

CITY OF TORONTO DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

MINUTES: MEETING 8 – September 15, 2022

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday September 15, 2022 at 12:25pm.

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: Independent Consultant, Transportation Engineering | ✓ | ** |
| Jessica Hutcheon: Principal – Janet Rosenberg & Studio | ✓ | * |
| 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 | | |
| <i>†Chair of 1st Session</i> | <i>††Chair of 2nd Session</i> | <i>†††Chair of 3rd Session</i> |
| <i>*Conflict 2nd Session</i> | <i>#Conflict 3rd Session</i> | <i>**Present 1st Session</i> |
| <i>##Present 3rd Session</i> | <i>###Absent 1st Session</i> | |

Members of the Waterfront Toronto Design Review Panel – Present for Second Item

Peter Busby: Managing Director, Perkins + Will, San Francisco

Gina Ford: Principal, Agency Landscape + Planning

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 July 16, 2022 by email.

MEETING 8 INDEX

- i. Thermal Comfort Study (1st Review)
- ii. East Harbour – Phase 1, Tower 1B, 21 Don Roadway – Joint WT Panel (3rd Review)
- iii. Bloor-Kipling Block 1, 5207 Dundas St. W. – Housing Now (1st Review)

THERMAL COMFORT STUDY

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW First Review

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Rong Yu, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Antonio Gómez-Palacio, Dialog;
Bernardo Vazquez, Buro Happold



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. Does the background work resonate with you, and do you have any specific comments on the following:
 - Findings of Toronto context (both physical and planning); and
 - Findings of thermal comfort case studies.
2. Having regard for typical applications that come before you and considering what the panel can have a positive influence on, is there anything we need to consider that we have not in out:
 - Emerging themes;
 - Emerging recommendations; and
 - Emerging Table of Content.

Chair's Summary of Key Points

Panel appreciated the opportunity to consider a process that would improve thermal comfort in public realm design in Toronto. By combining the human impacts of solar access and wind speed, the approach promises to extend the usability of outdoor spaces into the shoulder seasons and beyond. Panel was in favour of pursuing this approach as well as the update it would bring to current City standards addressing environmental impacts of built form on public spaces. To go further, and to quote from the study, "Toronto needs to find an innovative voice as a four seasons city".

There was support for the proposed table of contents for both the clarity it represents and the principles it espouses, but also in reminding that there should be a direct link between the guiding principles and the performance metrics.

Panel proposed some improvements for consideration:

- Provide both performance and prescriptive standards so that the document encourages more detailed study by the design teams, with the aspiration that innovation can emerge as a result;
- Include a range of scales in the case studies, especially ones that represent current development practices and intensity of site coverage;

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

MINUTES: Meeting 8– September 15, 2022

- Include a range of scales in the case studies that address the recent trend in mall redevelopment near high-speed regional expressways
- Implement a generous minimum study area so that it is possible to evaluate the impact of new development on neighbourhoods beyond the immediate site.

Finally, there was optimism that this kind of study will provide one more layer of reinforcement toward overcoming the shortfall of park space which we are experiencing throughout the city.

Panel Commentary

The Panel thanked the study team for their clear presentation and many members noted it was a very important initiative. Various members complimented the team on the "end to end thinking" on the study and additionally thought the work resonated with an equity-forward approach.

Moving forward, the Panel advised further consideration of how the prescriptive and performance based metrics are linked, as well as broadening the case study sites. Many members additionally suggested bringing forward different ways of thinking about thermal comfort and public spaces as the study progresses. The Panel looked forward to seeing the study again.

Document Organization

- A member complimented the study team on how the draft document had been organized. This member felt that it was unusual to see studies with this amount of forethought around what needed to be included in the document and suggested it could become a benchmark for other studies.
 - o Another member hoped the study could become a template for similar initiatives.
- Various members complimented the study team on the "end to end thinking" on the study.

Study Approach

- Some members commended the study team on their equity forward approach to the work done to date.
- A member noted that they enjoyed reading the draft report.
- In addition to private development and the street network, a member strongly advised ensuring these guidelines also apply to TTC facilities and other transit infrastructure.
 - o One example this member gave was thermal comfort when waiting for a bus in the summer and winter.

Implementation

- Various Panelists noted that they "fully endorsed" and would support having a thermal comfort analysis be a requirement for future applications.
- Many members advised including a minimum required study area beyond the site as part of the implementation of the study.
 - o A member pointed out that new developments could come in and change the good work that had been done before, so if there was a requirement to go beyond the property line developments would instead have to consider, for example, the impact of a 60 storey significant development next door to a bike path.

