

CITY OF TORONTO DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

MINUTES: MEETING 9 – October 5, 2023

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, October 5, 2023, at 12:00 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

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, Climate Strategy – Choice Properties

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

MEETING 9 INDEX – MAIN AND DANFORTH: JOINT REVIEW ITEMS

- i. Context and Overall Site
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- v. 2721 Danforth Avenue (1st Review)

MAIN AND DANFORTH: JOINT DISCUSSION – CONTEXT AND OVERALL SITE

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW First Reviews

APPLICATIONS ZBAs:

2575 Danforth Avenue, Talisker;

2681 Danforth Avenue, Canadian Tire REIT;

8 Dawes Road, Marlin Spring;

2721 Danforth Avenue, Tri-Metro Investments Inc.

SPAs:

6 Dawes Road, Fitzrovia;

9-25 Dawes Road, Minto;

10-30 Dawes Road, Marlin Spring

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF George Pantazis and Helen Song, Community Planning;

Julie Bogdanowicz, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM (See individual review items)

VOTE None

REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR Meg Graham

PANELISTS Dima Cook, Jim Gough, Paul Kulig, Heather Rolleston, Eladia Smoke

CONFLICTS Not in Attendance: Margaret Briegmann, Jessica Hutcheon

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. Is the vision from the planning framework being delivered by the applications?
2. Is each application contributing appropriately to the public realm?
3. Are applications responding appropriately to the existing and planned context: issues such as block planning, site organization, separation distances, etc
4. Does the design of the various blocks (podium, tower, massing and materiality) relate to each other and create a cohesive composition?

Summary of Project's Key Points

The following items were highlighted in the verbal meeting summary by the Chair, based off feedback heard from the Panel members.

This session represents a rare opportunity to consider a neighbourhood under development, in its entirety. Only then do we have the chance to understand the greater impacts of some of these proposals. We know that Toronto is a rapidly growing city, and one in which approvals as well as construction can take a long time. What we are seeing today highlights this rapid growth of our city, and has been reviewed in a way that differs from how we typically see work at the Panel. What is at issue here, is the creation of a beautiful, functional, and humane city district, equivalent in size to a small town and therefore a massive undertaking.

The Panel appreciates that the projects presented today are in early stages, but it is clear, and has been acknowledged by some of the proponents themselves, that more time and much deeper study is required. The following highlights input from the Panel:

- Public Realm
 - The creation of a humane public realm is critical.
 - It would seem at this stage of the game, and in consideration of the SPA proposals, that minimal attention has been given to creating a coherent public realm; to some degree this is alarming given the scale of redevelopment in this area.
 - Panel members have noted the inadequate attention to safety and accessibility throughout, and in between the various sites.
 - Access to transit is resolutely inadequate.
 - The road network needs to be studied much more deeply.
 - The pedestrian realm requires much further study, specifically its layout.
- District Vision and Coordination
 - The Panel advised that there seems to be no coherent vision nor coordination between the proposals.
 - This includes an incoherent architectural expression across what has been seen today.
 - This underlines that a central cooperative planning and visioning effort as well as exercise is required; this is the time to do it. It must be one that consults the community and its expertise, while promoting and prioritizing sustainability and water management.

Panel Commentary

Overall District Vision and Concept

- In consideration of the proposal's scale, a panelist queried how private, individual proponents could cooperate on elements that will lead to the success of this new neighbourhood and midsize town, as a great place to live.
 - They queried if the private proponents could create a cooperative entity, to address amenities that will benefit this redevelopment as a whole.
 - It was suggested that perhaps this entity could consider proportional membership and the establishment of a centralized component, paired with proportional financial support, commitment to implementation, as well as consolidated design thought and effort by all proponents working in tandem.

