



**WATERFRONT**Toronto

## **Waterfront Design Review Panel Minutes of Meeting #16 Wednesday, May 9, 2007**

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### **Present:**

Bruce Kuwabara, Chair  
George Baird  
Paul Bedford  
Tania Bortolotto  
Peter Clewes  
Anne McIlroy  
Don Schmitt  
Greg Smallenberg

### **Regrets:**

Renee Daoust  
Peter Halsall  
Siamak Hariri  
Janet Rosenberg  
Charles Waldheim

### **Recording Secretary:**

Pina Mallozzi

### **Designees and Guests:**

John Campbell  
Robert Freedman  
Christopher Glaisek

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### **WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed the Panel, and reviewed the agenda noting that it had been changed as Project Symphony will not be presented until next month.

The Chair then invited Mr. Campbell, the Corporation's CEO, to provide his report.

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### **REPORT FROM THE CEO**

Mr. Campbell, the Corporation's President and CEO, began by summarizing progress since his last report.

#### *West Don Lands*

- The goal is to initiate the construction of the low-level interceptor sewer this June, however the risk assessment/risk management plan must be approved first.

#### *East Bayfront*

- The Corporation's Board has voted in support of Project Symphony. The Corporation will provide a \$12.5 million investment, \$9 million for the base building and \$3.5 million to aid in achieving LEED Gold.
- The zoning bylaw for East Bayfront will be amended to accommodate Project Symphony.
- Demolition of the Cinespace building is anticipated to commence in June.
- The Corporation has acquired the parcel of land at the foot of Parliament Street south of Queens Quay Boulevard, between Parliament Slip and the Victory Soy Mills.

#### *Sustainability*

- The Corporation is establishing performance measures to ensure projects meet the goals established in the Sustainability Framework.
- The Corporation is committed to LEED Gold on all projects to be built on public lands and has decided to provide LEED training for all its professional staff. The goal is to have all Project Managers LEED certified.

#### *District Energy*

- The Corporation is moving ahead with a business plan for District Energy. The challenge will be to develop a strategy for those buildings which will come online earlier than the permanent infrastructure for District Energy and we are developing an interim strategy for this.

#### *Vacuum Waste*

- The Corporation is continuing to explore the potential for vacuum waste in West Don Lands and East Bayfront.

#### *Branding*

- The Corporation will be unveiling its new branding at the May 15, 2007 Board Meeting. The goal of the branding exercise was to develop a unified branding strategy for the Corporation and all of its diverse projects.

#### *Corporate Structure*

- The Corporation has completed its senior staff team with the hire of Meg Davis as Vice President of Development for West Don Lands.

The Chair then opened the meeting to questions from the Panel.

One Panel member asked whether Home Depot still owns a piece of land on the waterfront. Mr. Campbell explained that Home Depot owns the site west of Cherry south of Lakeshore for which they have applied to the OMB for approval.

One Panel member explained that he was approached by the editor of the Harvard Design Magazine who was considering the idea of doing a piece on Toronto and suggested that they hold off until the waterfront park projects were a bit further developed. Another Panel member suggested that this is a critical moment because the waterfront landscape projects are all underway and each at unique points in their evolution.

The Chair requested that a comprehensive map of all the waterfront projects be prepared, and suggested the new branding be used when completed.

The Chair then asked the Corporation's Vice President for Planning and Design to provide his report.

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### **REPORT FROM THE VP PLANNING AND DESIGN**

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

#### *Lake Ontario Park*

- Field Operations has prepared an implementation plan which proposes as the first phase the area around Coatsworth Cut. The strategy is to collaborate with the ongoing work being undertaken by Toronto Water to improve water quality in Coatsworth Cut. This would maximize the impact of the first phase by leveraging other resources. This recommendation

will be brought forward to the Board for its approval. It will require additional funding than currently allocated for Lake Ontario Park.

#### *Central Waterfront*

- West 8+DTAH will present their design for Spadina Head of Slip later in the meeting. The goal is to start construction in early fall 2007.
- The traffic feasibility study for Queens Quay Boulevard has been completed and is expected to be presented to council in June for their endorsement to initiate the environmental assessment process.

#### *West Don Lands Public Realm*

- Planning Partnership and Phillips Farevaag Smallemberg have been retained for the public realm in the West Don Lands and will present their initial thoughts later in the meeting.

#### *Lower Don Lands*

- On May 8, 2007 the Corporation announced that Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates (MVVA) was selected as the winner of the Lower Don Lands design competition.
- MVVA's first task will be to provide design expertise for the ongoing Don River Naturalization EA and begin precinct planning for the lands east of Parliament Street. The Corporation will negotiate a contract for this work and will begin negotiations of subsequent tasks in the Lower Don Lands.

