

CITY OF TORONTO DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

MINUTES: MEETING 7 – July 13, 2023

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, July 13, 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

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

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Panel confirmed minutes of their previous meeting, which was held on June 22, 2023, by email.

MEETING 7 INDEX

- i. Thermal Comfort Study (2nd Review)
- ii. 250 Wincott Drive and 4620 Eglinton Avenue West (1st Review)
- iii. 2200-2206 Eglinton Avenue East – Phase 1 (1st Review)

Thermal Comfort Study

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW Second Review

APPLICATION City Study

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Rong Yu, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Dorsa Jalalian, Dialog
Dr. Tristan Gerrish, Buro Happold

VOTE None

REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR Gordon Stratford

PANELISTS Michael Leckman, Meg Graham, Margaret Briegmann, Olivia Keung, Paul Kulig, Joe Lobko, Anna Madeira, Heather Rolleston, Sibylle von Knobloch

CONFLICTS None



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. Performance Metrics
 - Percentage of time for thermal comfort for different seasons - prioritizing shoulder seasons as discussed in our Guiding Principles
 - Percentage of change in thermal comfort between existing and proposed scenarios to strike a balance between public realm comfort and urban growth - prioritizing shoulder seasons as discussed in our Guiding Principles
 - Break it down: Identify important existing and proposed public realm features within the study area and have different performance metrics for each category
 - How do we classify the spaces?
2. Mitigation Toolbox
 - How to organize the Mitigation Toolbox: Level of impact, Scale of Development, Stage of Development Application
 - How do we measure those that not reflected in the UTCI?
3. Implementation
 - Scope and scale of development required for thermal comfort study

Summary of Project's Key Points

The following Panel member discussion points were highlighted in the verbal meeting summary by the Chair:

This initiative is essential to the City of Toronto, due to increasingly challenging climate change, which we are all experiencing. There is an urgent need for the City to be proactively responsive to the danger that this change poses. The following highlights five key points arising during Panel discussion:

- Useful Examples
 - The Panel advised that there should be useful case studies that tell both successful and challenging stories about tackling climate change.
 - These should include known Toronto places that people are familiar with, and as a result will more directly appreciate the impact of climate change on places they know. Also, these places should include priority action areas of the City.
 - Examples should also include precedents of cities that are similar to our current state (e.g.: such as other winter cities). Also include cities that are now facing climate change challenges that have yet to be experienced by Toronto, so that we can proactively prepare for our future.
- Make It Clear
 - Make sure that the final deliverable is clear, simple, and readily useful.
 - Make it (and the team that will manage it) a pragmatic resource that it is embedded with the agility to adjust and adapt with the rate of climate change.
 - Ongoing updates will be required to remain relevant.
- Micro and Macro
 - The initiative needs to include both a macro and micro lens, considering both the big picture and the details are equally important. All levels need to be included, from the city to the neighbourhood, and on down to individual sites and buildings, and into the outdoor and indoor spaces.
 - Be sure to dive further into the presented methodology and include within it the livability equity for all citizens.
 - There is no “one size fits all” solution; ensure that the initiative is sensitive to and embraces this.
- Next Steps
 - Focus on effectively communicating to a broad and diverse audience.
 - See Useful Examples above regarding the use of case studies and precedents.
 - Follow the C40 UC Toolbox example if that can enable effective communication.
 - Focus on telling this urgent challenge (and how the audience can help) concisely and clearly so that people quickly “get it” and act.
- Guidelines vs. Requirement
 - Panel member discussion favours starting the initiative as a guideline. Then, closely monitor the rate of climate change (and community response to that change plus the guidelines) and be prepared to shift the initiative to requirements.

Panel Commentary

Study Vision and Scope

- Appreciation was noted for the City's acknowledgement of the importance of the topic as we grow so rapidly.
- Excitement was noted for implications that look at the broader context beyond the immediate site; this might then reinforce a variety of perspectives and lenses.
- Support was expressed for the premise of the study, but a panelist called attention to the potential issue of what may be conflicting priorities within projects.
 - o Various perspectives including urban design, architecture, traffic, and density were highlighted as well as considerations of the developer, proponent, and City, in addition to cost and construction implications; they advised that there needs to be some sort of prioritization.
- A panelist wondered how these measures will change with the rapidly changing environment, and how frequently these ideas will need to be revisited.
- In consideration of other cities that have recently mandated minimum air condition standards, a panelist highlighted the importance of indoor impacts as a potential second phase of the study.
- The opportunity for the study to help the implementation of larger sites such as mall redevelopment was identified. A panelist advised that a study like this could be a basis for policy for developing sustainable large sites, as currently, there is nothing to address this condition in Toronto.
 - o The City of Vancouver was referenced as precedent with respect to their specific policy to address development of sustainable large sites.
 - o The panelist noted that a shortcoming of TGS is that sustainability is addressed on a building-by-building basis, but there are more opportunities looking at larger sites.
- A panelist expressed that the work has not landed with any specificity at this point; they noted that this makes sense but at some level there will be a struggle to provide feedback on the specific items identified for that reason.