- The lack of coherence, cohesive and cooperative thought across the proposals, was identified.
- A panelist recommended more comprehensive community engagement and expressed concern that the expertise from the community is lacking in all the developments; it is clear that the designers do not have access to this, which is hindering their efforts to make good public space.
 - They advocated for a rigorous plan for listening to the expertise and insights of existing residents and community members, leaders, and entities doing work in the Dawes Road neighbourhood.
 - They advised that the results be made available to all design teams, as well as the establishment of a protocol to measure success in the development, design, and programming response to what is heard.
- Coherent, interconnected parkways together with strategic revegetation using native species to support animal and pollinator habitats were strongly recommended.
 - It was advised that this will also result in enhanced human health and experiential qualities for the new town.
- The importance of sustainability measures was highlighted; they are critical to our survival as a species.
 - A panelist advised that innovative measures will be quite feasible if undertaken collaboratively, given the sufficient scale of the projects together. Possibilities include:
 - food security, renewable energy, a district heating and cooling approach;
 - passive solar orientation privileging daylight to the adjacent and internal public realms, views and viewsheds;
 - energy use optimization including strategically placed opaque walls, solar shading, and site cooling through wind and ventilation analysis;
 - onsite water reduction and rainwater reuse.
- It was strongly recommended that the private developers support their designers pertaining to an Indigenous approach to planning, which considers the following principles.
 - How will we support our four generations: children, youth, adults, and Elders?
 - How will we address our four aspects of health: spiritual, physical, mental, intellectual?
 - How are we planning for our seventh generation, with reference to the three-strand braid of reality, where we are deliberately and consciously planning for who and where we want to be in the future, the needs of the present, learning from and actively responding to the lessons of the past?
 - How are we living up to our kinship responsibilities to actively support and regenerate the systems of life that we rely on for survival?

Transportation and Circulation

- The importance of the City's proposal for a transportation study was highlighted; this is most definitely needed before planning for this area can advance.
- A panelist advised that from a transportation perspective, there is not a workable vision right now.

- They advised that on a numeric basis the proposal would potentially add 700-800 vehicles in peak periods (based on 7600 units, with a roughly 20% modal split which may be optimistic).
 - They did not see how this could fit onto the small network, with everyone pushed onto Danforth at some point.
- A panelist expressed that the density being proposed is based on access to transit. In the proposals, there is a question of how one accesses and improves transit to the TTC and GO; it was advised that all cases need to be improved.
 - This includes the city's public realm and sidewalks; some of this is in the City's ballcourt as well.
 - It was cautioned that a lot more work needs to be done from a street realm perspective regarding connections north toward Main, and south towards the GO.
- The lack of any integrated improvements proposed for the subway station, or very little for the GO station, were identified.
 - Concern was noted for the one entrance to the subway station that is accessed by a very narrow sidewalk on Main Street.
 - It was advised that the plan needs to have a real emphasis and priority on what can be done to those facilities to allow them to accommodate the number of proposed new residents.
- City staff were asked to look more closely at how the intersection of Main and Danforth works; the existing condition is currently not at its safest, and the proposed developments will make things considerably more problematic.
 - Concern was expressed for pedestrians running across the street to catch buses.
 - The team was advised that it may be worthwhile to completely reconsider the whole intersection, which does not seem to be part of the discussion at all.
- Strong concern was identified for the lack of east-west connectivity through the site; there seems to be a dense forest of condos and no permeability.
 - Caution was noted that there is no way to create an integrated community east-west through these sites with essentially three isolated fingers of development pushing everyone up to Danforth.
 - The one-directional movement was questioned given the other planned uses including retail and the community centre that people will want to access on these streets.
- The introduction of an east-west road through the district was strongly suggested; the very clear opportunity along the southern property line of the 2575 Danforth lands was identified, to be able to extend out onto Main Street.
 - A panelist opined that if this idea were to be entertained, they would prioritize that use of land over the park at the corner.
- Concern was noted for the sidewalk widths along Danforth and Main; they are not being addressed properly within any of the proponent plans.
 - The current conditions are already heavily pedestrian-loaded given the existing towers and will be increased substantially by the developments.
 - It was cautioned that the attention given to street frontage and public realm, particularly at Danforth seems to be relatively minimal; all proponents were encouraged to consider this in more serious detail.

- In consideration of the transit-oriented development, surrounded by transit, concern was expressed about the insufficient pedestrian movement east-west, and diagonally up to the corner of Main and Danforth.
 - o It was cautioned that the sites are not communicating well enough with each other to allow for this very important pedestrian movement.
- Strong concern was identified for the GO station access, including the inaccessible stairs.
 - o Commitment to a universal accessibility approach to design was recommended; stairs are simply not acceptable.

Green Space Planning

- A panelist expressed trouble seeing this area as proposed in its various parts holding together as a district. Appreciation was noted for the original planning presented in the planning context document, specifically the very strong idea about a central park and then a linear park linking back out to the public realm.
 - o It was advised that this should be reconsidered; the fact that the central park was centrally located was a very strong gesture.
- A panelist did not agree that two smaller parks located right on Danforth, and one located at the corner of Main and Danforth would be successful.
 - o Concern was noted for the surrounding adjacencies of two very high and large slab apartment buildings that would cause the smaller park to be in shadow most of the time; another look at this was strongly encouraged.