#### *Canada Square*

- A team has been selected to complete a feasibility study for Canada Square. Canada Square consists of the Harbourfront Centre parking lot east of York Street south of Queens Quay. The study will examine the feasibility of creating a mixed-use, cultural destination and public square atop a below-grade parking structure.

#### *Sustainability Centre*

- The Corporation will be opening a temporary sustainability centre on the promenade adjacent to Queens Quay Terminal building for the summer. The centre will consist of a mobile mini-home which will be on display throughout the Luminato event.

The Chair then opened the meeting for questions from the Panel.

One Panel member asked if the environmental assessment for Queens Quay Boulevard could have a minimal scope in order to expedite its implementation. Mr. Glaisek explained that the goal is to complete the environmental assessment in nine months with the hope of initiating construction as early as the fall of 2008.

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## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

The Chair noted that the *Leading with Landscape* event which the Corporation held at the ROM the night before was remarkable and congratulated the Corporation on its success. It was noted that the approach of putting the public realm first is revolutionary and has been critical to articulated the vision that is underway on the waterfront.

The Chair also provided a summary of the results of the Lower Don Lands Innovative Design Competition, noting the strengths in all four schemes prepared by the short-listed competitors.

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## **PROJECT REVIEWS**

### **I.0 West Don Lands Public Realm**

*ID#: 1018*

*Project Type: Park/Public Realm Design*

*Location: Area bounded by Parliament St., Eastern Ave., the Don River and the CN rail corridor*

*Proponent: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation*

*Architect/Designer: Planning Partnership with Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg*

*Review Round: One*

*Presenter(s): David Leinster, Planning Partnership; Greg Smallenberg, Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg*

*Delegation:*

#### **I.1 Introduction to the Issues**

Mr. Glaisek introduced the project, noting that this is the first presentation and is intended to provide the Panel with some preliminary thoughts on the design of the public realm in the West Don Lands. It was noted that the team, as a first step, will be taking a step back from the public realm framework prepared by Urban Strategies for the West Don Lands plan of subdivision approvals process.

#### **I.2 Project Presentation**

Mr. Leinster, Partner with the Planning Partnership, began by introducing the team. He explained the role of the team is to provide a public realm plan for the precinct which will continue the work being done by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates on Bayview Avenue and River Street. He then walked the Panel through the phasing for the public realm in the precinct and explained some of the concerns that the team intends to address in its design process.

Mr. Smallenberg, Partner with Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg then provided an overview of the design intent which included imageability, authenticity, innovation and sustainability. He then showed a series of precedents from around the world including Tokya, Malmo and New York City. He then explained the team's approach to public art, street hierarchy, and neighbourhood blocks and zones. He concluded by describing schematic design alternatives for Front Street including ones which reduced and removed the centre median in favour of a more robust sidewalk/esplanade on the north side.

#### **I.3 Panel Comments**

The Chair then asked the Panel for questions of clarification or comments.

One Panel member noted that Danforth Avenue is a great street for examining the "wrap around" condition at intersections. Another Panel member suggested comparing the median and intersections of University Avenue today with images of it prior to reconstruction.

Another Panel member asked how the team intended to treat pavement options, citing St. George Street as an alternative model. It was noted that it has not had the best maintenance regime and that expedient repairs have had priority. The Panel suggested that the roads in the West Don Lands should be robust enough to withstand the urban forces upon them. One Panel member inquired about the team's thoughts on the approach to street tree planting. It was noted that most of the larger trees on St. George have been removed and many of the new trees are in decline.

The Panel asked how the team was intending to integrate the new street furniture that resulted from the city's street furniture competition. Mr. Smallenberg noted that they are in the process of obtaining the specifications and asked the Panel for their opinion on whether it was advisable to attempt to integrate with the proposed furnishings. Mr. Freedman explained that there are eight different pieces which can be customized and that Astral Media will install and maintain the furnishings. Mr. Smallenberg explained that he believed that a consistent furnishing program is desirable and that the team would do more extensive research on the City's furnishing program.

#### 1.4 Summary of Panel's Key Issues

The Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- i. Support for initial precedents and typologies
- ii. Consider St. George Street as a local example
- iii. Consider integrating City of Toronto standard street furnishings

#### 1.5 Proponent's Response

Mr. Smallenberg thanked the Panel for its feedback.

