



Waterfront Design Review Panel Minutes of Meeting #13 Wednesday, February 14, 2007

Present:

Bruce Kuwabara, Chair
George Baird
Paul Bedford
Tania Bortolotto
Peter Clewes
Peter Halsall
Anne McIlroy
Janet Rosenberg

Regrets:

Renee Daoust
Siamak Hariri
Don Schmitt
Greg Smallenberg
Charles Waldheim

Recording Secretary:

Pina Mallozzi

Designees and Guests:

John Campbell
Robert Freedman
Christopher Glaisek

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed the Panel, thanking those who were in attendance despite the inclement weather. He reviewed the agenda and then invited Christopher Glaisek, the Corporation's Vice President for Planning and Design, to provide his report.

REPORT FROM THE VP PLANNING AND DESIGN

Mr. Glaisek, the Corporation's Vice President for Planning and Design, provide a summary of the progress over the past month.

Lower Don Lands Design Competition

- The RFQ for the Lower Don Lands closed on January 24, 2007. The Corporation received submissions from 29 teams representing over 120 firms from 13 countries.
- A selection committee which included Carolyn Woodland, Steve Willis, Eric Pederson, Chris Glaisek and Charles Waldheim, reviewed the submissions and selected a short-list which includes: Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates, Weiss/Manfredi Architects, Atelier Girot, and STOSS Landscape Urbanism. All four teams have been asked to identify a local partner for their teams and will be doing so within the next week. Hargreaves Associates was also short-listed but has withdrawn from the competition because of other obligations.

Central Waterfront

- The Contribution Agreement for design work in the Central Waterfront has been executed and the Corporation is in the process of finalizing the contract with the West 8+DTAH team.

Canada Square

- The Corporation, in collaboration with Harbourfront Centre, is in the process of preparing an RFP for a feasibility study for a self-sustaining, mixed-use cultural public space with an underground parking garage. It is located on the south side of Queens Quay west of York Street at the entrance to Harbourfront Centre.
- The Corporation will invite West 8+DTAH to provide guidance on the design character of Canada Square.

West Don Lands

- Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates have been contracted to work on the schematic design for Bayview and River Streets and Laura Solano will provide a presentation to the Panel today.

East Bayfront

- Project Symphony, the first development proposal for the East Bayfront, is underway. David Dow of Diamond and Schmitt Architects will provide a presentation to the Panel on the design of the building today.

Lake Ontario Park

- The Lake Ontario Park concept plan was presented at a public meeting on January 17, 2007 and the plan was well received by the public, and a lot of momentum for the project now exists.
- The design team is currently on hiatus awaiting the results of a soil investigation being conducted by the Corporation. The study will provide a detailed inventory of the site's soil characteristics and the detailed master plan for the park will integrate this data and make recommendations for soil management.

Regional Sports Complex

- The Corporation is preparing a site plan for the lands north of Unwin Avenue adjacent to Lake Ontario Park. These lands have been considered the preferred site for a Regional Sports Complex which is being undertaken by the Corporation. The site plan includes consolidating additional related uses on the north side of Unwin Avenue in order to create a campus like environment.

Martin Goodman Trail

- An RFP for the design of the Ontario Place segment of the Martin Goodman Trail will be issued shortly.

Sustainability Centre

- The Corporation has committed to building a sustainability centre on the waterfront. Several sites are currently being considered, including a retrofit of the Pier 4 building at Queens Quay and Rees Street. An RFP will be issued for the design of this marketing and presentation centre.

The Chair then asked the Panel if they had any questions or comments.

One Panel member complemented the Corporation's marketing approach noting that there is a "buzz" in the design community about the exciting underway in Toronto

GENERAL BUSINESS

The Chair then asked the Panel for their comments on the minutes. It was recommended, given the late delivery of the binders, that comments be provided in writing as soon as possible following the meeting.

