

CITY OF TORONTO DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

MINUTES: MEETING 5 – May 4, 2023

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, May 4, 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 April 13, 2023, by email.

MEETING 5 INDEX

- i. 320-332 Bloor Street West (1st Review)
- ii. 150 Sherbourne Street – John Innes Community Recreation Centre (1st Review)
- iii. Toronto Island Master Plan (2nd Review)

320-332 BLOOR STREET WEST

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW First Review
APPLICATION Rezoning
DEVELOPER First Capital



PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Corinna Prior, Community Planning;
Erin Smith, Heritage Planning;
Kevin Lee, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Richard Witt and Ossie Airewele,
BDP Quadrangle;
Oz Kemal, MHBC Planning

VOTE Non-support: unanimous

REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR Gordon Stratford

PANELISTS Dima Cook, Ralph Giannone, Jessica Hutcheon, Olivia Keung, Paul Kulig, Joe Lobko,
Juhee Oh, Sibylle von Knobloch

CONFLICTS Not in Attendance: Margaret Briegmann, Anna Madeira, Heather Rolleston

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 of the Corner at the view terminus of Spadina Avenue;
2. Design of the open space, including the woonerf and midblock connections, and relationship to vehicular movement on the site;
3. Design and height of the podium, lack of step back or podium definition;
4. Relationship to Spadina TTC station;
5. Possibility on heritage integration;
6. Recognition of significant Indigenous history along the Spadina corridor; and
7. Articulation/materiality of the building.

Chair's Summary of Key Points

The Panel would like to thank the proponent team for their thorough presentation. The proposed project is of value to the City for its potential to realise transit-oriented development adjacent to a key subway station. The project is also of great importance because it will occupy a significant site due its prime location at the end of Spadina Avenue's view corridor.

With this unique opportunity comes the civic responsibility to create a high-quality landmark site and building. While the proposed development shows some promise, overall, the design does not meet the responsibility noted above.

The Panel encourages the proponent to focus on the following:

Response to Context

- Busy Thoroughfares – The sculpting of deeper street level setbacks along Bloor and Spadina is a positive response that creates a better pedestrian experience along these busy streets.
 - Develop further to increase pedestrian realm.
- Spadina View Corridor – Develop a stronger, more cohesive response to this important context.
 - See Built Form below.
- Pedestrian/Vehicular Realm – Designing for a future on-site context of fewer cars, more bikes and pedestrian pathways is positive but further work is needed.
 - See Site Planning below.
- Indigenous Heritage Context – There is significant Indigenous history along the Spadina corridor.
 - Provide a strategy for recognizing and openly celebrating this heritage context throughout the design of the proposed development.

Site Planning

- See Response to Context above.
- Woonerf – Providing such space is worthwhile but as proposed it does not have enough critical mass to really work as a woonerf.
 - Develop stronger pedestrian-oriented amenity alternatives.
- Retail – Extend proposed retail to the corner of Spadina and Bloor West.
- Building North Edge Pedestrian Pathway – The pathway idea is a start but as proposed it is not an attractive route.
 - Open the pathway to the sky and ensure that this is a safe space for pedestrians.
- Shadowing – As proposed many of the outdoor amenity spaces will be in shadow at key usage times of the day.
 - Develop alternatives that mitigate this problem.
- Car Parking – Significantly reducing the number of parking spaces on site is highly beneficial but go further.
 - Make a case for providing no car parking on site and increasing bike parking.
- Pedestrian Comfort – Ensure that all pedestrian spaces provide personal safety, and wind mitigation.

Built Form

- Built Form Expression – The proposed angular grid pattern appears as an applique surface graphic applied onto and at odds with rectilinear box form massing. The result is an awkward, unresolved built form expression that fights with itself.
 - Strive for a cohesive whole.
 - Develop a more sculptural massing approach, with expressed structure forming a pattern that is in sync with massing.
- Street Level Structure – The proposed wishbone structure at street level projects a heavy, overbearing presence along major street frontages, and presents a pedestrian safety hazard.
 - As part of rethinking the built form expression develop a lighter, safer alternative.
- Precedents – Look beyond the researched existing built form along Bloor Street West for precedents.
 - A potential example could be The One at Bloor and Yonge.

Landscape

- Surface Pattern – The proposed angular pattern laid out throughout the site and outdoor amenity levels is frenetic.
 - Develop a calmer alternative.

