

CITY OF TORONTO DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

MINUTES: MEETING 3 – March 9, 2023

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, March 9, 2023, at 12:30 pm.

Members of the Design Review Panel

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 – Joe Lobko Architect Inc.

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

Design Review Panel Coordinator

Lee Ann Bobrowski: Urban Design, City Planning Division

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Panel confirmed minutes of their previous meeting, which was held on February 16, 2023, by email.

MEETING 3 INDEX

- i. 1215-1255 McCowan Road (1st Review)
- ii. 40 Bushby Drive Housing Now (1st Review)
- iii. 595 Bay Street (1st Review)

1215-1255 MCCOWAN ROAD

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

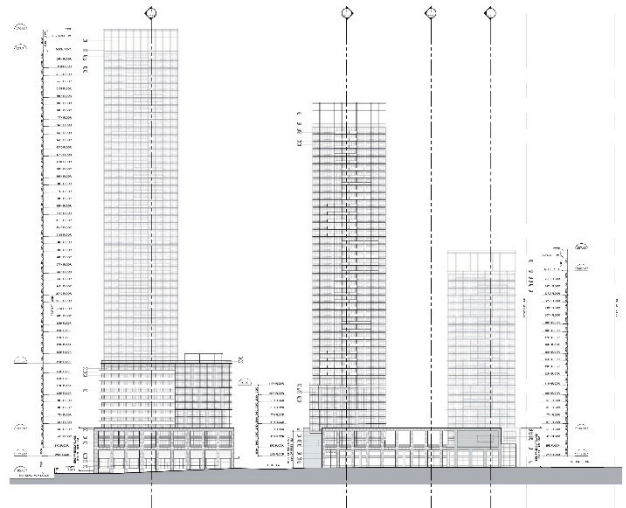
DESIGN REVIEW First Review
APPLICATION OPA and Rezoning

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Tyler Hughes, Community Planning;
Sasha Terry, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Nicola Casciato, WZMH Architects;
Ray Ronaghan, STUDIO tla;
Jane McFarlane, Weston Consulting

VOTE Non-support: unanimous
(*One panelist left before the vote)



REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR Meg Graham

PANELISTS Michael Leckman, Jim Gough, Olivia Keung, Paul Kulig, Joe Lobko, Anna Madeira,
Juhee Oh

CONFLICTS Not in Attendance: Margaret Briegmann

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. Provision of a public street and a public park as part of Our Scarborough Centre study visioning
2. Integration of a public park within a public realm network for the greater development block
3. Design of the building including building entrance, building setback and building height at the gateway intersection to Scarborough Centre at Ellesmere Road and McCowan Road

Chair's Summary of Key Points

A strong and vibrant public realm is central to the success of this project. To this end it is imperative to re-design/re-examine the scheme with the goal of creating thoughtful and well-considered pedestrian / at-grade connectivity within the site, and to the neighborhood; there is currently scant evidence of this in the submission material.

In some measure the proposal is not consistent with its stated thesis: the public realm proposed

does not reflect the site's proximity to transit and a major urban corner; a more dynamic, vibrant and extroverted, active, public realm is needed. The active street proposed at the centre has created an inward-focused development. The proponent is encouraged to re-examine the orientation of the site to the interior, with a view to creating a more active exterior presentation on McCowan and Ellesmere. The blank face of the building at McCowan and Ellesmere with a view to adding amenity and activation (grocery store entry/exit, a café, flower store, etc.), coupled with adjacent public realm space where interior uses could spill out.

Similarly, the POPS location does not achieve the kind of connectivity that would be good to achieve across the site, nor does it activate the movement through the site envisaged by the Secondary Plan. The proponent is urged to reconsider how the active street in the middle is part of the larger picture.

Pedestrian and cyclist amenity and comfort need much greater consideration and development. It was suggested the proponent reconsider the L-shaped public street, the design of streets in general (give as much back to pedestrians as possible), and the suppression of the surface parking lot. The east-west street is a challenge to a calm and orderly public realm; Panel suggested the proponent consider raised crosswalks at entries and cobblestones.

Critically, collaboration, coordination, and coherence with the adjacent development to the north is essential. Consider the development from the inside, and all the active movements within the development that can connect it both to itself and the street, as well as to its present and future neighborhood context.