REPORT FROM THE CEO

John Campbell, the Corporation's President and CEO, began by expressing his optimism about the new project being presented to the Panel today, as it potentially represents a major step forward in terms of attracting jobs to the waterfront.

He noted that corporately, given the termination of the Program Manager contract at the end of March the Corporation has initiated internalizing project management functions and continues to increase staffing. At the same time, the Corporation is in the midst of undergoing a value-for-money audit which may affect the operations and structure of the Corporation.

Mr. Campbell explained that the Corporation is in the process of developing a marketing and branding strategy. Spencer Francey Peters, the branding consultant, is in the process of examining opportunities for marketing at a regional scale. The goal is to begin to implement the Corporation's new brand in May.

Mr. Campbell noted that the Board of Directors held a visioning session to review a new five year strategic plan for the Corporation, which will be tabled at the March 6, 2007 board meeting. This budget has established some new priorities for the Corporation.

Mr. Campbell concluded by providing the Panel with an introduction to Project Symphony, noting the importance of the project as a catalyst for the development of the East Bayfront community. Mr. Campbell stressed the challenge of bringing employment to the waterfront and the opportunities which Project Symphony represents in doing so. Mr. Campbell concluded by noting the Corporation's commitment to this project as a partner and also reinforced the Corporation's commitment to design excellence in this and all projects on the waterfront.

PROJECT REVIEWS

1.0 West Don Lands: Bayview Avenue and River Street Design

ID#: 1015

Project Type: Park/Public Realm Design

Location: Bayview Avenue south of King Street and River Street from Bayview Avenue to Queen Street

Proponent: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation

Architect/Designer: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA)

Review Round: One

Presenter(s): Laura Solano, MVVA

Delegation: Laurie Payne, Urban Strategies

1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Mr. Glaisek introduced the project, noting that MVVA has been contracted to do the schematic design of Bayview Avenue and River Street as part of the flood protection landform construction project being led by ORC. The main issues on which the advice of the Panel was sought include:

- Overall urban design character being proposed.
- Organization of streetscape elements, particularly the location of trees in relation to the curb.
- Street widths.

1.2 Project Presentation

Ms. Solano, Partner with MVVA provided the Panel with a plan of the public realm streetscape. She then walked the Panel through a series of detailed cross-sections along Bayview Avenue starting at Mill Street and moving north to River Square and along River Street to Queen Street. Ms. Solano provided the Panel with a detailed description of the planting strategies for the streets, highlighting the team's response to the feedback received by the Panel at its last meeting. She concluded by explaining the simple palette of plant material noting the relationship between the tree species selection and the character of the street.

1.3 Panel Comments

The Chair then asked the Panel for comments.

One Panel member asked if the design team intended to use manufactured soils in continuous pits for all street tree plantings. Ms. Solano noted that that is the intention but that the team is still discussing with the city the best methods for obtaining the preferred soil volumes, as there may be budget concerns with the continuous pit alternative. The Panel stressed the importance of continuous tree pits to the success of the plant material and urged the design team to do their best to prioritize this in the design.

Another Panel member asked for a description of structural soils. Ms. Solano explained that it is a sand-based soil that can withstand compaction.

One Panel member inquired about the ecological intent of the trees selected for Bayview Avenue and River Square/Street. Ms. Solano explained that the three species selected for the public realm were selected both for their quality but also for their hardiness in urban conditions. She noted that although the public realm tree palette is largely exotic, this is in contrast to the selection of trees in Don River Park which is nearly completely native species.

Another Panel member asked whether the team had studied the potential for decreasing the width of the roads by investigating alternative approaches for providing elements of the right-of-way, such as the bike path for example. Ms. Solano noted that this has not yet been explored in detail, but the team is in discussions about alternatives.

The Panel requested a plan view related to the series of sectional drawings provided, that demonstrates the relationship between the public realm and the internal function of the buildings. Ms. Solano explained that this has been created, noting that the team has had to make many assumptions about access into the future buildings and other interior public realm elements such as cafes.