Panel Commentary

Context and Site Planning

- A panelist highlighted the very special site while acknowledging that the client and design team's efforts to rise to the challenge are evident in the exploration.
- A panelist noted that a tall building in this location will be fantastic.
- Multiple panelists questioned why parking was needed at the intersection of a subway and LRT station.
 - Including the development to the east, the unfortunate site conditions of 58 parking spaces, two driveways, two ramps and loading requirements was highlighted.
 - No parking would free up the ground floor including the safety of the woonerf, and so much about the building.
 - In consideration of bicycle parking, the opportunity to augment the proposal to include one bicycle space for every bedroom provided, by eliminating of vehicular parking, was highlighted.
- Appreciation was noted for the connections into the block, but a panelist questioned the woonerf doing different things along its existence which include the loading area, POPS and east-west community connector.
 - There are not enough continuous elements along its length that would contribute to it being a true woonerf that slows vehicles and prioritizes pedestrians.
 - It will be a hard sell with Parks to eliminate the fence; run the scenarios and consider what will happen if the fence stays.
- A panelist identified issues with the woonerf and expressed that it was a bit disingenuous not to talk about the building to the east that is a blank wall of loading and underground parking, as well as the whole loading and underground parking component of this proposal.

- They strongly suggested removing the north-south woonerf to allow the fabric to continue all the way across to Madison.
- A panelist respectfully disagreed with some colleagues and noted their like for the idea of the mid-block connection.
 - They agreed with the removal of the parking on both buildings so that the garages and cars were not part of the picture, to create merely a loading zone.
 - Support was noted for the positive and practical contextual strategy of a mid-block connection between two big buildings that accepts the loading impacts rather than other streets and has a chance to become a meaningful pedestrian connection to the park to the north.
- The importance of the covered east-west pedestrian connection to transit at the north side of the site was highlighted, but further refinements were identified as necessary to ensure safety.
 - Concerns was expressed for the lack of eyes on the passageway, the tall wall on the north side, and only 2.6-metres of walking space with the columns.
 - The importance of clear site lines as well as coordination was identified in consideration of the driveways and servicing further to the east.
 - Hope was expressed that the TTC would be open to visual perforations into the wall, or the creation of increased visibility.
 - The missed opportunity to demonstrate how the space could be made enjoyable and safe was lamented, including if unique lighting or art components could be incorporated.
 - The importance of weather protection to transit access was highlighted, but the team was encouraged to consider ways to open the space up to the sky and let it breathe a little more.
 - The big roof on top of the space was characterized as a bit odd and it was questioned why the mid-block connection would be made dark.
- Multiple panelists questioned if this was the place for a uniquely expressive streetscape.
 - Given that there are multiple developments proposed in a row, the opportunity for a coordinated east-west streetscape was highlighted.
 - Review of the streetscape standards should be developed to strengthen cohesion of the public realm beyond the site.
 - The patterning on the sidewalk and in the private property is suggestive of a wholistic public realm that creeps into the private realm but it might be too optimistic to rely on this bold pattern to unify the public realm in consideration of City requirements for works in the right-of way.
- Multiple panelists expressed opportunities for the corner treatment at grade.
 - There is potential to integrate Indigenous art and expression, if of interest to the client.
 - The suggestion was put forth to push the retail to extend all the way to the street so that the animation on the corner is public and the corner expression has something to spill out; have that corner and landscape be marked.
 - Perhaps the corner should be a unique opportunity for the City to celebrate Indigenous history along the corridor, in combination with transportation services.
 - The corner should be given to retail; make it a retail corner and allow the lobby to shift north, deeper into the site.

- The corner could be opened up more to perhaps expose both the retail and residential lobby to allow for the expansion of the POPS under the canted corner.
 - The angled corner is visually interesting, but more could be done to celebrate that offset condition.
 - There is a lot happening; greater resolution and clarity was encouraged in terms of what it is trying to say.
- Concern was expressed regarding the angled building columns eating up accessible public space; volumetrically those spaces are not just where they sit.
 - A panelist commented that they were unsure that the diagonal language at the ground plane were helping to create a wonderful public realm.
 - The public realm is very encumbered by something that is awkward and difficult to move around.
 - The diagonal columns are overbearing on a street like Bloor.
 - The public realm at the east side of the building was identified as starting to pinch so much that it is unusable.
 - The team was encouraged to think more about pedestrian activity and what is happening there, including how the building can support this.
 - Support was expressed for the proposal's bicycle parking, notably the inclusion of more bicycle parking spots than units.
 - In consideration of the underground vehicular ramp and infrastructure, the team was encouraged to design the best possible bicycle ramp or dedicated bicycle parking freight elevator to reflect the proposal's mobility statistics.