Performance vs Prescriptive Based Metrics

- Many Panel members thought there should be a combination of both performance and prescriptive based metrics required by the City.
 - o Various members felt that a combination of metrics would lead to more developed, thoughtful and unique site-specific solutions.
 - o One member commented that this would give projects some leeway in how they developed a solution. This member additionally felt that it would encourage further study of the thermal comfort of each individual site.

- A member noted appreciation for the emphasis on mobility and cyclists in particular. This member was glad to see that mobility had been tied in with performance measures.

Link between Guiding Principles & Performance Matrix

- Several members advised that it was important to have a direct link between the guiding principles and the performance matrix.
 - o A member noted that having a direct connection between the two was important so that those using the future guidelines would be able to see the link from A to B, which would in turn help the guidelines be implementable.
- A member commented that the trends and terms are clear and well defined.
 - o This member questioned how each of the terms will specifically be defined and used to measure success and performance measures.
 - o The member advised that they should be different from public services.

Prioritizing Conditions / Issues

- A member wondered if there was singular space, such as a large park, what conditions would be prioritized, and what would have the most impact.
 - o The member questioned if a project only had room to address two issues what would they be? Heat or areas of respite from heat? Shade vs shadow?
 - o This member further noted that scale was an important consideration when considering impact.
 - They further elaborated that the area of impact and how that can change the impact of the project is an important piece.
 - For example, if there are large contributors nearby, would a proposed project negatively impact them, or could the project help strengthen the positives.

Develop a Life Centric Approach to Thermal Comfort

- A member noted that they had a huge problem with the proposed guiding principle number 12 as they felt it missed a really big and important piece of thermal comfort, namely the reason that spaces are inhospitable is because they are inhospitable to all life, not just humans.
- Many members agreed that a different way of thinking about thermal comfort was required.
 - o A member advised that a "life centric" approach to thermal comfort could bring forward a different way of thinking.
 - This member suggested that this could become a performance metric, and cover such things as how a project is supporting insects, vegetation, birds etc.
 - This member pointed out that often those lower species are canaries in the coal mine, and an easy way of assessing whether a space is successful for humans is if it successful for these other living beings.

Thermal Comfort in Four Seasons

- A member noted that the statement about Toronto finding an innovative voice as a "four seasons' city" resonated with them.
 - o This member noted that there is a tendency to "hunker down" in winter, and thought it would be great if the study findings enabled additional spaces of respite throughout the city.
- A member advised further emphasis of the shoulder seasons.

- This member pointed out that typically people talk about the benefits of extending outdoor time, which are plentiful. The member felt this was an important part of the study.

Guiding Principle Number 6 & Water

- A member felt that guiding principle number 6 was a very critical principle because the interaction with water and how humans treat water is critically needed right now in current design methods.
 - Some examples of the intersection between water and thermal conditions included conditions of ice and snow and the current reliance, due to design methods, on salt in the wintertime which eradicates vegetation, creates slush and reduces mobility.

Guiding Principle Number 8

- A member pointed out that currently when new towers are developed all four facades tend to be identically treated, which is not good for the exterior or interior environments.

Leftover Spaces

- A member noted that the study presented an opportunity to look at leftover spaces in the city, including offsite spaces, and look at ways to bring them into intentionally designed spaces that improved immediate and overarching thermal comfort.
 - Some examples of leftover spaces included:
 - Traffic meridians and those spaces that aren't typically thought of, and whether there is a way they could become designed and contribute to the city as a whole.
 - Surface parking which are currently "giant frying pans" and difficult for pedestrians to navigate and cross due to the vehicular focused design.

Case Study Sites

- A member commented that while the background research was really great, a more sensitive analysis was required via more case studies and testing to specific conditions needed to be done, including in different parts of the city.
- Some Panel members noted that they understood why fictional sites were being created, particularly for the purpose of tweaking the sites and testing the various outcomes.
 - However, many Panel members wanted to see whether further investigation into existing success stories or other known places in the City that perform well could be undertaken as well.
- A few members pointed out that other architects from different countries already include this type of study as part of their site analysis.
- A member suggested trying to focus in on some of the areas of the city that are either experiencing change or a stress condition, such as a change in the site use to residential, substantial increased densification as compared to the surroundings, or a project located at a major transit interchange.
 - This member wanted to see further analysis around how to create a liveable condition in these places where extremes exist side by side.
- A member thought that the missing middle typology might be another area of the city to further study and analyze.
 - This member noted that the missing middle might impact thermal comfort through such things as the existing tree canopy being put at risk. The member advised getting ahead of this by having strategies put in place to protect the tree canopy and other thermal comfort components while also allowing for an increase in density.