Another Panel member asked about the potential for a biofiltration system to be incorporated into the tree pits in the public realm. Ms. Solano noted that although the tree pits will be designed to collect stormwater runoff, they are not proposed to be as sophisticated as other precedents such as Seattle.

There was an inquiry about the lack of trees shown north of River Square along Bayview Avenue. Ms. Solano explained that there are no trees proposed in that area because of the constraints of the flood protection landform.

The Panel expressed concern about the interaction with public works in the defining of the public realm. There was a concern that a simple strategy may be cluttered by components such as cross

walks and parking meters if this is not integrated into the process at this point. Mr. Freedman recommended that a representative from the public realm design team join the standing multi-departmental meeting at the City.

Another Panel member expressed scepticism about the double intersection at River Square and at Front Street and asked for an explanation of how these intersections were intended to function. Mr. Freedman explained both River Square and Front Street will function as large intersections, and that these intersections are being coordinated through weekly meetings at the city. The Chair requested that the City provide the Panel with a drawing which demonstrates how the intersections will integrate into the plan for the public realm.

Ms. Solano then provided the Panel with a brief presentation of the team's proposal for the public art component in Don River Park. She provided an overview of artist Meg Webster's past projects and then introduced Ms. Webster's proposal for Don River Park. She explained the intention to use recycled concrete pieces to create a fractured ground plane installation under the park pavilion.

One Panel member complemented the scheme noting that the design may require some interstitial spaces in order to ensure that the fittings are not impractically tight. It was suggested by another Panel member strands of landscape could be woven into the recycled concrete area. It was suggested that the artist carefully consider the granular fill within the gaps between the pieces of concrete.

1.4 Summary of Panel's Key Issues

The Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- i. Ensure the use of continuous trenches and structural soil in all street tree plantings in the public realm;
- ii. Analyze the potential for a decreased width for the right-of-ways for Bayview Avenue and River Streets;
- iii. Develop a site plan which demonstrates the relationship between the public realm and the major interior uses of the buildings;
- iv. Ensure coordination with public works in order to deliver a coherent and elegant streetscape.

1.5 Proponent's Response

Ms. Solano thanked the Panel for its feedback.

2 Don River Park: Pavilion Design

ID#: 1006

Project Type: Building Design

Location: Area bounded by the Don River, CN Rail Yards, Bayview Avenue and King Street

Proponent: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation

Architect/Designer: Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates

Review Round: six

Presenter(s): Maryann Thompson, Maryann Thompson Architects; Laura Solano, MVVA;

Delegation: Laurie Payne, Urban Strategies

2.1 Introduction to the Issues

Mr. Glaisek introduced the project noting that Maryann Thompson will be joining the meeting via telephone. The main issues on which the advice of the Panel is sought include:

- Integration of feedback the Panel provided the last time the pavilion was presented;
- Panel sign-off to proceed into construction drawings.

2.2 Project Presentation

Ms. Thompson provided the Panel with a summary of the pavilion design. She noted the changes since the last meeting, including the extension of the roof to respond to the entrance of the park at Front Street. Ms. Thompson explained the details of the fire place, the park keeper's room, the kitchenette and the windbreak doors which slide on a stainless steel track into a pocket wall. Ms. Thompson concluded by discussing options for the materiality of the pavilion, including the use of wood, metal, poured concrete, and mesh.

2.3 Panel Comments

The Chair then asked the Panel for its comments.

One Panel member asked for details on the structure of the roof as well as on the engineer who will detail it. Ms. Thompson explained that the structural elements would be hidden by wood on the underside of the roof, and would be made of steel. Ms. Thompson explained that she has a preferred engineer but asked the Panel if they could suggest a local engineer.

