent is required;
- Ensure Indigenous design principles and placemaking are embedded in the design;
- Ensure that the green spaces are animated with community uses, and not just retail;
- The connectivity of the upper and lower plazas is critical to the success of the development and its integration with the greater public realm on all of its edges; ensure that this is well-considered;
- Ensure that substantive and significant indoor and outdoor amenity space is provided;
- Family and office use spaces cannot conflict; create distinct areas for each that are nonetheless well-integrated into the overall design; consider defining the mews as a dedicated and protected play area for children;

Pedestrian Realm

- Ensure that there are small scale pedestrian spaces that offset the larger ones

Built Form (Massing, Height, Articulation, Heritage Conservation)

- The cascading architecture of Tower #1 was considered successful, despite the large floor plates;
- While the clustering of the Phase Two towers is appropriate, the cluster is too tight and enclosed; greater openness or porosity is required here;
- As noted above, the project would benefit from a reduction in overall height of the Phase Two towers, as well as the height of the podia;
- A landmark, award-winning design for the subway entrance is required

Landscape Strategy

- Consider greater number of trees in the plaza on Eglinton, and less grass;
- The long-term maintenance of the park is critical to the project; ensure that this is provided for;
- A dog park is needed; a location near the TTC entrance was recommended

Sustainable Design

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Comments to the City

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Panel Commentary

The Panel thanked the project team for their excellent presentations. Several members commended the design team on an "incredibly well put together and informative" package. The Panel noted that the project was located on a very significant and important site.

Many members felt that the initial design presented to the Panel was a "great start" and the Panel was very supportive of the quantity of open space proposed for the site. Moving forward, the Panel

advised further development to the specific open spaces proposed within the design, including a broader range of programming and scale.

Looking at the sustainability strategy, the Panel questioned the decision to demolish two significant buildings along Yonge St, and wanted to see a more complete explanation of the overarching sustainability strategy together with more ambitious sustainability goals.

With respect to the built form, the Panel felt all the proposed floorplate sizes needed further consideration and the southern tower cluster further design development. The Panel also advised that significantly more community spaces were required throughout the site.

In general, the Panel felt that the project team were known "civic builders" with a commitment to a "quality public realm" and noted they were looking forward to seeing the project as it evolves.

Response to Context (including local character and heritage)

Retention of Existing Buildings on Yonge St

Various members noted that the existing buildings along Yonge St have a heritage aspect to them. One member commented that for many people they held cultural value as well. Other members commented that the project was sited on a "very important corner" for the city.

Some members pointed out that demolishing these two "significant buildings" would have a long term negative impact on the environment. These members wanted to see further consideration of adaptive reuse for ideally both the buildings, but at minimum the building to the south.

2009 Plan

Many members felt that the proposal did a good job of respecting the "spirit" and many of the aspirations of the 2009 plan for the site. However, various members felt there were some points from the 2009 plan that should be incorporated into the current proposal.

Some members commented that they found the 2009 proposal very interesting, and specifically noted appreciation for the 2009 plan's retention of the two existing buildings on Yonge St, as well as how the base buildings in the plan served to define streets and courts.

One member felt that the definition of streets and courts in the previous plan was more convincing than what was shown in the current proposal.

Another member thought that the current design package was also missing eye level views. This member pointed out that in the 2009 package there were eye level views from Duplex Ave clearly showing the scale of the towers. This member wondered whether similar views for the current proposal would reveal that the tower heights needed to be brought down.

Competition Process

A few members acknowledged the decision by the project team to support a competition process for the site. These members felt the decision to pursue such a process was indicative of overarching intentions by the team to develop a strong and appropriate design response to the project.

Indigenous Place-making

Looking at the proposed park design, a few members pointed out that the importance of Indigenous Place-making as one of the City's objectives was not being addressed in the project.

These members noted that Indigenous Place-making was especially imperative when developing a park of this importance in the city, particularly given the prominent location at Yonge and Eglinton as well as the deep Indigenous history in North Toronto.

Moving forward, the members advised that Indigenous Place-making should be a very strong design impetus and a key criteria when the design of the parks are further developed.

Microclimate at Yonge & Eglinton

Some members advised ensuring the existing microclimate of the area didn't undermine the potentiality of the public realm, particularly given that the project was proposing several more tall buildings. These members pointed out that Yonge and Eglinton is already a "very windy part of town" due to the amount of development in the area.

Site Plan Design

Complex Site

Many Panel members commented on the complexity and size of the project site. Some members noted that the Design Review Panel rarely sees sites of this magnitude and felt it was "difficult to deal with something this complex in such a short period of time".

One member thought it would have been interesting to understand more about the complex logistics with respect to public transit. This member pointed out that the transit requirements would have a huge impact on the design of the project.

Overarching Vision

Some members thought the project team had developed a clever and a strategic approach to this "very complicated site". Many Panelists felt that there were "a lot of things about the overall vision that are exemplary at an overall strategic level".

Different members variously commented that they appreciated the reduction in towers and burying of infrastructure. The Panel members were all very supportive of the move to increase the amount of open space on the site.

Various members recommended further consideration of what the spatial experience of this significant landmark linchpin site and project would become. Some members felt that the project was about: outdoor rooms; frontage and entrances; and community space.

The Panel advised carefully developing the proposal to become a precedent setting project.

New Street & Access to Duplex Avenue

Various members questioned the placement of the new public street. One member pointed out that the landscape design spoke to establishing an urban setting on Yonge St and a more natural setting on Duplex Ave.

This member noted that having the public street spill out onto Duplex, together with the location of the bus terminal entrance, was contrary to this landscape approach. As an alternate approach, the member wondered whether the new public street could dog leg over to Duplex further south to gain more contiguous park space along Duplex Ave.

Bus Terminal Entrance

Various members recommended undertaking an in depth study of the TTC entrance and the face along Duplex Ave. These members felt the study should include both the openings themselves as well as the materiality treatment of the wall to the underground terminal.

Amount of Open Space

The Panel thought the significant amount of open space proposed in the project was "commendable". Several members complimented the project team on recognizing the importance of open space, particularly for Yonge-Eglinton where it was a "much needed amenity".

Looking at specific numbers, different members noted appreciation for the proposed amount of open space per person, as well as the upfront discussion about how density would be redistributed on site to achieve a substantial amount of open space.

One member thought the proposed open space would be "transformative" at a "metropolitan scale". This member noted that it reminded them of some of the commercial visions that the City of Toronto had for itself in the 60s and 70s when redeveloping the inner core of the city.

Other members hoped that this approach of consolidating massing to provide more open space at grade could be pursued in future projects on appropriate sites throughout the city as well.

Many members thought the proposed amount of open space would be a solid contribution to the framework of policies that have guided the development of the site. However, some members advised ensuring that all the spaces were well designed and programmed. These members noted that achieving good open space would be a delicate challenge, particularly due to the grade changes on site.

One member noted that park spaces that engage with the streets tend to be more successful, such as Rockefeller Center in New York City. The Panel advised further development and consideration of the programming for the different spaces, including whether the open space was intended to be park space or urban space.

Open Space Precedents

Some members noted appreciation for the use of precedents in the presentation to illustrate spaces of similar sizes; however, these members pointed out that all the shown precedents only related to portions of the open space rather than the open space in its totality.