Built Form and Architectural Expression

- In consideration of the building diagonals, reviewing the context may help with the architectural language including how they sit with the buildings next door.
- A panelist highlighted the heritage issues of the proposal, including the interesting question of how to look at buildings when their context has so dramatically changed over time, and when their context is slated to continue to change drastically over time.
 - Agreement was noted with ERA's assessment.
 - From a heritage perspective, there was no particular comment about removing the building; given that the context of the site and street is radically changing, these buildings become in a way vestigial.
 - If vestigial, the question of their architectural importance was raised including if they are prototypes that speak to a larger context, history, evolution, or architectural styles to support conservation.
 - The architectural style of the existing buildings was described as weirdly anachronistic and an odd little architectural choice for something built in the 1930s.
 - Improvements to the public realm and Spadina viewpoint corridor facilitated by a new, well-designed building that fits the context may support demolition and loss of carbon concerns.
- A panelist pushed the team to reconsider the graphical crosses that are not structural; they need to have some function as the building will be the main target up Spadina.
 - The tower expression was also noted to be limited to the two facades; it does not seem to be united on all sides.

- A panelist expressed concern that the arbitrary graphic overlays of lines were in danger of becoming an architectural joke and graphic cliché, especially when only applied on two facades.
 - It feels undeveloped, token and not interesting from a decorative perspective.
 - More work is needed from this impressive team; consider something less mannerist, less arbitrary, something hopefully more timeless and more elegant for a landmark site.

- A panelist queried how the identity graphic, or graphic motif as suggested by the design team evolves into becoming an effective structure. Curiosity was also noted regarding the current blend of structural expressionism and the graphic applique; however this evolves, it is a really significant site.

- A panelist underscored the great opportunity to produce a signature building and suggested that perhaps this could be achieved just by sculpting the west side of the building along Spadina.
 - Perhaps there is a real serrated edge on one side of the building and maybe a more urban one as the building moves to the east.
 - The building should be more sculptural rather than the current funny mid-rise language that does not seem to relate to anything.
 - The floor plate size has space to sculpt.

- A panelist highlighted the long view from the south, the negotiation of the offset, and the asymmetrical pattern of Xs with a bit of an hourglass shape as graphically compelling but noted that this is very much an applique on a relatively stout tower form.
 - A more sculpted approach was noted to yield the signature formalism being pursued.
 - Three levels were identified including a tower with an applied X formation, a podium that is about vertical striations and a base that is about V-shaped columns.
 - The team was encouraged to simplify the applique; there may be one too many things going on.
 - The selection and continuation of an expression across, including the simple V-shaped notch at the corner that cuts through all three (tower, podium, and base) may lead to simplicity.

- A panelist acknowledged and supported the heroic structural corner condition but expressed that more evolution is needed.
 - Appreciation was noted for the deferral where the building bends back to the ground plan and opens up the corner; this is a really big move and of a multi-storey scale.
 - The long view north may provide a major clue as to how the design evolves.

- Concern was expressed for pedestrian comfort and wind; ensure pedestrians will be comfortable walking in great numbers to the subway station.
 - Further consideration is needed regarding building massing, tower setbacks and podiums in terms of how they can contribute to creating more wind mitigation.

- A panelist expressed worry about the daylighting in the units on the east and lamented that a bit more contextual information was missing.
 - This is difficult to judge without sectional information, including a drawing demonstrating the relationship with the buildings to the east and west.

- The quality of the outdoor spaces needs further thought.
 - Per the shadow studies, the main outdoor spaces are mostly in shadow starting from 1-2pm.
 - There are no balconies on the units; access to outdoor space is really important.
 - In particular, the sliver of space on the second floor feels leftover; can these spaces be consolidated into a quality out space for the residents.

Sustainability and the Environmental, Social, and Governance Pilot Program (ESG)

- Numerous panelists expressed support for the ESG pilot program considerations and encouraged the team to strengthen those moves, continue to evolve the thinking and solidify things as the project develops.
- Multiple panelists lamented that further details were not included; the ESG statements are high-level and aspirational, but targets need to be set to get there.
 - A panelist queried what can be achieved by 2030 and could targets be set for then, as this upcoming date makes things more urgent.
 - The 2050 net-zero target is sort of a minimum and what makes that target easy is that we will not be around to be accountable for it.
- In consideration of the ESG pilot program, a panelist was surprised that currently, the building is only achieving TGS Tier 1.
 - The team was encouraged to keep looking at the performance beyond the minimum requirements, especially around energy, GHGI and TEDI as these will help support the pilot program.
 - The starting design point of the tower already appears to have successful ingredients to achieve a high-performance building including the current window-to-wall ratios, and no balconies; this is a good opportunity to look at the façade and make sure it is very high-performing.
 - Appreciation was noted for the focus on embodied carbon. Tackling the next step of selecting a system that can contribute to lowering the embodied carbon while also providing strong performance was highlighted.
 - Depending on the system for terracotta or brick, the building envelope TEDI can really change; study was encouraged to inform what kind of material is selected.
 - Highlighting the 2050 net-zero target, consideration for the costing and planning of the mechanical system that will support the residential building was underscored as the next steps.
 - The team was encouraged to consider in-suite heat pump technology for heating and cooling that can integrate with the low-carbon technology in the future, so that the transition does not need to be made down the line. Study of the ventilation requirements for the suites was also noted, as these considerations will help push the overall performance of the building.