Implementation

- A panelist highlighted the question of how this will be implemented. They advised that this is a very important question to take back, to think about how to communicate the implementation of all this information, and what you hope to gain at the end of the study.
- In consideration of the emerging planning framework and the review timelines for community planning, a panelist advised that picking battles is critical. They suggested that with respect to a Terms of Reference, opt for the most basic thing for all applications above the threshold; keep it really simple and get it out the door.
- In reference to the targeted areas with known issues, the key large intersections and perhaps some of the mid-rise conditions, a panelist suggested bringing more rigor back to some of the changes that are currently under review. They opined that some have weaponized sun and shadow impacts to limit development in a negative way.

- The Major Streets study and Avenue changes were referenced; the panelist encouraged the addition of some really specific data around how those are treated, including the angular planes or setbacks. The queried where these can be liberalized in a way that does not have adverse impacts but still deliver high quality of life on the streets.
- A panelist highlighted the opportunities for programming and collective attitude rather than built form; maybe it is not about development, streetscape, and coniferous trees. They suggested that perhaps the study can end with recommendations that speak to programming or things that are outside the planning department but contribute to a high quality of life.
 - The Edmonton Winter City Guidelines were referenced as precedent, as well as programming or approaches in other cities such as Quebec City, Copenhagen and Oulu, Finland.
 - Acutely, further study of strategies for summer was advised; limit the focus on shadows and look at other things that mitigate extreme heat.
- A panelist advised that with respect to tree planting, there are limited opportunities to provide shade in very dense urban projects.
 - They wondered if something along the lines of Oakville's requirement to include canopy coverage studies performed showing the growth pattern over a number of years would be helpful for the study.
 - Caution was also noted that in their experience, Urban Forestry did not acknowledge tree planting on amenity terraces; this may need to be revisited in terms of allowing more natural canopies to be planted there.
- A panelist appreciated that the City staff and consultant may be in the exploratory stage of figuring things out, but expressed that it was a little unclear as to where the work is going.
 - They thought that it was appropriate to propose guidelines rather than regulations at this early stage, while acknowledging that there are not many examples around the world to build on.
 - In consideration of the choices for performance metrics and an equity lens, they were wary of getting far too specific, far too early in an evolution of this kind of effort.

Equity

- A panelist highlighted the importance of equity considerations and advised that perhaps a stronger purpose of the study is to identify neighbourhood disparities, as well as the mitigation tools needed to take place there.
 - They referenced the Turning Up the Heat study in New York City which found that there can be a temperature difference of up to 8 degrees on a single day between some lower income, highly racialized neighbourhoods, and other more affluent ones, that may even sit adjacent to each other.
 - They also cautioned against the higher standards and advised the team to make sure that the cost of development in these priority neighbourhoods does not increase as a result.
- A panelist encouraged the Buro Happold team to dive further into their methodology and check their assumptions with respect to the test subjects being used; this could be another way to introduce equity considerations.

- They opined that the subject is likely a 1.8-metre tall, 95-kilogram male; broader considerations for influencing factors such as age and gender were suggested as another way to introduce equity.

Scales, Classifications, and Test Sites

- In consideration of how to apply this, and the scale of application, a panelist wondered if there was a way to look at the city as a whole, and to address different conditions in areas of importance and apply guidelines as they vary to aspects of thermal comfort.
 - They advised that Bay and Bloor will be very different than St. Clair and Bathurst.
 - The city-wide 3D development model that shows how development is affecting and evolving the city as a whole was referenced; the panelist queried if there was a similar way to consider thermal comfort.
- A panelist identified wind as a challenging part of urban intensification and highlighted the importance of carefully choosing the testing boundaries in consideration of the cumulative wind effect.
 - They advised that often the testing markers are only on a few specific corners, but instead should engage beyond to include public spaces that will be impacted.
- In reference to page 26 including the baseline and proposed cases of six test sites across the city, a panelist expressed that they did not find them useful. They advised that we need to figure out what is working, what is not, and how to encourage the development community and designers moving forward to get better performance and use data effectively as well as strategically; it is expensive and challenging to do this kind of testing.
 - The panelist expressed that they would love to see actual data on places like King and Bay, Dundas Square, Love Park, Jane and Finch, and Scarborough Civic Centre. The team was advised to pick a series of existing places in the city that are very dense and have challenging or successful thermal conditions; describe in detail what the thermal condition difficulties are, and how the built environment contributed to them.
 - The team was encouraged to find other known examples that people can visit that have mitigated environmental conditions; provide case studies that are meaningful, data rich and useful in terms of how we move forward.
- A panelist reiterated support for the suggestion to analyze built conditions as case studies rather than theoretical future design; this will be more helpful ultimately to designers than the theoretical redesigns.
- In reference to performance metrics and classifying spaces through live-work-play, a panelist advised that focusing on prioritizing areas without leaving any spaces out, or overclassifying them could be a good approach. Consideration for transit stops was highlighted; they could be a key focus area without leaving the others behind.