The Panel advised incorporating more precedents relating to the overarching area and one member mentioned Pershing Square in Los Angeles as an example of a similarly sized space.

Public Park vs POPS

A few members questioned the proportion of open space that would become a public park versus a private park that is publically accessible and privately maintained. Other members felt that there needed to be better access and connectivity to the new public park from Yonge St.

While the Panel understood that the presentation was showing that the public park would be located on Duplex Ave and the majority of the open space would become POPS space, various members felt that this division of spaces should be subject to more discussions between the developer, City staff and the community.

Mews

Many members pointed out that although the mews was intended to be a pedestrian space, the images shown in the presentation together with the proximity to access the loading and parking were contradicting that idea.

Some suggestions to develop the mews as a pedestrian oriented space included relocating the drop-off onto Yonge and/or moving all the services and loading below grade with access off the new street entrance.

The Panel noted that the relocation of the parking and loading would allow the mews to become an inner park experience for the residents of the buildings. Some members commented that this could provide the residents with a more protected private communal space "where kids can run around".

Residential Courtyard & Porosity on South Portion of the Site

Various Panel members thought that the residential courtyard felt very walled off. A few members thought the compounded effect of the circular/oval form of the courtyard with the very high tower podiums was exacerbating this feeling.

Instead of a circular walled open space, many members recommended adding some cross cuts and vistas through the courtyard. Various members specifically advised developing more porosity to the south.

Some members suggested incorporating a mid-block connection to the courtyard from Yonge St. These members felt that the public park in the current proposal was hidden and suggested that more connectivity to the park from Yonge St, vs. having to access it from the side street was important.

Other members noted appreciation for the lobby connections off the courtyard but noted that the inclusion of "small pedestrian scaled access" would do more to open up the nature of the space and give it more of a public quality.

Midblock Connection from Yonge St

Some members appreciated the how the proposed open space would cut through and provide more light onto Yonge St. One member noted that this would also benefit the Ann Johnson Square, which would resultantly have longer views towards the west.

A few members also suggested incorporating a midblock connector through onto the oval courtyard.

Corner of Yonge & Eglinton

Some members thought the big moves of the wedge shape starting at the corner of Yonge and Eglinton and building southward were working well.

However, various members questioned the plaza being proposed at the Yonge-Eglinton corner. One member recommended bringing more of the "playfulness" that had emerged in some of the other open spaces throughout the project into the corner.

Some members pointed out that as shown, the Yonge-Eglinton corner was "strictly a circulation space". These members suggested the corner needed to have a more exemplary approach to the public realm. A few members commented that the corner lacked energy.

Some members thought there should be more trees in this plaza space. These members strongly felt that the plaza should have more trees rather than the low level green space that was currently shown at the Eglinton corner. The members suggested more green should be located in the upper open space areas instead.

Many members felt the TTC entrance at this corner should be absorbed into the building. These members noted that there is currently an interstitial space between the entrance and the volume behind it. One member further noted that the inclusion of retail would also begin to help animate the space.

Community Spaces & Uses

Some members pointed out that sustainability and resilience was also about the provision of good community spaces in neighbourhoods. The Panel advised that the community spaces and uses needed further development in order to ensure the project was sustainable.

Several members strongly advised that substantial community space, both indoor and outdoor space, were required in the proposal. One member stated that there was an "important and

significant call here for public use". Many members commented that the area needed more than just retail, commercial and residential spaces.

Some members noted that "community spaces" did not just constitute community centres and daycares, (although many members agreed that likely two daycares would be required somewhere in the neighbourhood to accommodate the intensity of the proposed number of residential units).

The Panel suggested animating all the outdoor green spaces with "great community uses" and a range of indoor spaces that could benefit from having close proximity to park space. The Panelists strongly felt the community uses needed to be multi-generational and a few members called for the establishment of a "cutting-edge 21st century public amenity".

At minimum, the Panel felt that there should be community spaces that functioned as a "hub" for the neighbourhood. Some members noted that strong community amenities would help pin the whole development down in a more substantive way.

A few members felt that the fluid way in which people would be able to move through the various open spaces would also be used both by the local community as well as attract many people from further afar.

Built Form (Massing, Height, Articulation and Heritage Conservation)

Tower 1

Some Panel members thought that the "cascading form" of the architecture proposed for Tower 1 on the north side of the site was generally successful; however, the Panel questioned the large floor plate sizes, particularly for the residential floors above the office space.

Various members wanted to see more information around the amount of family friendly suites to understand why the larger floor plate size was being justified.

While some members appreciated the cascading form on T1, these members suggested bringing the building down on the west side to create an edge along Duplex Ave such that the park didn't open right through to the street.

Residential Towers (T2-T5)

Various members noted that while they thought the cascading form was generally working well on the north tower, it was not as successful on the four towers with bustles and larger podiums on the south of the site.

While many members thought that locating the residential tower cluster at the south of the site seemed to make sense, the members thought that Phase 2 was too enclosed and the residential towers too high.

A few members noted that these towers, on the whole, did not engage as well with their surroundings, notably the street frontage and city fabric. Some members felt that the streets and blocks pattern defined in the 2009 plan was more successful in this regard.

Various Panel members also pointed out that Tower 4 was blocking southern light into the open space. The Panel advised shifting density around, including by relocating the tower itself, to allow more light through the tower cluster on the south into the park space.

Eye Level Views / Tower Scale

A few members pointed out that the package was missing eye level views and noted that the inclusion of these drawing types would allow the Panel to better understand the scale of the proposed development.

These members were concerned about the proposed tower heights and felt further study was needed. One member felt that it was likely that the scale of the towers to the south, in particular, were not suitable in terms of transition down to the residential areas to the south and west.

Residential Unit Sizes

Some members noted that there had been made mention that 45% of the residential units would be family friendly. These members advised that future presentations should specifically identify how "family friendly units" were being defined by the design team.

Some members wondered what family friendly features would be included within the buildings in general, as well as throughout the site itself. Other members questioned the proposed 1,000 sm residential floorplate sizes.

Office Uses

One member wondered whether the amount of office space proposed by the design team would have built in flexibility. This member commented that there may be uncertainties regarding the future design needs of office space and/or the amount of space needed following the global pandemic.

Affordable Housing

Some members noted that they wanted to see more dialogue with respect to affordable housing.

Proposed Yonge St Edge Condition

Several members thought that the way the building facades, TTC pavilion, and park faces have all been expressed on Yonge St was underdeveloped. Many members pointed out that the blank wall of the TTC station was not an urban edge condition.

Various members recommended having the mews and the street frontage engage more with the city and in general the Panel felt that there was a much bigger opportunity to define the edges and intensify the experience than had been developed.

TTC Pavilion

Many members highlighted the importance of the TTC presence on Yonge St. and one member commented that the design of a pavilion would be a "significant project in itself".

Many members advised that this pavilion was a "very, very important part of the project that requires further study". Various members pointed out accessibility concerns with respect to the pavilion, including the blank wall/opaque faces as well as the 2 storey stair located right on Yonge.

The Panel agreed that the TTC entrance needed to be a "real gem", "fantastical", and a "spatial experience".

Some members noted that Toronto doesn't do enough to celebrate the spatial experience of the subway system and suggested bringing the canopy above and the station below together, such that when entering the subway there is a soaring spatial experience.

