

CITY OF TORONTO DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

MINUTES: MEETING 9 – October 6, 2022

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday October 6, 2022 at 1:20pm.

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>*Conflict 1st Session</i>	<i>#Conflict 2nd Session</i>

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 September 19, 2022 by email.

MEETING 9 INDEX

- i. The Parkdale Hub + Housing Now (1st Review)
- ii. 475 Yonge Street (1st Review)

**THE PARKDALE HUB + HOUSING NOW – 1303-1337 QUEEN ST W &
220 COWAN AVE**
DESIGN REVIEW PANEL
DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW First Review

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Victoria Fusz, Community Planning; Malcolm Duncan, Strategic Initiatives; Pourya Nazemi, Heritage Planning; Joseph Luk, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Joe Lobko, DTAH



VOTE Support with condition* – 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 overall built form strategy integrate well with the character of the street, heritage resources on site, and the surrounding heritage context?
2. How should the Masaryk Community Centre interface with the Masaryk Park along the south side?
3. How can the proposal provide a sense of place for the community and visitors to the area, and are there other opportunities for improving the public realm at the site that should be considered?
4. Are there opportunities for special and unique treatments of the existing public lanes and new connections being created?

Chair's Summary of Key Points

The Panel would like to thank the proponent team for a comprehensive urban design concept within a complex site.

This project is particularly important to the City, as it presents a unique opportunity to contribute to and strengthen a key neighbourhood. Panel members have lauded the creativity shown in the proposed context-sensitive design strategy, which has the potential to contribute significantly to that neighbourhood. They have also encouraged the proponent team to further develop the strategy, so that it can achieve its full potential as a supportive and nurturing hub, an essential goal for the wellbeing of the surrounding community.

The Panel urges the proponent to further the overall design, including (but not limited to) the following areas:

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PROJECT BOUNDARY VS. BOUNDARY OF INFLUENCE: This project possesses a boundary of influence that extends on all sides far beyond the set site boundary. Considering this, for complete success continue developing the design “in-the-round”. Some examples include:

Masaryk Park: Update the design of the Park to address and take full advantage of the adjacent new Parkdale Hub (including the proposed revitalizing Masaryk-Cowan Community Centre programme along the north edge of the Park).

West Block: The potentially exemplary weave of publicly accessible interior and exterior spaces throughout the proposed design strategy shows great promise. However, the following areas in (and adjacent to) the West Block are the exception that need more attention to fulfill this promise:

- Thin pedestrian cul-de-sac along the west side of the residential building.
 - Acquiring and/or engaging the properties along the west edge of this cul-de-sac could help lead to a better urban design solution.
- Service court along the east side of the residential building.
 - Taking cue from north end of court develop a more pedestrian-first / vehicles-second landscaped space.
- South edge of West Block.
 - Collaborate with adjacent residential tower owner to create a well-landscaped pedestrian realm connecting between Dunn Avenue and Masaryk Park.

A Concrete Vision: The proponent team has clearly shown abundant strategic imagination and conviction in creating a vision for a highly successful Parkdale community hub. Translate that vision into a strong and concrete framework so that the selected implementation team will closely follow it (and the resulting hub will become the standard for future development in Parkdale and beyond).

Panel Commentary

Project Vision & Demonstration Plan

- A member thanked the design team for such a clear and thorough presentation.
- Thank you for the presentation it’s a pretty interesting project and the project team has really hit the mark in terms of the vision that they had set for themselves.
- A member thought that the proposal was a really appropriate vision for the area and supported the gentle density and way the heritage had been integrated and preserved.
- A member commented that the project as well as the initiative were both very exciting.
- A member wondered how the demonstration plan would be developed in such a way to ensure the proper verbiage, language and illustrations were included such that the developer will build something similar to what has been proposed.
 - This member thought it was important to find some ways to embed in the plan that the library entrance should have a step back to Queen Street.
 - This member commented that ensuring the correct language and illustrations was important so that some of the restrictions that are put into the demonstration plan will have to be implemented by a developer.
 - Given that the build two line on the east block to Cowan is defined by a diagonal line some of the restrictions that are put into the language for the plan will have to be implemented by a developer.

