

CITY OF TORONTO DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

MINUTES: MEETING 3 – March 10, 2022

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday March 10, 2022 at 12:30pm.

Members of the Design Review Panel

Members Present

Gordon Stratford (Co-Chair): Principal – G C Stratford – Architect	✓ ††
Michael Leckman (Co-Chair): Principal – Diamond Schmitt Architects	✓ †
Meg Graham (Co-Chair): Principal – superkül	
Margaret Briegmann: Associate – BA Group	
Dima Cook: Director – EVOQ Architecture	✓
George Dark: Partner Emeritus/Senior Consultant – 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	✓
Olivia Keung: Architect – Moriyama & Teshima Architects	✓
Paul Kulig: Principal – Perkins & Will	✓
Joe Lobko: Partner – DTAH	
Anna Madeira: Principal – BDP Quadrangle	✓
Jim Melvin: Principal Emeritus/Advisor – PMA; Owner – Realm Works	
Juhee Oh: Director, Sustainability & Energy – WSP	
Heather Rolleston: Principal, Design Director – BDP Quadrangle	✓
Eladia Smoke: Principal Architect – Smoke Architecture	
Sibylle von Knobloch: Principal – NAK Design Group	✓

† Chair of 1st Session

†† Chair of 2nd Session

Design Review Panel Coordinator

Meredith Vaga: Urban Design, City Planning Division

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Panel confirmed minutes of their previous meeting which was held on February 17, 2022 by email.

MEETING 3 INDEX

- i. Keele-St. Clair Study Update – for Information (2nd Review)
- ii. Hotel X – Phase 2 (2nd Review)

KEELE-ST. CLAIR STUDY UPDATE – FOR INFORMATION

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

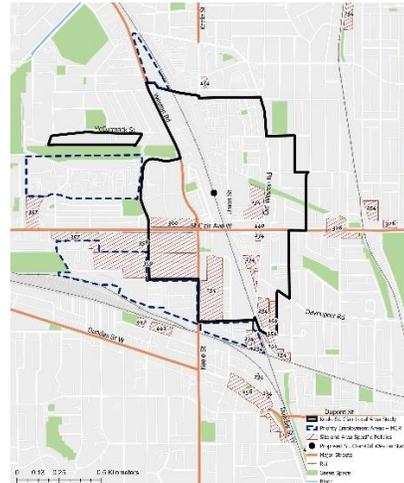
DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW Second Review

APPLICATION City study

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Steven Dixon, Strategic Initiatives,
Policy & Analysis; Allison Reid,
Urban Design



VOTE No vote

Introduction

City staff outlined the project history, existing and future context, and planning framework.

The session was primarily an information session, but staff were also interested in the Panel's advice on whether the Policy vision is clear and if any adjustments/additions should be considered to further strengthen and clarify the Plan, particularly around matters of urban design, including the Public Realm and Built Form sections.

Chair's Summary of Key Points

With all the growth emerging at Keele and St. Clair, a strong, clear statement of priorities is essential, and the Keele St Clair Study Update frames them very well.

Panel clearly understands that this is an area that's transforming, not just from low rise to vertical, but also one that risks losing an incredibly rich employment culture that you've heard many of our colleagues talk about: one with a character that is vibrant and should be maintained. As well, the area has the kind of richness and complexity – the appreciative term 'gnarly' was heard several times – of a non-Cartesian, discontinuous, foreign territory, by virtue of the remarkable geometric character of created by the collision of nature, transit infrastructure and street grids: this is another inherent complexity that should be maintained and enhanced.

With every neighbourhood undergoing change like this one, there is an opportunity to idealize, and imagine a successful, inspiring environment as the outcome. Panel members suggested ways to capture and enhance the inherent character: the definition of “mixed use” could be examined so that the current scale and variety of uses, which is so rich, can be continued; existing green spaces could be better defined, enriched, and strengthened; new green space can be considered not only in as consolidated areas but also in intensified ribbons; ensuring that continuities illustrated in the plan are achievable, so that basic strategies for crossing the three-dimensional complexity of the site are much more explicit. Without confidence in those strategies, some of these crucial principles might fail.

Panel felt that the values and principles underlying the document are headed in a very good direction and remain very interested to see how the proposed character and the ambitions can be enriched and strengthened in its next phases.