Strategies

- The key challenge of how to extend thermal comfort in public spaces over time was queried, acknowledging that Toronto is only naturally comfortable for approximately 25% of the year. A panelist lamented that specific examples of where design measures have been implemented to extend thermal comfort and shoulder seasons, were missing.

- They advised that the work is a bit too theoretical and high-level; they will appreciate it becoming more specific and practical moving forward.
- A panelist highlighted the problem of finding ways to have the winter become more like a shoulder season. They opined that we should be focusing on the design strategies to make that possible as they are the best seasons in Toronto.
- In consideration of heat domes and future contributors to the UTCI, a panelist queried what will, and should we be doing with our urban environments as well as building treatments to manage future overheating from climate change.
- A panelist liked the idea of the toolbox noted on pages 15-18. They advised that it needs work but is a very accessible idea that could be quite applicable for developers, and is reminiscent of the United Nations sustainability goals.

Communications

- In reference to the baseline and proposed cases on page 27, a panelist advised that there is way too much information and that infographics will be crucial to explain the concepts to clients. Pages 33-34 and 14-18 were identified as very helpful.
- In reference to page 45 of the Flemington Park study, and in consideration of client participation, a panelist highlighted the crucial importance of keeping the graphics as well as concepts extremely simple.
 - They highlighted pushback from clients regarding existing development guidelines such as angular planes, TGS and building separation.
 - They expressed that the TEUI, TEDI and GHGI targets of TGS were struggles enough. The team was encouraged to find something simple, stick with it, and demonstrate that those standards make sense as well as how they can be achieved.

250 Wincott Drive and 4620 Eglinton Avenue West

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW Second Review
APPLICATION ZBA and SPA
DEVELOPER Trinity Development Group



PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Jennifer Renaud, Community Planning;
Prachi Patel, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM Macquinn Victoria and Stephanie Maignan, B+ H Architects;
James Duncan and Jackie VanderVelde, Land Art Design Landscape Architects Inc.;
Ryan Doherty, Bousfields Inc.;
Rob Wells, Trinity Development Group

VOTE Non-support: 7
Support (*with key condition*): 1*

REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR Gordon Stratford
PANELISTS Michael Leckman, Meg Graham, Olivia Keung, Paul Kulig, Joe Lobko, Anna Madeira,
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. Public Realm and Site Organization
 - Utilization of the site for public realm, landscaped open space and amenity.
 - Building entrances, pedestrian connections, ground floor uses and its interface with surrounding public realm.
 - Future transformation of the strip mall and connectivity.
2. Built Form
 - Proposed building heights, massing and articulation within the site and the surrounding area context.
 - Does it provide safe, comfortable, accessible pedestrian movements throughout the site?
 - Does it offer at-grade amenity for residents?
 - Do the buildings have visibility and convenient accessibility from municipal sidewalks?
 - Do useable interior spaces along street edges provide 'eyes on the street' for safety?

- Do gradients allow for pedestrian accessibility and optimal utility?
- Does the built form massing and articulation relate to the pedestrian scale of the Street and the Park?
- Does the overall height of Building A and B fit within and relate to the existing and planned context?

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.

The project that has been presented is important to our city because it demonstrates a further step in the reimagining of retail centres into vibrant mixed-use neighbourhoods. It also helps in the evolution from low density suburban conditions towards a more urban fabric. This proposed development needs to be exemplary especially in consideration of the increased density that is being requested, in comparison to what had been requested for this project a few years back. The following highlights input from Panel comments:

- Submission Package
 - The consensus from Panel members is that the submission package itself, and not necessarily the design it depicts, was well done; being clear and simple in its description.
 - More information is needed to clearly demonstrate the impacts of grade conditions as well as the solutions that the team has used to resolve this site condition.
 - This includes providing cross-sections, which appear to be missing from the package.
- Site Plan
 - The Panel advised that the presented site plan requires a lot more work, including:
 - Improvement to the quality of ground-level experience, especially at the central courtyard.
 - A stronger, cohesive relationship to the proposed park and connected POPS, as well as the existing and proposed retail.
 - Providing retail layout options geared towards creating a very high-quality site plan that is pedestrian-first (this has not yet been achieved).
 - Further attention to resolving the grade conditions.
 - Rethinking the site plan's vehicular-first circulation, to provide a pedestrians-first realm.
 - Pedestrians should be the first priority and the site plan should flow from that prime requirement.
- Hybrid Condition
 - The proposed design appears to be stuck in between a suburban and urban approach, but it needs to be fully urban.
 - This is aptly demonstrated through the comments covered in Site Plan above.
- Master Plan
 - There is more work needed regarding the phasing of the proposed development, in particular the "in the meanwhile" state before the project is fully implemented.