Built Form

- Concern was expressed regarding maintaining the character of Danforth; it would be beneficial to find and maintain the expression on the south side of the street of the development zone.
 - o The particular character of Danforth was noted to be formed of very narrow lot lines; each of those properties and lots have their own architectural style as well as articulations. This is very particular of the development and rhythm of Danforth.
 - o The existing conditions of the Canadian Tire site (2681 Danforth) were identified as a big hole in the Danforth progression, in the urban flow of the city as well as the street wall flow.
 - The team was advised to find an opportunity to improve that condition, and that reinstating it with something that is quite monolithic is a challenge from that end.
- Concern for the presence along Danforth was reiterated; the proposed, one after another, do not necessarily need to respect a heritage condition but they are completely unrelated to what is happening across the street.
 - o This includes the very expressionistic arches in one building, followed by a hard, commercial, glass expression of corporate architecture, which then turns into a residential wavy podium.
 - o It was advised that at the very least, formally it is critical to stitch those together from an urban perspective as well as to present a similar fine-grained expression of the retail that is not currently evident with the Canadian Tire frontage and others in a mixed way.

- The proponent was encouraged to find ways to take advantage of the fact that the big box has already been moved up to the second level and reserve some of the ground floor as evident in other places including the Canadian Tire on Dundas and Bay.
 - Find ways to introduce other uses that reflect the rhythm, scale and tenor as well as the needs of the 14,000 residents to come.

- Concern was expressed for the complete, apparent lack of coordination between 2681 and 2721 Danforth, from a network and fundamental vision perspective; desperate work is needed.
 - One presents a boundary condition that is a zero-lot-line that is of one kind of urban type; the other side assumed a vertical, north-south green space. There is zero coordination between these two and they are completely at odds with each other.
 - Other elements show extensions of abandoned parts of Guest Avenue; it is not clear which takes precedence over which and how they come together.
 - One shows a preference for an east-west park; another shows a north-south park.

- Concern was expressed for the proposal at 6 Dawes; it seems like a wall has been erected between the north and south part of the district by this development. Its importance as a crucial transition, order, and boundary for the area, was underlined.
 - The proposal's architectural expression was characterized as a wall; it is out of place in the context of this neighbourhood. It was cautioned that the orientation of the buildings and expression of the towers create a quite stark, monolithic wall.
 - Hope was expressed that further development would include softened towers and more articulation given, in consideration of the visibility of those buildings and the park on the other side.

2575 DANFORTH AVENUE

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW First Review

APPLICATION ZBA

DEVELOPER Talisker

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF George Pantazis and Helen Song, Community Planning;
Julie Bogdanowicz, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Micah Vernon, WZMH Architects;
Craig Hunter, Hunter & Associates Ltd.

VOTE Non-support: unanimous

REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR Meg Graham

PANELISTS Dima Cook, Jim Gough, Paul Kulig, Heather Rolleston, Eladia Smoke

CONFLICTS Not in Attendance: Margaret Briegmann, Jessica Hutcheon



Summary of Project's Key Points

The following items were highlighted in the verbal meeting summary by the Chair, based off feedback heard from the Panel members.

- Site Plan
 - The Panel advised that the site plan and building layout be reexamined. The buildings at the perimeter make for an impenetrable interior.
 - The proponent was encouraged to consider step-backs from Danforth Avenue to improve street-level conditions.
- Circulation
 - The Panel had general agreement that there is too much paving, as well as road, and not enough green space as currently proposed. The proponent was encouraged to reexamine and reduce the vehicular circulation on site.
 - The Panel advised that the greenery should be generous and consolidated while creating coherent and humane pedestrian circulation that considers not only the context of the site itself, but that beyond as well; the current site plan does not do this.
- Architectural Expression
 - The proponent was encouraged to consider simplifying the material palette to unify the overall composition of the development.

- The Panel opined that the arcades should be revisited as they do not seem to work with the massing and program.
- Accessibility
 - A lot of concern was expressed around the removal of the GO access ramp, and its replacement with stairs at the southwest corner of the site. The Panel acknowledged that they did not have a full understanding of all the aspects under discussion at the moment, but strongly encouraged a reexamination of this particular direction as it is highly problematic.