Panel Commentary

- Thank you for the presentation.
- This represents a huge amount of work; thank you.
- Thank you to the team that has been working on this, and for all the hard work.
- Thank you for the presentation, the study is focusing on all the right things, including affordability, naturalization, and undertaking an extensive engagement process.
 - o Developing a great understanding of the experience of living here, and then working to develop a plan that respects the existing neighbourhood is a great approach.
- Great commentary, congratulations team; this is an incredibly sophisticated plan. The site is like wrestling an elephant, and appreciate the sophistication of what's being presented.
- Wonder if there could be an opportunity to look at the study in different ways?
 - o E.g. one review focusing just on the public realm and another review focusing just on built form. There is too much for one meeting.
- Thank you for creating a wonderful vision for the area.

Graphic Standards / Drawings

- The presentation really benefits from the verbal accompaniment.
 - o Had to have google open to understand what the maps were showing. There were also a number of maps at the same scale and the legend was only at the beginning of the document.
 - o It was generally very difficult to sift through the big ideas that are now evident after the presentation.
 - o One example: the hydro corridor connection. In google, at the crossing across Weston Rd, the amount of topography, retaining walls that have to be navigated is not present in the mapping. Suggest having a lot of call out images next to maps to show the real life conditions, as well as what's present/what's envisioned in vignettes to help people absorb the full breadth of the study.
- Graphics are everything; use graphics to tell the story.
- Graphics could show a bit more of the intent for the character of the area and what it desired by the study team.
- Graphically the study might benefit from having more than one map; suggest developing different types of maps as well.
 - o For example, it would be helpful to have a map that shows the existing network of community facilities and how it would tie into the new network of facilities that are being proposed by the study.
- Had to consult google to appreciate the challenges of the area, even though have familiarity with it.

Open & Green Spaces

- Few questions, particularly around the open realm and green space – maybe it's in the guidelines, but not clear on how it gets realized.
- Assuming the green space indicated for development is foreseeing the additional 20,000 people in the neighbourhood and it's planned for that vision/density of occupants in the area?
- Regarding other planned green space: will it solely be acquired based on development charges? How certain are these going to come in? And when?
- Will green space come before development?

- Regarding corridors and setbacks/trees: is that in the guidelines phase? How do greenery and trees get added?
- Even looking at aerial photos, it is clear that this area of the city doesn't have the same tree canopy as the rest of the city. Glad to see this being folded into the aspirations in a substantial way.
- There are not enough park spaces in the city and this neighbourhood is a grey area for sure. Is there a way to "turbo charge" the smaller creeks as they come together? Assembling and consolidating any future parks into larger pieces is very important.
- Some developments have the right amount of POPS spaces coloured green, but not enough size to count as a real public space assembled together.
 - o Identifying larger blocks where larger public spaces could be made would be great.
- Pg. 43-44 in the drawing package included a mandate about restoring and reconnecting to water and nature. This is commendable. Wonder if when density is added to the neighbourhood, if there will be a need to put more into the green spaces.
 - o It would be better if the amount of green didn't always need to be playing catch up.
 - o Suggest looking at the proposed greenline at Yonge and Eglinton as an approach to adding more green to over built neighbourhoods in unconventional ways. This study should take every possible move to create an array of approaches to add to the tree canopy.
- The guiding principle to restore reconnect and reconnect to water and nature is strong. A lot of the ideas presented are very organic, which fits with the area as it is also eclectic and organic; however, the study is missing how this character translates into plan.
- The green spine is strong and will help connect the area; this will be a huge factor going forward.
- If there will be bridging over the hydro corridor, having a piece of green structure floated over the tracks would be a very interesting move to bridge the corridor.
- The Old Stockyards seem to be bound between employment and mixed use with a "super wide ROW". Is there an opportunity to make a green corridor that augments the pedestrian network? Introduce biophilia in areas where parks will not be implemented immediately. Get every scrap of green for the area possible.
- The open spaces need more teeth.
- The east-west connection to the hydro corridor – it's not clear how it goes over the rail line extension of the road system? Is there a separate pedestrian layer?
 - o This needs more teeth to ensure it happens, or else it will become sidelined, which would be unfortunate.
- Hope the streets are successfully greened with trees. Suggest developing policies to look at utilities for streets so that street trees can happen.