150 SHERBOURNE STREET – JOHN INNES COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTRE

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW First Review
APPLICATION City Infrastructure



PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Thomas Spolsky, Community Planning;
Juliana Azem, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Viktors Jaunkalns and Krista Clark,
MJMA Architecture & Design;
David Leinster, The Planning Partnership

VOTE Support: unanimous

REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR Gordon Stratford

PANELISTS Dima Cook, Ralph Giannone, Jessica Hutcheon, Olivia Keung, Paul Kulig, Joe Lobko,
Anna Madeira, Juhee Oh, Heather Rolleston, Sibylle von Knobloch

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. Interface/relationship with the park and the public realm:
 - Built form
 - Visual connection
 - Integration
 - Materiality

Chair's Summary of Key Points

While this review is intended to focus primarily on the John Innes Community Recreation Centre the Panel would like to thank both the Moss Park and Recreation Centre proponent teams for well-presented submissions, and their intuitive, sensitive, and evocative designs. The gracefully interwoven, signature-worthy Park and Centre form an essential public amenity for the City, and in particular for the neighbourhood itself.

For the Centre, there is so much excellence promised already portrayed in the proposed design that the Panel encourages the team to work further to realise the full potential. This work includes (but is not limited to) the following:

Response to Context

There are many aspects of the proposed design that eloquently respond to its surrounding context. Panel members have noted that the following context needs further thoughtful response:

- Shuter Street – Balancing pool visual privacy with exterior public realm, develop this side of the Centre to create a more transparent and activated frontage.
- Sherbourne Street – Ensure that this frontage and the corner of Shuter and Sherbourne Streets are activated and engaging with the neighbourhood.
- Future Transit Station + Existing Arena – Provide along the Sherbourne Street frontage weather protected pathway between the Centre and Arena and Future Transit Station. This could provide opportunity for extending the Centre’s design character across the Arena frontage.
- See City below.

Site Planning

- See Response to Context.
- Land Acknowledgement – Provide design information regarding this area near the corner of Shuter and Sherbourne Streets.

Built Form

- See Response to Context.

Landscape

Panel members commend the proposed Terraced Garden (with its Forest Garden concept) and its relationship with Moss Park and the tree canopy on the site.

- Garden District – Amplify the landscape visibility of the Garden District and its history.

City

Since its inception in 2007 the Panel has observed the changes that Toronto experiences as it has grown and substantially changed. With this, Panel members have found themselves commenting on the intersection between design and change, and how design can be a force for better change.

The neighbourhood that the new Moss Park and the Centre will be part of, will be increasingly a microcosm of the side effects of densification and gentrification in the City, as well as the lingering impact of the pandemic.

The projects reviewed in this Panel session could provide an opportunity (from a design perspective) to proactively strategize how to address the impact of densification, gentrification, and the long-term fallout from pandemic (or other calamities) on a neighbourhood community. This could include tackling questions (through a design lens) like:

- What can major public amenities like a significant park and new community centre do through programme and design to counter or assimilate that impact?
 - How to build in the agility and flexibility to accommodate/support the dispossessed and homeless?
 - How can public amenities best serve both the existing and gentrified community?
 - How to help public amenities (outdoor space included) that can’t keep up with the pace of densification?

- Etc...

The above are only a few of the questions that need urgent answering; especially given how many projects the Panel reviews that will quickly be overwhelmed once completed.

Panel Commentary

Overall Project Vision and Implementation

- Panelists commended the team on the thoughtful proposal in all regards and complimented the beautiful design package; the much-anticipated project will be a game changer for the community, neighbourhood and beyond.
 - It is an incredibly well-crafted composition in both park and building.
 - It is an important and beautiful piece of social infrastructure.
- Multiple panelists queried the future of the site and impact of gentrification in consideration of the Ontario Line and new subway station, the amount of density approved nearby and the existing vulnerable community.
 - There are big questions here about this place in the city's future; the importance of the building and park were highlighted in this regard.
 - Appreciation was noted for the engagement process, but the team was encouraged to go further; it is not readily apparent from the plans how feedback was incorporated into the design.
 - Consider what was heard, and who was engaged, as well as who might be missing from these conversations.
 - The City and design team were encouraged to reflect on how the proposal could accommodate the vulnerable population over time, including their need for respite and shelter.
 - The JICRC lobby room was highlighted for consideration.
- A panelist expressed concern for a single-use building in an era where housing, including short-term and transitional, as well as other services, are needed; a single-use entry to a subway at the corner of Queen and Sherbourne should not be accepted.
 - The opportunity to add more programming to support the existing community was underlined in consideration of the components that will comprise the Sherbourne frontage.
 - Housing or servicing components need to amplified overall within this park.
- In recognition of the long construction period for the Ontario Line implementation, a panelist expressed hope that there would be a way to introduce elements to the community as time goes on, and in advance of the Ontario Line completion.
 - The project that has been presented is absolutely beautiful and works really well but getting there could take many years.
- The City was encouraged to maintain or allow continual gathering spaces during the construction work in consideration of the existing vulnerable community, to help mitigate displacement.
 - The location is a social place for people who do not have places to meet; there is very much a community here.
 - Outdoor space is critical.