- This member felt that thermal comfort can be enhanced or replaced if something is lost and suggested the study could "turbo charge" other related initiatives in a valuable way.
- A member thought that having a range of sizes in the test sites will help ensure the guidelines are relatable to different situations.

Climate Change

- A member strongly cautioned that the climate emergency is accelerating and there was an urgent need to minimize the Heat Island Effect and maximize livability.
- A member noted that while the study hasn't been updated since the 1990s the climate and the city have both changed substantially. This member commented that these facts pointed to how essential this updated study is for Toronto.
 - Another member was glad to see the study team wasn't relying on past climate patterns.
- A member noted that there will likely be further climate change and deterioration in the future. This member hoped that the study would anticipate that in terms of comfort and the changing climate changes that it can evolve to meet.

Equity & Social Justice

- A member commented that they were heartened to see equity and social justice placed as important issues.
 - This member advised pushing to be more explicit that environmental justice is an important issue and central to the discussion.
- A member noted that while the study team had done a lot of mapping already, they should start to overlay environmental justice, areas of industry, flooding, air pollutions etc.
 - The member noted that these issues will tend to overlay with social economic issues.
- A member advised ensuring City staff who are involved in equity policies (such as the priority neighbourhoods in Toronto) to make sure the issues those neighbourhoods are experiencing can be addressed in the future findings of the study.
- A member noted that the University of Toronto School of Cities is doing a lot of research on the intersection between climate change and social justice.
 - The Turning Up The Heat study out of New York City was also suggested as a good precedent.
- A member noted appreciation for how this critical work was being woven into the environmental and climate work.

EAST HARBOUR – PHASE 1, TOWER 1B, 21 DON ROADWAY

JOINT WATERFRONT TORONTO PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW Third Review

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Seanna Kerr, Community Planning, Ran Chen, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Trent Tesch, KPF Architects;
Charles Cattlett, OJB; Benjamin Hoff, Urban Strategies; Greg Dunn, Adamson Associates



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. Public Realm Network

- Does the proposed design of the open spaces and POPS integrate with the surrounding context in a meaningful way and provide a diversity of programming and uses that are adequately animated?
- Does the proposed private street and vehicle driveway accesses enhance pedestrian and cycling connectivity and the public realm along adjacent public streets?

2. Character and Design Excellence

- Does the proposal, including the open spaces design, celebrate and connect with the industrial legacy and unique character of the area?

3. Sustainability and Resilience

- Does the proposal reflect the City's accelerated timelines to achieve net zero emissions by 2040, and its targets to reduce energy consumption and switch to low-carbon energy sources?

Chair's Summary of Key Points

The East Harbour development, as presented in the first and second submissions to the Design Review Panel, was ground-breaking in its vision of a dynamic new employment hub that embraced and celebrated the existing built form heritage context of its site.

The Phase 1 Tower 1B design submission is situated within a different master plan than presented earlier. The new plan is both improved by becoming a mixed-use district (through added residential uses) and diminished by the loss of the unique heart and soul of the original vision (through removal of the existing built form heritage context).

It is vital to Toronto's success as a "place of choice" that East Harbour becomes an exceptional new hub that is not just anywhere. It needs to expertly blend the best of what the city's downtown workplace core offers with the vibrant authentic character of the Distillery District.

To achieve the above the design of Phase 1 Tower 1B must set an exemplar precedent for the overall East Harbour development; with further work needed in the following areas:

- **RESPONSE TO CONTEXT – HERITAGE:** The proposed design includes some references to the site's built form heritage but more is needed in order to sufficiently celebrate that heritage:
 - Develop strategy for inclusion of significant existing built form heritage elements in Phase 1 and throughout the overall development.
 - Ensure that new and old building elements evoking built form heritage are included at ground level, to celebrate heritage character and enhance East Harbour Plaza, Event Lawn, and Amphitheatre public realm experience.
- **RESPONSE TO CONTEXT – DON RIVER + DVP + RAIL CORRIDOR:** The proposed outdoor amenities east and south of the tower promise a high-quality public realm, but the immediately adjacent expressway and rail corridor provide a visual, noise and air pollution challenge. As well, the Don River and its floodplain present both challenge and opportunity relative to the proposed design.
 - Ensure that the quality and effectiveness of proposed outdoor amenities is not negatively impacted by the adjacent major arterials (DVP, transit corridor) context.
 - Develop a design response to Don River and floodplain context.
 - Include site sections to clearly show design response to the context noted above.
- **RESPONSE TO CONTEXT - TRANSIT HUB:** The proposed site design includes promising efforts to address the adjacent Transit Hub's key pedestrian access point in the north-east corner of the site.
 - Ensure that there is sufficient public realm circulation space along the north and east sides of the site to accommodate significant Transit Hub pedestrian traffic.
- **SITE PLAN DESIGN - MASTER PLAN-WIDE STRATEGY:** The proposed East Harbour Plaza, Event Lawn and Amphitheatre have the potential to set a strong amenities benchmark, but further information is needed in order to fully assess this potential.
 - Provide a more detailed overall plan of the proposed public realm (and amenities) for the overall development's work/live community, and how the Phase 1 public realm integrates with and contributes to that whole.
- **BUILT FORM:** Panel members have expressed support regarding the proposed character of the new built form, and its referencing of the structural cadence and fenestration patterning of the site's industrial built form heritage.
 - Develop this character further, including referencing the solid massing and articulation characteristics that the built form heritage also possesses.
 - Refer to Response to Context – Heritage above.

Panel Commentary

Industrial History of the Site

- Many members wanted to hear more about the industrial history of the site.
- A member noted that they wanted to understand more about how this proposal was linking to the industrial past, and how this heritage might express itself in the material choices.
 - This member noted that the incorporation of history seemed to be leaning towards flexible elements, but wondered whether it could be incorporated into things that feel more rooted as well.

Built Heritage / Soap Factory

- Various members commented that they were very disappointed to see that the Soap Factory was no longer planned to be retained through adaptive reuse, as that had been central to the previous design schemes reviewed by the Panel, and was the "heart" of the previous design.
- A member pointed out that the Soap Factory Building has a lot of very robust artefacts in the building, which could be used in the lobby, the landscape, the food and beverage area etc.
 - o This member strongly encouraged the team to take a very careful inventory of everything in the Soap Factory building if it truly couldn't be saved and adaptively reused.
- Another member noted immense appreciation for the sensitivity of the massing that exists in the Soap Factory building. This member thought that if the heritage building could be adaptively reused and integrated into the proposal it would help the proposed design.

Phase 1

- A member commented that they appreciated the ingredients that were included in phase 1, along with the aspiration of the proposal.
 - o Some things this member specifically noted that were included in phase 1 was how the building was nestled in the transit hub as well as the critical mass being delivered to the public realm.

Site Context

- A member noted that in the renderings of the tower above grade the Toronto context has been included; however, at grade the existing and future context is largely absent.
 - o This member advised that it would help anchor the at-grade renders if the context was included.

Topography

- Various members commented that the topography of the site was unclear.
 - o These members suggested further exploration around the topography and organization of the site elements.
 - o One member thought the topography might help carve out unique and flexible spaces.
 - o A member noted that a lot seemed to be happening on the west side of the site. This member commented that they understood the move to locate things away from the parkway, but advised that the existing condition looked more flat there.
- A member advised diagramming the changes in level to help better understand the site.
 - o For example, this member pointed out that the train is lower than the space immediately south; that on Broadview there is a drop; and there is an exterior grade change to the amphitheatre etc.
 - o This member noted that diagramming the site will both show more sensitive responses or lead to more sensitive responses.
- A member was particularly concerned about how Broadview will be bifurcating the transit plaza with a lower condition.
 - o This member pointed out that this will be a very pedestrian unfriendly condition.

Landscape Design

- A member thought the landscape proposal seemed really intelligent in terms of flexible and intimate spaces.

- A member noted support for the pavilion in the landscape, commenting that they liked that space as a destination and see it as a punctuation of progress, as a distinguishing benchmark in the landscape.
- A member thought that the west side of the site had responded well to the site threshold conditions. This member commented that the proposal was well modulated between the high traffic corridors and the outdoor room and had created a strong progression in the outdoor room.
- A member pointed out that it will be challenging to select appropriate vegetation on the north side of the site due to how shady the conditions would be.

Public Realm

- A member noted appreciation for the landscape and public realm areas, but suggested that the F&B could be more modulated and textured for people sitting in terraces on the grounds floor on the south and south-west sides.
 - o Another member felt that the F&B to the west and the associated plaza was well located in general.
- A member commented that while they liked the variety of public spaces being delivered, noise would be an important consideration for the success of the spaces.
- A member commented that the rendering of the south side and the indoor/outdoor living rooms shows a vegetated canopy of trees; however, this member questions whether it would be possible to match the scale and feeling of a living room as shown as the spaces were high and broad.
 - o Instead this member wondered if the architecture could be used to help bring the living rooms to a human scale and create something more intimate.
 - This member additionally noted that this might help bring a sense of industrial variegated massing back to the site as well.

