



WATERFRONTToronto

**Waterfront Design Review Panel
Minutes of Meeting #46
Wednesday, December 8th, 2010**

Present:

Brigitte Shim, Acting Chair
Peter Busby
Peter Clewes
Claude Cormier
Greg Smallemberg
Betsy Williamson
Jane Wolff

Regrets:

Bruce Kuwabara
Paul Bedford
George Baird

Recording Secretary:

Melissa Horwood

Designees and Guests:

John Campbell
Christopher Glaisek
Robert Freedman

WELCOME

Brigitte Shim welcomed the Panel, noting that Bruce Kuwabara has asked her to act as Chair this month. The Acting Chair then provided an overview of the agenda and invited Christopher Glaisek to provide his report.

REPORT FROM WATERFRONT TORONTO CEO

John Campbell, Waterfront Toronto's President and CEO, provided a summary update report.

The funding issues have been resolved for Harbourfront Centre and excavation will start in January 2011.

With the new mayor in place, we may be looking to adjust our capital budget and ask the federal, provincial and municipal governments to revise our long term funding plan. The municipal government may wish to reallocate funds as per the new administration. We intend to brief the new administration on all the work happening on the waterfront.

If the new administration does not feel the city should be paying for the Port Lands Sports Complex, Waterfront Toronto feels the funds should be reallocated elsewhere within the

waterfront. As the majority of the funding is coming from the City of Toronto, it will be up to city council if the rinks go forward.

The Pan Am Athletes Village RFQ is scheduled to close on December 10, 2010 and the RFP is scheduled to go out in late January 2011. Infrastructure Ontario is in charge of the procurement process for this project. Our partnership with them is working very well.

REPORT FROM VP PLANNING AND DESIGN

Christopher Glaisek, Waterfront Toronto's Vice President for Planning and Design, provided a summary of project progress.

Infrastructure Ontario has selected a Planning and Development team to oversee the procurement and implementation phases of work, consisting of Joe Lobko, HOK and other professionals who are familiar with the West Don Lands Precinct Plan. We have consulted with a few people who worked on the Athletes Village for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver so as to learn from their success and mistakes.

The Design Review Panel will be able to review the Pan Am Athletes Village RFP but Panel members who participate in the review will not be able to bid on the project. The document is large but has a large focus on design. Once the Preferred Proponent is identified the design will come to the Design Review Panel. If the Design Review Panel is not satisfied with the design, they must come back to the Panel with a revised design. This will all happen during the negotiation phase, prior to commercial close.

The Lower Don Lands Master Plan was brought to council in the summer and was unanimously adopted in as an official plan amendment with the new river alignment. We are currently getting ready for any appeals being filed.

The Bayside proposal with Hines was approved at council and will be coming to the Design Review Panel soon.

The Gardiner Expressway EA is slowing down until we find out how the new administration is feeling about finishing the EA. Waterfront Toronto was directed by council to do the EA but the new council is able to change this decision. We will brief the administration on the status of the EA at some point soon.

The Acting Chair asked the Panel if there were any questions or comments. There being none, the chair moved to general business.

GENERAL BUSINESS

The Acting Chair moved to adopt the minutes from July 2010. The minutes were unanimously adopted, with a correction to the Attendees list; Peter Clewes was not present and Peter Busby was present.

Mr. Glaisek then welcomed Jane Wolff, Associate Professor and Director of the Master of Landscape Architecture Program at the University of Toronto John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design, as the Panel's newest member whose particular role will be that of Landscape Architect.

The Acting Chair asked the Panel if there were any conflicts of interest to declare. No conflicts were declared.

The Acting Chair moved to adopt the proposed 2011 Design Review Panel schedule. The schedule was unanimously adopted.

There being no other comments, the Acting Chair moved to the Project Review portion of the meeting.

PROJECT REVIEWS

1.0 West Don Lands: Storm Water Quality Facility

ID#: 1036

Project Type: Buildings/Structures

Proponent: Waterfront Toronto

Architect/Designer: gh3

Location: North of Lake Shore Boulevard, East of Cherry Street

Review Stage: Conceptual Design

Review Round: One

Presenter(s): Pat Hanson, gh3

Delegation: Michael Stewart, R.V. Anderson

1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Raffi Bedrosyan, Director of Portlands and Civil Infrastructure for Waterfront Toronto, introduced the project noting that this is the first presentation to the Design Review Panel and is currently in the Conceptual Design Phase. Mr. Bedrosyan explained to the Panel that this project will be the first of its kind in Toronto and that the City of Toronto has agreed to the treatment process that this building will house.