Panel Commentary

Site Plan and Public Realm

- In terms of the overall site plan, there was agreement with the City that there seems to be a lot of paving and not enough green.
 - Concern was expressed that a sustainability layer is needed, given the size of the site and questions of water as well as greenery; it was advised to review how the ground plane is being addressed.
 - The proposal's insufficient central green space was identified; the buildings feel like islands in a very hardscaped environment with small moments carved out for use.
- Appreciation was noted for the proponent's efforts to work with the City to reduce vehicular movement within the site.
 - The commitment to move the garbage and some loading underground was referenced; liberating as much of that ground plane as possible to accommodate more pedestrian, and ultimately green spaces, was advised.
- A panelist strongly encouraged the team to consider the opportunity for a road on the southern property line of this parcel.
 - The five-metre grade change was acknowledged; it was suggested that a new road might be the exact device needed to navigate this.
- A panelist expressed that it was difficult to plan the site without any consideration for the location of the future community centre, given that it is the largest piece of the property in this emerging, reconsidered district.
- A panelist opined that the site should require a huge parkland contribution, which is not currently shown.
- An open space at the corner of Main and Danforth was advised, in the form of a plaza or a POPS, and not a park.
- Concern for the amount of hard surface materials was reiterated, especially when combined with raised planter beds; they tend to be useless.
 - The team was advised that dogs often relieve themselves and the beds are not really used for anything else.
 - Appreciation was noted for the proposed trees, but a panelist expressed that they would like to see something more integrated with the use of the actual space in terms of the green space that is there, which should be enhanced and expanded.

- A panelist advised that removing the ramp to the GO station would be a big negative, in terms of accessibility.
 - The team's discussions with Metrolinx were acknowledged, but hope was expressed that there would be ways to maintain some kind of ramp connection on Main Street as well as provide enhanced connections through the south side of the development.
- The team was advised to clearly articulate the pedestrian route proposed from the Main and Danforth intersection down to the GO station.
 - Enhanced signage, paving or an alternative was suggested to make things clear for pedestrians and help enhance access.
- A panelist identified challenges reading the key plan in concert with perspective views, which was attributed to coherency issues pertaining to the pedestrian pathways. They advised that it must be clear how one gets through this development and did not think that it was, yet.
 - In consideration of the existing, GO transit hub, and 6 Dawes buildings, the proponents were asked to challenge themselves to rigorously update their renderings, views and drawing sets to include the context of other buildings.
 - It was advised that this would help immensely to ensure that floating plans with white beyond the property lines are not seen; the view from the south is not showing the other buildings.
- A panelist questioned if all the buildings around the periphery would function from a pedestrian and cycling perspective.
 - Appreciation was noted for their added animation to the streetscape, but concern was expressed that they are creating a large, impenetrable block that will not be legible for pedestrians nor cyclists.
 - They did not see cyclists trying to ride through this area as they will be pushed to the periphery of what is quite a large block.

Built Form

- A panelist referenced site history, noting that for a very long time it was the only high-rise site anywhere in this area, and that despite being a real anomaly in the urban scape of the neighbourhood it worked because it considered the following, noted below.
 - Breathing room along Main and Danforth: the buildings were not right against the street and the streetwall relationship was respected.
 - It was noted that this helps with congestion as well as transitions along Main and Danforth for public transit, in consideration of the very actively used space.
 - Building characteristics: specifically, the two-storey or low podium conditions that fit in the overall streetwall as well as the very deep setting of the tall buildings, which are quite setback from the street frontage.
 - Somber architecture: the extreme simplicity did not scream for too much attention and had the functionality of traditional slab buildings as well as a materiality that fit into a more residential context.
- In acknowledgement of these considerations, a panelist wondered if breathing room could be brought to the fore in some of the new developments, even if there is going to be more height in this neighbourhood.

- The team was advised to revisit the setbacks or stepbacks from Danforth to give the sidewalks more room to allow more greenery, as well as to help the streetwall relationship that will be fairly off balance between the very low scale on the north, to the much more substantial developments on the south.
- A panelist cautioned that some of the elements felt a little tight when moving up the towers. They queried if there were opportunities to liberate some of the podium elements to consider what residents will see out of their windows, in both the existing and new buildings.
 - Concern was expressed for the building on the southwest corner; its 10-storey podium piece that wraps around appears to be very close to the existing, adjacent slab building, and also in shadow of the 6 Dawes Road wall building.
 - There will be three buildings in quick succession with very little privacy and access to sunlight; it was advised that a bit of light and levity be brought to the podium levels.