Response to Context

- A member commented that they were struggling with the project a bit because there was an "incredible richness and complexity" to the design but also a "whole lot of constraints".
 - o This member felt that the design team had done an admirable job of working within the constraints and fitting in an incredible amount of program onto a relatively small site.
- A member commented that in their experience in the area there is not a big sense of place as one travels along Queen St at Cowan.
 - o This member thought that enhancing this intersection to signal to people that they are at a special place would be important in the next phase of the project.
 - The member noted that the project team had already begun to do this with the changes proposed to the plaza on the south side, but suggested pushing it further.
 - Some additional suggestions to create more of a sense of place included potentially spilling the plaza out into the street with a special pavement treatment or another even bigger and stronger signal that this is not just a corridor to get to the end of Queen St where it turns into the Queensway but a special place in and of itself as well.
 - The member thought that synchronizing the intersection at Queen would also increase the focus here, specifically for pedestrian movement across Queen St at this location.
- A member commented that the project was located on a very complex site but that the design team had presented a "very nice solution".
- A member thought that there were some really great design moves happening in the project.

Streetscape & Heritage Frontage / Character

- There are a few things in particular that a member thought were quite successful, including the variety in the massing on the street frontage to reflect the character of Parkdale.
- Looking at a high level, a member commented that they really appreciated how the design team had articulated the setbacks and the frontages along Queen St, and specifically noted appreciation for the way the zero setback conditions of the neighbours to the east and west had been matched.
 - o This member thought it was well designed to only have the massing set back and provide a bit of relief when it comes into the body of the library as well as part of the community replacement elements shown in red in the drawings.
 - The member specifically noted that this was a good transition to that historic façade and streetscape character.
 - The member thought that moving forward, the refinement will come with matching the floor to floor heights and especially the retail spaces to the adjacent and surrounding heritage buildings.
 - The member commented that the building to the east may have a higher floor to floor height as it was a warehouse arrangement originally.
 - The member noted that responding to the very specific heritage context and area character will lead to the success of the project.
- Looking at the street elevations, a member felt that the Cowan elevation was the most successful now both because there is more of a diversity of spaces there as because the public space is a bit wider there.

- The member noted that there is the potential for more through views there as well as the fact that the "recipe" for an "amazing public realm" is perhaps more evident on the Cowan side.
 - The member further noted that this is perhaps more possible to achieve on Cowan given the fact that it's a side street, as opposed to the Queen St facades.

Heritage Buildings

- A member thought the massing and the way the design had worked with the frontages of the new buildings and integrated them with the heritage elements was very successful both in terms of continuing the character and creating that variety in the street frontage vertically, but also in the way the massing was playing with the setbacks.
 - This member pointed to the way the library entrance was setback as being particularly successful as it both reflected the heritage character as well as provided more public realm space at the civic frontage.
 - This member noted that this setback was also subtly opening up a very busy corner and public place.
- A member commented that they really appreciated the thoughtful integration of the heritage assets into this demonstration plan.
 - This member noted that the resulting variety of streetscape with Queen and Cowan really enhance the pedestrian experience and would make this a very interesting place.

Connections

- A member encouraged the addition of the connection to Queen St from the thin courtyard space that was mentioned during the presentation.
 - This member noted that the courtyard was a bit of a dead end space as shown and that allowing a connection back to Queen would be very important for both safety and overall porosity as well.
 - This member thought that the streetwall was strong enough to support a small break to facilitate this connection.
- Looking at connectivity, a member wondered whether there was an opportunity along the southern boundary of the community centre and the west block to introduce an east-west connection.
 - This member commented that the porch is a really valuable integration element between the community centre and the park, and thought a bit of plaza area will need to be introduced as well.
 - The member noted that currently they thought there was a fence blocking an east-west connection through this area and advised working collaboratively to provide a through connection going east-west from Cowan over.

Public Realm

- Looking at the character of the public realm, a member encouraged making it a really exciting public realm space, but advised that the landscape components of the space also needed to blend with Milky Way Lane.
- A member advised ensuring there was enough room for pedestrian movement around those large planting beds.

Open Space at Grade

- Looking at the open space at grade, a member noted they felt conflicted because the design team had done a "brilliant job" and they appreciated how the open space hangs together.