Transit Plaza

- A member noted that there was an entrance to the building off the transit plaza. Various members advised that it would be very important to address the biggest flow of people in this area.

Retail Corridor

- A member noted great appreciation for the retail corridor to the north of the building.
 - o This member commented that this will be the place where people buy flowers on their way home, etc. and thought this kind of space will thrive.
- A member commented that they liked the retail corridor and the feeling of the train station platform, commenting that the rendering included in the presentation makes the proposed space look very beautiful.
- Looking at the transit hub, a member thought the rendering showing the retail corridor was interesting, but questioned whether there was enough space to provide a buffer to the train hub.
- A member commented that the rendering shows an intricate network of retail shop fronts. This member suggested, as the northern lobby entrance would be the first introduction to the building, that it was important from an occupant comfort perspective to think about how the retail corridor in the northern lobby would be experienced in terms of all four senses, including smell.
- A member questioned how occupants would be welcomed into the retail corridor.

Site Plan Design

- A member advised that the edge of the building facing Broadview, when turning off the transit plaza, could be strengthened. This member felt that currently the focus was only on transit and the plaza.
- A member thought that the introduction of more park space, housing and community space as compared to the previous design iteration were all good improvements.
- A member was particularly concerned about how Broadview will be bifurcating the transit plaza with a lower condition.
 - o This member pointed out that this will be a very pedestrian unfriendly condition.

Servicing & Loading

- Looking at the servicing and loading, a member wondered about the "nuts and bolts".
- A member noted that while it was great that loading was located below grade, they wondered how it would work given the scale of the retail base.

Bike Infrastructure

- A member commented that while it was great that the car parking was located below grade, they wondered how bike infrastructure would be managed on site.
 - o This member pointed out there are a lot of bike routes around the site, and that likely people will exit transit and grab a Bixi Bike or ride their bikes to work.
 - o The member pointed out that the vast bike infrastructure would include such things as bike racks and rental bikes, and it was important to think them through such that they could be managed as a part of the landscape sequence.

Built Form Massing

- Looking at the building, a member noted appreciation for the window to wall ratio. This member thought the inclusion of the metal trunk on a modular basis was good, and distinguished the proposal from blank facades and glass buildings.
- A member thought the modulation of the tower in the west corner and the terraces in the south-west were effective, but encouraged the design team to be more daring as large parts of the tower shaft were quite uniform.
- A member additionally appreciated the provision of exterior space for people in the building, commenting that this would be great for office life and a welcome addition to an office building.
- A member commented that they were intrigued about the concept of a four-sided building, noting it was a strong idea but in order to successfully execute it, it was imperative to ensure that all sides be forward facing.
- A member, understanding that the transit bug was still ongoing and the project team didn't have the full information yet, wanted to see more thinking on that building interface to match the amount of thinking that had been done on the other three facades.
- A member thought that the building and how it meets the ground/public realm were acting as the driver.

Building Base

- A member noted appreciation for the way the base of the building had been stepped down.
- A member liked the base of the building, specifically the robust grid and the stepping.
 - o This member felt that the base architecture recalled more of the industrial heritage more than the transparent factory cubes in the sky

Factory Cubes

- With respect to the "factory cubes" a member questioned whether people would feel the drama of being in those cubes, or if the drama would be felt more when the building was viewed from the outside, particularly the long views of the architecture from downtown.

- A member noted that where the factory cubes are articulated in the building will be viewed as a negative corner in the tower.
 - o This member advised that anything that can be done on the inside of the cubes to make the inhabitant feel as if they are inside that space will be important.

Sustainability

- Various members were concerned about the lack of commitment at this stage to a high level of energy performance.
 - o A member noted that while energy modelling may not be required at this stage, when designing high performance buildings there is a need to commit to these targets early, including such things as the envelope details.
- A member was glad to see the design team was committing to a higher-than-minimum TGS standard, but strongly encouraged the team to take these aspirations further.
- A member pointed out that the project was in very close proximity to another project that is targeting a high standard.