Landscape Strategy

Open Space Overarching Design

Several Panel members noted appreciation for the overarching move to create a "green blanket" over both the natural and manufactured topography.

One member thought the informal spaces were creating a kind of "funky parterre" that would complement the "intense architecture" surrounding the open space. Other members also noted support for the playful open space design.

However, the Panel advised ensuring the open space was engaging the surrounding city fabric in an effective and fluid way. Some members felt the open spaces proposed at the north end of the site were "weaker" than those proposed for the south.

While the Panel was pleased to see the amount of open space being proposed, as one member cautioned, spaces aren't successful just because they're big, but that the type, quality and design of the space also needs to be highly developed and considered. This member pointed out that places that "really work" are ones that engage with the streets and surrounding fabric in some way.

Various members additionally noted appreciation for the proposed balance of informal space and large scale space in the design. Moving forward the Panel advised further development of small scale, intimate spaces as well.

Open Spaces on the Northern Portion of the Site

Various members were concerned that the proposed open spaces on the north portion of the site were too undefined. Looking at these spaces, a member recommended the book "Space and Anti-Space". This member was concerned that the design as shown would result in iconic buildings residing in an undifferentiated and undefined ground plane.

Maintenance Implications / Strata Parks

Looking at the amount of strata parks proposed in the project, some members strongly advised that the maintenance implications, including considerations around layering and long term maintenance, were "really, really critical points to figure out" as early in the design process as possible.

Elaborating on this, one member noted other examples of strata parks needing to be redone in Toronto including:

"Adelaide Park, 30 years after creating it above underground structures, and the maintenance of that park – or the absence of it, I think – is partly the cause for [...] after 30 years only, needing to take the entire park up and redo it."

Type of Open Space & Programming

Many Panelists encouraged more diversity in the programming and amenity spaces provided to best serve the multiple user groups and stakeholders. Various members pointed out that there will likely be a conflict between the needed family spaces and the more urban "office lunch spaces" that will be established.

Many members advised that the proposal needed further attention to the kids and family spaces beyond the proposed park space. Some members wondered whether some of these spaces could be located in a more pedestrian oriented mews.

Many other members felt the market spaces needed further development and consideration as well. Some members noted that it is important to have spaces that are more "rough and ready" to accommodate a range of activities, such as markets, in addition to specifically defined spaces.

As the types of open spaces are further defined, a few members pointed out that bigger does not always constitute better spaces and the Panel recommended the thoughtful development of a range of programming that would best serve both the local and future community as well as allow the site to become a landmark destination for people from further afield.

Market & Stage Area

Many members welcomed the inclusion of the market and stage area, with some members noting that such spaces would make the site a destination for both people in the local area as well as those from further afar. The Panel advised ensuring the space could accommodate large numbers of people for things such as market activities.

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A few members suggested looking at the weekly Saturday market that occurs in Union Square in New York. These members pointed out that Union Square accommodates these activities well because while it is very green it also has hardscaping and plaza-like landscaping, which allows it to accommodate large numbers of people when needed.

With regards to the architecture of the stage area, one member suggested that L'Ombrière de Norman Foster in Marseilles would be a good precedent. This member felt a light and airy structure would be appropriate for the space.

Open Space Grade Change

Various members noted that the significant 5m grade change on the site would bisect the proposed open space and therefore had the potential to impede the ultimate landscape design. While some members felt the design response to the grade changes had been addressed "quite fluidly", the Panel still thought that further development and study was required.

Many members advised substantially developing the connections to the upper and lower areas of the site. One member noted that the Halprin fountain in Portland had been shown as a precedent in the presentation and suggested that incorporating this kind of design response could help in making these connections.

Incorporation of Water Elements

One member felt that elements that invite a more interactive association with the users of the site would be a welcome addition to the landscape design. This member also suggested that incorporating water throughout different areas of the site may help bring the site together.

Dog Park

Some members advised that the inclusion of a dog park would be necessary given the amount of residential proposed on site in an already very dense area. One member recommended locating the dog park within the POPS spaces, such as near the entrance to the TTC and the underground access.

This member strongly advised against placing a dog park in the new public park.

Sustainable Design

Proposed Demolition of Significant Buildings

Various members pointed out that in terms of long term responsibility to the environment there would be negative long term implications to demolishing the two "significant buildings" along Yonge St.

Many members wanted to see specific information around how the project was proposing to mitigate the substantive carbon emissions that would be incurred if these buildings were demolished.

Some members pointed out that adaptive reuse, of at minimum one of the buildings on the south, although a "radical change" to the current proposal would be a more appropriate response from the perspective of sustainability and climate resiliency.

At minimum, the Panel strongly advised that the proposed demolition of two significant large structures should be accounted for in the sustainability and energy targets.

Carbon Neutral Precinct

While some members complimented the design team on including an in depth explanation of their sustainability strategy in their presentation, other members expressed concern around the phasing of the project with respect to sustainability and carbon intensity.

Some members pointed out that due to the phasing, some of the projects will be coming on stream in 2030. These members advised that the design team needed to harness their "design creativity in this project" to get lower EUIs, lower carbon intensity, and first and foremost, lower thermal energy demand on the project "as a starting point" such that the numbers and sustainability strategy represents 2030 and beyond.

One member additionally pointed out that "aggressive carbon pricing" will be coming and this needed to also be built into the design and sustainability strategy.

Community Resilience

A member pointed out that in the United Nations guidelines, sustainability also involves building community resilience. Various members felt that to ensure community resilience in this proposal, a lot more attention and space needed to be given over to community uses and spaces.

Some members additionally noted that as per the aspirations of the 2009 plan, the site was intended to be a multigenerational area. These members advised that the community spaces needed to have a much wider reach and include both outdoor and indoor spaces.

HOTEL X PHASE 2 – EXHIBITION PLACE

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

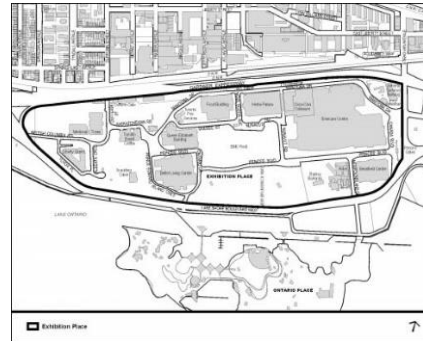
DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW First Review*

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Dan Nicholson, Community Planning; James Parakh, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Armstrong Planning



VOTE Non-support – unanimous

**Phase 1 was reviewed twice in July and September 2010.*

Introduction

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

1. The proposals compatibility with the monumental scale of the buildings and landscapes of the site including its impact on pedestrian views and broader view corridors, including the view of the Princes' Gates.
2. The proposed design relative to "contextually appropriate and harmonious character, materiality and colour" as it relates to the ceremonial character of Princes' Blvd.
3. The proposed development as it relates to the scale of Stanley Barracks, Parade Grounds and the heritage sensitive context.
4. The integration of the proposed development into its public realm context an animation of its facades on all frontage. Including the west elevation relative to the future Festival Plaza and connections to Ontario Place, the south elevation and set back and its relation to the perimeter pedestrian promenade. And the north west corner as it relates to the proposed Meeting Place.