- This member commented that they were "on the fence" and debated whether there should be more interblock connections or the introduction of more open space at grade.
 - They felt that the frontage that had been designed was very indicative of Parkdale and really speaks to where the project is situated and therefore from that perspective more connections and open space wasn't needed.
 - For example, this member felt that opening meandering pathways through the site wouldn't fit the neighbourhood.
 - However, on the other hand, this member also noted that providing more open spaces at grade could help create an interconnected network of open spaces to the park.
- A member questioned the glass porch parti and thought that the community centre end of the park should respond to the architecture, and the architecture more deliberately respond to the park.
- Looking at the build to line, a member suggested trying to integrate the park and building more along the property line that was defining the spaces.
 - This member felt that it currently looked a bit awkward given the location of the community gardens and the kitchens and youth space.
 - This member questioned how all the components related and whether it was just a straight walkway.

Laneways

- A member suggested looking at examples from Montreal such as the Green Alleyways program, in terms of how to reimagine the laneways.
- A member noted that it was important that the treatment of Milky Way Lane, such as the unit pavers, ties in and around to the plaza on the corner to create that continuous ground plane.
 - This member commented that inviting people into the lane was a great concept; however, noted that the only concern there is that when that amenity space gets developed, it is important to make sure it relates to the public lane appropriately.
 - In other words, if a wall is built around it then it may lose some of that animation that the design team is trying to encourage with the moves in the back.

Courtyard

- A member thought that the linear courtyard laneway that's behind the adjacent building on Dunn with the large saucer planters was a bit of a tight space and suggested further integrating it into the development to make the courtyard between the housing and the community centre larger could benefit the overall assembly.
- A member agreed that the laneways and courtyards needed to be reexamined.
- A member noted that the courtyard space between the building on Dunn and the development was too narrow and questioned whether it would be a nice space to inhabit.
 - This member wondered whether that allotment of exterior space could be moved over and joined to the courtyard that is further east.
 - This member also wondered whether a through connection could be made from the courtyard space(s) out to Queen St. or at minimum at least a line of sight.
 - This member pointed out that this would improve safety in the outdoor amenity spaces.
 - The member additionally suggested having a sight line through the development on the Cowan entrance.

- The member noted that currently, looking from the Cowan entrance to the west, the corridor/hallway starts out wider and then gets smaller as program has had to be accommodated and finally terminates at an office.
 - The member advised moving the programming at the end of the corridor so that there is a sight line all the way through to that amenity space from the Cowan entrance.
- Looking at the south end of the thin courtyard, a member noted that there was a tiny bit of a pinch point between the lobby entrance and the existing ramp into the parking.
 - This member wondered if the face could be shifted slightly to the north to allow for a little bit more access in and circulation around the building and into that playground.
- Looking at the middle courtyard, a member suggested trying to explore the space as a bit more of a multi-use space that can be activated when not being used for garbage and loading.
 - This member noted that there were a lot of things fronting onto this courtyard that aren't always in use, but instead only used at the beginning or end of the day.
 - The member commented that there was a real "temporal experience" in that space.
 - This member advised that looking at how this courtyard space could be activated and used at other times of the day would be really important.
 - This member suggested moving the lobby across so that there is a bit of a frontage from that lobby into the courtyard space as opposed to just having solid walls or wall with curtains that are primarily pulled shut.
- A member liked the use of the courtyards to control the massing and thought that the courtyard could provide some interesting amenity opportunities for the residents.

POPS

- Looking at the POPS, a member questioned the splay on the building noting that it directs the orientation of the POPS more to the corner on Queen St.
 - This member commented that while the corner should be addressed, if the splay was potentially reduced or eliminated it could create more of an outdoor room that spans across Cowan and goes between the second building there to make perhaps a more purposeful and intentional outdoor room in the POPS spanning across Cowan.
 - The member suggested cranking the space back a little bit to have it more forcibly address the building that's on the west side of Cowan.
 - Acknowledging that it wasn't part of the scope, the member also noted that part and parcel of their comment was understanding that potentially a different team will be the ones to take the project further.

The integration of the indoor and outdoor space from the community space to the POPS is going to be very critical and shouldn't be a normative window wall or storefront condition, but rather something that actually supports indoor/outdoor movement and views.

