



WATERFRONTToronto

**Waterfront Design Review Panel
Minutes of Meeting #52
Wednesday, October 12th, 2011**

Present:

Bruce Kuwabara, Chair
George Baird
Paul Bedford
Donald Schmitt
Betsy Williamson
Jane Wolf

Designees and Guests:

Christopher Glaisek
Robert Freedman

Regrets:

Peter Busby
Claude Cormier
Brigitte Shim

Recording Secretary:

Margaret Goodfellow

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed the Panel and in particular, Donald Schmitt, Principal with Diamond and Schmitt Architects, noting that Mr. Schmitt has agreed to sit on the Panel for another three year term. The Chair then invited Christopher Glaisek to provide his report.

REPORT FROM THE VP PLANNING AND DESIGN

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

Design Review Panel

- The City of Toronto is interested in referring private projects that lie within the Designated Waterfront Area (DWA) to the Waterfront Design Review Panel, instead of the City of Toronto Design Review Panel. As the City further develops its protocol on what will come to its panel, more of these private developments will come to the Waterfront DRP. It's a good opportunity to reinforce the role of the Panel.

Queens Quay Revitalization

- Waterfront Toronto has selected a Construction Manager to oversee the reconstruction of Queens Quay West from Spadina to Bay Street. Waterfront Toronto reworked the Long Term funding plan to allow Queens Quay to be treated as a comprehensive package of work, which allowed the project to be constructed from Spadina to Bay Street instead of

the original 800 metres proposed. It is anticipated that work will begin by the end of the year, with the project taking two years to complete.

The Chair then asked the Panel if there were any questions or comments.

One Panel member wondered how complete the design drawings were. Mr. Glaisek stated that the design team is revising their "60% Engineering" submission based on City of Toronto feedback, and at 90% they will constitute construction drawings. Mr. Glaisek added that the City is concerned about maintenance of the large amount of granite proposed throughout the public realm, noting that currently there is a "one size fits all" approach to maintenance. Mr. Glaisek added that Waterfront Toronto is currently working with the City to develop a maintenance protocol to alleviate their concerns.

Another Panel member wondered what the maintenance protocol was along the newly re-constructed Bloor Street. Mr. Glaisek answered that the Bloor/Yorkville BIA is maintaining it, although the exact protocols are still being worked out with the City even though the project is already completed.

Another Panel member enquired about the status of the York Quay Revitalization project. Mr. Glaisek stated that the construction of the underground parking garage is on track to be completed by March 2012, noting that in the current budget there is no funding to complete any of the public spaces designed for the surface. Mr. Glaisek added that Harbourfront Centre, Waterfront Toronto's partner in the development, is confident that they will be able to raise the funds necessary to complete the public spaces, potentially avoiding any temporary surface treatment.

GENERAL BUSINESS

The Chair then asked if there were any conflicts of interest to declare. The Chair declared a conflict of interest with the item being presented in camera, noting that Paul Bedford would chair that session.

The Chair then remarked on the collective action surrounding the Lower Don Lands motion at City Council last month. The Chair noted that it was incredible how the community rallied in support of the Waterfront Toronto (WT) plan for the Lower Don Lands, in particular groups like Code Blue and the Cities Centre at the University of Toronto. The Chair then invited John Campbell, President and CEO of Waterfront Toronto to speak to the issue.

Mr. Campbell reminded the Panel that a motion was passed at Executive Committee on September 6, 2011 recommending that Council re-visit the Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") dated March 31, 2006 and enter into discussions with WT, and the Provincial and Federal governments to review the revitalization delivery model for the Port Lands and replace WT with The Port Lands Company on the Don Mouth Environmental Assessment. It also recommended entering into discussions with WT and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to re-evaluate the delivery of flood protection and direct appropriate staff to pause any further actions that implement the Lower Don Lands framework as they relate to the Port Lands.

Mr. Campbell stated that essentially, this meant removing WT as Master Developer in the area and placing the Toronto Port Lands Company (TPLC) in the lead role. It also meant revisiting the

Council Approved Keating Channel Precinct plan and associated Zoning, the Lower Don Lands Framework Plan and associated Official Plan Amendment, and the Environmental Assessment which was submitted to the Ministry of the Environment last year.

Mr. Campbell stated that subsequent to the Executive Committee meeting, a groundswell of support from the public ensued, and as a result, the City became interested in working with WT to find a way that would alleviate concerns over flood protection costs and development timelines. Mr. Campbell stated that the agreement, passed by Council on September 21st, included adding the City as a co-proponent with WT and the TRCA in the Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Environmental Assessment. As well, on the land use planning side, it was agreed that WT and the City would work on the Business Plan and process together and report back in January 2012 on the cost of this process, then in June 2012 on the results.

One Panel member asked if there would be an opportunity to borrow against the future increased value of the land in order to fund the project. Mr. Campbell stated that they were looking at a number of funding models including "Tax Increment Financing" or TIFs, although the Province has been reluctant to support this model in the past. Mr. Campbell added that no matter what the final outcome is, maintaining public support and the public engagement process is very important.

Another Panel member wondered about the timing of the development in the East Bayfront and the potential impact on the Lower Don Lands (LDL), and Keating Channel precinct in particular. Mr. Campbell stated that Waterfront Toronto has always been cognizant of not wanting to cannibalize its own market, adding that there was a misconception by some people that development in the LDL would not begin for 20-25 years when in fact that has always been the timeline for finishing the whole build out.