Another Panel member questioned the use of a steel structure and suggested that structural concrete may be a better alternative that would enable a more sculptural roof of varying thickness. Ms. Thompson was concerned about the costs associated with this alternative, but the Panel noted that it may be less expensive because of the abundant local supply of concrete. It was strongly recommended that the use of wood be strategic because of maintenance concerns, although there was also concern that the image that the public has of the pavilion may not be met if the materiality shifts dramatically from wood to concrete. Another Panel member suggested using wood for the soffit because it would be inaccessible and would be protected from weathering and that durable woods such as Ipe, which does not darken with age would be preferable.

Another Panel asked if the team had done sun/shade studies, given that the shape of the roof resembles a sun dial. Ms. Thompson explained that sun/shade study patterns have been predicted in order to ensure that there is enough shade in the summer. It was noted that the design of the pavilion is not intended to act as a sun dial but rather the shape of the roof is designed to respond to the entrance of the park at Front Street.

Another Panel member complemented the pavilion design and its evolution since the last presentation. The Panel generally agreed that the new shape of the roof is better, however, it was suggested that it might be lowered in order to create a greater sense of enclosure at one end. It was also suggested that the roof be additionally tilted and that the fold be exaggerated. Another Panel member noted that that linearity in the plan view of the pavilion seems stronger than the model does and recommended reinforcing the linearity. The Panel complemented the randomness of the columns supporting the roof and suggested reinforcing the playfulness by increasing the number and strategically tilting several of the columns.

One Panel member discouraged the use of a bottom hung sliding door system because of the debris which may get caught in the track. It was suggested that the design team reference a system built by Centor which is top hung and bi-folding. Another Panel member asked for clarification on the function of the sliding doors. Ms. Thompson explained that they would provide protection from the wind and create privacy. She explained that the intent is for the

doors to be operated by the park manager. The Panel asked the designer to determine if the proposed location of the sliding doors would cause a wind tunnel when the doors are open and suggested that lowering the roof could decrease any wind crossing through the pavilion.

The Panel requested the project be presented one final time at the March Panel meeting.

2.4 Summary of Panel's Key Issues

The Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- i. Support for the revisions since the last Panel meeting;
- ii. Concerns with the maintenance of the pavilion regarding the selection of materials to withstand use and time;
- iii. Coordination of the groundfloor art installation with the design of the pavilion and surrounding park landscape;

2.5 Proponent's Response

Ms. Thompson thanked the Panel for their feedback.

3 Project Symphony

ID#: 1017

Project Type: Building

Location: South-side of Queens Quay Boulevard on the east side of Jarvis Slip

Proponent: Toronto Economic Development Corporation (TEDCO)

Architect/Designer: Diamond and Schmitt Architects

Review Round: One

Presenter(s): David Dow, Diamond and Schmitt Architects

Delegation: Jeff Steiner and Chris Barre, TEDCO; Elaine Baxter-Trahair, Waterfront Secretariat

3.1 Introduction to the Issues

Mr. Glaisek introduced the project, noting that it is the first building being presented to the Panel. He then provided a brief description of the project site in relation to the precinct plan already reviewed by the Panel. The main issues on which the advice of the Panel was sought include:

- The impact of the building on the diagonal view corridor proposed in the East Bayfront precinct plan;
- The discrepancy between the proposed building height and the allowable heights in the approved precinct plan and zoning bylaw;
- The proposed building envelope;
- The proposed public realm and its relationship to the West 8+DTAH design;
- The design of the proposed public space on the west side of the building;
- The skin of the building including the design of the curtain wall;
- The ground floor animation strategy and circulation.

Mr. Glaisek concluded by stressing the significance of Project Symphony as the precedent for future development, and encouraged the Panel to keep that in mind while commenting on the proposed design.

3.2 Project Presentation

Mr. David Dow, Partner with Diamond and Schmitt Architects, introduced himself to the Panel and thanked them for the opportunity to present. He began by summarizing the site, its context and the program for the building. He explained the new zoning bylaw for the East Bayfront, citing

its provision to not preclude development of Project Symphony in this area. He then noted that the designs are very preliminary, and that the team anticipates three or four more meetings with the Panel as they get further into the design work.