Street Grid & Site Plan

- Because of the non-Cartesian nature of the street and the disconnections of the streets as well as large blocks of industry, space forms a foreign territory: it is different when there compared to other parts of the city. There is a rotated orientation and it's hard to understand where you are.
- It's a different place in the city; the geometry of the place and the large ownership blocks are challenging.
- This is a gnarly part of the city: it is the site where there is a collision of all these different paths and streets and the question becomes how to knit it together.
- Pick moments to connect across/through/over the rail corridor to begin to knit together the disparate parts of the neighbourhood.
- Agreeing and loving the word another panelist used – gnarly – it really describes this area and plan, and how complex it all is.

- The midblock connections could be made very strong, laid over the plan and restore the thoroughfares at grade.
- Connections both under and over the corridors are both very important.
- The 3D diagram shows blocks of development that will land in the area. Understand streetwalls and where the study is coming from in terms of height and how it will be formed; however, worried that this will lead to a monotonous streetwall and a heavy approach. Wonder if there is a better way that allows the eclectic and organic street network to be preserved.
 - o Maybe some dead ends could be kept; this is an interesting part of the city where one can get lost and enjoy the history of how things are terminated/started in this area.
- Want more information on the location of community services and facilities as well as their relationship to the cycling network.
- The connectivity of the community facilities could be stronger.
- Glad to see that more mobility studies will be coming.
- There is a strong north-south connection in the area and there could be more east-west connections.
- There are grade changes, rail and hydro corridors, that slice things up in a way that is not obvious in plan.
- A lot of things, because the area is so nodal, there is density at nodes, transit centre, etc. results in the edges being forgotten. The edges are critical.
 - o Bike connections peter out to the north. Stitch them together so people can get to Mt. Dennis and all the way downtown.
 - o Look at the edges north-south to find opportunities to augment the public realm.
- Regarding the diagram of midblock connections from the intersection of St. Clair and Weston/Keele to the southwest, not a fan of diagonals as they "knock the feet out" of built form.
 - o Would rather see strong café/retail spaces and access to the neighbourhood a block over.
 - o Instead focus on places where there are truly missing links, for example at Old Weston Rd and St. Clair to the T-street there are no pedestrian crossings. Crosswalks and green links could start to be introduced at Silverthorn as well.
- Develop a fine grained pedestrian walkway map, and then each area can become a mini project.
- Midblock connections contribute to a wonderful experience.
- Be mindful of the perimeter of the area and create connections out of the area into the surrounding neighbourhood so those neighbourhoods can also move in a pleasant environment to the core area.

Public Realm

- Appreciate the key connectivity nodes and the areas for public art – this is important.
- Cawthra and Geary have become high streets and hearts for the community; glad that the study has acknowledged and understood that.
- Regarding the avenue designation of the east-west roads in the study area: what are the improvements to the actual road that can be made? There are topography changes, guardrails that are tight to the curb, fast moving traffic...
 - o Successful pedestrian activation will be a very big challenge for the area.
- The walkability and cycling texture in the study is fantastic; the connectivity of this into a larger street network is also a great thing to support.
- The public realm is incredibly important.

- Looking at the public realm piece, there is a lot at the policy level, but how does the West Toronto Rail Path connect over Weston Rd? How will it get under the Gunns Rd underpass to make the connection to green?
 - o This level of detail is critical for implementing the policies, and is a priority in terms of getting the work started. Advise looking at the study area at this level of detail everywhere: every edge, crossing and connection is critical.

Employment Lands & Mixed Use

- Currently the area has a very eclectic employment uses, such as fabric shops. How will the study ensure a variety of employment in the future mixed use areas?
- Think there should be some areas that are just employment.
- Employment considerations should take a structured approach.
- Zooming in on the small scale, worried from the last time the Panel saw the study about the required system of uses and definition of land uses.
 - o Worried this will come back and haunt us. Maybe there needs to be tools to better deliver what the study is hoping for.
 - o Concerned that the concept of personality or the character of the area (gnarly; special buildings on Cawthra; neighbourhood next to employment with residential filtered in) will be "completely bleached out in plan".
 - The "collisions" of the wonderful mix of people living and working at a very small scale won't be delivered unless the mixed use definition is able to convey your intent for the area: every mixed use block should be a priority area for employment.
 - There are amazing employment places that will be lost if this is not addressed, like International Cheese (the best ricotta in the city).
- If there is no small scale Geary Ave, Cawthra Ave new economy/old economy small scale spaces the "same old" mix of retail uses found in new developments will start to take over.
 - o There has to be study and commitment to what is a diverse economy. This needs to be one of the major points – we are losing these types of spaces in the city. These types of spaces should be amplified and embraced.
 - o Meat packing district in New York City 20 years ago was the "coolest place on earth". After the highline arrives the area was completely gentrified. It is now a beautiful area, but it lost something.
 - The same thing could happen here. The study needs to support the small makers etc. that we all love and the guidelines as shown won't be enough to do this. More work needs to be done on how to deliver that experience.
- The land use maps and purple dots shown east-west of Cawthra that disappeared in the future version will make places like International Cheese disappear.
 - o This is partially due to the existing definition of the land use categories; therefore there is an opportunity to create a new definition.
 - How do you allow a small landowner to continue while also allowing an area to densify? If this isn't addressed there will be land assemblies.
 - Developing policies to preserve the land pattern is another approach forward.