Panel Commentary

Project Vision and Site Plan Connections

- Multiple panel members highlighted issues with the overall design approach of the proposal, in consideration of the future subway station.
 - o A panelist encouraged the team to reimagine the larger block planning aspects including the design of the streets; the proposal is coming across as a highly car-centric place and at odds with the transit argument.
 - o The application of a lower parking standard was strongly encouraged.
 - o A panel member identified issues with the thesis behind the project; beyond what is envisioned in the Secondary Plan, the increase in density and urbanization is being justified by the future transit station but a conventional approach is proposed that does not follow on that promise.
 - Almost fifty percent more car spaces are provided in the surface parking lot than bicycle parking spaces. The surface parking is given a privileged spot at grade, but bicycle parking is pushed up on the corner. This ethos needs to be reversed to build a vibrant, urban pedestrian realm tied to transit.
- Multiple panel members suggested greater collaboration with CreateTO and the neighbouring development.
 - o Perhaps there is potential for some activation with the adjacent sites together; this may bring clarity for what can be solved between the two projects for the bigger community.
- A panelist identified the site as a great opportunity as a gateway, with connections to all the transit planned in the area.

- A panelist noted their support for a lot of good base elements in the proposal.
 - This includes a street with more attention in the middle of a development, potentially towers on either side that scale down to Ellesmere, as well as the intent to ensure that the community does not lose the food store during the course of the work.
- A panelist encouraged the team to adopt the sense of the streetscape that the City is trying to promote. The City and proponents need to come together to develop a better overall vision.
- A panelist highlighted the challenge of creating character in this neighbourhood.
 - The area is very car-centric, and the proposal is looking to transform it into a transit-oriented community where the car no longer takes precedent. Some indication of how the buildings might transform, and an acknowledgement of change over time has been shown.
- A panelist highlighted the strengths of the outstanding design studio and their long reputation of doing great work. Noting the extraordinary site that is singular in the city, further persuasion was requested to ensure that all the talents were being brought to bear with the specificity of the site.

Active Street and Driveway

- A panelist highlighted the challenges of the east-west active street in terms of creating a calm, pedestrian-focused environment.
 - The street needs a strongly designed pedestrian realm and heavily calmed traffic lane; consider cobblestone and raised crosswalks between entrances to reinforce that traffic needs to slow down in the pedestrian-focused space.
- Multiple panel members questioned the parking along the active street.
 - One wondered if the parking could be reduced, if not removed on both sides; seeing it on both takes a bite out of it being the heart of the development.
 - Another panelist noted that they were torn on the matter as angled parking would help to slow down traffic, but encouraged the design to give as much back to the pedestrian realm as possible
- A panelist acknowledged the design team's intent to establish the active street as the heart of the development as a beautiful idea but lamented that in some ways it has made the development turn its back on McCowan and Ellesmere.
- A panel member noted that it was not clear what the active street was activating.
- A panelist acknowledged the underground parking but questioned the desire to go private with the active street and drive beyond that reason; a private street allows you to move away from city standards but none of this is shown.
 - If the street is going to be private, make it better than it could be as a public street, and dive into elements around pedestrian amenity, comfort, slower traffic, safety as well as CPTED.
- Another panel member questioned why the street should not be public, and why the City staff's suggestion of the L-shape could not be made to work.
 - They were not convinced about the northern driveway loop and its need at all.

- The plan would work better if there was an L-shaped public street.
- Multiple panelists noted that they did not think the Shops on Don Mills was a good precedent, or the right application to reference for the project.
 - Market Street downtown, on the west-side of the St. Lawrence Market was highlighted instead for its ability to accommodate special occasions, and built-in flexibility.
- Regarding the driveway, a panelist expressed that making the pavement wider was not a good choice.
 - In consideration of the POPS and the need to create a pedestrian-focused area, the suggestion was made to keep traffic speeds as low as possible.
 - It was advised that the pavement width be kept to six metres, and much more space be given to the pedestrian as well as landscaping to reinforce those as important modes while creating more of a sense of place.