## **2.0 West Don Lands: Blocks 21 and 23 Affordable Housing**

*ID#: 1019*

*Project Type: Building Design*

*Location: Area bounded by King Street, River Street, Eastern Avenue and St. Lawrence St.*

*Proponent: Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC)*

*Architect/Designer: Baird Sampson Neuert Architects*

*Review Round: One*

*Presenter(s): Jan Neuert, Baird Sampson Neuert Architects*

*Delegation: Barry Ditto, TCHC; Ian Douglas, Baird Sampson Neuert Architects*

#### 2.2 Introduction to the Issues

Mr. Glaisek introduced the project, noting that TCHC is the Proponent for the first building in the West Don Lands. Baird Sampson Neuert Architects has been retained to design the building and has proposed a schedule for their visits to the Panel which has been included in the pre-briefing material. The main issues on which the advice of the Panel was sought include:

- Proposed site plan and massing
- Site planning considerations including open space, access, servicing, parking and unit typology
- Sustainability and LEED Gold considerations

#### 1.2 Project Presentation

Mr. Neuert, Partner with Baird Sampson Neuert, began by providing the Panel with an overview of the block 21 and 23 site, its context, and an interpretation of the design guidelines and zoning that apply to it. He noted that they have concluded that the current zoning allows for 60% more density than the Precinct Plan currently mandates.

Mr. Neuert provided a summary of the project proposal, including the orientation of the three buildings around the central courtyard, the servicing strategy, access and building entrances, groundfloor strategy of retail in the north building and live-work units in the two southern buildings, the approach to parking and a summary of the team's approach to achieving LEED Gold.

#### 2.3 Panel Comments

The Chair then asked the Panel for questions of clarification.

The Panel began by noting that the Design Review Process Agenda provided by the Proponent is much like the model used in Denver and felt this was a positive model to use for this project.

One Panel member asked for clarification on the width of the courtyard. Mr. Neuert noted that it is currently 18 metres wide. Another Panel member asked what type of loading standards would be required. The Proponent noted that it would be "Type G" loading which would facilitate garbage trucks.

Another Panel member asked for clarification on the zoning restrictions. The Proponent noted that while the zoning would permit more density the project proposes to follow the massing diagrams provided as part of the West Don Lands Precinct Plan. Mr. Glaisek clarified that when the zoning for the Precinct Plan was prepared it was decided not to decrease the zoning but rather to rely on the Precinct Plan as the basis for development densities.

The Panel inquired on the floor-to-floor heights for the building. Mr. Neuert noted that they are 6 metres at-grade and 3 metres above-grade for the north building and 4 metres at-grade and 2.8 metres above-grade for the townhouse units.

One Panel member asked if the acoustics from the eastern avenue flyover were considered in the development of a site plan orientation which appears to open up to the flyovers on the south side. Mr. Neuert noted that the design team intends to undertake noise and vibration analysis of the flyover and will modify the architecture to mitigate this condition including the potential use of triple pane glazing on the façade. Another Panel member was concerned that the orientation of the courtyard area would be negatively impacted by the noise of the traffic on the ramp. The Proponent noted that they were considering designing the roof of the parking garage to absorb the noise but that they have not yet detailed it.

The Chair then opened the meeting for comments.

The Panel commended the team on an excellent presentation that was comprehensive and well thought out.

One Panel member suggested reconfiguring the site plan in order to create a buffer to the flyover. The Panel asked whether it would be possible within the massing of the Precinct Plan to relocate the building on the north to the south side of the block against the Eastern Avenue flyover. Mr. Neuert suggested that it may be possible but that it may only nominally extend above the flyover. The Panel suggested that this may help buffer the noise and suggested studying its further to determine if units closest to the ramp would be marketable.

Another Panel member expressed concern with the parking plan and suggested that the parking be consolidated into one large lot under the entire site that would function much better and accommodate increased parking efficiency. It was suggested that parking spots should be linked directly to the unit. Mr. Neuert noted that the building envelope restrictions were not coordinated with preferred parking modules.

The Panel asked about the character and design of the public laneways and inquired about whether it would be possible to extend the parking beneath it in order to accommodate a much larger parking garage. Mr. Neuert noted that although they intend to animate the laneway its design is not included in their workplan. Mr. Freedman noted that it may be possible to obtain

approvals to accommodate an underground easement beneath a public laneway. It was also noted that public laneways can be purchased and converted into private laneways.

Mr. Glaisek noted that when the Precinct Plan was developed this block was unable to accommodate an underground parking garage because of the requirements of the flood protection landform and that the intent was to accommodate the parking above grade in the courtyard with no parking under the north building. It was noted that the goal was to design the laneways as part of the public realm in the West Don Lands. Mr. Neuert noted that their team would be happy to comply to the standards developed by the Corporation for the public realm.