- The opportunity for the city building to provide spaces of refuge in case of a power outage was highlighted as a resilience measure.
 - This could be a potential contribution to the community and vulnerable population around it.
- Multiple panelists appreciated the importance of Indigenous art, and the greater role public art is playing in the project.
 - The team was encouraged to consider ways of amplifying this component to be bigger than the project itself, and to serve as an exemplar.
 - It is not just about what goes into the building, it is about the process, as well as the artists involved, including what can live on beyond the projects and its execution.
 - The opportunity to generate exhibitions was referenced.
 - Huge applause was noted for page 24; it is rare for the Panel to see this sort of consideration.

Site Planning and Response to Context

- Multiple panelists expressed support for the location of the JICRC; it sits in a great spot on the site as a whole.
- In consideration of a building in the round that is attached to an arena in the dark, further study was suggested around the entire perimeter of the proposed JICRC to promote the safe experience of the place and vibrant utility of the space.
 - The team was encouraged to be explicit about what is open and active, what allows views to and from the park and swimming pool, as well as operationally when things are open or closed.
 - Increased porosity could be explored along the Shuter Street façade, or perhaps the service drive between the building and arena.
 - There is potential for evolution and final details of both the architectural and landscape strategy around the perimeter, including where they come together.
- The Sherbourne Street frontage was identified as a real challenge; it looks incredibly broad strokes.
 - The importance of activating the edge was highlighted, particularly at the corner of Shuter Street where the building may not be as porous.
 - Further study was suggested regarding the intimate experiences that should, can and must happen, including more effort at a small, intimate scale.
 - Consider what is being done other than circulating through the space.
- In consideration of lighting and the activation on Sherbourne, a panelist queried what the park will be like at night when the building is closed in terms of visibility, while not conflicting with uses that occur at all times.
 - The aspect that lighting plays in how the building sits in the landscape, and how the landscape is lit was underlined; the warmth and welcome captured in the beautiful renderings is coming from the glowing building.
- A panelist highlighted the south exit for servicing at the arena and community centre, and wondered if it was required.
 - Perhaps the space in front of the arena could evolve to include more community uses to help the immediate residents.

- A panelist highlighted the arena and expressed that it felt like a bit of a middle child; whether it is part of this project or the larger park project, the link down the face of the arena to the new transit station will be a critical piece of public realm.
 - Perhaps there is an opportunity to provide a weather-protected exterior space here that is not necessarily within the confines of the building, nor overtly surveilled, and close enough to access services in consideration of the existing space that may be lost at Queen and Sherbourne.
- A panelist queried if there were ways to amplify mobility and bicycle parking, perhaps as a way to activate some of the edges around the building.
 - This could include a repair space.

Built Form

- Multiple panelists expressed appreciation for MJMA community centres including their phenomenon of drawing a wider audience; this project will have a bigger ripple effect.
 - It is clear that the lessons learned from previous projects are being applied.
- Multiple panelists applauded the sustainability efforts to push the edge in terms of addressing carbon within this building typology; the ambition for carbon is commendable.
 - A panelist was pleased to see that the City is maintaining this requirement, for its project to be a leader and exemplar.
 - Appreciation was noted for the low embodied carbon focus on the material selection.
 - In reference to the retention of the adjacent arena, a panelist queried if there was an opportunity to transfer the energy needs required for the ice production refrigerant for use in the JICRC's pro heating and domestic hot water.
- Additional architectural opportunities to amplify the gateway to Pembroke Street and acknowledge the Garden District were queried.
- A panelist supported the massing of the building being pulled back from the street with the height set back a little, as well as the curved edges of the corner which lighten the whole feeling of the building, along with the rippling effect on the façade; this is masterfully done.
- Support was expressed for the overall organizational approach to the building; in the context of the park, it is straightforward, legible, practical, and sensitive to the context.
- Numerous panelists applauded the unique built form and architectural expression including the lightness and transparency of the CRC.
 - There is a nice balance between the solid and vision elements establishing a civic feel which the park and neighbourhood will benefit from.
 - There are no harsh lines; it seems to be floating in the park.
 - The light feeling, especially in comparison to the very opaque arena next door was highlighted; this is an importance distinction and evolution.
 - Appreciation was noted for the mass timber and resulting character.
 - Appreciation was noted for the weather-protected building spaces.
 - Support was expressed for the lantern-like quality of the architecture including the gradients from vision to solid.
 - The wonderful juxtaposition of hard and soft including the idea of a “concrete lantern” was applauded; the soft brutalism is really unique and has an amazing effect on the built form experience.