Embodied Carbon

- A member pointed out that demolishing the existing soap factory building versus the previous proposal to adaptively reuse it would also have a huge impact on embodied carbon.
 - o This member strongly noted that it would be irresponsible to demolish a building and not account for the impact that action will have on the environment by finding ways to mitigate the impact.
 - Some suggestions to mitigate the embodied carbon if the building was demolished included looking at ways to salvage materials and other aspects of the building.
 - A member noted that this would also help preserve the historic built identity.
- A member pointed out that lots of concrete is being used here and the impact from this will be immense. This member advised looking for strategies to address this impact as well.
- A member noted that full decarbonization required significant integration to achieve in this building type.
- Various members strongly encouraged the project team to include full decarbonization as a literal goal for the project.
 - o One member thought that in achieving this there would be a big impact on the remaining office towers to also pursue decarbonization.

Facades & Sustainability

- A member advised development more distinction on the south and west facades, including by having increased depth for solar protection.
- Various members noted that the four elevations of the building should be different from a climate performance perspective.

MZO

- A member commented that the changes made to the site with the electrification and addition of 8 towers by the MZO was a "big ask". The member advised therefore having a "big offer" for the site and area to make up for this, such as through high quality sustainable design and social innovation.

BLOOR-KIPLING BLOCK 1, 5207 DUNDAS ST. W. – HOUSING NOW

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW First Review

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Joseph Luk, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Gregory Henriquez, Henriquez
Partners Architect; Guillaume
Paradis, Claude Cormier +
Associés; Eladia Smoke, Smoke
Architecture



VOTE* Support – Unanimous

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. Does the proposed development provide appropriate site design considerations, such as active streetscapes, street wall heights, open spaces, unit designs, and micro-climates/wind impacts?
2. Does the proposed development provide a high-level of design excellence as established by the new Etobicoke Civic Centre and meet the Mayor and City Council's Urban Design Initiative for design excellence?
3. Does the proposed development benefit from some differentiation in building design between the base buildings and tower components?
4. Does the proposed development provide appropriate uses and design responses at-grade along the public street frontages and within the central courtyard?
5. In terms of landscape design, does the proposed development succeed in creating active, functional and beautiful spaces for various uses/users for year-round enjoyment?
6. Does the proposed development adequately employ the use of green technologies, infrastructure, and other features to meet and/or exceed TGS requirements?

Chair's Summary of Key Points

This project is a prominent element in the development of the new Etobicoke Civic Centre precinct. It is important to note that a precinct development of this scale -- containing a significant public building -- is rare; individual blocks and buildings therein are therefore of greater precedent-setting architectural, urban design and landscape significance for the city -- both in and of themselves, and as they relate to their neighbours and context. Additionally, this is a Housing Now (HN) project; the mandate of the HN program is to create greater housing diversity and accessibility across the city.

It is within the above context that the following comments are made.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

MINUTES: Meeting 8– September 15, 2022

Beginning with landscape and urban design: the Panel appreciated the amount of high-quality exterior amenity space at the interior of the development, and the provision of urban agriculture amenity. Panel suggested expanding the scope of the landscape to include areas beyond the building perimeter, such as the traffic islands, and adding an active use to the courtyard.

Although panelists felt that the public realm was in general a generous one, they expressed concern about the width of the development's northern edge and therefore its viability as a public space and ability to host healthy and sustainable tree growth. Panel encouraged the proponent to properly shade the roofscapes to ensure their useability.

Regarding architectural design, generally Panel thought that the proposal was architecturally worthy of being across from the Civic Centre. Opinion was divided on the use of colour and the extent of the colour range, and the variation between the podium and the tower, however, with some panelists suggesting that the colour scheme should be toned down.

With respect to building tectonics and morphology: the clarity of the scheme is confounded to some degree by the awkward intersection of the honeycomb where the volumes meet; the corners are not working. And while the courtyard is generous in scale in plan, the honeycomb walls that frame it appear to be oppressive.

It's regrettable that there was no view provided showing both the development and the ECC -- because it is critical to understand and design the development as part of a greater whole. Based on the presentation material provided it was not possible to fully review the materiality and tectonics of the development and its compatibility with the ECC and the precinct; this aspect of the proposal requires further study and scrutiny.

Panel Commentary

The Panel thanked the design team for a wonderful presentation.

Response to Context

- A member thought the design team had created a residential development with character and its own sense of place.
 - o This member noted that achieving this is difficult given the amount of new development in the neighbourhood.
- A member commented that the project will be part of such a big transformation of the area and thought it was great to see it being developed and so close to transit.
- A member noted appreciation for the story of the evolution of the site.
- A member commented that they that the scheme had a great story that brought different reading at different scales.
- A member commented that the building has the opportunity to reclaim what mixed housing looks like through the simple elegance of achieving high value innovations.