Built Form

- Appreciate the built form neighbourhood approach to break the area into a finer grain "particular-ness" for the neighbourhoods. This was allow the scale to vary.
- It is fascinating how you are studying density.
- With the rail corridor coming through, wonder whether there could be another type of built form that spans across the hydro corridor?

- The built form being proposed in the station north area is a bit aggressive in terms of height and density. The area adjacent to Lavender Creek Trail and the neighbourhood to the north might benefit from more of a midrise typology.
- Showing transitions in height and land use that moves progressively towards employment or neighbourhood, but how does it play out on the ground?

HOTEL X PHASE 2 – EXHIBITION PLACE

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

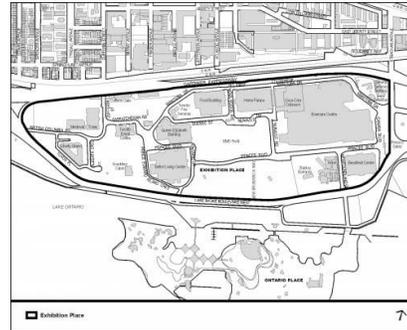
DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW Second Review

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Victoria Fusz, Community Planning; Nasim Adab, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Armstrong Planning



VOTE* Support – 5
 Non-support – 2

**Two Panel members left before the 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:

- **General**
 - Response to first review comments of the Panel
- **Built Form**
 - The relationship of the proposed building, in terms of scale, height, form, setbacks, transition, base building, main entrances and architectural expression within the Exhibition Place context
- **Cultural Heritage**
 - The massing and exterior expression of the building and materials in relation to the heritage fabric, namely Stanley Barrack
 - Archeological assessment and relationship of the proposed development to Stanley Barracks
 - In situ preservation and interpretation of significant archaeological features
 - Preserving important views as described in the Cultural Heritage Study, Phase 1 report and the Official Plan
 - Appropriate public realm transition to Stanley Barracks
- **Public Realm**
 - Overall public realm enhancement in relation to the bigger context
 - Princes' Blvd Streetscape design and meeting place
 - Enhancement of the existing mid-block connection that runs through the site
 - Connection to and from Ontario Place
 - The enhancement of promenade south of the site
 - Relationship of the proposed development with Lake Shore Blvd W
 - Enhancement of open space on the westernmost side of the site

Chair's Summary of Key Points

The Panel would like to thank the proponent team for both the presentation and their design development efforts since the last submission. Exhibition Place is of particular importance to Toronto, possessing a unique balance of deep heritage (sometimes hidden) and the energy and transitory celebration of often large short-term events.

Exhibition Place has been undergoing a transition where new uses are being introduced, with the project reviewed today being a significant addition. The success of this project is very important in terms of maintaining and enhancing the balance.

Panel members have commented about the improvements made to the design in terms of providing a better fit with surrounding context, the potential for public pedestrian flow between hotel and event venue, the attempt to bring hidden heritage to light, and the further development of the character of the building.

As a site that is open to public use on all sides, there are issues that need to be addressed more fully. These include:

Heritage: Ensure that the significant heritage along the east side of the event venue is given sensitive visual (and public access) importance that is not overwhelmed by the venue. Also, ensure that in doing this the heritage is not seen as an isolated fragment but as a complete and more integrated picture of the historic fort that is partially revealed to the east.