Chair's Summary of Key Points

The Panel would like to thank the proponent for a very clear and comprehensive presentation. The proposal for a landmark hotel with innovative performance venue is an informed and provocative view of the future of the Exhibition Grounds, an approach that is needed to realize the full potential of this important civic site. Successful venues at the CNE have always sought to find a balance between a respect for heritage resources and the expectation of celebratory architecture, and Panel found that there was insufficient evidence that the proposal in its current form was achieving a satisfactory outcome. More work was needed to develop a responsive relationship with the Stanley Barracks, to align the overall massing with the larger scale architecture to the north by flipping the positions of the tower and performance spaces, and to validate the importance of the public realm

at grade by providing a comprehensive ground floor plan integrated with a more resolved site and landscape plan.

Response to Context (including local character and heritage)

- Consider several revisions: develop a more deliberate and better scaled relationship to the Stanley Barracks; consider placing the performance venue on the north, near the other existing large-scaled venues; improve the response to the designated views through the Princes Gate with further set-backs; treat Princes Boulevard as the principal address; provide a detailed site and ground floor plan to illustrate activated frontages, concealed loading and servicing, and explicit spatial responses to the Barracks, to Princes Boulevard, and to the west façade each of them emphasized by a corresponding landscape identity.

Site Plan Design

- Provide a detailed site plan which responds to context as noted in Response to Context, above.

Pedestrian Realm

- Provide a detailed site plan which responds to context as noted in Response to Context, above.
- Consider the design of the pedestrian realm during off season or the darker hours, and the ways in which planning and programming creates architectural interest as well as environmental protection and personal safety.

Built Form (Massing, Height, Articulation, Heritage Conservation)

- Consider massing which reinforces Princes Boulevard as the principal address, brings the celebratory form of the performance venue to the north of the site.

Landscape Strategy

- Refer to Response to Context above.
- Develop a landscape identity and express it in comprehensive landscape plan.

Sustainable Design

- Consider a comprehensive approach to high-performance low-energy design that meets or exceeds the TGS in force when the building is occupied.

Comments to the City

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Panel Commentary

The Panel thanked the design team for their presentation. Some members noted that the design team were very experienced in designing world entertainment facilities. The Panelists expressed concern around the concept design as shown, particularly in relation to Exhibition Place as a whole and the adjacent Stanley Barracks.

Many members questioned where the project was in the design process and hoped there were still opportunities to shift elements around as well as resolve the outstanding design issues. The Panel thought there were many interesting aspects about the project that could be a great catalyst for other things within Exhibition Place, but advised that the significant issues with the design and

response to the physical and cultural context needed to be looked at in more depth and reconsidered.

The Panel looked forward to seeing the project again.

Response to Context (including local character and heritage)

Exhibition Place Context

The Panel noted that Exhibition Place had deep historical significance and meaning for Toronto. Many members spoke to the duality of Exhibition Place today where it has both important architectural examples from the past as well as being a place of "future looking" architecture. One member called Exhibition Place a place of "positive optimism". Other members felt that Exhibition Place balanced heritage and celebration.

One member commented that Exhibition Place "has a character that is both grounded and founded, and then another character that is more transient, and the CNE is an example of this where you have this wild, exuberant celebration" that is temporal but occurs annually.

Various members further reflected on the CNE, the EX, and Ontario Place, and the nostalgic, significant memories many people in Toronto had for those places. Many Panelists also pointed out that the proposal was not located on a private site, and that the design team had a responsibility to deliver something special to Toronto.

While many members noted that they didn't necessarily have an issue with having an iconic building, the Panel advised the design team that there needed to be further consideration of how the proposal would fit into this vision and history of Exhibition Place, including its existing surrounding context.

Hotel X Phase 1

Several members pointed out that the results from Hotel X Phase 1 were underwhelming and "not very wonderful". One member called Hotel X Phase 1 "mediocre architecture; mediocre public ground". Another member remembered reviewing the proposal for Hotel X Phase 1 which showed "beautiful renderings" and high quality materials including stone and laminated glass that would glow at night.

It was also noted that Phase 1 had promised regeneration for Exhibition Place as the rationale for building a hotel in a publicly controlled and very significant site in Toronto.

Different members commented that the people of Toronto had been "cheated" by the built Hotel X Phase 1, and the Panel cautioned that the design team had a commitment and responsibility to the city as well as to the collective memories of people who have enjoyed the experiences at Exhibition Place, when proposing development on the grounds.

Various members advised that the design team look at the promise and then the delivery of Hotel X Phase 1, then review the proposal and budget for Phase 2 to ensure this project will be able to be delivered properly.

Princes' Gate Heritage Context

Some members noted that Princes' Gate and Princes' Blvd had historic importance for Toronto. Various members were concerned that both Princes' Gate and Princes' Blvd were being "seriously jeopardized" by the current proposal.

Tower Location & Princes' Gate

While they recognized the moves that had already been made to push the podium and tower back to lessen the impact on the view through Princes' Gate, the majority of the Panel strongly advised setting the tower further back to not be visible when looking through the Princes' Gate portal.

Various members expressed concern around the impact of the tower rising very close to Princes' Gate, especially the impact on the "quite beautiful quality, formal quality, of the gate". Many members wondered whether the tower could be flipped such that the tower was closer to Lake Ontario and the podium/venue space was moved to Princes' Blvd.

Several members questioned the location of the tower and hotel along Princes' Blvd as being tied to a desire for more pedestrian animation. These members pointed out that the front façade of the hotel was predominantly drop off which wouldn't bring pedestrian animation to Princes' Blvd.

Some members noted additional concern for the city view of the proposal, including the distance view along Lake Shore Blvd. One member thought the whole project should be relocated to the far west edge of Exhibition Place where it could overlook Lake Shore Blvd and the Gardiner for those entering the downtown core.

Impact on Visual Identity for Exhibition Place

One member alternatively thought that the impact on the tower was more concerning after one passed through Princes' Gate into Exhibition Place. For this member, the impact on the view through the gate was less of a concern because they wondered whether the tower massing would recede enough from the foreground reading of the gate.

However, this member felt that the initial view once through the gate was more important for the vision and success of Exhibition Place. This member was then more concerned about the overall massing of the proposal from the perspective of what branding this building would create as a first impression of Exhibition Place.

Relationship to Lake Shore Blvd

Various members thought the idea of having a front porch overlooking Lake Ontario was interesting. Some members felt the way this proposal was interacting with Lake Shore Blvd would start to set a new tone for how subsequent buildings would interact with Lake Shore Blvd as well. These members cautioned that if the project was built as shown, it would create an unintentional civic threshold.

Many members additionally felt that the scale of the proposal was too large and reiterated that flipping the location of the tower and venue massing made a lot of sense.

Archaeological Impact

Some members noted they had a number of thoughts and questions around the archaeology on site would be approached, and pointed out this wasn't addressed in the drawing package or presentation. One member commented that the inclusion of underground parking implied that the design team was assuming the archaeology would all be removed.

Programming & Heritage Conservation of Stanley Barracks

Looking at the proposal to insert new programming into Stanley Barracks, one member cautioned that in successful conservation work, one of the key elements is finding an appropriate use for the heritage building.