Amount of Softscape vs Hardscape

- A member commented that some of the grass areas that were shown in the perspectives were a little restricting in terms of having a freer open hardscape plan.
 - This member suggested reducing the amount of grass areas a bit.

Project Phasing

- Looking at phasing, a member noted that this will be a significant project that will be so important to the community and it will be unfolding over quite a long period of time. This

member commented that it would be helpful to have a clear idea about how the services start to grow on the site and perhaps continue their services at the same time while the project is under construction.

- The member noted that this would be a tricky thing to do but noted that there are some "really great existing assets" on the site that could be moved around as needed during construction, including great open spaces that could be inhabited throughout the process.
 - Looking at the parking lot as an example of the existing open spaces, the member suggested looking more at how it would transform into a building at what the phasing strategy would be.

Dunn Property

- A member felt that the property on Dunn was a missed opportunity for the project and recommended pulling it into the site assembly.
 - The member noted that the inclusion of this site will help resolve some of the public space issues at grade, including some of the very narrow courtyards that are behind the building as well as potentially allow for some additional residential space.
 - The member suggested the additional residential space could be potentially achieved by pulling the 6 storey volume around the corner of Dunn in a way that can deliver a substantial amount of additional units while still fitting into the "very prescriptive" built form guidelines.
 - The member hoped that this would be explored from a plan perspective.
- A member agreed that the building on Dunn was a lost opportunity and questioned whether there was any chance that it could be incorporated into the development.
- A member felt that the existing building on Dunn not included in the assembly was a bit of a missed opportunity for an improved public realm and improved density.
 - If this could be pursued, this member thought it would be great; however, if it wasn't possible, then the member thought that the thin courtyard that had been proposed needed some tweaks to ensure it worked better.

East-West Edge from Cowan to Dunn

- Looking at the east-west edge that goes from Cowan to Dunn across the park/community centre interface and then into the building driveway, a member felt that it was very important to have a "true public face" along that edge.
 - The member didn't know whether the condition assumes a fence along that boundary.
 - The member noted that there is already what appears to be a playground over the parking entrance and wondered whether it could be integrated with the driveway to create a continuous east-west connection into the park from Dunn.

Proposed Parking Supply Ratios

- A member noted that it was great to see the very low parking supply ratios and commented that they didn't think anything more was needed for this kind of development.

Ground Floor

- A member noted that the ground floor was doing a lot of the heavy lifting for the project.
 - This member further commented that the entire development seems to be doing a lot of heavy lifting as well, but the ground floor was doing a lot of work for the project.
 - The member felt that there should be, to some extent, a more porous ground floor such that it could become even more of an extension of the public realm.

- A member thought that it was lovely that the openings that come down to grade would maximize the transparency right into the development in both plan and section, which was evident in the renders.
 - o The member noted appreciation for how this will bring light into the building.

Built Form Massing

- A member noted that while they understood some of the other Panelists' comments around lining the streetwall up with the heritage neighbourhoods on Queen St and then making the jog down on the west side of the site, they felt that the east side of the site didn't need to line up.
 - o This member felt that the sidewalk on the east side was too narrow and that given the "great street life" on Queen St and it would be great to see some more trees there.
- A member suggested that the residential building on the West side of the development be simpler.
 - o This member suggested looking at eliminating the two setbacks on the west block. Instead they suggested only doing one at the line of the second current setback and making up for that by making the tower taller.
 - The member felt that there was a lot going on here and that greater simplicity in the massing would allow the development to breathe a little bit more, which would be helpful in terms of animating the streets through to the park as well.
- A member thought that the new built form had been integrated with the existing built form quite well.
- A member noted appreciation for the sculpting of the building on the east block commenting that it is taking advantage of an already enlarged boulevard to create more of a plaza space.
 - o This member commented that they can see how it starts to draw the eye and try to pull people down to the park including by taking advantage of that very green western edge of Cowan.
 - o This member wanted to see more planting or trees in the plaza to match what is happening further south on Cowan.
 - The member commented that this would be appropriate given the adjacent uses there.

Rooftop Amenity Spaces

- A member commented that the rooftops will definitely be used for amenity purposes, but wondered if there was an opportunity on the library roof to perhaps introduce opportunities, or the infrastructure for, agriculture.