Arcades

- A panelist questioned if the arcade coverings hid too much of the retail; the opportunity to create a more expressive retail was identified.
 - It was advised that one of the dangers of having a traditional plate-glass condo retail base, especially in this neighbourhood, is that it kills the street in its presence as a uniform wall.
 - Caution was noted that glass is not really transparent walking along a streetwall; it ends up being a more obscure expression.
- A panelist found the arcades as an element confusing and saw them as the first thing that would be VC'd out. They did not know how seriously they should be taken and were at a loss as to their aesthetic or functional role.
- Concern was identified for the problematic edges on the Main Street façade and clarification on their impact on what is otherwise a relatively open ground floor plan, was suggested.
 - It was cautioned that if a public POPS is meant for the middle, the broken arches framing either side of the driveway very much act as gateways signaling a private space.
- A panelist was not sure that the arches were having the desired effect; they feel very shallow and simply like façade treatments.

Architectural Expression

- Appreciation was noted for the study in terms of the classical tripartite division of the buildings, but a panelist wondered if the project would benefit from a more unified material palette and expression.
 - It was advised that the elements that work with the base, middle and top can have radically different architectural expressions but there is a palette of materials and colours that unite.
 - They opined that currently it is not much of a tripartite expression but rather a piling of completely different elements, one on top of the other. This is more exuberant in terms of how things fit in the context, and in consideration of the neighbourhood identity that will be provided with all the other buildings.

- A panelist expressed that the brick datum proposed for the new buildings to match the existing was not successful in this case; a relook at this was encouraged.
 - o In consideration of page 17 imagery, the reverse argument was made for the brick datum to be broken by the other materials in the new buildings proposed, as it feels like a wall of sameness and brick.

2681 DANFORTH AVENUE

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW First Review
APPLICATION ZBA
DEVELOPER Canadian Tire REIT

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF George Pantazis and Helen Song,
Community Planning;
Julie Bogdanowicz, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Anita Yu, Turner Fleischer

VOTE Non-support: unanimous

REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR Meg Graham

PANELISTS Dima Cook, Jim Gough, Paul Kulig, Heather Rolleston, Eladia Smoke

CONFLICTS Not in Attendance: Margaret Briegmann, Jessica Hutcheon



Summary of Project's Key Points

The following items were highlighted in the verbal meeting summary by the Chair, based off feedback heard from the Panel members.

- Site Plan
 - The Panel comments centred largely around the site plan. This included the massing of the building, and creation of a canyon as described by one, in the middle of the project.
 - The Panel advised that the proposal as designed renders itself as an impenetrable block; there is an unacceptable lack of east-west flow across the project.
 - Further study regarding the positioning of the loading dock was recommended to help alleviate this.
 - Consider moving the loading dock south, and decoupling the east-west pedestrian connection from loading.
 - Consider moving the residential lobby to Danforth and away from the loading dock.
- Scale
 - The Panel opined that the scale of the streetwall and massing is considered to be substantial. A suggestion was made to move the Canadian Tire to the upper floors and replace it with fine grain retail on Danforth Avenue.

- Linear Park
 - The Panel advised that the linear park at the south is the wrong location for it; it will be in shadow. It is considered to be untenable, unrealistic and does not contribute to a greater plan or connectivity within the emerging context.
 - The Panel strongly suggested that the proponent deeply reexamine the emerging context and redesign with it in mind moving forward, recognizing that the project is at an early stage.

- Sustainability
 - The team was encouraged to demonstrate a sustainable approach to building and landscape design in subsequent submissions.

Panel Commentary

Site Plan and Linear Park

- Concern was expressed for the site further blocking east-west permeability; it feels very overwhelming and very impermeable.
 - Finding ways to allow more east-west flow was advised to help create more of a community here between Danforth and the rail corridor, as opposed to the big, isolated slivers of development that do not relate to each other.

- In reference to the long, linear park location and the development to the south, a panelist wondered how much light the park will receive. Concern was noted that it is relegated to a dark, residual place.
 - The good opportunity for a central park was identified, including the potential with the parking lot at the development to the west, to conjoin these currently empty spaces to create something that is more functional and useable, as well as preclude the junction of the wall to the east.

- In consideration of community needs, a panelist questioned if the linear park is what is needed for the existing and potential residents of the area.
 - The opportunity to apply a real sustainability lens was highlighted; it was noted that the proposal images look very sterile.
 - It was queried how this can be a showcase area for some green ideas including bioswales, extensive support for pollinators and a whole range of things; more emphasis is needed to try to fight the climate catastrophe.