Public Realm: Develop the north-south pedestrian pathway so that the route up to and through the Urban Room is intuitively clear. Encourage public pedestrian flow along an enclosed, more services programme-activated east edge of the venue (fort history storytelling opportunity overlooking heritage site).

Site Planning – West Side: Reduce surface parking in favour of landscaped pedestrian-oriented plaza, and attractively screen highly visible services structure in southwest corner of the site (see View 11 in submission package).

Signage/Visual Display – South Side: Given the natural, civic and heritage context along the south side of the site ensure that the proposed signage/visual display wrap does not overwhelm and detract.

Scale: Ensure that the big design elements are counterbalanced with finer moves that are sensitive to the pedestrian-scaled experience and the surrounding context (including heritage).

Sustainability: Ensure that this project is an exemplar of sustainability for its entire site and built form.

The Panel appreciates the proponent team's design skill, and their ability to address the above to create a design that thoughtfully fits into the context of a treasured existing major community amenity.

Panel Commentary

The Panel thanked the design team for their presentation and several members remarked on the substantial thought and redesign that had gone into the project since the last Panel review. Many members noted appreciation for the amount of Panel comments that had been taken into consideration and various members thought many of the "big moves" in the current iteration had begun to resolve many of the previous issues. The changes to the setback, height and orientation as well as the green roofs were all noted as specific positive improvement.

Moving forward, the Panel strongly advised that much more consideration was required around the significant cultural heritage resources and archaeological features. The Panelists strongly felt that the archaeology should be preserved in situ, and further advised that the interpretation of the archaeology, cultural heritage, and artefacts needed much more consideration and development.

The public realm, including the site plan, provision for parking and pedestrian connections were also noted as areas that needed further development, along with the 1:20/1:50 finer grained details and consideration of the arena as a space "in the round". Various Panel members commented that the project was located in an area that has historically been associated with innovation and optimism, and that this aspect should be further recognized through a more ambitious and innovative sustainable design response.

The Panel looked forward to seeing the project progress.

CNE & Ontario Place Context

- The Panel noted that the CNE and Ontario Place were "conjoined urban pieces" and pointed out that any discussion on how to develop them or what to do with them, had been a decades-long collective joined activity.
 - o Various members felt it would be important to show greater context to provide more understanding of all the other stuff that is occurring or being explored in Ontario Place.
- One member commented that while they understood that the government's directive had been to find ways to ensure Ontario Place was a destination for national and international visitors; however, it didn't say how to make it useful for citizens that use it every day.
 - o This member advised that further consideration of how to bring the daily citizens appreciation and daily use of the area, such as through ways to accentuate the "love of living in the city" would be an important element of the design proposal and public realm considerations.

Significant Cultural Heritage & Archaeological Features

- The Panel strongly felt that the archaeology should be kept in situ and were surprised by the amount of archaeological resources were being proposed to be removed.
 - o One member specifically commented that they felt saddened that the fort was not being preserved in its entirety.
 - o Various members commented that removing all the foundations was a "big" decision.
- Many Panel members pointed out that the New Fort and Barracks constituted a significant part of Toronto's history and should be preserved, seen and embraced.
 - o Some members additionally noted that the Barracks constituted some of the older known built pieces of Toronto's history.
- Several Panel members further advised that the archaeology needed to be preserved in context.
 - o One Panel member elaborated that as per heritage resource guidelines, one should be able to look up and understand how the exposed archaeological resources connect to the rest of the archaeological site.
 - o The Panel pointed out that the proposed ramp and glass floor would disconnect the archaeology from its site as it presents just a portion of the resources in isolation.
 - Various members commented that a small view into the ground of a very small portion of the former fort would create a condition where the resources are very disconnected from the archaeology actually was and its context.

- Some members advised that this proposed strategy for viewing the foundations goes counter to fundamental ideas of archaeology and how to preserve connections to its context.
 - One member further made the point that the archaeology should not be re-contextualized into the proposed buildings' context especially when it disconnects it from its actual context.
 - Many members pointed out that the ramp blocks the archaeology from the Barracks and should be completely removed.
- The Panel strongly felt there were better ways to convey the context of this significant historic element in the landscape, including ways to convey the scale of the Fort.
- Looking at the opportunities for interpretation, various members strongly felt that a lot more thought was required in terms of how the resources will be interpreted, as well as mitigating any potential removal of the archaeology.
- Some members wondered whether the archaeological excavation could be viewed from level 0 in the proposed building, allowing patrons "peeks" into the fort foundations.