Site Plan Design

- A member felt that the cross block connection was very well done and noted that having the public able to cut through the site would break the block up in a positive way.
- A member thought the connection through the block would provide good porosity for the area as well as a great space in the building.
- A member commented that there was a disconnected crossing south of the site to Kipling station, observing that there didn't seem to be a continuous sidewalk access on St. Albans Rd.
 - o This member advised making a continuous connection.

- A member commented that the way that the built form and site plan had been developed kept the energy of the master plan and was starting to give the whole project life.

Streetscape & Active Street Uses

- A member questioned whether there were enough active uses at the street.
- A member thought the streetwall heights were successful.

Street Trees

- A member commented that the move to protect existing trees and add new trees was great.
- Looking at the south row of trees on Dundas, a member noted that the trench was only 1.4m wide, close to the property line and the face of the building. This member noted that this seemed tight and did not think that trees would survive. They also noted that there would be conflicts with retail doors as well as some of the other aspects the design team was trying to achieve on the street frontages.
 - o This member advised that it would be great if these trees could have more breathing room.
 - o Looking at the north edge with the building overhang and some architecture over the base of the building, this member suggested using the ground to get trees away from the base.

Bike Amenities

- A member noted that at-grade bike parking would be a great addition to the building as well.

Plaza Spaces

- A member noted appreciation for the generous plaza that would invite people into the site.

Interior Courtyard

- A member liked the different expression in the courtyard, commenting that this would be a special moment.
- A member thought that the height of the opening to the courtyard was welcoming.
 - o This member liked the way the massing pushed and blended into the courtyard space but advised ensuring there would be enough sunlight and water in the courtyard to ensure the success of the landscape elements.
 - o This member noted that this was the moment the building and landscape come together.
- A member noted appreciation for the path through the courtyard space as well as the connections to the lobbies, commenting that it was "beautiful". However, this member advised against allowing the courtyard to become a passive space and questioned what would happen when the residents shut their blinds.
 - o This member advised further consideration of what would cause people to pause in the space and suggested included more active elements, not major attractions but "staying elements" such as playful things that a child could find interesting for 15 minutes and could cause people to pause.

Bring Elements of the Courtyard Landscaping to Other Areas

- A member thought that the garden inside and type of landscape being proposed was "fascinating".
 - o This member suggested that maybe aspects of the beautiful garden should start to make their way out of the boundaries of the courtyard itself and that they would love to see some of that vibrancy make its way out and invade some other spaces.

- This member noted that the two traffic islands would be perfect places to have the courtyard landscaping "invade".
- This member also suggested that some of the flowering trees could also make their way out of the courtyard garden.
- The member noted that it would be wonderful if the courtyard garden could start to have an impact on the broader city.

Urban Agriculture

- A member thought it was great that the project included a large urban agriculture component, and commented that this would be a great thing to offer to residents who don't have access to urban plots.
- A member commented that they were excited about the urban agriculture piece, noting that it was a great way to bring people together.

Provision of Outdoor Amenity Space

- A member thought that some consideration for the reality of the proposed outdoor space was required.
 - This member noted that to have successful rooftop amenity spaces one needs to design for quite a deep roof structure, while currently the drawings appeared to show a very thin lip where the precast stops.
 - The member advised further consideration of how intense the structure and slab will have to be to support this proposed outdoor space.
- A member noted that the trees look lovely and advised that shade will be incredibly important for these spaces as they would become unusable if they become too hot.

Built Form Massing

- A member noted appreciation for the simplification to the massing.
- A member noted appreciation for the taller elements with the northwest breaks in the tower podium language that comes directly to the ground.
 - This member felt this was a successful aspect of the architecture.
- A member noted appreciation for the massing change to simplify the terracing and steps in the building.
 - This member thought the result is great as it affords so much more amenity space, which would be wonderful for the future residents of the building.
- A member felt that the project was a dynamic building and liked the proposed massing.
- A member noted that the elongated double height in the towers might give more verticality. This member also suggested having a single height on the street building portion.

Original Massing

- Looking at the original volumes described for the block, a member noted that there had been a lot of commentary about the need to understand whether the previous massing had been shrink-wrapped or whether there was still flexibility moving forward.
 - This member commented that this proposal represents the previous design massing in terms of the sun in the courtyard, protections from the wind, and the overall density.
 - This member felt that if the next phases were rendered with the same specificity that there is promise for the whole development.

Facade Design, Materiality & Articulation

- A member thought the honeycomb pattern was "brilliant" and noted appreciation for its repetitive nature and use of colour.