*Vote

The Panel unanimously voted to support the proposal with the key condition of paying careful attention to how the proposal responds to each of the Masaryk Park, the east-west frontage/connection between the project and the TCHC property to the southwest, and the Cowan ROW.

475 YONGE STREET

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW First Review

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Katherine Bailey, Community Planning; Ran Chen, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM BDP Quadrangle



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. Public Realm Network**
 - Does the proposed parkland and POPS connect with the surrounding public realm network so that the spaces will be usable and animated?
- 2. Ground Floor and Animation**
 - Does the design of the ground floor and the proposed uses contribute positively to the vibrancy of Yonge Street and the adjacent public realm?
- 3. Built Form and Transition**
 - Does the proposal with its height and Yonge St. podium / streetwall respond appropriately to the historic and emergent context of Yonge Street?
 - Should there be greater variation and difference between the streetwall north and south of the proposed POPS?

Chair's Summary of Key Points

The Panel would like to thank the proponent team and the City for bringing this prominently located project within the Yonge Street Character Area to the Panel, and for the substantive redesign of the 2017 Council approved scheme for the site.

Located directly on Yonge Street, the site spans the block between Wood Street and Alexandra Street. Changes to the proposal since 2017 include a notable increase in the amount of open space on the site (from 15% open to 46% open), a more substantive relationship to the Alexandra Street Parkette to the north, an additional 30 storeys added to the south tower, and 17 storeys added to the north tower, bringing them to 78 and 75 storeys respectively. The Panel felt generally that the revisions presented greatly improved the proposal, however, further exploration/development is required the following areas:

Built form:

- The Panel strongly encourages the use of alternate ground floor layout;
- The blank facades of the original scheme are not appropriate and must be minimized if not eliminated;
- Consider giving the community use a much greater presence at grade; this will amplify its use, complement the public open space, and improve its accessibility;
- Consider greater asymmetry between the two buildings;
- Ensure that the entry to the community space and the entry to the bicycle parking are demarcated clearly and appropriately with a canopy or similar distinguishing feature;
- Ensure greater curation/composition of the materiality and architectural expression of the buildings -- as individual buildings, as well as with each other and the landscape;

Landscape strategy:

- Ensure there is no pinch point at the east end of the POPS;
- The Panel encourages the City and the proponent to work with Parks, Forestry and Recreation to design a holistic ground level POPS and park environment, avoiding fencing between them and ensuring they share a consistent or complementary design language;
- Ensure that POPS/park environment is well integrated with the building entrances and the design of the Alexandra Street Parkette;
- Consider the nature of the seasonal stations, and whether they are sufficient to animate the open space throughout the year;
- Consider whether the mound in the POPS is an appropriate form for this location.

In summary, the Panel felt that the project was commendable on several levels, but that the potential of the open space has not been unlocked, and that the architectural expression of the towers was not yet well-resolved. The proponent is encouraged to strengthen and clarify project aspirations as the project moves to the next design stage.

Panel Commentary

The Panel thanked the design team for their presentation and for the advanced materials that had been provided. Many members noted that the proposal was an improvement on the earlier design submission and specifically noted appreciation for the increased amount of public realm and green space in the current proposal.

Looking at the park and POPS, various members thought they would be great additions to the broader green network in the area and advised designing the two spaces together to ensure there were no obvious boundaries between them. The Panel additionally advised the further work was required to ensure sufficient animation in the public realm spaces.

Various members thought that the built form massing was intriguing but advised further refinement of the massing, articulation and facades, as well as further consideration of the programming and how they are expressed on the façade. Many members additionally suggested introducing more asymmetry into the architecture and landscape designs.

Moving forward, various members noted that it was difficult to evaluate the built form proposal in context given the lack of information on the immediate existing surroundings and advised including more information on the adjacent and area context in order for the panel to properly comment and review whether the built form proposal fit in the surroundings. The Panel looked forward to seeing the project again.