- Strong concern was reiterated for the location of the park; as shown, it is untenable, unrealistic and does not contribute to a broader network. It was advised that moving the park will unlock a number of other site issues.
 - Whether the park is relocated to the corner as shown in City sketches, or the north-south connection shown by the applicant, it was reiterated that moving the park is the fundamental piece.
 - The proponent was advised to find a way to move some of the loading further south; perhaps moving the park out of the way will allow this and thereby liberate some of the retail along the Danforth frontage for more traditional 20 x 100 foot things, along with the big box kept up on the second floor.

- Appreciation was noted for the efforts to analyze the existing context, but few efforts to anticipate and respond to the emerging context were identified.

- Concern was expressed for the lack of response to 2721 Danforth; the dark canyon is very profound and does not seem feasible.
- Concern was reiterated that the impacts of the 2575 Danforth proposal on this development were not represented, particularly the south park.

Built Form

- Caution was noted for the tower expression; a panelist was wary of creating the kind of wall expression that bounds Danforth too much and creates shadows.
 - The importance of the quality of light on Danforth was underlined; it was advised that all these projects should take that into consideration in their tower orientation.
- Support was expressed for additional studies regarding the tower orientations in an effort to minimize shadow impacts, in consideration of the City's suggestion to reposition the towers so that the impacts overlap, and the combined shadow impact is minimized.
- A panelist was struck by the streetwall scale and overall massing, particularly of the podium building. The proponents were encouraged to move the Canadian Tire retail to the upper floors.
 - It was advised that this will free up the ground floor planes to more, smaller retail, and more, smaller functions which could allow for further articulation of the massing of the building and the expression of the street front.
 - The Canadian Tire building on Lakeshore was referenced as a precedent.
- A panelist cautioned that one of the challenges with putting residential on top of a big box store is the dark hole at the centre of the development.
 - Given that the tower does not seem to overlap the hole, it was queried if there was an opportunity to cut it out and provide something where natural light can be brought into the middle of the building. Amenities or other functional spaces that serve residents could then be placed there.
 - Concern was noted that it is a very large floor that is now an isolated island, and also makes for an uncomfortable corridor loop around where it is only loaded on one side with residential.
- Concern was reiterated for the landlocked, very deep space noted in the podium plans that have no natural light.
 - It was highly encouraged that the label of "common area" come off that zone. It was noted that it could be fine for storage or lockers, but it would be great to get natural light.
- Caution was noted that the setbacks on the east side of the second floor and above, are very minimal.
 - In consideration of what is being proposed to the east and terrace conditions, a dark canyon-like space results; it is all very challenged and should be reconsidered.
- In reference to the architectural expression, a panelist supported aspirations of precast elements for balconies or bay windows, and any other sustainable construction strategies; it would be great if these were considered.

Service Laneway

- The ground floor relationship between the residential entrance and all the loading docks was questioned. It was advised that the building could benefit from moving the residential entrance to Danforth or somewhere that is away from the loading.

- A panelist advised that the service laneway and loading associated with the main building drop-off is trying to do too much.
 - Caution was noted that the lobby of the north tower feels like it is part of the loading dock.
 - Concern was expressed that the tall and large space being labeled as a pedestrian mid-block connection feels very uncomfortable and vehicularly oriented; it was advised to delink those pedestrian spaces from the service and loading.
 - Further study was encouraged in consideration of the Canadian Tire car repair and tire change functions going into the parking level; this will be a very busy area.

8 DAWES ROAD

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW First Review
APPLICATION ZBA
DEVELOPER Marlin Spring

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF George Pantazis and Helen Song, Community Planning;
Julie Bogdanowicz, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Gianni Ria, Arcadis IBI Group

VOTE Support: 3
Non-support: 2

REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR Meg Graham

PANELISTS Dima Cook, Jim Gough, Paul Kulig, Heather Rolleston, Eladia Smoke

CONFLICTS Not in Attendance: Margaret Briegmann, Jessica Hutcheon



Summary of Project's Key Points

The following items were highlighted in the verbal meeting summary by the Chair, based off feedback heard from the Panel members.

- Ground Floor
 - The Panel recognized that the proposal was at early stages but advised that the layout of the ground floor be rethought; this was a critical point made by a number of panelists.
 - Panel members questioned if the retail was truly needed or in fact viable as proposed here. It was suggested that the location where the retail is shown could be better used perhaps as a POPS, bike parking, or as a bike share location.
 - The sense was that the bicycle storage on the ground floor was inappropriately located; the proponent was advised to consider looking at alternative layouts.

- Façades
 - East and west façades: the proponent was encouraged to consider softening the elevations at the parking garage levels.
 - South façade: the proponent was encouraged to consider a redesign given it will be a backdrop to the GO station.