Public Realm and the McCowan-Ellesmere Corner

- A panelist noted that the POPS location felt disconnected.
 - Although the configuration may not be possible, the original parkland presented by City staff was intended to be a connection corridor between sites.
 - The idea of drawing through the site and creating movement is important.
- Concern was expressed for public gathering spaces at the ground level beyond just a modest POPS; decent public space is missing in consideration of the proposed population.
- A panelist underscored the challenges of the site and McCowan district to achieve a continuous, believable, active public realm.
- The design team was encouraged to take a greater look at the streetscape details around the perimeter.
 - The proposal should demonstrate the planning work occurring including the bicycle lanes and deep setbacks on McCowan, the double row of trees, as well as the BRT planned along Ellesmere.
 - The team was also encouraged to acknowledge the activity currently happening at that corner including pedestrians waiting for the bus; how is this supported, how does it add to the vibrancy and how does it inform the architectural sequencing?
- A panel member noted that the face of the building on McCowan and at the corner of Ellesmere seems big and blank with no accesses; this will not encourage pedestrian activity.
 - In consideration of the eventual proximity to a subway station, maximizing opportunities for pedestrian movement in and out is important.
- A panelist identified the corner condition at Ellesmere and McCowan as an important moment for the development as well as the greater area but questioned what was activating it, and also wondered if the food store entrance could come off McCowan.
 - Beyond the artwork, people need more active uses to arrive here. McCowan is an important corridor for both pedestrian accessing transit, and cyclists; the continuity of active uses along it is really important.
- A panelist noted that the corner of Ellesmere and McCowan felt a bit dead.

- The evolving character and composition of grocery stores was highlighted, appreciating how active retail can bring life to the corner, perhaps with a cafe.
- The question of how to bring activity to the street outside of the grocery store was posed; it is not easily done as they are often inward places.
 - There may be a solution, but more work is needed.
- The challenges for character between the streetscape and active frontage were highlighted.
 - A panel member commended the proponent team for their commitment to both; quality streetscape is important, and an active frontage can create a very pleasant-feeling development. There are a lot of opportunities between those two, to look at the interface of the building and how those interior uses spill-out to the exterior.
- A panelist highlighted the opportunities with the grocery store as an anchor and characterized it as a wonderful tenant as far as use at the base of a residential building.
 - There is a generous streetscape outside that unit along McCowan and Ellesmere. Perhaps there is an opportunity to make use of the adjacency for the store, as there are a variety of ways that the grocery use can spill out and activate the urban streetscape in front.
- A panel member underscored the challenges of loading for the grocery store and encouraged the proponents to explore internalizing it so that trucks would not be pulling across the sidewalk.
 - This would improve the feel of the area to be less backdoor and more in-line with that the proponents are intending.

Architecture and Sustainability

- Multiple panel members encouraged a more detailed investigation of the project's sustainability goals and targets. The architecture will be influenced by current as well as approaching green standards.
 - The shape and massing may potentially change to reach the new targets, while the roof design could be informed if PV panels are used to balance out the energy requirements, for example.
- A panelist commended the design team on the generous roof amenity spaces.
 - Thoughtful design was cautioned to ensure usability including shade; the spaces could be quite beautiful if designed with a lot of trees and canopies.

40 BUSHBY DRIVE HOUSING NOW

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW	First Review
APPLICATION	Pre-Application Consultation (future OPA and Rezoning)

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF	Annely Zonena, Strategic Initiatives; Tyler Hughes, Community Planning; Sasha Terry, Urban Design
DESIGN TEAM	Dermot Sweeny, Sweeny & Co Architects Inc; Wai Ying Di Giorgio, The Planning Partnership
VOTE	Non-support: unanimous

REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR	Michael Leckman
PANELISTS	Meg Graham, Jim Gough, Olivia Keung, Joe Lobko, Anna Madeira, Juhee Oh, Heather Rolleston
CONFLICTS	Not in Attendance: Margaret Briegmann

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. Design and size of the privately owned publicly accessible mid-block within a public realm network for the greater development block
2. Design of the building including:
 - Tower separation between towers and to 1215 McCowan Road;
 - Tower base building height and tower stepback in regards to pedestrian comfort along McCowan Road, Bushby Drive and the midblock connection;
 - Tower design excellence

Chair's Summary of Key Points

40 Bushby is an extraordinary opportunity for city building. Panel expressed strong support for the design's ambitions for sustainability, for the Housing Now initiative, and for the way in which this site, as well as a proposal on it, could be an integral part of delivering high quality affordable housing to Scarborough. It is also a site that needs strong collaboration with its neighbour at 1215-1255 McCowan Road. The success of this proposal depends heavily on the success of that collaboration, and that of the mews that separates them.