Additional Ways to Further Acknowledge Cultural Heritage

- The Panel strongly felt that the archaeological resources should be kept in situ, but further posited a variety of ways to further acknowledge the cultural heritage of the areas. Some of these suggestions included:
 - Finding ways to incorporate the cultural heritage and archaeological history into the public realm and open space, such as by using subtle paving to outline the footprint of the fort and the area it encompassed;
 - Finding ways to highlight the distinct form of the fort and star footprint;
 - Ensure any artefacts (or archaeology) that is removed takes a bit more of a "front and center" role;
 - One example of how to achieve this included the Globe and Mail building on King St with small vitrines in the walls of the through lobby that house all the pieces that were found when they excavated the site.
 - Think more abstractly about heritage and incorporating heritage pieces and acknowledging the significant cultural heritage on the immediate site and in the broader area.

Potential Precedents for Archaeological Interpretation Strategies

- Some members suggested specific potential precedents of archaeological interpretation strategies where the archaeology was preserved even when it couldn't be preserved in situ.
 - These members noted that interpretation was included in the concept of the building and the site.
- The first precedent was the Bloomberg building in London, UK and the Mithraeum.
 - The Mithraeum was an ancient Roman temple of Mithras.
 - The Mithraeum was built as a separate interpretive space and functions as a performance space that takes people into the history of the site.
- The second precedent was the Auberge Ste Antoine in Quebec City, which was a hotel built on a heritage site.
 - Every piece that was found on the site was turned into something that was either found, such as in the lobby or viewable through a vitrine, such as a large vitrine in the bar. Other pieces were taken and incorporated into the hotel rooms themselves.

New Performance Venue for Toronto

- Some Panel members noted that this could be an important moment in the City of Toronto in terms of performance venues.
 - o One member commented that it was "an entertainment venue of our generation".
 - o One member noted that Esports are very popular and important to many people.

Evolution of the Proposal

- Looking at pg. 5 of the briefing materials which showed the evolution of the design proposal, some members commented that this effectively told the story of the project team's response to the previous Panel commentary, including:
 - o The adjusted scale and massing;
 - o The improved response to circulation on the north and south sides; and
 - o References and appreciation for the Vancouver Convention Centre and its holistic view of a roof landscape connected to a ground landscape.
- Various members felt there were still opportunities for the proposal to continue to evolve.

Value Engineering / Built Project vs. Proposed Design

- Many members were concerned that the proposed design would be value engineered when it was constructed.
 - o Many members were concerned that the materiality being shown would not be in the final building.
 - o One member pointed out that the project was at a site plan application stage and therefore quite far along the process.
- Some members, reflecting back to the original Hotel X and the difference between the proposal and built design, felt very concerned that a similar result for happen on this site.
- A few members pointed out that there are currently "horrendous price increase[s]" due to current events. The Panel advised securing a budget that can't be value engineered would be important.
- Various members pointed out that the site was publicly owned and thus had a duty to delivering what was being promised.

Public Realm

- Various members noted that the public realm was a unique place, as it was sparsely attended 90% of the time, and then hosted "massive crowds" the other 10% of the time.
 - o The Panel noted that balancing the two public realm requirements was a challenge because it would need to serve both conditions.
 - o Some members additionally pointed out that there was "general city life" around the site and broader area that also needed to be accommodated for.
- A member felt that the streetscape was a good continuation of what had been started in the east-west direction; however, wayfinding from the north or south was not intuitive.
- Some members suggested further investigation on how the venue can work with the security perimeters and fencing to ensure there is more of a public use from both Princes' Blvd and Lake Shore would help bring it into the public realm in a more successful way.

Connection to Ontario Place & Waterfront

- The Panel advised that it was not obvious how to connect down to Ontario Place and the waterfront, in part due to the fixed wall that interrupts the flow of movement.
 - o Many members pointed out that although in plan the connection appeared to be a straight line, in reality there would be a grade change.
 - When looking from the north at the hotel where the upper and lower grade connects, it is not obvious how to make that connection.
 - Many members advised that it would be hard to figure out how to connect down to Ontario Place as there is a wall and a different grade.