- Landscape
 - The Panel was not able to comment as there was no substantive material presented in the package.
 - The point was made that landscape, no matter how small it will be, will be a critical piece of the development. The Panel would look forward to seeing details on this in the subsequent submission.

- Sustainability
 - The Panel advised the proponent to consider curtain wall or a greater percentage of opacity, rather than window wall, as demonstrated in the drawings.
 - Generally, the proponent was encouraged to demonstrate a commitment to progressive sustainability measures that are more current than ones seen 2-3 years ago.

Panel Commentary

Context and Overall Site Plan

- A panelist expressed appreciation for the opening comments at the outset about a willingness to work with the City, as well as the acknowledgement that the review is premature.

- A panelist noted that the site had a requirement for employment uses that could be offset by affordable housing. They were encouraged to hear that affordable housing was being considered; it would be great to have this incorporated.

- The proponent was strongly encouraged to ensure that they are paying attention to the existing buildings to the west in terms of the relationship and juxtaposition for those tenants.

- The proponent was encouraged to consider providing a very minimum amount of parking as the site is very well-served by transit; a panelist opined that there is an awful lot of above-grade parking that should be reconsidered.

- Concern was expressed with the blank wall and driveway on Dawes. A panelist advised that they are not going to create a pedestrian-support environment, but rather a drag on animating the entire street of Dawes Road.

- The huge potential at the southwest corner to integrate a linear parkway system with the other developments was identified.

Ground Floor

- The proponent was encouraged to rethink their ground floor design, specifically the retail.
 - A panelist questioned if it was needed as well as viable there; it seems to squish everything else including the tenants and lobby.
 - More useful or public functions at that space were queried, perhaps a larger POPS or adding more greenery to the site.
 - It was cautioned that there are a lot of gymnastics required to stick retail, and that it is not actually serving the building correctly.

- Another panelist agreed that alternative uses for the retail space may make a lot more sense.
 - The opportunity to dedicate the space to bike parking, or a bike share station was recommended, as it would relate better to the GO station and enhance functionality. It was advised that this would move towards sustainability in terms of transportation movement throughout the community.
- Concern was expressed for the bicycle parking location; the developer was advised to look at alternative layouts to see how it can be moved forward, closer to the entrance.
 - It was cautioned that its placement at the back will not encourage cyclists to use bikes here; it seems like a very convoluted way to get through the building to access the storage.
- A panelist queried if the long ground floor exit corridor could be lined with bike storage, rather than as it is proposed on the southeast corner hidden behind a huge parkade.
 - It was suggested that if feasible, the corridor could double as bike storage and is directly adjacent to transit connections with a pleasant access route through a beautiful mini park.
- The opportunity to relocate the pet relief area to the southwest corner was identified; it was suggested that perhaps the POPS can be expanded so that it is less of an inhospitable high wall and provides a bit more open space for the POPS.

Architectural Expression and Façades

- More openness to the floors above the crash wall was suggested, especially as they turn.
 - A softer expression was recommended; it was advised that beyond the crash wall requirements of the south wall, it does not have to be that sort of architectural expression as proposed.
 - It was suggested that the softening of the elevation can extend going up the east and west elevations, even if the garage function remains on the inside.
- The need for parking and the crash wall was acknowledged, but further consideration of it as a positive façade was encouraged.
 - In reference to the transit riders that will be waiting at the nearby platform, it was advised that it will be an incredible canvas and not simply the back; it should be treated in a way that respects and responds to the audience, even if it is a surface treatment.
- The big expanses of window wall elevations without balconies were highlighted; further study was encouraged with respect to the architectural expression and sustainability interests.
 - In consideration of performance and maintenance, a panelist wondered if curtain walls could be looked at, or at the very least perhaps some interruptions with other materials to the large expanses of window wall, to make this more sustainable.
- A panelist reiterated concerns for huge expanses of glass façades; they are not seen any longer because we know that we need to do better.
 - More opaque surfaces that strategically respond to the realities of the sun and wind were recommended; these are not currently seen in this development.

Sustainability Goals and Landscape

- Attention was drawn to slide 16; the proponents were encouraged to dream a little harder on the sustainability goals. It was advised that more innovative measures, and more ambitious as well as inspiring goals are needed.
- The developers were challenged to play an active role in creating a successful living environment here, including connecting up to parkways and habitat zones as well as creating humane experiential spaces.
- The team was advised to invest in some really critical landscape thinking, soon; the presentation did not include a landscape expression, which will be critical.
 - o In consideration of the Dawes Road extension and the interface with the future Metrolinx station entrance, it was cautioned that a deft touch will be needed to stitch all these things together.
 - Potential issues including grading, security, and gates were identified, and caution was noted that if these things are not managed well, they could be resolved very poorly. Alternatively, they could also be the incredible gateway that unlocks all of this development potential.