Various members advised that before any thought was given into the programming for Stanley Barracks, there needed to be an in depth study of what programs the building will tolerate. Other members pointed out that in general the proposal was located on an important historic site, and that Stanley Barracks was "very, very, key" to the historic nature of the area.

A member noted that undertaking such a study and was very critical and strongly advised considering what would work best for Stanley Barracks in terms of heritage conservation, environmental accessibility, and impact on the existing building, and to not "shoehorn" program into an historic building.

Site Plan Design

Site Plan Analysis & Ground Floor Plan

Many Panel members pointed out that no site plan or ground floor plan was included in the entire presentation. The Panelists pointed out that it was crucial to understand how the proposed building would literally fit into the existing context at the ground plane and relate to its surroundings.

Many members also noted that the integration with Stanley Barracks and the sensitivities to it would benefit greatly from a more thorough examination, including through a ground floor plan analysis. These members pointed out that a ground floor plan would also be useful to visualize how people would enter and exit the site.

Various members advised included the interior buildings, outside public space, east-west connectivity across the site should be included in the site plan. Other members noted there also needed to be investigations into the ground plane perspective use coming along each of Princes' Blvd and Lake Shore Blvd in all directions.

A few members pointed out that currently the only views were aerial images that were detached from understanding how the building would function at grade. While many members noted that they would be open to an iconic structure or a contemporary aesthetic, the Panel advised that the proposal felt like an object being dropped into the site.

Entrances & Building Orientation

Various members questioned the rationale for locating the hotel along Princes' Blvd and pointed out that the front façade of the hotel would predominantly be drop off space. These members felt there would be opportunities to create a building entrance and/or animated uses along Princes' Blvd at street level if the hotel and venue were flipped.

Some members remembered that when Hotel X Phase 1 was brought to the Design Review Panel for review, the location of that entrance was due to constraints from the midway of the Exhibition which meant that it was too challenging to locate the entrance off Princes' Blvd for Phase 1.

These members questioned whether anything had changed in the intervening years given that this had been a driving force in locating the entrance for the Phase 1 building on the south.

Drop-off & Vehicular Access

The Panel questioned the decision to have the north side of the site along Princes' Blvd to be used as a big drop off area. The Panelists strongly felt this needed to be rethought. Some members thought that locating the vehicular access on the west side of the site seemed to make sense from the perspective of not cutting up the pedestrian realm on Princes' Blvd to the east.

Animating Lake Shore Blvd

A member noted that there were images of Lake Shore Blvd showing a generous sidewalk and the removal of the existing chain link fence. This member hoped that the proposal would try to bring some of those attributes to Lake Shore as opposed to just having a blank face along the boulevard.

One member additionally wondered whether there would be an opportunity to remove the berm in the section and bring the building down to Lake Shore Blvd.

North-South Walkway on Western Side of Building

Some members thought the west side of the building would likely be a "cold and windy spot". These members noted that this area would become a major north-south pedestrian access route once more things started happening at Ontario Place, as it would lead to the transit facilities adjacent to the rail corridor. Moving forward, these members recommended careful planning of the space to ensure it would be a comfortable and safe space to be in.

One member specifically advised humanizing the future walkway as well as protecting the pedestrian environment and microclimate through trees, planting, and other elements along the expanse of the walkway.

Pedestrian Promenade along the Northern Part of Lake Shore Blvd

A few members noted that the master plan showed a pedestrian promenade along the northern portion of Lake Shore Blvd. A member commented that this will become an important linkage route to all the other planned pedestrian routes. Some members recommended ensuring the promenade was fully incorporated into this site and existing context.

Pedestrian Realm

Pedestrian Experience

Many members questioned how the pedestrian realm as affected by the proposal would fit in with its surrounding context, particularly the sensitive site to the east. One member felt the proposal and pedestrian experience would be better suited if the building was relocated to the far west edge of Exhibition Place.

A few members noted that the concept design on Princes' Blvd showed several windows and an overhang. These members suggested developing this to create a sense of protection for pedestrians walking in the area.

Some members additionally pointed out that Exhibition Place can be a cold and windy pedestrian experience during colder parts of the year. These members suggested using this proposal to try to address and ameliorate this condition where possible.

Pedestrian Realm during Events & Egress

Some members noted that there was "no doubt" the site would be "buzzing" with people and activity during an event in the new venue, and questioned how the thousand attendees would exit the venue, and specifically wondered how the exiting of so many people would impact the sensitive site to the east.

These members recommended further consideration of the egress requirements moving forward, that mitigated any impact on the surroundings, particularly Stanley Barracks.

Members additionally advised the design team to further consider how the site would feel on a typical day when there was no event going on. A few members specifically advised considering what it would feel like to walk around the edges of the site as a pedestrian.

Built Form (Massing, Height, Articulation and Heritage Conservation)

Built Form & Massing

The Panel was concerned that the architectural design and massing was too "exciting" and large for the site. Several members commented that it felt like the building had been dropped onto the site without sufficient consideration of, or integration with, the existing context, including the historically significant Stanley Barracks.

Some members commented that the shell-like geometry and large massing was playing against the potential opportunities of the site, and various members were concerned that the design was creating a second, segregated Exhibition Place above grade and the public realm.

One member appreciated the analysis that had been done on pages 11-13 of the drawing package. Various members thought the grand stairs and porch elements could benefit the site; however, these members felt that in the current incarnation they were over scaled.

One member noted that the reveal on the podium would rely on very clean detailing and canted glass. This member questioned whether that would be successfully realized in the project. Another member commented that the podium felt out of scale.

Moving forward, the Panel advised further developing the building design and massing so that it was more contextually responsive and anchored into its surroundings. Various members recommended reducing the bulk of the massing and lowering the podium.

One member suggested that if the massing was better anchored into the ground there would be an opportunity to bring the public plane of Exhibition Place up onto the roof of the building.

Flipping the Location of the Hotel & Event Space

The Panel had differing opinions on the location of the hotel and event space. Several Panel members thought the hotel and venue should be flipped. Many members thought that moving the venue to the north side would better serve the Exhibition Place master plan and the "entertainment" and "meeting place" goals.

Some members pointed out that if the venue was located on the north side it could become another anchor place with the Enercare Centre and the BMO field. A few members pointed out that the scale of the venue was more in keeping with the scale of Enercare Centre and BMO field as well.

While they understood the rationale for orienting the event venue towards the lake, various members pointed out that the scale of the hotel architecture would be more appropriate on Lake Shore Blvd rather than the pedestrian scaled portion of Exhibition Place. A few members pointed out that Lake Ontario presented challenging weather for many months of the year.

Many members also noted that moving the hotel to the south would reduce the impact on Princes' Gate and the Panel questioned whether a hotel drop off would create the desired pedestrian animation. Many members felt that more people would engage with the event space if it was on Princes' Blvd.

Some members noted that the location of these programmatic elements needed to consider if there was going to be any development at Ontario Place it would likely be occurring on the parking lots across Lake Shore. If the parking lots were developed, then the view to the Lake would be obscured.

One member commented that if the spaces were flipped and the architecture refined, the proposal could become another "Tottenham Spurs Arena" as opposed to an "object muscling itself onto the skyline of the lake".

On the other hand, a couple members thought that the current location of these two key programmatic elements was fine.

Scale of the Event Space

Many members felt the scale of the event space was overwhelming and bulky, and various members thought the clamshell shape was exacerbating this feeling. Various members felt that the event space massing was negatively impacting the scale and fabric of the surrounding buildings.