He then described several of the design elements, including the location of the main entrance and servicing access on the east side of the building, the stepped massing of the building rising from 23 metres at the water's edge to 40.5 meters on the Queens Quay side, the elimination of the diagonal building form in favour of a rectilinear floorplate, the use of a large cantilevered wing extending to the slip edge to provide enclosure and act as a gateway to the lake, the use of colonnades and covered arcades to move people to the water's edge along a raised plinth, the at-grade retail and media production uses intended to animate the site, and the benefits of making the building taller to help serve as a buffer between the more industrial uses to the west and the future East Bayfront community.

3.3 Panel Comments

The Chair then asked the Panel for its comments.

One Panel member asked for clarification on the datum used in determining the effects on the view corridor of eliminating the diagonal. Mr. Dow explained that projections were taken from the centre of Jarvis Street which demonstrated that the view corridor is not impacted from the shift of the building footprint parallel to the dockwall edge.

Another Panel member asked what criteria was used to determine the east setback along Street A. Mr. Dow explained that the location of the east edge of the building is determined by the underground parking garage. One Panel member suggested shifting the east facade closer to the edge of Street A in order to start to define an urban system of streets and blocks. It was also recommended that the building expand towards the east in order to help decrease the heights of the building to more closely match the heights approved in the zoning.

The Panel expressed concern with the elevation change needed to accommodate the underground parking and strongly cautioned against this strategy. It was suggested that given the level of the water table, a second level of parking could be added below the north end of the building where the water table is lower. It was felt that the one-metre plinth conflicts with creating a great public space and sets a bad precedent for future East Bayfront development. Mr. Dow noted that the current single-level garage is favourable in terms of timing and cost, and also serves to keep the building out of the 100 year flood level. One Panel member asked if the building was required to be built out of the 100 year flood level. Mr. Glaisek noted that until the completion of the flood protection landform in the West Don Lands this is technically the case.

The Panel expressed concern with the colonnades proposed in the new building design and commented on the lack of good precedents for urban colonnades. One Panel member expressed a concern with the character of the ground plane and asked for the team to produce a section which clearly illustrates the relationship between the proposed architecture, the colonnade, the public space, the elevation change and the water's edge promenade. It was noted that there was concern that the combination of the colonnade and the raised public space would create both a visual and a physical barrier along the waterfront. Mr. Dow noted that the goal was to create a gathering space on the west side of the building and therefore the plinth has been pushed east as much as possible, however, this has created a condition in which the grade change is located very close to the colonnade and appears to have created a barrier.

The Panel expressed concern about the design proposed for the public realm. The winning design for the Central Waterfront by West 8+DTAH proposed a great gathering space at the foot of Jarvis Street, and the Panel expressed their commitment to this idea, noting concerns with the treatment of the public space in the current proposal. The Panel noted the desire to have large numbers of people enjoy the slip and the need for the design of the building to engage these users.

The Panel inquired about the team's intentions for the design of the north façade of the building and its relationship to future development opportunities. Mr. Dow explained that four to five meters have been reserved for a pedestrian bypass between the two buildings, and a notch in the north façade should be mimicked in the building to the north to act as a lightwell between the two buildings. It was noted however that the design team cannot control what happens to the north of the site. The Panel noted the need to ensure that the north façade of the Symphony building could be animated in the absence of a building to the north on opening day. Mr. Steiner noted that retail has been planned for the north-west corner of the building.

One Panel member expressed concern with the location of the loading area noting that pedestrians traveling from the north would have to cross the loading bay in order to reach the front entrance of the building. The Panel recommended reconsidering these relationships.