Proximity to the future Scarborough Line 3 and projections for population growth in Scarborough are likely to produce very high levels of pedestrian traffic in this rapidly growing area of the city, and particularly on this site; the intensity of pedestrian activity at Union Station is a useful reference. In that context, every effort should be made to create an environment that considers accessibility and pedestrian safety – such as continuity of the public realm to the south, reduced interaction with vehicles along that path, and promoting smaller turning radii at the edges of the site to reduce vehicular speeds.

On the subject of the streetscape, an extraordinary series of effective streetscape cross-sections have been developed by the city for this site and the surrounding area. Panel believes that site plans and eye level views should adopt and accurately reflect the fulfillment of those streetscapes. In this automobile dominated circumstance, the proposed street sections present a habitable and very promising pedestrian environment - but they have not yet been accurately represented on site plans for these proposals. Panel believes the environments represented in those sections are a fundamental contribution to the public realm and the success of the neighbourhood.

Even at this early stage, Panel was sympathetic to the gestures proposed for the tower designs and considered that they could be part of the story that helps resolve the relatively small separation distances for such tall towers. Panel suggested that perhaps angled forms could be emphasized as one approach to improve sightlines between towers. On the whole though, Panel felt that floor plate sizes on this already dense site should not exceed 750 metres to ensure access to light and view was protected, regardless of the finer elements of the design. In addition, Panel echoed the requirements of the tall building guidelines, and noted that the design should be revised to include an articulated podium and its commensurate set-back, to ensure that wind down-wash was managed appropriately for a pedestrian friendly microclimate.

Panel observed that every effort should be made to increase open space at grade: it was noted that considering open space to be active, not only passive, is an important way to adjust perception of the space required, its shape and adequacy.

Considering the ongoing development of Scarborough around the Civic Centre, there were concerns expressed about the monoculture of tall towers, as portrayed by the future context drawings and this particular project. It was hoped that the Planning could continue to consider greater diversity of building types as studies and masterplans continue to evolve.

When the floor plate sizes, requirements for greater tower separations for taller towers, requirements for podium setbacks, and need for greater open space at grade are considered, many Panel members suggested, more radically, that this site may not have the capacity for the three towers proposed, and should be redesigned with a greater focus on the public realm.

Panel Commentary

Project Vision and Context

- A panelist underscored fundamental support for the supply of affordable housing, and the importance it currently has in the city.
- Multiple panel members expressed great concern for the future of Scarborough, including alarm for the alacrity with which it is being developed.
 - o A panelist noted that the ability to keep up with the developments being proposed is lacking.

- In effect, a very dense city is being built; slow down enough to realize that there is a public realm problem and potentially a quality-of-life problem here.
 - A panel member was not encouraged imagining the future of Scarborough Centre.
 - It will effectively be a bunch of very tall towers with barely any podiums, horrendous street conditions with wind tunnels and little street presence, as well as a vastly under-scaled public realm supplied mostly by POPS, and not truly public.
 - There is a disconnect with the vision understood for Scarborough Centre.
- Numerous panel members questioned the balance of quantity versus quality in the proposal.
 - The project in some level is at odds, or out of balance with the critical need to provide additional housing; it must be balanced with quality of life and quality of space, not just at the public realm level but the upper levels as well.
 - The amount of public space is vastly under-scaled; it is entirely possible that removing a tower is the solution.
 - Notwithstanding the urgent need for housing, a lot of building on-site has been proposed, given the amount of grade-level, outdoor open space and amenity provided.
 - The density is too great in relation to the number of people and the way the ground plane is being handled; it is one tower too many.
 - A panelist wondered if it was a three-tower site but noted that this depended largely on the economics of the project, including how to build and produce affordable housing.
 - They questioned how much was needed to make it feasible and imagined that more could be done with less in this instance.
 - A panel member expressed that they were torn on the project and wondered if such density would be supported if it were not affordable housing.
 - Concern was underscored for the social economics and social sustainability of a place that will ultimately house thousands of people.
- A panelist was encouraged to hear that the team was actively working with the neighbours to ease some of the adjacency and challenging grade issues on site.
- Multiple panel members highlighted comments related to the drawings.
 - The proposal is a pioneering project in the area with respect to the height and density; it would have been quite useful to continue the legend of proposed vs. approved.
 - A context plan would have been helpful to understand the proposed alignments; they were not sufficiently illustrated with the site to the south.