Evolution of the Design

- A member thought the project was moving in the right direction.
- Think there are a lot of proposed benefits in the public realm with the development of the park space.
- Think the client has made the right decision by pulling back from the original proposal and offering more for the public.
- This is a substantial improvement over the previous concept or vision for the site and congratulate everyone involved in bringing this along.
- The achievement of open space at grade is remarkable, and sense it is unusual in that it is not the recent norm with respect to development patterns.
- Really interesting development to consider.
- This is an improvement over the earlier scheme: the dedicated public realm is a great contribution and it is a kind of an extension of a network that is interesting and critical in that part of the city.
- Sticking to the three elements posed by the staff questions: the public realm, the ground floor animation, and the built form transition, this design proposal is a marked improvement when compared to the previous big block plan and "giant podium".
- A member thought there was a lot of potential in the design but that more work needed to be done to unlock the true beauty and usefulness of the amount of space that the design team has opened up on the site, otherwise a great opportunity will be missed.
- A member noted appreciation to the increase in publicly accessible open space that the design team has been able to achieve since the previous submission.
- A member thought that the park was a drastic improvement over the approved rezoning submission and felt that the POPS link from Yonge St will make the park even more special and successful.

Site Context

- The presentation package is very thorough, but there is a certain amount of context that is missing in the drawings that makes it difficult to properly comment and review.
 - o For example, while the plan shows a lot of connections between the park that's shown in this project and some existing parks immediately adjacent to the site, it doesn't show any existing built form or public realm context on Yonge St, Wood St, or the other nearby streets.
 - The drawings curiously don't even show the immediate built form context.
 - o The Panelists really need to know how the proposal fits (or doesn't) into the existing context and it is currently difficult to get a clear picture of what exists in the immediate and broader area.

Proposed Design Options

- Support the potential changes to the design shown at the end of the presentation with respect to animating the north-south public realm space.
- Support the recent explorations and further evolution both by City staff and the design team; overall this updated proposal is "onto something".

Project Phasing

- While understanding the potential phasing desire as an explanation for the distinct services, suggest identifying that there may or may not be an opportunity, should phasing change and the whole block is developed at one point in time.
 - o If the phasing does change, while there may continue to be a need to separate servicing for the reasons that were mentioned, hope that the parking volume does not require the two ramps given the location of the project.

- Hope modest parking, not 4-6 levels of underground parking in this day and age.

Transportation & Access Ramps

- From a transportation perspective not a lot to say; the answers given by the proponent team as to why things are placed as they are in terms of the access ramps makes sense.

Pedestrian Porosity & Park/Public Realm Network

- Having the space between the buildings to improve the pedestrian porosity makes perfect sense, as does connecting to the park behind it to add more to the north-south park network east of Yonge St.
- With regards to the connection of the POPS to the broader network, only highlight that the weaving pattern that's been laid out of the hard surfaces with the three rings of open space or softscape in between, tend to privilege on the north side a connection that's on the east side of that open space.
 - That makes sense if you're making it to the Alexander Wood Park but there's probably an equally interesting desire path going east of the Buddies and Bad Times Theatre in the laneway that continues north.
 - Look into establishing more equal priority to either of those exits on the north side of the site.
- Think the public realm is fantastic the way it fits into a network and stitches in well, it's gracious.
- Looking at the public realm network, a member commented that the project makes a series of really good connections to existing parks and pedestrian routes.
- The existing parking areas and drive aisles are used by a lot of people as secondary routes downtown and in this area specifically as ways to avoid Yonge St and the related crowds, including as a way to fast track to the subway station.
 - Think it will be a very well used park.
- A member noted appreciation for the added porosity that the POPS will provide for people walking along Yonge St.
- A member thought that all the linkages heading north along the parks were great and that this park will make a great addition to that network.

Public Realm & Green Space

- Looking at the green space and public realm proposals, think there is a wonderful opportunity to create a wonderful secret garden; sense the design has started in that direction, but it is not quite there yet.
- Think the programming is going to be really important to the success of the public realm, and currently there are discrepancies between what is shown in the views versus in the plan.
- A member pointed out that when looking at all the proposed open space on the site approximately a fifth of it would be POPS and four-fifths a park.
 - This member hoped that during the design process the dual property line will not impede or restrain the design of that space, and that the City can work around not clearly defining that line.
- A member advised designing the park and the POPS simultaneously so that there is a cohesion between the two spaces as well as a flow from one space to the other.
 - This member cautioned that if the two spaces had completely different styles it would be detrimental to the experience of moving through that space.