- The Panel queried the effectiveness of the overall master plan, with Panel members encouraging the proponent team to demonstrate how the conditions in each phase will be of benefit to the site's residents in terms of temporary green space, amenities, etc.
 - Through addressing the above in combination with reworking the site plan, this will enable the proponent to arrive at a more cohesive, high-quality outdoor pedestrian amenity. The potential is there, but it is not currently evident in the submitted design.
- Built Form
 - The Panel questioned the "squash and spread" strategy of applying density to the site. Rethinking this approach was encouraged to allow more ground-level site space for an amenity-rich, pedestrian-first mixed-use setting.
 - This will help ensure a cohesive, high-quality urban environment throughout the entire development.

Panel Commentary

Vision and Master Plan

- The northern part of the site is quite substantial; a panelist lamented that the ultimate master plan was not presented to see how it all would fit together.
 - A stronger relationship to the neighbouring community was encouraged, as it currently feels like two separate sites.
- Major concerns were identified with the implementation phase where the mall is demolished in part, more surface parking is added, and only a small bit of the future development is built out.
 - Worry was expressed that the development could stall and be like that for years; this does not represent good planning or city-building.
- The team was encouraged to go further with respect to sustainability, to choose an area excel to at, and to bring up the minimum requirements even if they are being met.
- A panelist identified the big ask of the project and advised that there should be a big give of a public-realm-focused strategy at grade that perhaps does not easily fit into pro forma but is required for the project to be important and a great place to live.
 - The squash and spread strategy has been taken, but the proposal still cannot get viable space at grade for animation along the edges with these steep grades.
- A panelist highlighted the interesting site that was formerly an area developed a long time ago, and also acknowledged the impending major transit investment. They encouraged flexibility about the application of downtown urban design guidelines given the circumstances, and queried if workable environmental conditions at grade were achieved regardless of footprint size.
 - Support was noted for the design team's relatively simple L-shaped circulation pattern, the insertion of three new and more substantial buildings, the inclusion of a brand-new big grocery store, as well as the retention of the local retail to help support the community.

Site Plan and Circulation

- A panelist thought that the park location could have benefitted from being paired with the existing greenspace on the other side of Wincott.
 - o They did not understand the interruption of the corner building in what could otherwise be considered a very large and linear greenspace.
 - o Further study and careful thought about the nature of the park was encouraged, including if it will need to be buffered from traffic as it is quite linear.

- In consideration of the exceptional transit connections, concern was expressed for the amount of proposed parking.
 - o The one-storey mall with parking on all four sides was identified; a panelist wished that there was a more efficient way to handle this.
 - o Given the amount of parking on site, ways to mitigate heat island effects were queried, as well as stormwater management considerations.
 - o The team was encouraged to consider the view looking down for apartment residents.
 - The site is already contending with the rooftop of the strip mall; there is a lot of asphalt and a lot of grey to be looking down on.

- A panelist opined that the drawing package does not necessarily agree with the diagrams in terms of what the different strategies are, what the major and minor roads are, as well as what the primary and informal routes are.
 - o They advised that there is lots of room for future development there so that a new truck route might be managed between buildings C and D.

- A panelist wondered if the roadway entrance between buildings A and B was necessary from a traffic perspective.
 - o If so, the team was encouraged to make it much more pedestrian-centric as the site has been given over to car circulation; pedestrians are often relegated to the side.
 - o They queried if it could be a one-way street or more of a woonerf-type condition.
 - o The pedestrian walking experience for building A residents coming off transit was queried; what is that experience and how can it be made more friendly.

- Further study regarding safe pedestrian connections to Widdicombe were encouraged, in consideration of future residents desiring to head to schools and parks in the community to the northwest.

- Appreciation was noted for the retail organization on the north sides of the new buildings; this pairing of retail to retail is a great idea.
 - o A panelist lamented that cars from Wincott Drive could not come in under the building and therefore free up the retail-to-retail space to be more pedestrian-centric.