Architectural Form and Massing

- A panelist expressed concern for the emerging architectural character, and nervousness about the amount of density being proposed in Scarborough. City staff and CreateTO were encouraged to consider diversity in the architecture as it evolves, and not a monoculture.
- Further study was encouraged regarding the density and tower separation.
 - A panelist expressed that the 25-metre tower separation is not sufficient and that 30-metres may not appear sufficient given the size of the site.

- Another suggested daylight and view analysis to understand what the proposed experience may be.
 - The language of angling forms could perhaps be used to enhance these things.
- Concern was expressed for the tower floor plate sizes.
 - One panelist noted that the 800 square meters at the base felt excessive and that there could be additional areas to study the massing proposal to meet the Tall Building Guidelines more closely.

Amenity Spaces

- The importance of public urban space was noted; equally important is the private amenity space in a building of this scale.
 - More consideration is needed regarding the scale of the outdoor spaces adjacent to indoor amenity in terms of the support that those spaces provide to the building residents.
- A panelist cautioned that some of the exterior amenity spaces at the subtle shifts in the tower look quite narrow; further study relative to proposed uses was encouraged.
- A panelist noted that the podium with small, open amenity spaces on the roofs is not particularly successful and needs to be reexamined.
- A panelist highlighted the challenges of the long and narrow, strangely proportioned site; perhaps there is an opportunity for more podium levels and to provide amenity uses on the bigger podium plates.

Overall Public Realm and Streetscape

- Multiple panelists noted that a lot more public open space is needed.
 - Concern was expressed with the expectation that the site to the south will handle the burden of public open space; it is vastly under-scaled.
 - The north-south connection needs to be considerably wider than it is and needs to connect to something considerably bigger on the site to the south to create a very strong public realm moving north-south.
- A panelist noted that the ground floor plane reads as leftover spaces and wondered if there was an opportunity to raise some of the non-residential uses into the podium.
- Multiple panelists conveyed that more active programming is needed in addition to the passive spaces shown.
 - Given the amount of open space currently, it may not be possible but is needed.
 - In conversation between the two sites seen, this will help inform if there is enough park space.
 - Underpass Park was highlighted as a great precedent for the project, notably the large areas for child-friendly play structures, skateboard park, and a basketball court.

- Concern was expressed to City staff regarding the corner of McCowan and Bushby; the radius on the southeast corner seems quite large, unlike those on the other corners of the intersection.
 - o Perhaps there is an opportunity to jointly reduce this, to make vehicles making the turn slow down and increase pedestrian safety.
- A panelist expressed their enjoyment for the experience being created along Bushby; it is a thoughtfully designed, great street and a great experience.
- Alternatively, another panelist was not convinced that Bushby will be a great street.
 - o The acknowledgement of the City's effort put into the evolution of streetscape in Scarborough Centre is missing in the application, as well as the integration into the larger plan.
- The team was encouraged to consider the landscape plan given the decommissioning of the SRT; the building design may be impacted as well.
- A panelist expressed appreciation for the direction taken with the landscape design; it has character and strength.
 - o Additionally, it could be more layered in plan between the inside and outside of the building.
- Concern was expressed that the large planters will impede movement in consideration of the potential transit conditions and users.
- The mid-block green connection off the mews aids in the idea of porosity for the whole site.

Mews

- The complexity and number of different users was highlighted.
 - o It will be challenging to navigate the particular vehicular uses proposed in the mews area, including the loading and servicing for the towers as well as drop-offs to two of the lobbies.
 - o Pedestrian elements will need to be very strong to ensure safety as well as security given the number of vehicular driveway and building accesses.
- Multiple panelists highlighted the critical importance of the mews to the success of the project, both in nature and function.
 - o It was characterized as a linchpin piece to resolve, to successfully establish what is happening on the property itself, as well as the property to the south including the connectivity.
 - The connection and development to the south is a critical piece; a fulsome connection must happen.
 - The question was posed of how much of the mews' success depended on getting the extension and widening from the neighbour.
- A panelist noted that bringing uses to the mews frees up the other side of the building and gives it a chance to be a contributor to the public realm.