Another Panel member requested that the Panel be kept apprised of planning developments in the area as they happen, adding that perhaps a brainstorming session on planning for the Port Lands outside of the LDL area could be useful.

PROJECT REVIEWS

1.0 WDL Private Development Proposal: 47 Eastern Avenue

ID#: 1043

Project Type: Building Design (Private Property)

Location: 47 Eastern Avenue

Proponent: Honda/Acura Dealership via the City of Toronto

Architect/Designer: Plaston Architect Ltd.

Review Stage: Design Development

Review Round: One

Presenter(s): Peter Gappmayr, Plaston Architect Ltd.

1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Margaret Goodfellow, Planning and Design Project Manager with Waterfront Toronto, introduced the project, noting that this development is a private development that the City of Toronto asked be presented at Waterfront Design Review Panel because of its location in the Designated Waterfront Area (DWA). Ms. Goodfellow then reminded the Panel that this development zone stands on a privately-owned block, which was always intended to be the site of two car

dealerships, noting that the development arrangement was part of a land exchange involving the First Parliament site and is now privately-owned. Ms. Goodfellow added that the proponents are respecting the WT DRP process and have agreed to present and hear the feedback.

1.2 Project Presentation

Peter Gappmayr, Architect with Plaston Architect Limited, provided an overview of the existing site and planning criteria, noting that the team was already in the Site Plan Approval process with the City of Toronto when they were advised of the Design Review Panel process. Mr. Gappmayr then presented the design for the dealership, noting that the bar building along Front Street would come back to the Panel at a future date.

1.3 Panel Questions

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

One Panel member asked what "OEM requirements" are. Mr. Gappmayr stated that they stand for *Original Equipment Manufacturer* and has to do with the distinct image or branding of the product.

Several Panel members enquired about the relationship of the building to the site, noting that there was no clear site plan that showed this. Mr. Gappmayr acknowledged that this was an oversight on their part.

Another Panel member asked what the program for the bar building along Front Street was. Mr. Gappmayr answered that it had not yet been fixed, but will likely be retail or an amenity that would complement this section of Front Street East.

Another Panel member asked what the nature of the East-West lane was between the dealership and the bar building. Mr. Gappmayr stated that it was covered by the overhang from the upper stories of the dealership.

1.4 Panel Comments

The Chair then opened the meeting to Panel comments.

The Panel generally agreed that there were no major issues with the distribution of the programmatic elements across the site.

Several Panel members stated that the project would benefit from a process of editing and simplification of the facades and that the building should be a more neutral palate to offset the Honda and Acura branding. Other Panel members agreed, feeling that the patterning of the middle section detracted from the branding at the entrances. One Panel member felt that the masonry sections could be removed in favour of the Kalwall (translucent cladding system), adding that the entrances should be given more prominence as distinctive elements. Another Panel member felt that another strategy could be to choose the masonry as the major element instead of the Kalwall.

One Panel member stated that the project lacked the necessary configuration and scale that would tie it in with the heritage context, feeling that it was not something that the team needed to strive for. Another Panel member agreed, feeling that the use of masonry did not seem like a particularly convincing response to buildings next door. Another Panel member stated that it was the City that had originally asked the proponents to reference the heritage character of the

neighbourhood in the design of the building, acknowledging that the use of brick did seem out of place here. Another Panel member agreed that the design team was trying to satisfy too many agendas.

Another Panel member felt that the landscaping proposed, the lawn in particular, was a suburban response and seemed like an anomaly along this stretch of Eastern Avenue. Another Panel member felt that the laneways were urban places that could help create the framework for the project.

Several Panel members questioned the necessity of the bar building along Front Street. One Panel member worried that the bar building would never be built and would leave back the of the Acura showroom as the primary elevation along Front Street. Another Panel member felt that the bar building was an afterthought. One Panel member stated that even if were to be built later, that having a design for the bar building now would be helpful. One Panel member felt that the Front Street elevation was even more important than the Eastern Avenue façade. One Panel member felt that a two story building was too small for Front Street, wondering whether the whole dealership building could be pulled toward the south to have a presence on Front Street. Other Panel members agreed, feeling that it could be an interesting activator for this part of Front, potentially housing the retail component of the program such as electric scooters and other environmentally friendly products that will be sold there.

One Panel member stated that Honda and Acura are two of the best car makers in the world and should have a building that reflects that. Another Panel member agreed, citing the BMW building down the street as an award winning showroom. Another Panel member felt that the tower element was interesting, but felt that its small size actually diminished its power relative to the glass Acura tower, which the Panel liked.

1.5 Summary of the Panel's Key Issues

The Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- 1) Strive for a more urban landscape relationship
- 2) Simplify and clarify the elevations, perhaps using less materials
- 3) Consider eliminating the historical references
- 4) Use the laneways as organizational structures, or urban passages.
- 5) The South façade looks like the “back” and should relate to Front Street
- 6) The bar building along Front Street should either be absorbed into the larger development or eliminated and the dealership brought into a strong relationship with Front Street.

1.6 Proponents Response

Mr. Gappmayr thanked the Panel for their feedback.

1.7 Vote of Support/Non-Support

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

CLOSING

There being no further business, the Chair then adjourned the meeting, noting that the meeting would now move in camera.