- A panelist lamented that the grocery store use could not be in the existing mall as it would function a lot better than trying to have it in a new building.
 - o Potential lease agreements were acknowledged, but they opined that it would be a happier circumstance.

- The site is challenged by grades dropping to the north end. A panelist expressed that the relationship between the community centre and the park is very awkward, as well as the entrance on the west side.

- They queried an understanding of the overall retail strategy, and suggested that perhaps the introduction of more residential units at the base of some buildings would allow for smaller floor plate elevation changes, to facilitate a better relationship with the sloping driveway leading into the site.
- A panelist questioned the servicing and dropoff; the way it works is unfortunate.
 - It would be nice to have the POPS extend in between buildings B and C.
 - They wondered if the loading area at building C was large enough to accommodate a grocery store and the servicing of the residential building.
 - Further explorations were advised for opportunities to service building D and parts of building C from the north, to allow the greenspace to extend further in between the buildings, to reach the existing commercial space at the north end.
- The site's transportation planning difficulties were underlined; the degree to which the space between building B and C becomes a trafficking and servicing artery rather than a public space becomes the challenge for the team in terms of making it successful.

Site Core

- Concern was expressed for the core of the site; it is not a courtyard, it is a traffic area and requires rethinking in terms of how it was designed as well as an understanding of the relationships at grade across the public realm.
- A panelist referenced the precedent imagery on slide 49 of pop-up events intended for the centre courtyard, including the note about their viability. They expressed that the area is a parking space, but that visually it is the heart of the community; pop-up events are necessary.
 - They queried how so many people being brought to the site will live, thrive, and gather; the amount of greenspace that is there is what was approved for half the population.
- A panelist acknowledged the team's hope that the central courtyard area would be used for other functions than traffic, but if that happens, they did not see it being a major use of that piece of the site and did not think that it justified its size.
- A panelist noted appreciation for the uses at grade and how they improve the quality of life at that level but expressed that it would be improved without the central court that ends up being a traffic centre.
 - A straight, direct flow through to a spectacular view of the mall from Eglinton, could create a very comfortable pedestrian flow through the site, that then connects up to the existing community.
- A panelist advised that the conditions at grade, especially along the buildings, were not adequately represented; they are not easy to understand but of central importance.
- A panelist advised that the package would have benefited from a north-south cross section through the site and courtyard; there is a significant grade change there that will become a little more acute with the parking lot.
 - They queried ways to address this, including trimming back some of the floor plates and giving the east-west private driveway more breathing room, to perhaps either accommodate new turning radii for loading trucks, or to relocate residential lobbies onto those corners, or to accommodate landscaping.

- They advised that whatever the resolution may be, to first prioritize the courtyard space, and secondly, mitigate what may be a tricky grade change stepping back, as you may be looking at the mall roofs from the new courtyard or POPS.
- A panelist queried if pushing back a bit on the City and Transportation Services to accept some delays on Wincott would help to move stuff off the central courtyard.
 - They queried if residential lobbies could then be introduced on that frontage, or perhaps the parking ramp could be put off of there to take advantage of the grade changes.
 - Given the layout of the L and Wincott, three frontages were identified to move these things; they do not need to be on the courtyard.
- A panelist reiterated the importance of moving the loading dock, but alternatively identified the possibility of another building in the 50-metre width of central section.
 - They acknowledged the likely desire for sightlines from Eglinton Avenue to the mall development at the north but suggested that a greenspace on top of a linking building might be a better approach to provide usable space if the loading dock cannot be moved.
 - If it cannot be moved, nor the grades changed, they opined that the proposed area did not seem viable as any narrative about usable space animated by retail at grade will not happen with people at least 1.2 metres or farther below grade.
- A panelist struggled to understand the relationship between the new buildings and the plaza, other than one of proximity or colocation.
 - Concern was expressed that this was problematic; a more fulsome design was advised as whatever is done at the ground plane is so incredibly important.

Built Form

- The priority for retail was highlighted, but the locations of the residential entrances were identified as odd, particularly the one that faces onto the central traffic court.
 - A panelist queried if there was a way to bring that onto a main street; this might create a more obvious and comfortable front door for residents.
- A panelist highlighted the importance of accessibility and future-proofing with respect to bringing the ground-floor level of the buildings to meet the level of the sidewalk.
 - They queried if there is a way to meet the grade at street level, and perhaps then manipulate the grading of the central land in the between the two buildings to help achieve this.
- A panelist opined that Wincott could use a street wall condition and did not understand why building C has the L facing to the east rather than the west.
- Concern was expressed about the quality of the four townhouses at the base of building A, facing a service road; it is an orphaned condition.
- The streetscape conditions along Eglinton were referenced, and a panelist questioned which paradigm building C was supporting.
 - The 45-metre right-of-way with extremely wide verges between the curb and sidewalk edges was characterized by default as a kind of landscape urbanism.