1.2 Project Presentation

Pat Hanson, Principal with gh3, provided an overview of the project noting that it consists of a deep shaft, or "well", and a building with UV treatment. She presented several design alternatives for the building. Ms. Hanson presented the site, its constraints and the infrastructure the building will contain. Ms. Hanson also noted the time constraint on this project and stated that it will likely come back to the panel soon.

1.3 Panel Questions

The Acting Chair then asked the Panel for questions of clarification only.

One Panel member asked if there were any other options for the storm water quality facility other than a shaft and well. Michael Stewart answered that, as such a large volume of water must be processed it is not practical to treat it any other way.

Another Panel member asked if the water was potable and what is done with the sediment. Mr. Stewart stated that the water was not potable and that 80% of the total suspended solids are removed and then alum, polymer and sand are added and combine with the rest of the particles to sink to the bottom. The sediment is then pumped out and treated. Another Panel member asked what the well is lined with. Mr. Stewart stated that it was lined with concrete.

One Panel member asked if there are any downsides to this treatment procedure. Mr. Stewart stated that there is a low risk to Waterfront Toronto, the infrastructure required is minimal, water can be stored and the water can be treated at a lower rate. Mr. Glaisek stated that this is the treatment facility that Waterfront Toronto wanted from the beginning.

Another Panel member asked if there was any way to flow the water through a wetland. Mr. Glaisek stated that it will be possible in the Lower Don Lands, but there is not sufficient space in West Don Lands to do this now.

One Panel member asked if there has been any thought of using the water for irrigation. Mr. Stewart stated that all of the trees have been pre-serviced for irrigation and when the buildings are developed, cisterns can be hooked up to the irrigation system. Mr. Stewart also stated that in the future the Keating Channel will be blocked off from the river and the water could become stagnant. Treated water flow could be added to the end of the Keating Channel to provide a steady flow of water.

One Panel member asked if there are any downsides to the water chemistry after the alum and polymer have been added. Mr. Stewart stated that the solids that are flocculated with the alum and polymer are taken away and treated off site.

One Panel member asked who will maintain the facility. Mr. Bedrosyan stated that Toronto Water will maintain both the site and the system.

One Panel member asked if the sediment will all be removed. Mr. Stewart stated that although the City of Toronto was initially reluctant to take it to the Ashbridges Bay Treatment Plant they have since agreed to the process. Once at the Ashbridges Bay Treatment Plant, the sediment will be pelletized.

One Panel member asked if stone harvested from the tunnel boring machine could be used as the finish material. Ms. Hanson stated that no, the entire site is fill. Mr. Bedrosyan stated that this is a heavily contaminated site and most materials excavated will need to be taken away for treatment and disposal.

One Panel member asked if there are any storm water retention requirements for the Lower Don Lands. Mr. Glaisek stated that yes there are requirements for storm water retention, as well as requirements for green roofs. One panel member stated that it was interesting that there are no requirements for a green roof on the storm water management facility itself. Mr. Stewart pointed out that the facility is directly at the receiver and a connection could be made from the roof to the well quite easily.

1.4 Panel Comments

The Acting Chair then opened the meeting to Panel comments.

One Panel member stated that they thought it was beautiful and that the stone speaks to where it is coming from and the well speaks to what is going on in an enigmatic way. The Panel Member felt it was evocative of the aqueduct building in Europe. The Panel member also stated that they were worried if the hedge is not maintained that the purity of the design would be lost.

Another panel member stated that while they are comfortable with the idea of showing infrastructure as a shaped object, that it is important that the reason for the building be evident, possibly through areas of transparency. A berm building would lend itself very interestingly to a storm water collection process. The Panel member stated that they favour a stone solution, but not in a conventional way.

Another Panel member stated that they like the primitive form that seems to come up. They also stated that, if budget is a constraint, poured concrete could be part of the whole expression. The beauty of the project is that there is no visually complex detail and in 50 years, it would still look fresh. The concrete and stone would age naturally. The panel member also stated that they have full trust in gh3's ability for this project.

One Panel member stated that they share a lot of the comments of the other Panel members. The Panel member also stated that they are suspicious of people who maintain beautiful things. When it comes to the building, they think it wants to be robust. The Panel member asked if there was another way of interpreting the depth of the facility that is not so obvious. They also stated that the building does want to respond strongly to the berm because of the change of the berm and that, as the bike path may be the only area where people get up close to the building, they want to respond to that.