- The Panel advised further thought as to how to make the connection smoother and clearer for the public.
- Various members commented that it would help with traffic flow if it was clearer what constituted public space.
 - Some members additionally suggested having a continuity of all the spaces out into the broader exhibition grounds to better identify how the areas connect to each other.
- Some members pointed out that currently the connection at this location between Ontario Place and Exhibition Place is "iconic" and a "well-loved route".
- The Panel advised that emphasizing the connection would be very important as the area evolves.
- Some members felt that it would be great if the bridge connection could be the responsibility of this project.
 - A member pointed out that this would allow the two architectures to run together.
- Various members advised further consideration and development of the urban realm and how it relates to the historical context, base of the proposed building, and materiality of the design

Urban Room

- The Panel had mixed opinions on the urban room.
 - One Panel member was in support of the room as a concept, but felt that it needed to become a "majestic" space that people would enter and experience.
 - This member further advised against having vestibules and instead suggested developing the space to function more as a sieve to create a more "tempered" experience.
 - Various other Panel members thought that although the urban room would be free flowing, even if it was open 24/7 it still presents a wall to the public as one has to go through a set of doors to enter it.
 - These members cautioned the project team that the urban room doesn't present as being part of public space.
- Some members suggested, if the urban room was kept, developing another space that is completely open and free.
- Some members felt the vertical mass of the hotel would instinctively draw people to the hotel lobby. These members pointed out that the majority of people using the space would be utilizing and passing through the urban room.
 - The members then felt the formal composition did not support intuitive wayfinding and advised further consideration of the master planning for the site and broader area.

Multi-modal Transportation & Parking

- The Panel thought that way too much parking was being proposed. One Panel member pointed out the project was proposing 400+ spots for hotel guests, and only 50 bike spots.
 - Several Panel members pointed out that a multi-billion dollar investment was being made in transit for the area.
 - Many Panel members questioned why there was virtually no provision for bike parking.
 - One member pointed out that the City of Toronto's Official Plan and various policies would require an inversion of those parking numbers.
- Various members suggested the surface parking being proposed should be reconceived as a plaza that cars can park in during the large events at the entertainment venue.

- Some members additionally advised ensuring there is ample bike parking, close to the venue, under/above/at-grade.

Landscape Design Relating to the Built Form

- Various members commented that it felt like the landscape design didn't belong to either the esports arena or the tower/hotel.
 - o These members suggested making a decision about which aspect of the project the landscape is a part of.
- One member suggested looking for a way for the inflections in the architecture to find themselves a bit more in the landscape.

Built Form Articulation & Materiality

- Various members advised developing the building more as a building in the landscape.
- Looking at the scale of the detailing, some members noted that the majority of the views provided showed the building from a distance. These members wondered how the building and materiality would feel up close.
 - o A member questioned the 1:50 and 1:20 details.
 - o A member advised focusing on the details around the entrances and other places that people would regularly engage with.
- A member pointed out that the front and back of the building had been heavily developed, but the sides were quite unarticulated.
 - o This member questioned several finer grained, underdeveloped details, including where benches would be placed, what was considered public vs. private, and the location of places for staff to take breaks.
 - Other members suggested there were opportunities for public art around the base of the building in the spaces that were currently underdeveloped.
 - o Various members questioned what it would feel like walking around the entire base of the building.
 - One member used the Skydome as an example to illustrate this point.
 - Various members questioned the location of the exits.
 - Some members felt that the exit stairs, mechanical screens and other "back of house" elements should be as special as the volume of the main buildings.
- Some members commented that they were intrigued by the "extraterrestrial" shape of the massing.
 - o One member felt that the shift of the hotel massing made the building more complex and intriguing.
 - o Some members noted appreciation for the tension between the tower form and the "more voluptuous" arena volume.
 - One member suggested the curvilinear massing could be clad in the same material for more of a "roguish" quality.
- The Panel advised that the execution of the small details in the building articulation and massing will be a major component of whether the articulation and massing is successful.
- Various members noted appreciation for the revisions that had been made to the building massing, including:
 - o the tucking in from both Lake Shore in the south and Princes' Blvd in the north; and
 - o the general "quieting" of the project, particularly at the building base.
- Looking at the tower form, some members noted appreciation for the additional information regarding the curtain wall.
 - o One member commented that prior to hearing this additional detail they had been missing the original texture that had been proposed in the tower. This member was