- Alternatively, the streetscapes in the area were referenced, as well as the condition further west along Eglinton where there is an attempt to bring buildings to the implied street line.
- If building C was supporting landscape urbanism, the panelist anticipated that it would be setback even farther for the park to run through, to rely on landscape for continuity with the lands to the east, and more urban edges to the west.
- They opined that it was a neither/nor condition.

Architectural Expression and Floor Plates

- A panelist expressed that further justification for the planning rationale with respect to how successful large floor plates are being planned would have been appreciated.
 - This includes metrics, and the ratio of setbacks to plate size.
 - The inclusion of further thought regarding the interior planning and the interior corridors that suffer from large, rectangular floor plates would have been appreciated, as well as ideas about getting natural daylight into that length of the corridor.
- A panelist found the floor plates very large and encouraged consideration for more setbacks for pedestrian comfort as well as wind mitigation.
- A panelist was not convinced that the 31-storeys made sense; the squash and spread is a difficult argument to make.
 - They opined that it does not make better buildings and did not think that the brick detailing would add that much girth to them.
 - An overall pass at the architecture was recommended, that looks not at demarcating the lower floors with a brown ribbon of brick. The team was advised that a more courageous and wholistic architecture that is consistent from top to bottom is warranted here, regardless of what the final height is.
- Another panelist agreed with a bolder architectural expression.
 - The brick on the podiums reads as applied planes rather than as a solid volume.
- Alternatively, one panelist expressed appreciation for the design team's development of an architectural language that provides the ability to help break down the scale of what might otherwise be very large footprint sizes in this situation.

Submission Package

- Numerous panelists expressed appreciation to the design team for the drawing package and presentation.
 - The presentation was well organized, and the isometric renderings were helpful.
 - The quality of the clarity of the drawings and communications was commended.

*Vote with Key Condition

- A panelist added a key condition to include a fundamental rethink of the space between buildings B and C, and the removal of transportation roles there, to a vote of support. The project received a vote of non-support from the panel (7 to 1).

2200-2206 Eglinton Avenue East – Phase 1

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW	First Review
APPLICATION	SPA
DEVELOPER	Dream, CentreCourt

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF	Emily Caldwell, Community Planning Behnaz Djabarouti, Urban Design
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DESIGN TEAM	Aamer Shirazie, Arcadis IBI Group Ray Ronaghan, STUDIO tla
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VOTE	Non-support: unanimous
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REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR	Gordon Stratford
PANELISTS	Michael Leckman, Olivia Keung, Paul Kulig, Joe Lobko, Anna Madeira, Heather Rolleston, Sibylle von Knobloch
CONFLICTS	Not in Attendance: Margaret Briegmann, Ralph Giannone



Introduction

City staff outlined the project history, existing and future context, and planning framework. Staff are seeking the Panel's advice on the following key issues:

1. Public realm design for elements such as streetscape along Eglinton Ave E, Birchmount Rd and the proposed POPS (raised planters, materiality, walkways);
2. Active uses at grade and locations of service areas.
3. Façade articulation and exterior materials; and
4. Sustainable building and landscape design strategy and features.

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.

While the minutes provide more detailed content regarding Panel members' discussion and input the following is a high-level snapshot of some of the key issues identified during discussion.

This project is important to the City because it is a key part of the evolution of the Golden Mile from a suburban strip to an urban centre. As noted by the proponent team, their project occupies a gateway site and is especially important due to such prominence. As a result, the design needs to be an exemplary signature of a vibrant and urbane Golden Mile. To that end, the following identifies some of the key issues expressed by the Panel.

- Site Plan
 - Many comments pointed towards significantly rethinking the proposed site; including but not limited to the following issues:
 - Improve the positioning and shaping of the retail, the positioning of residential units at grade, access to sun, the location of loading/servicing, the quality of the proposed POPS, the design of the internal courtyard, and the permeability of the pedestrian realm.

- Response to Context
 - Improving the proposed design’s response to context was also a key issue, including the following sampling:
 - Improve response to the adjacent future parkland park, and the context to the north and north-east of the project site.
 - Considering the prominence of the project site create a signature future context.

- Landscape
 - The Panel appreciates that the proponent is planning to update the POPS landscape design, and the following are some of the additional comments:
 - The proposed design needs to enhance the presence of landscape throughout the site to make it a high-quality defining feature of the project.
 - The many comments about the POPS are an encouragement towards the proponent’s desire to rethink the design of that area.
 - The landscape concept for the rest of the site needs to be rethought as well, taking into account Site Plan and Response to Context comments.