Another Panel member stated that there is an array of options and that what they are hearing is that the project needs to have presence as both a building and an object. The Panel member asked how the performance of the stone material will allude to what the building does. The Panel member also stated that the design of this building should not look like an infrastructure building.

One Panel member stated that they are with the crowd on the beautiful muteness of the building. The Panel member also stated that they like the idea of the moray and the project would be interesting for people driving by on the highway.

One Panel member stated that the design needs to safely capture the well, like the auditory elements of a subway grate.

Another Panel member stated that they think the image with the well is a powerful one and that stone or concrete should be used as a base. The project could be a real contribution to the pedestrian and cycling community in that area. The Panel member also stated that there are pieces of infrastructure that should be discussed across the water that would answer a lot of questions. The Panel member also stated that clarification on authorship of precedents needs to be included in the presentation.

1.5 Summary of the Panel's Key Issues

The Acting Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- 1) Study the possibility of a visual connection to the water in the well.
- 2) Be more explicit with the design without undermining the poetic quality of the project.
- 3) Address the maintenance concern, without losing quality in the design.
- 4) Ensure a response is made to the bike path, berm and highway.
- 5) Study the use of acoustics and underground elements to make the presence of the water felt.

1.6 Proponents Response

Ms. Hanson thanked the Panel for their feedback.

1.7 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Acting Chair then asked the Panel for a note of support, non-support or conditional support for the project. The Panel voted unanimously in Support of the project.

2.0 East Bayfront Development: Parkside

ID#: 1037

Project Type: Buildings/Structures

Location: North of Queens Quay, east of Sherbourne Common

Proponent: Great Gulf (Downtown Properties) Limited

Architect/Designer: Safdie Architects

Review Stage: Schematic Design

Review Round: One

Presenter(s): Moshe Safdie, Safdie Architects

Delegation: Alan Vihant, Great Gulf; Jeff Matthews, Great Gulf; Michael Fox, Great Gulf

2.1 Introduction to the Issues

Andrew Gray, Vice President of Development for East Bayfront, introduced the project noting that this is the first presentation to the Design Review Panel and is currently in the Design Development Phase

2.2 Project Presentation

Moshe Safdie, Principal with Safdie Architects, provided an overview of the project including site context, massing, materiality, and clarification of the uses. He noted that this was the first time the project has come to the Design Review Panel but that the project is further along than schematic design because of the design work done as part of the developer selection process.

2.3 Panel Questions

The Acting Chair then asked the Panel for questions of clarification only.

One Panel member asked for clarification regarding the base of the podium along the north side of the building. Mr. Safdie stated that the north side would anchor the building along the freeway to the north. Units in that location would be residential loft units.

One Panel member asked if the atrium was designed to enhance the sustainability of the project. Mr. Safdie stated that if the potential is there, they would research the opportunity, but currently

they feel as though there is more value in creating a garden and pool space on the roof, thus limiting the atriums openness above.

One Panel member asked for clarification regarding the site limitation in relation to Sherbourne Common, specifically the edge of the property line. Mr. Safdie clarified that the sidewalk is the edge of the property line.

Another panel member was looking for clarification regarding the trees along the west side of the building and whether a double row of trees is already predetermined by the Sherbourne Common plan. They also asked about the double row of trees to the east of the building. Mr. Safdie stated that he was not aware that there was a specific plan for the trees on the west, but that if it was already determined, he would indeed respect the original plan. He also stated that the trees to the east were outside of the property line.

Another Panel member asked if there was daycare drop off and if it is mandatory for the daycare to have a fenced off area. Great Gulf stated that a layby may be required for drop off and that they were hoping to use the park as the play area for the daycare, but if a fenced in area is required then they would provide for that.

One Panel member asked if the district plan for East Bayfront speaks to continuity of streetscape across all podiums and midrise mixed use buildings and if there is anything mentioning the pedestrian scale. Mr. Glaisek clarified that the base height is written into the plan, but nothing is written that regulates the pedestrian scale.

Another Panel member asked about the planting scheme surrounding the building. Mr. Safdie clarified that none of the plantings around the building are within their property line.

One Panel member asked why there is a shift in the south elevation, as it is the only area in the building where there is masonry with punched windows. Mr. Safdie stated that it acts to frame the atrium and give a substantive quality for the south elevation.