- The idea that this soft structure is wrapped by the gauze of concrete is quite stunning.
 - The idea of this juxtaposition should be further expressed.
- In reference to the building renderings at dusk, a panelist queried if there would be the same effect during a cold winter day or if the high-performance glazing might change the character of the lantern.
 - They wondered if there were other ways to express this.
 - The low-slung entablature that becomes the datum between the ground and lantern was highlighted; perhaps something can be given to the texture, or the scale could be broken up to make it more fine-grained rather than something that is a little overtly hard.
- Numerous panelists expressed appreciation for the lobby as a great new city room and east-west pedestrian link from street to park.
 - The adjacencies are working really well; the connection through the ground floor feels very public and does a good job of connecting to the various programmatic uses.
 - It is great that there is an internalized pathway to the CRC that is very impressive.
 - In reference to the red paving depicted in the exterior building renderings, a panelist queried if it could continue right through the triple-height space to become the connection to the soft.
- Numerous panelists expressed support for the forest garden on the second level including the wonderful views offered to the downtown; the terrace garden at the height of the tree canopy is a spectacular move within the program.
 - Further exploration of the building envelope was suggested with respect to the openings, closing and the rhythm provided.
 - The team was encouraged to continue to apply the low-carbon ambitions to the materiality of the landscape components here as well.
- Additional interior elements were highlighted.
 - Appreciation was noted for the visibility of the wooden soffits.
 - The reuse of wood from trees as interior building elements was applauded.
 - The gorgeous new pool space was applauded.
 - In reference to the gym, a panelist expressed that they were unsure about the contrast to dark wood and wondered about the sense of lightness being changed there.
- A panelist acknowledged other types of integrated experiences but struggled with a program that looks incredibly body centric.
 - The impending population including minimal residential building amenity spaces was highlighted, and concerns about supporting the existing community were echoed.

Landscape and Moss Park

- Multiple panelists supported the layout of the delightful park.
 - The passive travel is fluid, clear to understand and easy to navigate while creating diverse experiences as one walks through the park.

- Appreciation was noted for the fluidity of the paths including motion that is not overly articulated and geometric; this speaks to the landscape and original character of the area.
- The meandering aspects were applauded as well as the programmed spaces for all the different activities; they will be incredibly well-activated throughout the day.
- A panelist really liked the overall landscape approach but suggested that it be cranked up a bit as it is too subtle.
 - The references to history and origins of the natural conditions are really interesting; more of this could be reflected in the final nature of the place.
- Appreciation was noted for the Indigenous mapping including the reference to the big oak under which a treaty was signed. A panelist wondered if it could have more of an influence on the landscape responses.
- Appreciation was noted for the suggestion of the lost creek, including excitement for how it will be expressed in the final design.
- A panelist identified the Sherbourne side as the most challenging area for the landscape design to evolve; elevated planter walls would be beneficial.
- The preservation and reinforcement of the existing tree canopy along Shuter was highlighted as a very key move, including the extension of this all the way to Sherbourne.
- Discrepancies were identified in the architectural imagery; the overall impression is that the Shuter Street view is not representing the continuity of streetscape that is depicted in the landscape characterization.
 - It is critical; the green boundary is an important part, including in terms of transition.
 - It appears to be tree-deficient in the renderings as opposed to the reality.
- In reference to the exterior building renderings and appreciating the imagery note, the team was encouraged to consider some of the colour red immediately adjacent to the building within the park.
 - There is something stunning and engaging about the red paving that compliments the wood.