- Built Form
 - Panel members have noted that there are some promising initial moves in the proposed design, with some of the comments included below:
 - The design as shown is quite frenetic and busy, and needs to be simplified, clarified, and calmed.
 - Given the Site Plan comments the built form positioning and shaping will likely change due to the feedback.

- Big Idea
 - Given the gateway position of the site, and it being the first precedent-setting project of a multi-phase development, the Panel would like to see the Master Plan “Big Idea” story for what will become a complete neighbourhood. This will give the proponent team and Panel a better sense of how successful the current project will need to be in setting an exemplar for future phases.

Panel Commentary

Overall Concept and Project Vision

- A panelist desperately requested that City staff return to the panel with the larger vision of the Eglinton West and Golden Mile corridor. They expressed that it did not seem fully formed, considered, nor balanced.
 - They noted statistics of 66,000 new people and 37,000 new housing units proposed in a portion of the Eglinton corridor, which seem to be predominantly disposed on the north side while the south remains largely as it is.
 - Additionally, they were curious to know how much park space would be provided for the new residents.

- A panelist expressed that the site plan speaks to inconsistencies, notably that the entire project and neighbourhoods of over 60,000 people are here because of an LRT and yet the proposed lobby is organized around the car pickup and drop-off.
 - They implored the team to reconsider the very conventional, car-centric approach. Rather, they advised that the LRT should be celebrated as it is the genesis of the entire neighbourhood, and all attention should be turned to upgrading the public realm for that.

- A panelist opined that the concept has some fundamental flaws and advised a rethink of the project. They expressed that the east-west orientation of parallel towers, parallel to Eglinton ignores the frontage of the new proposed park to the west; this is a big problem.
 - Instead of two east-west rectangles around a courtyard, they suggested flipping this 90-degrees to the north. This would allow the west building to have a positive relationship with the park and the east building to have a positive relationship with Birchmount.
 - The panelist suggested that the two new buildings be shifted to one another, creating an open POPS at the corner of Birchmount, and that separation be provided at grade between the buildings.
 - They advised that this significant shift in the concept would accomplish a number of things, including:
 - the provision of a proper address to the park;
 - the minimized encroachment of transportation into the site including the extent of asphalt and parking surface through a courtyard to the north;
 - the provision of a more appropriate urban design arrangement for the overall context and;
 - the provision of a better framework for development moving forward.

- A panelist opined that it was unfortunate that the courtyard and outdoor amenity could not be more green, and oriented to allow for more sun.

Site Plan and Loading

- Concern was noted that the loading and trucks are coming very deep into the site, creating a lot of paving. A panelist advised that the staging location is really limiting the potential of the proposed retail along the parkland and along Eglinton.

- Another panelist reiterated concerns for the proposed loading and the amount of paving. They queried if it was possible to move the loading more to the north side of the site, where there is already a parking garage and a service-zone character.

- A panelist encouraged the proponent to revisit the ground floor layout to provide a solution that allows cars and loading to enter into the footprint of the building a lot sooner, so that a sea of paving does not eat up a lot of the site.
 - They suggested moving the lobby volume west, continuing the retail and activation along the park edge, expanding the POPS while providing a portion of the outdoor area associated with the lobby, as well as more fronting on Birchmount.
- A panelist advised that the move to create the outdoor amenity area has pushed all the programming out to the edges, leaving tight constraints along Birchmount and Eglinton, while also dedicating an incredible amount of space to a driveway and compromising the public realm along the park. Two suggestions were proposed to reconsider this.
 - Internalize the loading; the panelist noted that there seems to be shared loading from one of the facilities, so there is already a strategy about using the P1 level, and it could be almost anywhere provided the circulation works.
 - They suggested burying it in the middle, allowing for some deeper setbacks where needed, and deepening up the retail.
 - They also advised strategically considering the residential placement, perhaps along the positive frontage to the park, with a deeper setback that aligns with the future north-south connection seen in the staff report's larger master plan for the area.
 - Alternatively, blow it up entirely and make it a public galleria; the panelist highlighted the large lobby proposed noting that it could extend through to the park in a narrower version.
 - They suggested focusing the residential on that and turning the other sides fully to retail in a way that gives some space back to the public realm.

Ground Floor Layout and Uses at Grade

- A panelist advised further thought about the scale and nature of the space on the site, as well as what they contribute to the overall site plan, if residential uses at grade are used to activate a space.
 - They opined that the POPS and interior courtyard renderings look to be the same space. The treatment at grade was identical and there was no recognition of where a retail frontage would be, or how a residential area may have a different scale or feel than the high street retail.
 - They expressed that the at-grade 2-storey units addressing the private street parking garage do not make sense. Rather, they suggested that rotating them to address the interior courtyard might start to have a more residential and more appropriate feel.
- Concern was expressed that the residential units at grade will not be successful, especially those facing the parking access and loading.
 - Concern was noted for the units on the north driveway including the lack of buffer space, and traffic.
 - Caution was also noted that along Birchmount Road, there is no language of residential units at grade.
- Concern was noted for the retail spaces on the east side, going north including how narrow they are, and that they will become back of house. A panelist suggested that perhaps the section flanking the POPS could become part of the indoor amenity, perhaps as a lounge or a friendlier space.