However, several members noted appreciation for the porch idea. These members advised further animating and finding ways to allow people to occupy the rooftop spaces looking both west and south on the event space podium. Many members felt that scaling back and refining the massing together with better animating the public realm would help ameliorate the overwhelming scale.

Various members questioned whether the event space needed to be 7,000 seats as opposed to 5,000 seats, for example. These members noted that it felt like the proposal was trying to squeeze as much program as possible onto a really tight site.

Some members suggested the Four Seasons Opera Housing in Toronto at the corner of University Avenue and Queen Street West as a performance building where it is possible to look into the first layer of the building and see all the animation in the lobby spaces.

Event Space Massing & Articulation

The Panel thought the event space massing and articulation needed further consideration and refinement. Several members noted specific concern for how the venue piece felt like an object placed on the site without consideration for the existing context or site specific conditions.

Some members additionally noted that the results of Hotel X Phase 1 were "mediocre" and were concerned that Phase 2 would have similar results if the massing, articulation and site plan context weren't contextually resolved.

Moving forward, some members suggested evolving the tortoise shell shape of the event space into a plastic exoskeleton to better respond to the different edges of the site, especially facing east towards Stanley Barracks.

Many members felt that the east façade was currently reading as a large bunker and not responding to the significant heritage site directly adjacent to it. One member noted that Hotel X Phase 1 also failed to acknowledge or integrate with the heritage structures.

Relationship to Stanley Barracks

Many members felt that the relationship of this proposal to Stanley Barracks felt "quite uncomfortable" and advised that further examination and consideration was required. Various members noted that Stanley Barracks had significant heritage value.

Different members questioned the walkway element, including what the materiality would be. Some members suggested the eastern façade should be different than the western façade at the lower level to start to create a building element in both material and scale that was more compatible to Stanley Barracks.

Various members pointed out that neither the drawing package nor the presentation had a ground floor plan showing both the interior spaces of the proposed building or the surrounding outside public space. The Panel questioned how there would be connectivity east-west across the site, including to Stanley Barracks.

Building Height & Impact on Stanley Barracks

Various Panel members advised lowering the building height would help reduce the massing and impact on Stanley Barracks. Many members also pointed out that if the massing and height were reduced the whole roof plane could be used for an integrated, accessible garden/plaza on the roof.

Architecture of the Future

Many Panel members questioned whether the form and massing of the proposed building would stand the test of time, or if it should be the next vision of the future presented by Exhibition Place. Various members commented that while they were not opposed to an unusual or iconic

architectural form, they did not think the current proposal was the right character for the future building or existing site.

Some members remarked that the current design felt a bit like a foreign object had been dropped on the site. Another member noted that in the drawing package, the massing in the white model form was reading very differently than the fully rendered drawings. This member felt that when the model was rendered with the proposed materiality it was reading very dark and "scary". This member also felt that the fully rendered version looked much bigger on the site than the white massing model.

The Panel advised much more thought, exploration and design consideration of the architecture.

Related Precedents

Various members suggested reviewing precedents of buildings in North America and Europe that are waterfront sites that allow for large gathering spaces.

Some examples mentioned by different Panelists included the Oslo Opera House, which although it was noted as being a smaller venue than the proposal, was also sited on a promontory over the water, and served to become a piece of the landscape that people could walk on. Another Canadian example was the Convention Centre in Vancouver, which was noted for its timeless quality and similar waterfront location.

2444 EGLINTON AVENUE EAST – HOUSING NOW

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW First Review

APPLICATION Pre-Rezoning

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Jeffery Sinclair, Community Planning; Marina Haufschild, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Ziedler, Forrec



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 key issues:

1. Type(s) of appropriate built form for the site and the context
2. Site organization, including:
 - Vehicular access
 - Building placement
 - Location/amount of outdoor amenity spaces
3. Interface between the development and the street and potential design strategies to respond to the frequent bus traffic
4. Pedestrian/cycling connectivity to destinations in the surrounding areas

Chair's Summary of Key Points

The Panel thanks the proponent team and the City for bringing this project to the Panel. The Housing Now initiative is a critically important one, its goal being to accelerate the provision of affordable housing, community amenity and public realm improvements on City owned land. This particular project is a challenging one – given the uses that frame the site, and the development density sought.

The Panel felt generally that the proposal did not represent a credible development scenario. What is proposed constitutes overdevelopment of the site given the particularities of its context. In detail, the Panel cited the following issues with the proposed design:

Response to Context (including local character and heritage)

- By virtue of its location between an underpass, rail and hydro corridors, the proposed development is isolated from nearby neighbourhoods; the current proposal does not go to sufficient length to mitigate this; urban design of greater intent, purpose and generosity is required to make this a viable community;

- The design and development of the underpass as a pleasant and purposeful pedestrian space is critical to the success of the development

Site Plan Design

- The ground plane /public realm needs greater identity and definition to ensure liveability
- Panel questioned the driveway and drop-off at the centre, and suggested it be removed in favour of greater outdoor amenity area;

Pedestrian Realm

- Better pedestrian connectivity both within the site and to the south is critical to the immediate and long-term success of the development; significant development and improvement of this connectivity is required before the development should be considered viable;

Built Form (Massing, Height, Articulation, Heritage Conservation)

- Proponent should study the redistribution of building height and reorientation of the towers to make the hydro corridor the front yard of the development;
- Assuming the reorientation noted above, all townhouse units should face the hydro corridor rather than the southern or the eastern site boundaries
- Panel suggest that the proponent strongly consider reducing the number of towers from three to two, to improve the overall quality of the project and that of the open space
- Proponent urged to ensure that proposed tower heights are appropriate

Landscape Strategy

- The diagrammatic approach to landscape is insufficient and needs much greater development;
- A pedestrian easement on the south edge of the site is required to allow good tree growth here;
- Traffic taming through design, specifically the use of texture and material, is strongly encouraged;

Sustainable Design

-

Comments to the City

-

Panel Commentary

The Panel thanked the project team for their presentation of this very important project. Many members noted that the project was located on a very unique site and the Panel recognized they were seeing the proposal at a very early stage.

The Panelists questioned whether this site was the most appropriate for this amount of density, but acknowledged that creating additional housing throughout the City was crucial. Many members felt that such a challenging site required a creative design solution.

Moving forward, the Panel suggested further consideration of the: size/scale, density, pedestrian connections and amount of open space to ensure the project was providing housing that was conducive to a happy, healthy community for all who live there.

Response to Context (including local character and heritage)

Reference Concept Design Package Approach

Some members noted appreciation for the idea of bringing a reference concept design to be reviewed by the Design Review Panel, with one member commenting that it presented a good opportunity to "button down" a lot of important elements.

However, other members questioned the logic of bringing this Housing Now site to the Panel as a reference plan compared to how the other sites had been brought to the Panel.

Various members noted that pinning down the right amount of density for the site would be key to the success of the future project. Some members questioned the decision to put close to 1000 units in a tough site. A few members pointed out that the conditions of the market will be crucial.

Transit Corridor, Density & Site Selection

Several members noted that while they understood the logic behind the number of units proposed and people housed against the economics of the project and proximity to transit, that the site selection was "terrible" on all four sides.