Sustainability Initiatives

- Numerous panel members commended the team on their wonderful sustainability initiatives, and for taking the project above and beyond for exemplary performance. The sustainability considerations are promising and well-thought out.
- A panel member noted their appreciation as well as support for the higher TGS targets; it is important that CreateTO continues to set an example and this project is one of the strongest targets seen from them yet.
- A panelist noted that it would be helpful to determine the non-residential uses at the ground level early-on, as they will impact the energy profiles.
 - o Daylight analysis was encouraged in this regard; when the energy consumption has been driven down, daylight becomes a big aspect in terms of impacting energy usage.
- Early planning of the technologies was underscored to ensure that they are not value-engineered at a later stage.

595 BAY STREET

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW First Review
APPLICATION Rezoning

PRESENTATIONS:

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

DESIGN TEAM Nazia Aftab and Gregory Adams,
Hariri Pontarini Architects;
Tom Giancos, KingSett Capital

VOTE Support (*with key condition*): unanimous*



REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR Michael Leckman

PANELISTS Jim Gough, Olivia Keung, Paul Kulig, Joe Lobko, Anna Madeira, Heather Rolleston

CONFLICTS Not in Attendance: Margaret Briegmann, Juhee Oh

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. Relationship with the Context
 - Does the proposal's massing and design fit within the context and respond to its prominent corner location?
2. Ground Floor and Public Realm
 - Does the design of the ground floor, the proposed uses, and sidewalk widths contribute positively to the vibrancy of the adjacent streets and public realm, and address the anticipated pedestrian activity in the area?
3. Built Form and Design
 - Does the proposal and its design respond appropriately to the existing and retained buildings on the site, including the architectural integration with the abutting billboard structure?

Chair's Summary of Key Points

Adding a tower to 595 Bay Street represents a dramatic change to the corner of Yonge and Dundas: the design reverses the stepped form that has characterized the Atrium on Bay on that corner, and

envelopes the north side and top of a billboard that forms part of the celebratory electronic context of Dundas Square.

Challenges in successfully resolving the built form are plentiful: narrowed separation distances between existing office and proposed residential space, obstructed south facing windows in the new residential tower, infringement of Yonge Street set-backs, a new loading zone that narrows the Edward Street sidewalk, a potentially awkward cantilever up-and-over the existing billboard to recapture GFA, very limited amenity space above grade, space that is compromised with overlooks from the existing office space.

As the post-covid uncertainties of retail and commercial viability have begun to emerge, this project is responding to hard truths about the needs of a prosperous post-covid downtown. It proposes that more housing is the key – or at least one key to urban success – in areas previously dominated by commercial space only. Panel has seen similar strategies being applied on University Avenue where commercial uses were being supplemented by residential – but none of those is as challenging as this one. In this project’s complexities there are echoes of Tokyo, New York City, and London where designs respond to extremely constrained metropolitan conditions, in provocative and elegant ways.

Panel was persuaded that the design presented meaningful though non-conforming responses to the massing, separation distances, south facing windows, set-backs, loading zone, the sign, and the amenity spaces. It should be underlined that none of the proposed conditions was satisfactory in isolation, though as part of a comprehensive reconsideration of the Atrium on Bay, in this location, with waning retail and commercial activity, they were appreciated as situationally elegant. Panel urged the development team to continue to study the finer grained responses to these difficult conditions and seek imaginative responses to both validate and mitigate the experiences they create.

Finally, panel observed that combination of residential and office uses have intrinsic synergies that should be exploited to advantage in this proposal, in a more explicit response to sustainability.

Panel Commentary

Overall Design Approach

- Multiple panelists commended the applicant team and highlighted the complexity of the post-covid issues noting the unusual measures employed to address unusual circumstances in a well-established building.
 - o Appreciation was noted for the efforts to be at the forefront and develop something that responds to new realities in a way that respects the existing building, including embodied carbon and heritage considerations.
 - This proposal strikes a really fine balance on those points.
 - The architecture, resolution and space planning are really good.
 - o The proposal is an excellent response to the issues identified by the client and the goals put forth for the site; the project hits the mark.
 - The proposal’s achievements include revitalization, internal loading, direct connection to the subway and adding residential density to the site while improving the corner of the retail mall.