- A member noted that they were contemplating whether the small size of this park was advantageous to the area and then after looking at other small parks got excited thinking that this park will actually hold two parks.
 - o This member thought there was a tremendous opportunity here for the public realm and green space and looked forward to seeing the final design.

Park Design

- Looking at the landscape a member wondered whether there could be less hardscape.
 - o One suggestion given by this member to reduce the amount of hard surfaces was to have a single path through the space as opposed to two paths. The member noted that this would enable more continuous green spaces as opposed to "islands of green" in what is essentially a pretty hard paved space.
- A member, commenting on the very large increase in density that has already happened for the very dense area, noted that there will be thousands of people walking around and also thousands of dogs.
 - o The member suspected that the park will need to be designed in a very robust and durable manner to withstand all the traffic from the massive amount of density being proposed in the area.

Park Animation

- It would make more sense if the public realm spaces had a direct and closer connection to the proposed community centre via the staircase/elevator and entryway.
 - o This will mean redesigning where some of the dog runs occur on site.
- A member advised that at the next review the views and plans needed to be in sync because in these drawings the views were showing animation behind areas that in function didn't have any animation at all.
- A member commented that at first glance the lack of animation on the ground floor in the submitted proposal was a big issue for them, and specifically found the lack of activation along the edge of the park and the POPS very concerning.
 - o This member noted that while some of the rendering looked activated, when looking at the plan and the amount of loading and everything else that was happening it didn't seem likely that that much animation would be occurring.
 - o This member then noted appreciation for the potential modifications that were being considered as shown at the end of the presentations.

Park Programming

- A member thought that the idea of seasonal shops was something worth pursuing.
 - o However, while this member thought that the seasonal shops were "intriguing" they did not think that they, in and of themselves, would be strong enough to truly activate the park edge.
 - Instead this member suggested it could be something that gets brought in to a space that already has more constant activation as well.
- Would be nice to see some of the potential park programming that was mentioned be built into the park plan, such as the proposed ice rink or ice trail.
 - o There are some discrepancies on the park plans; some show two play areas while others show only one play area. Advise tying that down and defining a program through consultation with the Parks and Recreation department.
 - o It is important to define the public realm programming and spaces in order for the proposed changes to the massing and density to be appropriately contemplated.

East Boundary of the Park & 4m Strip

- A member wondered whether the east boundary of the site could introduce some of the curvaceous elements into the wall as well to create an environment that cups the garden space in the back with that Alvar Aalto-like expression.
- When designing the park, a member advised paying careful attention to the 4m strip of private property that exists between the park and the adjacent building to make sure that it is integrated and connected to the park.
 - o This member advised that achieving that level of detail will be critical to how well these large open spaces will function.

POPS

- Like the notion of using landscape to separate the POPS space from Yonge St to allow people to enter into a new "landscape oasis" between the buildings.
- Advise that the tree sizes in the POPS are not the minimum 70mm trees, but instead are more in the realm of 125-150mm caliper trees so that the impact of the POPS space is more immediate, understanding that the POPS is above the subway.
 - o Think larger trees would help welcome that space as a new green space to the site.

Pinch Point between POPS & Park

- On the east-west POPS with the pinch point where it comes down to approximately 9 meters between the building faces is even further squished through the introduction of a lot of softscape in there.
 - o Suggest to do the opposite and pull that softscape back there so that the pinch point is not being highlighted as much as it is in the current configuration.
- A member noted that there was a pinch point at the east end of the POPS that should be opened up to allow that connection between the park and the POPS to be as wide as possible.
- A member noted that there are a number of challenges with the POPS, particularly where it is pinching down at the connection to the park, and felt the pinch was being further exacerbated by the soft landscaping proposed for the area.
 - o This member therefore preferred the second option that was presented by the design team, where the north part of the building was pulled back.