TORONTO ISLAND MASTER PLAN

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

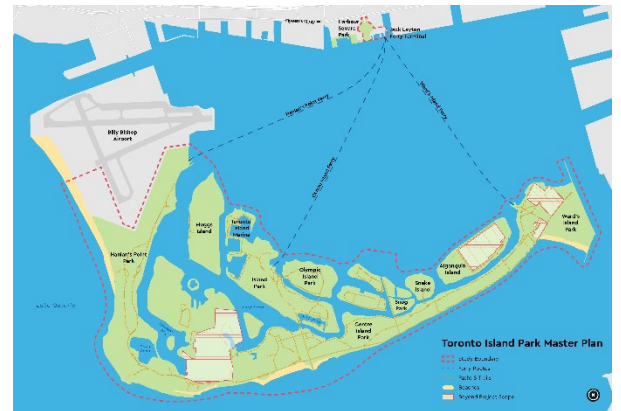
DESIGN REVIEW Second Review
APPLICATION City Study

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Lori Ellis, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

DESIGN TEAM Victoria Bell, DTAH

VOTE None



REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR Gordon Stratford

PANELISTS Margaret Briegmann, Ralph Giannone, Jessica Hutcheon, Olivia Keung, Paul Kulig, Anna Madeira, Heather Rolleston

CONFLICTS Observing: Joe Lobko

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. Are there gaps that should be addressed to improve the utility of the plan?
2. What needs to be clear within the plan to ensure the park celebrates its legacy and character?
3. Are there priorities from a design perspective that need to be elevated within the implementation?

Chair's Summary of Key Points

The Panel would like to thank the proponent team for the significant progress that has been made since the first review. The quality of sensitive analysis, creative ideation and clarity of vision matches the essential importance of Toronto Island to the city it nurtures.

Moving forward with design, the panel encourages the team to maintain and further enhance the exemplary level of master planning presented during this session, including considering the following:

Response to Context

- Indigenous Heritage Context - Continue to infuse and openly display indigenous heritage throughout the master plan.

- Ontario Place – When further developing the Toronto Island Master Plan consider the potential future private/public programme context being proposed for Ontario Place. Ensure that the Toronto Island Master Plan is rich in public amenity experiences throughout.
- Sensitivity to Existing Context – Develop from the Master Plan a case study highlighting how to sensitively respond to existing context and use as a precedent guide for future private and public development projects in the City.

Site Planning

- See Response to Context.
- Bigger Gestures – The Panel commends the design team’s careful combining of many small, thoughtful gestures together to add up to an impressive public realm experience. Consider the potential for future bigger moments in strategic locations (e.g.: possible Toronto Island Visitor Centre at Centre Landing, other amenities at the landing points, etc.).

Communication

- The panels created to tell the Master Plan design and process story are of excellent quality and an exemplar of how to effectively communicate with all stakeholders.

Panel Commentary

Overall Vision and Open House Panels

- The Panelists commended the team on the comprehensive proposal and endless project materials.
 - A panelist was blown away by the work and noted that things had done a complete 180 from the first DRP review; there is so much energy and good thinking in the panels submitted.
 - A panelist was overwhelmed in a joyous way; the work is a masterclass in doing a study, it is really a tour-de-force, and incredibly thorough as well as thoughtful in its Toronto-ness.
 - Another expressed that it was a pleasure to listen to the presentation and that the work has taken something that is so complex and translated it to a simple framework for the evolution of the island; it is done so well that it feels so simple.
 - The strategic incisions by way of this master plan really supports the vision that has been developed through public consultation.
 - The thoroughness of the documents makes apparent how thorough the engagement process has been; the team has done a great job at pulling together all these different perspectives.
- Panels were highlighted that stood out in the open house materials.
 - Panel 12 (Light-Touch Approach) including the wonderful diagrams; the light touch results in big impacts.
 - Panel 18 (Cultural Heritage + Interpretation) including the varied history of the islands, particularly from 1908-1960.
 - Panel 20 (Signage and Wayfinding) including the idea of designing a new map as well as orientation and decision points; the analysis was great.
 - Panel 22 (Focus Areas) including the energy felt in this.
 - Appreciation was noted for the Master Plan section of the panels which set out new layers and ingredients, notably Centre Landing’s new promenade, new visitor centre, new pathways and enhanced destination dining.