2.4 Panel Comments

The Acting Chair then opened the meeting to Panel comments.

Several Panel members stated that the podium needed to be re-evaluated. They thought that it was disjointed, as the colonnade does not wrap and the masonry on the south elevation is discontinuous.

One Panel member stated that they were worried about the environmental performance of the building, noting that they thought there was a high amount of glazing on the west façade. They also noted that it is much easier to protect the south façade from solar gain with an overhang than a west façade.

Several Panel members were concerned about the balconies. Some thought that the balconies appeared to be too narrow. Another Panel member thought that the balconies, from a use perspective, would be odd. One Panel member stated that they worry that the balconies will have a “diving board” feel and they would like to see something that is more harmonious and less “scary”. As well, one Panel member stated that they worried about people looking into other balconies.

One panel member noted that, the east-west lot dimension is too narrow for doublewide units, but also too wide for typical condos. They also noted that they are aware this is not within the power of the architect, but referenced that more research should perhaps be done into the sizing of the parcels in future precincts.

One panel member noted that the tower seemed either too tall or too short and that and that, proportionally, one does not know if it is a tower or not. Another Panel member stated that there are successful pieces of the tower.

One Panel member stated that the idea of trying to engage the park in the disintegration of the arcade is the wrong solution. They noted that this situation, where a residential condo fronts directly onto a public park, is almost unprecedented in Toronto and that Toronto has a hard time making successful arcades. One Panel member thought that the building did not need the arcade space, as it has the park directly beside it and with both, they are competing with each other. One Panel member stated that continuity of the public realm is important and that complete gestures like the canopy should be continuous, not interrupted or changing along the length of the building.

One Panel member thought that there were certain great qualities in the building and that adding a sculptural quality would be nice. They thought that the building has the potential to be iconic.

Many Panel members thought that the south façade appeared peculiar and foreign from the rest of the building. One Panel member remarked that the bluntness of the south façade is at odds with the rest of the building.

One Panel member mentioned being concerned that materiality is not understood.

One Panel member stated that there needed to be a clearer distinction between private and public space. Other Panel members agreed and also stated that they have not heard enough information pertaining to the public realm.

One Panel member stated that there was a discontinuity with the pedestrian scale, particularly as one walks along the west façade and then turns east along the south façade.

One Panel member stated that Bonnycastle Street is the “forgotten child” of the project and that it seemed odd that the building almost has the same response to Bonnycastle Street as it does to Sherbourne Common.

Several Panel members stated that the response to the surrounding context is not clear, and key elements of the design such as the North and East elevations need to be presented. A more complete set of drawings was requested the next time they come to the Panel. Another Panel member stated that the walkway through the podium is an important gift and gesture that needs to be celebrated more and that studies from both sides would be an asset to the design process.

One Panel member stated that this project is like all of the other projects on the waterfront in that there is never a backside to the project, and all four sides are “prime”.

One Panel member thought that the daycare needed to be integrated within the building, including better drop off/pick up locations in proximity to the entrance.

One Panel member stated that if there are previous visions about the eastern alle that were approved, it is important that the design stay true to them. Another Panel member stated that, as the first condo tower in the area, is has the important responsibility of setting precedence for design.

One panel member asked if there was any potential for reconsidering the height of the building. Mr. Glaisek stated that there was an internal discussion happening at Waterfront Toronto regarding that issue

2.5 Summary of the Panel's Key Issues

The Acting Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- 1) The switching of languages within the podium appears discontinuous and the south façade in particular needs to be stronger.
- 2) The north façade should relate more to the east-west façades of the building.
- 3) The balcony needs to be further considered.
- 4) The public realm needs to have more unity with more specificity on the landscape and tree species.
- 5) The arcade either needs to be eliminated or monumental in scale with the question of its relationship to the park better answered. A sense of unity or simplification is required.
- 6) The pedestrian passageway between Sherbourne Common and Bonnycastle Street needs to be much more articulated as public.
- 7) Investigate the sustainability of the elements; ventilation in the atrium; glazing.
- 8) The relationships to adjacent streets needs to be further developed.

2.6 Proponents Response

Mr. Safdie thanked the Panel for their feedback.

2.7 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Acting Chair then asked the Panel for a note of support, non-support or conditional support for the project. The Panel voted in non-support of the project and requested it come back before proceeding to the next stage of design.

CLOSING

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