2721 DANFORTH AVENUE

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW	First Review
APPLICATION	ZBA
DEVELOPER	Tri-Metro Investments Inc.

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF	George Pantazis and Helen Song, Community Planning; Julie Bogdanowicz, Urban Design
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DESIGN TEAM	Roland Rom Colthoff, RAW Design Inc
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VOTE	Support (<i>with key condition</i>): unanimous*
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REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR	Meg Graham
PANELISTS	Dima Cook, Jim Gough, Paul Kulig, Heather Rolleston, Eladia Smoke
CONFLICTS	Not in Attendance: Margaret Briegmann, Jessica Hutcheon

Summary of Project's Key Points

The following items were highlighted in the verbal meeting summary by the Chair, based off feedback heard from the Panel members.

- Green Space
 - o The Panel advised that the green space was thoughtful as conceived, but as proposed, no longer contributes to the greater emerging context and the connectivity thereof. There was an understanding that the scheme predated this; further development was advised moving forward.
 - o One panel member wondered if a land swap was possible with the tail at the south end of the site, in an effort to help unlock greenspace and public realm potential on other sites, through a domino effect.
- Architectural Expression
 - o The Panel opined that the architectural expression was very much appreciated here, including the materials and massing. Generally, the expression was considered to be friendly and compatible with the neighbourhood.
 - o The Tall Building Guidelines must be adhered to, if they are not currently.
 - o The proponent was advised to reconsider the linking mass between the towers and whether it is actually necessary; it is broad as well as deep, and there will be shadow there.

Panel Commentary

Overall Site Plan and Green Space

- A panelist advised that it was difficult to comment on the project given that it was designed with a context in mind that has substantially changed. The importance of having a more cohesive and cooperative approach between the neighbouring sites was reiterated.
- The critical issue of the site with respect to planning for a context that has not reached a consensus, was highlighted. Concern was noted for the southern edge, including the orphaned tail of the 2575 Danforth property; a panelist wondered if there were opportunities for land swaps there that could normalize the condition.
 - o It was suggested that this could free up some space for the mid-block service and loading, which may then have a ripple effect of freeing up some opportunities on the Canadian Tire site and may help start to realize the east-west connection.
- Appreciation was noted for the level of thinking that went into the green space, the willingness to provide the 10% parkland dedication and the strides made to support connectivity across the site.
 - o A panelist acknowledged that the project was chasing an ever-changing context, and appreciated hearing that some of the ideas were outdated but opined that they were rooted in the betterment of this place as a district.
- A panelist repeated earlier comments regarding the linear park and wondered whether it meets community needs as well as its viability.
- Caution was noted that the new road of Guest Avenue seems to be a very narrow ROW for part of the north-south length of the site.
 - o A panelist wondered if it is the type of street that requires or warrants a kind of streetwall-podium condition.
 - o If the rooftop is not needed to attain the 2-metres of exterior amenity, the suggestion was made that the site could benefit from not having a deep and covered pedestrian through-block connection; perhaps that area above could be omitted.

Built Form and Architectural Expression

- Adherence to the Tall Building Guidelines was advised; if the project exceeds 750-square-metre floor plates or if the towers are not meeting the 25-metre separation, they absolutely should.
- Concern was noted for the facing distance on the west side; it is very tight and not acceptable for primary windows of suites.
- A panelist applauded the architectural expression, particularly the textural work and efforts to bring the massing down to a reasonable level that can be absorbed by people at the ground level.
- Appreciation was noted for the Danforth expression including the massing and material expression. A panelist suggested that the rhythm of the implied structural bays be extended to the interior and subdivision of the retail space as well.

- Appreciation was reiterated for the expression on Danforth; real effort has been made to understand the street, its scale, and its materiality.
 - A panelist agreed that further articulation with the retail would be very beneficial in terms of the overall architecture, including setbacks, balconies, and openings. It was advised that the architectural expression works well with the neighbourhood, context and whole residential aspect; it is something that is very compatible with the area.
 - Appreciation was noted for the extent that the towers were set back from Danforth; it is a massing and volumetric articulation that really functions well within the neighbourhood.

Vote with Key Condition*

- The Panel voted unanimously to support the proposal with the key condition that it resolves with the emerging context at the west property line.