- glad to see that there were still textural elements that will result in a play of light and shimmer.
- Some members noted appreciation for the shaping on the end of the tower and the screening of the mechanical equipment at the top of the building.
 - Various members noted appreciation for the material palette and precedents shown.
 - o Many members thought the materiality shown for both the building and the site was interesting and had potential; however, various members noted that there were still some areas for improvement.
 - Some members questioned why more information hadn't been included in the drawing package on the materiality; one member noted that a commitment to materiality is something that would be expected at the site plan stage.
 - o A member commented that they were "nervous" about the proposed wood façade, noting that it is difficult to detail to ensure a wood was chosen for the vertical surface that would hold up in 10 years.
 - A few members commented that if the glass egress stair pavilions are kept they should feel as invisible as possible.
 - o One member noted that in renders of these elements there were thick elements that should become more "glassy" and minimal.
 - Various members questioned what was governing the height of the performance centre portion of the proposal.
 - o One member noted that the space was essentially a black box, a piece of program, and so questioned whether there was an opportunity for it to be lowered and set into the ground a bit more.
 - This member wondered whether parts of the venue space massing could appear to be emerging rather than floating.

Arena Design & Interface with the Public Realm

- Many members recommended further work was required to create a more comfortable pedestrian zone on all sides.
- Various members thought that the arena portion felt very heavy and distant.
- Many members pointed out that there was a disconnect between the interior and the exterior of the building, particularly in terms of the performance venue spaces.
 - o A member commented that from the outside, one would have no idea of the energy occurring inside.
 - o Various members suggested incorporating more transparent elements, transparent walls at grade to allow for a greater sense of what is happening inside.
- A member noted that in terms of arena design, the proposal appeared to be pursuing a modern futuristic design approach. This member pointed out that other modern arenas in Toronto, such as the O'Keefe Centre, also have a certain geometry and an optimistic futurism.
 - o They went on to note that the CNE is also home to previous optimistic modern enterprises as well.
- Many Panel members felt more work should be done to enhance the public realm around the building for the "daily everyday citizen use".
 - o LMN Architects' Vancouver Convention Centre was suggested as a precedent for enhancing the public realm, with a member pointing out that the overhangs and glass all contribute to it feeling more public at grade.
 - A member commented that it is pleasant walking around the Vancouver Convention Centre in the evening because it is a lovely building with a good interface onto the public realm.

- A member suggested looking at the Barclay Centre in Brooklyn for a precedent of a building that has been put into a different scale of neighbourhood. This member noted that there are similarities between the two projects in terms of vocabulary and expression.

Venue Entrance

- Various members felt the entrance to the venue could gain a little more flair.
 - Some members wondered if there was an opportunity to bring some sensibilities to the entrance to expand it.
 - Various members pointed out that the majority of attendees would be likely to be coming from the north and therefore would be seeing the entrance from that perspective.
 - The Panel wondered if there was a way to bring together the multimedia experience at the entrance rather than how it was currently oriented towards the automobile users on Lake Shore Blvd.

Sustainable Design

- The Panel strongly advised that the project needed a greater commitment towards sustainability and sustainable design.
- A member commented that such a prominent building needed to do more than target the minimum TGS requirements.
 - Various members pointed out that sustainable commitments needed to be made in the early days, and should be done in an inspiring way that is integral to the design of the building.
- Looking at the glass tower, a member noted that more articulation could help with catching light, and that this could be done while reducing the window to wall ratio.
 - Integrated PV was suggested as another way to improve the building envelope while also capturing the spirit of innovation.
- Some members commented that currently the most inspiring sustainable initiative was the "huge" green roof. The Panel suggested pushing the ambitions of the green roof further, including looking into water conservation or biodiversity as well as designing the space as a façade or landscape.

Proposed Lake Shore Blvd Screens

- Various members pointed out that Lake Shore Blvd in this location has always been a place of a lot of green and not a place that has been imbued with a lot of advertising.
 - These Panel members questioned the decision to introduce a lot amount of advertising with the multimedia screens and suggested that this portion of the design should be rethought.
- A member suggested looking at the Barclays Centre in Brooklyn as a good precedent for a building that has been put into a different scale of neighbourhood in terms of the vocabulary and expression of the Barclays Centre in comparison to the proposed video wall
 - This member wondered whether there was a lesson that could be learned from the way Barclays responding to the community and peer feedback.
 - One thing of note was how they responded to design review panel commentary to create an entrance experience.