Many members pointed out that the site had "hostile edges" due to the existing infrastructure. Some members pointed out that the best adjacency was the hydro corridor.

The Panel felt that the project was overloading the site and many members advised reducing the density and changing the proposed built form typology to be able to better respond to the unfavourable site conditions.

Several members cautioned the City that the need to create affordable housing should not predicate implementing a "scary condition". Other members additionally wondered whether this project could create an unfavourable precedent for the City.

Site Plan Design

Site Plan

Many members pointed out that the project was proposing a fairly sizable community and as a result the site plan needed to be more generous. Some members commented that they didn't have a problem with integrating the open space; however, the Panel noted that the open spaces were primarily triangular and/or linear and there was no central focus to the community.

Various members suggested if the site plan was reorganized such that there were more central open spaces in the center of the site, with a ring of townhouses around this central open space it would provide better overlook on the open spaces and a more normalized public life. One member additionally suggested incorporating community gardens or other community focused outdoor amenities.

The Panel felt that the current disposition of the site that the diagrammatic approach to the landscape wasn't working. Many members advised developing a more advanced site plan design and landscape strategy to better deal with the site conditions.

Underpass & Site Connectivity

The Panel strongly felt that developing the underpass connection was crucial to the success of the future project. Several members additionally wondered whether a precondition of the project should include weather protection.

The Panel pointed out that the site connectivity needed to be improved. Many members felt that developing a covered underpass was important. Other members pointed out that as shown, the site would be very difficult to get in and out of even when driving.

Various members suggested designing the street in front of the development in a way that would help tame traffic. Some suggestions for how to tame traffic included incorporating texture into the design, with one member noting that incorporating different materials would also improve safety.

Several members cautioned against developing the site as an island that can't be traversed on foot and the Panel recommended finding a way to bridge over the impediments and improve the connections east for better connectivity and flow to the future retail areas beyond the immediate site.

Drop off & Loading

Many members acknowledged the efforts made to centralize the loading, but the Panel advised this needed to be completely resolved. Various members supporting the idea of consolidating all the loading below grade.

Some members suggesting incorporating another drop off solution so the space in between could become part of the pedestrian pathway to the transit.

Community Space

Various members questioned the proposed location for the community space, noting that the front door was currently located right beside the loading dock. Some members commented that there was currently no access from the TTC to the planned community centre.

The Panel thought the community space needed to be further developed and resolved.

Built Form (Massing, Height, Articulation and Heritage Conservation)

Building Height & Massing

Several Panelists questioned the proposed building heights, with many members pointing out that having higher buildings in the area will set a precedent. These members advised reducing the density as well as study different built form massing and typology solutions. Some members suggested redistributing the height and number of towers to improve the open space.

However, some other members conversely noted that the lack of existing built form context together with the proximity to a transit hub should be maximized. One of these members suggested using shadow impact as guidance when reexamining the proposed heights.

Towers

Several Panel members suggested redistributing the tower heights as well as reconsider the overall amount of towers to improve the open space. Many members advised reducing the number of towers from 3 to 2 and a few members specifically suggested removing the tower on the west end because it was casting shadow in the afternoon on the limited green space.

Alternatively, some members suggested developing the towers to have identical floorplates all oriented in the same direction and using acoustic strategies to limit the rail noise. Another suggestion was to develop the corner tower as a square format and reducing the height of Tower B.

Some members wondered whether Tower A could be redeveloped as a hybrid midrise with step backs.

Tower Separation

Many members felt that the space between the towers was too tight, although they noted that they didn't have any way to verify that with the information provided in the drawing package.

Hostile Edges

The Panel pointed out that the proposal was located on a very challenging site with hostile edges due to large infrastructure pieces on multiple sides, namely the rail line, elevated highway expression from Eglinton Avenue and the hydro corridor.

Several members advised that the project needed to better respond to these conditions and various members recommended employing different building typologies that specifically responded to these challenging conditions. Some suggested precedents to look at included Erskine's Byker Wall.

Townhouse Location

Various members noted that they were not convinced by the townhouses on the south looking towards the service lane, and one member advised removing them from that location entirely. These members did not think that even with mitigation through trees etc. the townhouses would be enjoyable places given the amount of bus traffic.

Some members additionally advised against having any ground floor residential uses.

Ground Plane

Many Panel members felt that a better solution for a more generous ground plane should be developed. Various members pointed out that a successful ground plane went beyond orientation and consolidation of green space, but should also carefully consider what is fronting the green space. Some members noted that the position of lobbies needed to be deployed more strategically.

Several members noted that the proposed site was not ideal and questioned whether it should be used for housing. If this site was pursued, the Panel also advised looking at how to best animate the ground plane.

Various members recommended developing the ground plane as a series of pavilions with more continuous open space surrounding them.

Landscape Strategy

Streetscape

Some members pointed out that the streetscape was another challenge for the site and advised further developing it as more generous pedestrian spaces. One member noted that the 1m provision for street trees wasn't viable, and that the trees would not survive.

Parkland & Hydro Corridor

Various members questioned where the park and parkland condition would be and noted that using the hydro corridor as the primary park space was not sufficient for the site.

One member pointed out that there aren't enough trees in the hydro corridor. The Panel commented that a park was an important element needed to create neighbourhood community connectivity.

Some members wondered whether the built form, including that of the townhouse units, could be oriented towards the hydro corridor such that it became the front yard. One member suggested having a pedestrian easement on private property and developing the entire linear space as a POPS space.

158 BOROUGH DRIVE – HOUSING NOW

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW First Review

APPLICATION Rezoning

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Kelly Dynes, Community Planning;
Sasha Terry, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Diamond Schmitt Architects



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 key issues:

- The relationship of the proposed project with the Scarborough Civic Centre Forecourt, including grading, animation and pedestrian connections.
- The impact of the proposal in terms of height, shadows, views from Albert Campbell Square.
- The relationship of the podium or streetwall to the surrounding context along Borough Drive, Town Centre Court and the Scarborough Civic Centre forecourt.

Chair's Summary of Key Points

The Panel would like to thank the proponent team for their excellent submission package and presentation.

Housing Now is an essential initiative for the future of our city, and this submission's accomplished design matches that importance. It has the potential to become a Housing Now exemplar, and with this in mind further work is needed in several of areas outline below:

Response to Context (including local character and heritage)

- The precinct and site analysis shows considerable sensitivity towards existing urban, built form and landscape context. The resulting design helps the Scarborough Town Centre come of age in terms of urbanity and sets a strong context precedent for future development in this area.

Site Plan Design

- The accomplished site plan has strong potential, with site conditions creatively addressed. The resulting public/pedestrian realm throughout the site possesses a well-animated high-quality urbanity, and vehicular circulation is deftly handled by the well designed woonerf.
- Further work is needed in the following areas:

- Density – consider shifting some of the density from the west tower to the east tower.
- Courtyard – The courtyard along Borough Drive denotes civic entry, but the childcare play area runs counter to this. Consider shifting the childcare function to another part of the site.
- Building Entries – Ensure that entries (and related drop-off) are clearly articulated.

Pedestrian Realm

- See Site Plan Design.
- Further work is needed in the following areas:
 - West Site – Increase clarity of pedestrian pathway along west side of site. Provide stronger connection across to library.