- A member commented that colour is so important in architecture and such a challenge to do thoughtfully.
- A member thought the honeycomb design has texture and variety that prevents it from becoming too overwhelming.
- A member thought the bee and honeycomb motif was "quite seductive".
- A member noted appreciation for the idea of variety that's being achieved through colour within the sameness of the façade design.
 - This member appreciated the simple and reductive architectural approach with the one morphology for the entire building.
- A member noted that the base and tower had been differently articulated, not in the traditional sense, but there was a great level of variation that had been achieved with respect to colour and sameness.
- A member commented that the differences between the tower and base were subtle at times, but that in general they really liked the concept and felt that the colourations were starting to help with dealing with the blending of the two built form components.
- A member noted that in some images the honeycomb was pronounced while in others it seemed flatter. This member noted that they were sure the design team was doing studies regarding tinting and precast and were interested to see how it developed.
- A member commented that they appreciated the expression and warmth of the architecture.
- A member suggested calming down the colouration in the courtyard, commenting that a multi-sided courtyard would have a lot of activity, and advised using a gentler colour palette to calm down the space more.
 - This member compared it to living in a beehive.
- Looking at the hexagon/beehive pattern in the images on pg. 19 of the presentation, another member thought it was fascinating how it had been turned into the skin and filigree of the building.
- A member noted that the streetwall was double height and currently at odds with the colours on the building. This member wondered how to marry the two without losing the fineness and shape of the beautiful hexagon/beehive pattern.
 - This member wondered whether the outside edges could be kept light and the insides carry a tint could be a way to ensure the fineness of the shape wasn't lost but could instead come out as a counterbalance to the colours.
 - This member noted that they have seen buildings with a "crisp and clean" brutalist pattern where colour had been added after the fact.
 - They noted that in the original, uncoloured expression the elegance of the architecture was easier to read and were concerned that with the proposed colouration and application of the colours the beauty of the hexagonal form would similarly begin to be lost.

The Corners of the Architecture

- Looking at the rendering of the northeast corner, a member suggested, in the development of the honeycomb or hexagon pattern, that this is where the beauty of the project will be realised.
 - This member noted that there are two kinds of corners being deployed through the building: the ones seen in the tower where the panels come to a miter, and the ones where there is interest in elaborating the corner.
 - This member questioned whether the latter corner types are working yet, and instead felt there weren't giving the full expression of the beauty of the honeycomb pattern, especially in the context of being the primary arrival point for people coming from transit.

- The member advised further consideration and development of how these corners would be articulated and resolved.
- A member thought it would be interesting to see if there was a way to fulfill the promise of the honeycomb when the building turns the corners, such as a small interlock.
- A member commented that the hope is that this is not just outstanding architecture, but that the organic transformations are also realized at the corners.

Bee Inspiration

- A member commented, recollecting that the design team had mentioned bees were part of the project parti, that it would be great if bees were invited into the architecture via bee bricks.
 - This member wondered whether parts of the base could be made out of bee bricks or precast perforated concrete to encourage bees to inhabit the architecture of the site.

Precedents

- A member suggested looking at SQ2 POPS, which is part of an assisted housing development, for a good reference for how mixed housing can be successful when the budgets permit high quality materials.

Mechanical Penthouse

- A member noted appreciation for the treatments to the mechanical penthouse.

Sustainability

- A member noted appreciation of the project's ambitions to go above and beyond in terms of energy targets and sustainability performance.
- A member commented that designing a building with this kind of window to wall ratio was not easy and complimented the design team on their unique design solution.
- A member noted appreciation for the fact that the project was using geothermal but advised ensuring there was a good model being used that can tell the design team iteratively the response that the cladding has on the overall R value of the building.

Balconies

- A member advised reconsidering the usability of balconies in residential development
- A member noted that whether or not balconies would be part of the design moving forward, there needed to be access to usable private space.
 - This member commented that this will be a very important component in the development and is an important aspect in residential communities in general.
- A member pointed out that the current balcony decision could help with sustainability performance targets as most balconies act as thermal bridges.
 - This member felt that generous outdoor programming could help make up the need for outdoor space that wasn't currently being satisfied by the access to private outdoor space.

Commercial Spaces & Lobbies

- A member thought there was a good variety of size of the commercial spaces.
- A member noted appreciation for the generous lobbies as well as the through lobby conditions.

Podium Internal Corridor

- A member noted that the interior corridor in the podium was very long and advised further consideration of the people walking from the elevators trying to get to a unit in the podium.

Loading

- A member pointed out that because the proposal was for a rental building there will always be people moving in and out.
 - o This member noted that while it was good that there was one generous loading area with the turning occurring inside the building, that further design development and consideration was required as this will be a very well used area focused in one aspect of the building.