- Recognizing the wonderful retail asset, one panelist queried if there could be more, and if this improvement could be extended.
 - o Perhaps along the interior spaces in the mall as they are very important to the community.

Signage

- The majority of the Panel expressed concern for the relationship between the proposed building and the existing billboard signage. The proponent team was encouraged to find ways to resolve it.
 - One panelist did not see how the continued existence of the sign was compatible with the building proposal put forward and questioned why the signage was more valuable than the view for approximately 20% of the units.
 - These units on the southwest corner are forced to have relatively narrow frontages where there should be corner units with great access to sun and views.
 - Another noted that the signage will not stand the test of time like the building will.
 - Appreciating the value the billboard has to someone, 20 years from now the building and corner will remain with questions as to why it is notched.
 - Concern was expressed for the amount that the signage is driving things as it exacerbates the condition with residential units facing the nearby office building 18-metres away.
 - It is a fatal flaw, but not irredeemable.
- One panelist presented an alternative perspective; they were not too fussed about the relationship between the billboard and the building as it is part and parcel to living at Yonge and Dundas.
 - Potential buyers in a building like this may want to be in the centre of the action if choosing this location as a place to live, acknowledging that there will be ambient light from the billboard and lots of noise.

Architecture

- A panelist wondered if the team had considered easing the relationship of the building cantilever over the sign, perhaps by stepping it rather than having a single slice.
 - This might be more expressive on the architecture side and the relationship might feel a bit more finessed.
 - They noted their belief that there is a place in the world for architecture that has more jigs and jogs, that hits the ground only where it needs to as a machine for living.
- Skepticism was noted for some of the interior areas.
 - The residential lobby and the spaces currently proposed might be undersized in consideration of parcel delivery.
 - With respect to the proposed uses, the two residential suites on the third floor seem a bit orphaned in that location; perhaps could be turned into live-work spaces.
- Appreciation was noted for the bike elevator.
- Regarding the architectural expression, a panelist questioned if hand-laid was applicable at 38-storeys; perhaps the materiality could be thin brick and precast, or just precast.
- A panelist wondered if a specific retailer was being considered as the ground floor looks like it could be reduced.
 - There appears to be an awkward dimension of space around the escalator.

- Given that the second floor is the primary retail location, perhaps there is a way for just elements to touch down at grade on Yonge Street in favour of giving more area to the public realm and increasing the pedestrian clearway dimension as it is challenged there.

Public Realm and Street Frontages

- Multiple panelists questioned the setback on Yonge Street and agreed that more pedestrian space should be given at the ground plane.
 - Although the inset doors to retail help a bit, the distance of only 4-metres was questioned given that it is such a busy street with persistent pedestrian flow.
 - A panelist characterized the existing conditions as one of the most hostile pedestrian places in the city; it never feels like there is enough.
- A panelist noted their appreciation for the effort to improve the entrance from Yonge Street to the retail portion of the Atrium on Bay.
 - The design team was encouraged to consider how to make the welcoming into the retail environment more special, which may include widening the sidewalk.
- Appreciation was noted for the study completed by the team including the east-west nature of the site and the north-south nature of Yonge, as well as the research into future studies considering how Elm and Edward will be meeting Yonge Street.
- Multiple panelists questioned if the Edward Street loading could be reviewed.
 - One worried about its viability and questioned if the service loading space could be flipped with the retail
 - It feels like a leftover space; perhaps more presence could be given to the active uses on that frontage.
 - Another lamented that it could not be rearranged to minimize the number of driveway access.
 - A third panelist queried if the loading could be shared with the office space and if a turn table is possible.

Sustainability

- A panelist acknowledged that the proponent team is not obligated to go beyond minimum sustainability standards, while also identifying recommendations:
 - Recognizing that office spaces are cooling dominant and residential spaces are heating dominant, the panelist wondered if a creative solution could be found in the synergy between office and residential.
 - The team was encouraged to see if the green roofs currently proposed at the top of the building could be pushed down to the amenity space.
 - The 18-metre tower separation presents issues with not only daylight but views; a green roof might be a biophilic asset when the sky cannot be seen.

*Vote with Key Condition

- The Panel voted unanimously to support the proposal with the key condition that more work is to be done around the impact of the sign, and resolution of privacy issues between the new tower and the existing, with further development regarding access to light and views for the units obstructed by the sign.