Built Form (Massing, Height, Articulation, Heritage Conservation)

- The Panel appreciates the built form design process studies included in the submission package, and the resulting architectural expression shows great promise.
- Further work is needed in the following areas:
 - Link Between Towers – Create a calm/simple expression for this element.
 - Borough Drive Street Building Façade – enhance built form delineation.
 - Tower Entries – Clearly articulate entries.
 - Balcony Expression – Use of proposed expression on both towers is overwhelming... simplify approach (Jose Luis Sert's Peabody Terrace cited as example).

Landscape Strategy

- See Site Plan Design
- The proposed landscape strategy holds great promise, balancing an urbane quality with sensitivity to the naturalized Frank Faubert Wood Lot south of the site.
- Further work is needed in the following area:
 - Woonerf – Increase the green landscape at the non-vehicular west end of this space.

Sustainable Design

- Ensure that a deep sustainability strategy is fully implemented.

Comments to the City

- N/A

Panel Commentary

The Panel thanked the project team for their presentation and complimented the team on a great drawing package. Many members noted that the presentation and drawings were very clear and told a wonderful story.

Several members noted appreciation for the proposal, including the carefully considered analysis presented by the design team. The Panel felt that the eventual package would successfully inform future bidders of the expected quality.

Moving forward, the Panel advised further study of the traffic movement and drop-offs, as well as the further consideration of the childcare spaces, building entrances and architectural expression. The Panel thought the project could become a benchmark for Housing Now and looked forward to seeing it progress.

Response to Context (including local character and heritage)

Existing Context

Variou members commented that the surrounding area is currently incredibly confusing and anti-urban. The Panel thought that the project had the potential to transform Borough Dr. and some members felt that the "thoughtful and considered" logic of the project would improve the streetscape specifically and surrounding area in general.

Housing Now

Looking at this Housing Now site against the proposed site of 2444 Eglinton Ave E at the preceding session, many members suggested that where the other site felt too dense, this site was much more appropriate for the proposed massing and programming.

Some members questioned whether Housing Now would be able to afford the project. These members noted that while the building architecture was elegant and simple, the landscape would refer a substantial amount of money to execute.

Site Plan Design

Site Plan & Grading

Many members noted appreciation for the level of site analysis and overarching design scheme. Looking at the grading on site, while some members felt the condition had been "expertly handled", various other members advised the grading condition around the linkages needed further study to ensure AODA compliance, particularly in terms of slopes.

The grading, drop off, soil volume requirements, soil depth and structure were all additionally noted as aspects needing further study.

Daycare & Playground Locations

The Panel had differing thoughts on the daycare location. Various members thought locating the facility in the current south position worked well with the playground space. Some members also agreed that the solar access and shading from the street both worked with the southerly location.

On the other hand, various members pointed out that the north location would have less noise, pollution and vehicles and could be a better location for the playground. Some of these members noted that courtyards always read as entrances and wondered whether it wouldn't make sense to relocate both the childcare spaces to the north and building entrance to the courtyard.

Some members suggested further developing the landscape to better understand how it would work if the daycare and playground were located in the current south location to see if it made more sense to switch these spaces to the north side.

Pedestrian Connection

A few members felt the connection to the library felt a bit stymied and suggested strengthening the east-west connection beyond the paving pattern. However, another member felt that this connection was a clever solution that appeared to be working well.

Drop-off & Traffic Movement

Many members questioned the traffic movement including where the delivery and drop-off for the east tower would be located. Some members also questioned whether cars existing the site would have enough stacking space. Another member pointed out that on the western edge drop-off would be an issue.

Several members pointed out that there would be a substantial amount of parcels being dropped off daily. The Panel advised developing greater functionality and felt that the management of the onsite traffic movement requirements needed more examination and delineation.

Built Form (Massing, Height, Articulation and Heritage Conservation)

Tower Massing & Density

Some members commented that the proposed tower looked "stubby" against the existing building in the north. In response to this, many members wondered whether density could be shifted from the west tower to the east tower.

A few members suggested the eastern tower could become an elegant point tower configuration and a signature building.

Tower Separation Distances

The Panel felt that the tower separation distance was appropriate and felt gracious and comfortable on site.

Borough Drive Facade

Various members thought that the scale of the architecture on the Borough Dr. streetwall felt a bit oversized. Moving forward, some members suggested that more delineation of the architecture on Borough Dr. might be required. One member wondered whether the architecture on this façade could be further layered.

Architectural Expression

Many members noted appreciation for the "ladder" architectural expression. Some members cautioned that while the ladder pieces looked great in the elevations, that on pg. 62 of the drawing package they looked a bit orphaned in the linked piece between the two towers. These members suggested a more simplified linking piece might work better.

Various members thought the energy in the architectural expression at the top of the building was also well done. One member contrasted the "splintering" expression at the building top with the civic presence of the public realm, appreciating their unified expression.

Tower Connection

Some members suggested that the connection between the towers was poetic. Some member noted that this connection should maintain an elegant simplicity as the project is further developed and suggested eliminating the ladder expression.

Balconies

Various members thought that while the proposed three dimensionality of the balcony treatment was an intriguing design solution, the extent of the balconies made the buildings feel bulky and a bit relentless, particularly on the rectangular tower. One member additionally felt that the light and dark colours wasn't successful.

Various members pointed out that closer to grade, the balcony design would result in pedestrians relating to the balconies themselves as opposed to the streetscape. These members cautioned the project team that this could create void spaces in the streetwall.

Some members suggested developing a hybrid continuous balcony on each façade that stopped prior to the corners. José Luis Sert's Peabody Terrace in Massachusetts was recommended as a precedent to look at when developing the balcony expression.

Location of Amenity Spaces

Some members pointed out that while the project was proposing a daycare and outdoor plaza, there weren't currently any outdoor green spaces being developed for the future residents of the project.

Various members suggested that the podium roof could be a good opportunity for the inclusion of barbeque amenity spaces for the residents. However, these members additionally advised incorporating additional green spaces at grade beyond the woonerf.

Entrances

Various members felt that the project should do more to celebrate the entrance lobbies. Many members recommended the addition of another layer outside on Borough Dr. south of the development.

These members noted that a combination of architectural and landscape layers could help better delineate the space in a way that more intuitively enabled people to understand the different spaces and uses.

Looking at the location of the childcare facilities, some members pointed out that courtyards intuitively always look like entrances. These members questioned whether the daycare space could be relocated and the building entrance relocated in the southern courtyard.

Landscape Strategy

Landscape Design

Various members felt that the landscaping looked very lush. Some members wondered whether there would be enough financial resources to execute the design as shown.

One member thought the use of planting was "wonderful" while another member complimented the "fluid landscape aesthetic" noting that it worked well with the grade changes.

Some members felt that the trees should be located around the entirety of the site to further tie the greenery into the landscape.

Woonerf

Many members noted strong appreciation for the proposed woonerf and casual connection to Albert Campbell Square. These members felt that the daycare and drop-off zone would work well.

Various members wondered whether the western portion at the end of the woonerf could become more of a generous green amenity space. Some members commented that a green space in this location could also begin to address the need for amenity space at grade for the building.

Sustainable Design

Sustainability Strategy

The Panel advised that the project team should ensure the in depth sustainability strategy is fully implemented in the final product.