- A panelist advised that the lobby is very grand and does not contribute much to the street façade along Birchmount. They wondered if one grand lobby was the solution, or rather if it should be split up to animate the site corners with one lobby to address the parkland and another to address the interior drive entrance.

Streetscape and Public Realm

- The importance of working with the City in terms of creating a very robust streetscape along both Birchmount and Eglinton, was highlighted. A panelist advised that it is vitally important that they become successful with the number of people that will live here.
- A panelist expressed that the idea of a green and commercial streetscape along Eglinton is asking for a level of generosity that is not seen in the plan.
 - o They cautioned that generosity is critical where the POPS is on the corner including how it wraps around the Eglinton streetscape, and meets the park as well as how the outdoor space interfaces with the retail. They advised that this is the critical thing to get right in this development and what is being given back to the public.
- Concern was expressed for the impoverished approach to the public realm including the inaccessible stairs. A panelist cautioned that some of the dimensions at 2-metre clearances are not robust enough.

POPS Design

- A panelist expressed that the illustration of the POPS at the corner is candidly frightening. They advised that this is not a welcoming space but rather it is full of massive planters that people have to negotiate; it seems like a giant security issue.
- A panelist expressed that they did not mind the raised planters but that the POPS needs to be looked at again in terms of allowing more flexible pedestrian flow and crisscross through the space.
- A panelist advised blowing up the POPS space and taking a detailed view of the design given the stage of development.
 - o In reference to the precedent images, they queried if it will be a space for small gatherings, events, or circulation.
 - o The removal of the planters was acknowledged, but the panelist opined that the layout is carving it into too many small spaces that are not big enough to do anything; it is not a vibrant corner.

Response to Context

- A panelist advised that more study is needed with respect to the northwest corner, and concern was noted for the relationship between this space and the existing commercial building.
 - o They questioned how the residual space around the commercial building will function including movements, as well as how pedestrians exiting the parking garage will get where they want to go.
 - o They queried if there will be fencing or if it will be open, and noted that a lot of details are missing.

- A panelist cautioned that the relationship with the parkland is concerning in terms of the grade differences occurring at the retail, in addition to how narrow the westerly section of the retail spaces are.
- Strong concern was reiterated regarding the way the project engages with the future parkland to the west.
 - o A panelist appreciated that there was a gesture of very shallow retail fronting over half of it, but in consideration of the underground parking exit and proposed surface parking, they expressed that the remainder of that edge along the future parkland leaves a lot to be desired.
- A panelist highlighted the site-specific feature of the 1.5-metre grade difference and identified the great opportunity for the project to respond to the terminus as well as the grade transitions on the west, to improve the scheme.
 - o The immense opportunity for the architectural and landscape design to prioritize the specifics of the site and create a relationship through the transition from the raised podium down to the parkland, was identified.
 - o The nature of this relationship was queried, including if it is a series of steps, a landscape of transition, or a soft or hard transition.

Built Form and Architectural Expression

- In reference to page 14, a panelist advised that the architectural expression undertaken of splitting the towers is successful in breaking up the massing.
- A panelist advised that introducing breaks on the long runs of balconies will be required if only to meet energy model requirements.
- A panelist opined that there are a lot of competing elements of vertical and horizontal; more study was suggested towards anything that could be done to calm this down a little.
 - o They cautioned that the detail of the vertical fins intersecting brick horizontals will be tricky to achieve.
 - o They wondered if there could be a little less competition between horizontal and vertical, which is exacerbated by the very high-contrasting use of black and white.
- Concern was noted for the lack of specificity and commitment to materiality for an SPA application; there is a level of development still required.
 - o In reference to exterior renderings with materials that may be terracotta or precast, a panelist expressed that as a result, it is difficult to conclusively answer the questions asked about articulation, exterior materials, and the relationship to the street.
- A panelist expressed that the palette overall seems too neutral given the corner location and that there are too many different languages. Generosity, warmth, and presence were encouraged for the architectural expression given that it is the gateway, and an exciting moment on the Golden Mile.
- Appreciation was noted for the podium roof and the outdoor amenity associated with the residential units including the large space as well as the connection to the interior amenity. A panelist advised that the scheme creates a nice level dedicated to that type of space for the building and residents.