Public Realm & Location of Entrances

- From a public realm perspective, the central POPS will be a quite a busy space.
 - o There are two dedicated elevators with one going to the community centre, but both serving the bike spaces that are up on the 2nd floor. Can imagine that these will be extremely busy places, especially on the north side which is also feeding the community centre.
 - Suggest that these need a more civic entrance than what is currently proposed. The current design seems like a very modest vestibule with an exit coming out of the exit stair. Suggest including some kind of extension of a canopy or a waiting area to signify the community centre that is above, and to signify that the community centre is distinct from the other retail and programmed spaces.
- A Panel member thought that option 2 that had been identified at the end of the presentation, the option with more animated space in the north tower around the east side, would be really important for the site given the location of the lobby.
 - o This member pointed out that in the original plan shown for the design there was virtually nothing on the east side of either podium that would have any contribution to amination into the park.

- This member noted that they were assuming part of the animated space would be the lobby.
- A member noted that they didn't think it was necessary for both podia to have the lobby located in the same place in the respective buildings.

Site Plan & Design Symmetry

- Think there is more that can be done in the design, for example, given the very symmetrical layout of the two towers, there is the possibility of introducing more asymmetry.
 - Suggest introducing the asymmetry in the landscape plan itself; there are also opportunities to further differentiate the two building as well.

Ground Floor Animation

- Think that both the design team and City staff are focused appropriately on the ground floor animation and how to balance things there so that the incredible public realm that has the potential to emerge is supported, can be beautiful, and won't be characterized by blank facades with servicing elements behind them.
 - Understand that is certainly not the intention and there seems to be lots of improvement underway in that regard.

Built Form Massing & Transition

- Looking at the building massing and transition, would reinforce staff instinct to develop more asymmetry between the north and south buildings.
 - While the design team has developed a common architectural language in the project, suggest the overall architectural approach should have more distinction, asymmetry and opportunism within it. Particularly if phasing is something that comes about over time overall.
- In terms of the built form transition, a member thought that the curvaceous approach was interesting and had a nice modernist feeling to it at the ground level around the edges of the podium.
 - However, this member thought that this feeling and character/architectural expression gets lost as it goes up into the tower.
 - The member advised that the broad design instinct was interesting but that it needed to be realized differently, especially where the curves or the folds come down and start to create that transition to the podium and then the "big glassy reveal" that steps and then the beginning of the tower.
- Looking at the proposed massing, a member thought that the stepping on the north and south elevations were interesting.

Podium Massing

- The podium from a massing perspective is appropriate but further refinement on the materials will really help in its evolution.
- Think that the curvaceous walls on the first and second floors are "fascinating" and they remind a Panel member of Alvar Aalto.
 - This Panel member advised further design development on the curves to ensure they are properly resolved and can become very poetic. The member advised looking at Aalto's work for precedents on how to achieve this.
- A member commented that the 6 storey streetwall height on Yonge St could use more differentiation to separate and distinguish the two and create more variation on Yonge St, which is a street of interesting frontages.

Facades, Materiality, Heritage Context & Programming

- Looking at the materiality and the massing and its relationship to the heritage context together with the evolving character of the area:
 - o Think the proposed massing works well with the evolving character. It's replacing a more recent building but replicating the 3-4 storey height that is evocative of the heritage context north and south of this area in an appropriate and successful way.
 - o However, the material expression feels very formal and speaks to patterns and shapes that evolve up the tower in a curvilinear fashion that is rather evocative but completely agnostic to the program that is behind the facades.
 - For example, the 2nd floor bike parking has the exact same materials but simply frosted glass; the community space in some cases has the exact same exterior expression as the residential units that may be squeezed on a half floor beside it.
 - Suggest more refinement, particularly to the podium that responds to the programs behind.

Bike Space

- For the bike space, it is incredible that it has all been held off there perimeter so there is an opportunity to do something that is really interesting and backlit there that speaks very specifically to the program in the unique urban condition or mobility and bikes that could be celebrated.

Community Centre

- With respect to what is a community centre space in this context, the proposed size is about 5,000-6,000 square feet which is the scale of a small child care centre. Otherwise it is unclear what this space will become.
 - o Wonder whether it is possible to have some of the community centre space closer to grade, appreciating the instinct that a space does not need to be deep to be useful and to provide potential animation in a site that's constrained in the way this one is.
- Perhaps a vertical connection along the elevator is highlighted as an entry to the community hub that is again distinct from the residential program that may be on parts of the podium as well.
- Various members liked the idea of creating the two storey connection to the community centre adjacent to the park.
 - o One member commented that people passing through areas are great ways to create "energy and body heat".