One Panel member inquired as to the possibility of the character of the building becoming more that of a loft style concrete structure and whether operable windows were feasible. Mr. Dow noted that the preference would be for operable windows but highlighted the challenges with this, including noise from the nearby Redpath Sugar Refinery. Another Panel member inquired about the intended floor to floor heights. Mr. Dow noted that the height is 4.4 metres on the lower levels and 4.1 meters on the upper floors. Another Panel member asked about the location of the mechanical system. Mr. Dow noted that it would be located on the roof at the north side of the building although consideration is being given to distributing it throughout the building.

The Panel then asked about the building design with respect to the Corporation's green building specifications. Mr. Dow explained that they have been instructed by TEDCO to meet LEED Silver, and that they believe it does. Mr. Campbell noted that the Corporation hopes to achieve LEED Gold in all buildings south of Queens Quay and is discussing with TEDCO how to achieve this for Project Symphony.

The Panel expressed curiosity about the nature of the future tenant and asked for details on their intended functions. Mr. Dow explained that this information is currently confidential and explained that the tenant is a local creative entertainment company and would be constructing studio based production facilities similar to those of City TV. One Panel member felt that the City TV building on Queens Street is a positive precedent, but that its success was due to its location close to a public street and the use of openable garage doors at-grade. It was noted that this condition would be ideal for the west and south side of the Project Symphony building.

One Panel member inquired about what floor loading had been assumed in the pro-forma for the building. Mr. Dow noted that the loading would be typical for the use. The Panel noted that the examples of good green-roofed buildings have much higher loading capacity than a standard office building and therefore tend to allow for more flexibility in design.

The Panel commented on the awkward orientation of the building entrance on Street A and noted the need to fully understand the program in making recommendations about the façade and character of the building. It was noted that as the design process evolves it is essential that the

public interface of the building is strong. The Panel noted that in order for the building to interact with the public, a successful interface is required between the first bay of the building and the public realm, much like the interface at the Queens Quay Terminal building where the building, its design and its program interact with the surrounding context. It was felt that the building should respond to the context so strongly that one would recognize it as a waterfront development, even without seeing the water.

The Panel stressed the importance of this building as the first building on the waterfront. It was noted that because the East Bayfront Precinct Plan is not very proscriptive in terms of architectural design the first building is going to set the standard and therefore this building should be spectacular in its design. In addition, it was noted that this building is going to be highly scrutinized and because of the expectations that have been set with the level of excellence in the landscape architecture underway it is essential to achieve equal excellence in architectural design. Mr. Dow noted that the team is aware of the critical nature of the building and is prepared to put a lot of effort into it to ensure its success.

The Panel asked for details on the schedule and phasing for Project Symphony. Mr. Dow explained that a very aggressive schedule for implementation, based on the tenants needs, has been developed. He noted that the goal is to initiate construction in the fall. The Chair suggested that, given the pace of the project, a sub-committee of the Panel be struck to meet with the design team bi-weekly. Mr. Dow agreed.

The Panel highlighted the need to develop a process for the evaluation of buildings such as Project Symphony. The Chair suggested using a similar model to the Denver Design Review where projects come to the Panel first on building envelope design, next on massing, next on elevation and image, and finally on groundfloor and public realm design. It was recommended that such a model be drafted for the Panel to consider.

3.4 Summary of Panel's Key Issues

The Chair then summarized the key comments of the Panel

- i. The elimination of the diagonal building form is acceptable provided view corridors to the water are preserved.
- ii. The increase in height from 38 metres to 40.5 metres is not a major concern, but could be reduced by expanding the building to the east.
- iii. The cantilevered building section over the public promenade was not supported.
- iv. The design of the gathering space on the west side of the building is disjointed and does not feel publicly inviting.
- v. The building façade, particularly the curtain wall, requires much more articulation.
- vi. The design does not create a "signature" on the waterfront commensurate with the site.
- vii. The ground floor animation strategy is not convincing, as there is not enough integration between the ground floor spaces and the public realm.

3.5 Proponent's Response

Mr. Dow thanked the Panel for its input and stated his openness to further design input through the sub-committee process.

CLOSING

There being no further business, the Chair then adjourned the meeting.

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