- A panelist was glad to hear that there are so many parallel studies happening alongside the master plan and highlighted the task of bringing those findings into the proposal in impactful ways.
- A panelist identified words that carry a lot of weight in the open house panels including the acknowledgement that the islands are undervalued and uncelebrated.
 - Anything done to change or build on this, including the idea of naming or renaming, has to be done in a way that is very meaningful.
 - They also underscored two mantras that stood out as really important including:
 - Toronto Island should be a place for everyone with limited or no obstacles to getting there; and
 - the islands are a dynamic environment that is constantly changing.
 - Criticism was expressed for the use of the word “districts” in relation to the islands; it does not quite fit and is a bit of a miss.
 - “Landings” was suggested as a potential alternative.
- A panelist expressed that it is all about balance, while highlighting authenticity and cautioning that we do not want to lose the sense of place that we all find so special here.
 - The proposal acknowledges this with terms like light touch and loose fit.
 - The panelist noted that they have been convinced that there is room for everyone in the island and that the proposal documents shared do start to bring that lofty goal into focus.
- Appreciation was noted for the light approach from a physical perspective, but a panelist cautioned that it may need to be paired with a big bang approach from a programming perspective.
- A panelist was happy to see that the Indigenous layers of the proposal have been built up.
 - The ceremonial space is exciting as well as the acknowledgement of the islands as a place of healing and ceremony; these things stood out.
- The balance of the natural aspects of rewilding, and the language of “landing” as well as landing from an intentional-or-not Indigenous approach was highlighted as an interesting metaphor as well as physical design approach.
- The importance of the arts and culture program was highlighted.
- The ideas around resiliency and nature-positive outcomes were identified as a great way to frame the conversation about how to deal with a natural environment that is constantly in contention with human use.
 - The idea of reducing fragmentation is a simple, strategic move that enhances the ecological function.
- The presentation’s “Seven Generation Planning: Thinking About Tomorrow, Addressing the Needs of Today” was highlighted as an excellent point to conclude on as it summarizes what has been achieved in the plan.

Site Planning and Mobility Strategy

- Appreciation was noted for the mobility strategy including its employment as a great organizational factor across the island; it makes a lot of sense.

- The importance of arrival was highlighted as a big part of the experience of this place.
- The observation was made that active mobility could be further built into the plan as a benefit, and that four-season activation is an important component of it.
- The process as well as pivot to address commentary around Hanlan’s Point and the 2SLGBTQ+ communities was highlighted as commendable; the team responded well, broadly.
- The lagoon loop and long pond intervention was identified as a great new expansion of experience.
 - The light touch and simple incision of the new circulation route will have a big impact as it will increase user experience as well as education of natural systems while allowing for the restoration of the ESA.
- The new buildings and pavilions were identified as opportunities to celebrate the legacy and character of the space.
 - They will have to be sensitive to the location, with attention given to how they will be designed and built out.
- A panelist expressed that they were struggling with the politeness of the proposal and was nervous about a light touch that struggles with inertia; it needs a light touch and a big result.
 - The suggestion was made to apply a “not so light touch” potentially at the visitor’s centre and arrival points in consideration of heightened experiences there.
 - Olympic Island was also identified as a potential place to add something really unique, and signifies the change that has happened, or will happen, or can happen.
- The business strategy was highlighted as a critical piece, and a panelist queried if there are ways to include commerce in an organized but also grass roots way that responds to the diverse ecosystems, events, destinations and all the complexities of the island.

Implementation and Management

- The challenge of implementation was highlighted, and how to move from the plan to the physical was queried.
 - Questions of governance were raised, including who owns this and who becomes the champion of it, as well as how the proposal can be repackaged in a way that is palatable to the champion.
 - The team was encouraged to come with clear communication and a strategy that packages this into digestible bits to different constituencies, which may include quick-wins and bigger things.
 - Whether through an event or programming, paired with a mobility strategy, the suggestion was made to create a spark to capture the imagination and appeal to the downtown community to visit.
- The question of management was raised.
 - A panelist expressed that it was great to see that the master plan recommends the establishment of a natural area and management strategy but perhaps some sort of broader operational maintenance manual that works with the dynamic nature of the natural and built features could be considered.

- This could be a potential way to start to move things forward.
 - Perhaps the parallel studies could be examined and integrated with the master plan at the operations and maintenance level as well.
- Timing and phasing were identified as next steps in terms of the utility of the plan.
 - The team was encouraged to consider how to implement certain improvements in conjunction with other things that may be in movement, and how to integrate with the business plan to prioritize implementation.
- A panelist wondered if there is a 5–10-year future plan to see what the master plan is doing, and how the team would want to change it; it would be important to bake this future planning into the plan as it is today.

Educational Opportunities

- Appreciation was noted from a sustainability standpoint for the work in terms of naturalization and stewardship, but the suggestion was made that perhaps there is an opportunity to amplify educational components.
 - Visiting the islands is an important part of indirectly galvanizing climate action.
 - As city people, there is a danger in becoming disconnected from nature; going to the islands presents an opportunity to relearn and come to respect nature.
 - The opportunity to remember the previous flooding of the islands was highlighted.
 - Readily apparent issues like erosion and water levels could be integrated all over the islands, as well as in programmed areas like the visitor’s centre, to understand the ecosystem and the impact we are having on the islands.
- The team was encouraged to look at the bigger systems involved, and appreciation was noted for the work with the TRCA.
 - In consideration of storytelling, programming, and communication, perhaps there is an inspiring educational opportunity to look beyond into the watersheds, the importance of Lake Ontario, the Great Lakes as a whole and the ecosystem throughout.