The Panel asked whether the team had considered historical evidence of parking use in affordable housing projects. Mr. Neuert explained that the parking requirements developed as part of the design guidelines underwent extensive study and have been publicly supported.

The Panel suggested that the team develop a Parti drawing of the site plan.

The Panel asked about the impacts on the market housing of mixing it with affordable housing. It was noted that there have been great success in selling mixed developments but that shared facilities can impact selling price.

#### 2.4 Summary of Panel's Key Issues

The Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- i. Refine the parti and coordinate with the city requirements
- ii. Reconsider the underground parking layout
- iii. Consider how a strategic re-orientation of the site plan can help buffer the noise from the Eastern Ave flyover
- iv. Consider the design of the public laneways as active spaces

#### 2.5 Proponent's Response

Mr. Neuert thanked the Panel for its feedback and asked the Corporation to aid in finding answers to many of the unknowns in the design process (ie. District Energy).

### **3 Central Waterfront: Spadina Head of Slip**

*ID#: 1007*

*Project Type: Park/Public Realm Design*

*Location: South of Queens Quay Boulevard at Lower Spadina Avenue*

*Proponent: Waterfront Toronto*

*Architect/Designer: West 8+DTAH*

*Review Round: Five*

*Presenter(s): Maarten Buijs, West 8+DTAH*

*Delegation: Adam Nicklin, DTAH*

#### 3.1 Introduction to the Issues

Mr. Glaisek introduces the project, noting that the goal is to start construction on Spadina Head of Slip in September 2007. The main issues on which the advice of the Panel was sought include:

- Appropriateness of Canadian softwoods as structural and decking material
- Accessibility and its impact on the undulating form of the deck
- Interaction with the existing context

#### 3.2 Project Presentation

Maarten Buijs, Senior Project Manager with West 8 began by provided an overview of the existing site conditions. He then explained the design of the slip including the structural system, the undulating form, the materiality and the sculptural bench feature. Mr. Buijs concluded by summarizing the team's key challenges.

### 3.3 Panel Comments

The Chair then asked the Panel for comments.

One Panel member asked for clarification on the elevation change from the sidewalk to the top of the crest. Mr. Buijs noted that it was 900mm. Another Panel member asked for clarity on the toe rail. Mr. Buijs explained that the toe rail would likely be a large timber member which would be raised and would act as a bench. He noted that the goal was for the toe rail to follow the curve of the deck.

The Panel inquired about the regulatory framework that might govern the slip construction. It was noted that while the slip is not a building, the building code requires one accessible route and that the design is accommodating this through the central area which has been graded to 4.2% and would enable wheelchair accessibility.

The Panel suggested that the rock in Village of Yorkville Park is a similar example of interactive public art. It was noted that the design team would like to consider the slip a sculptural installation but that regardless because of liability a clear delineation between safe and unsafe zones must be designed.

The Panel complimented the very elegant and beautiful design noting that it would be disappointing to see the design compromised because of the constraints of the code and liability and suggested contacting a code consultant to review the design and provide a code interpretation. One Panel member suggested not building it if the design had to be compromised.

Another Panel member inquired about whether the slip undulation should be symmetrical with Lower Spadina Avenue and noted that the break in the trees on the promenade was a positive design strategy.

One Panel member inquired about the wood use noting that the "image" must be clearly "Ontario" and suggested making the reference to Muskoka clearer. It was suggested that the connection between the wood and the dockwall edge on the east and west side should be beautifully detailed. Another Panel member inquired about the exposed structural elements and how they would be treated to ensure longevity. The Panel suggested that a rail on the top of the east and west dockwall be considered.

The Panel was concerned with the current location of the guardrail at the foot of Lower Spadina and suggested that a more subtle transition be designed. The Panel warned the team to design all the accessories for the deck, like the safety stations for example, because otherwise standard ones would be added at a later date.

The Panel suggested developing a strategy for the collection of debris beneath the deck. Mr. Buijs explained that the team expected to design hatches that would enable access below.

The Panel inquired on the life expectancy of the slip, and suggested designing it to avoid skateboard and bicycle use. Mr Buijs noted that the structural system will be designed for a 50 year life and that the decking would likely have to be replaced more readily.

The Panel asked the team to consider how the refined and beautiful form of the undulation of the slip would wear given the selected wood. The Panel recommended considering in more detail the size of the decking and strategies for moisture retention.

#### 3.4 Summary of Panel's Key Issues

The Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- i. Excellent design with a lot of support from the Panel
- ii. Retain a code consultant to provide an interpretation of the code
- iii. Ensure that the transition between zones is clearly defined without compromising beauty

#### 1.5 Proponent's Response

Mr. Buijs thanked the Panel for their feedback.

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### **CLOSING**

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

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