



**WATERFRONT**Toronto

## **Waterfront Design Review Panel Minutes of Meeting #89 Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

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### **Present:**

Bruce Kuwabara, Chair  
Paul Bedford, Vice Chair  
George Baird  
Peter Busby  
Pat Hanson  
Don Schmitt  
Brigitte Shim  
Betsy Williamson  
Jane Wolff

### **Designees and Guests:**

Christopher Glaisek  
Harold Madi

### **Regrets:**

Claude Cormier

### **Recording Secretary:**

Tristan Simpson

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## **WELCOME**

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming Will Fleissig, the new CEO of Waterfront Toronto, then provided an overview of the agenda before moving to the General Business portion of the meeting.

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## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

The Chair declared a conflict of interest on the Block 16 project and indicated he would therefore be stepping aside to let Paul Bedford act as Chair for the project review.

The Chair asked the Panel if they had any comments or feedback on the minutes from the previous meeting. There being none, the minutes were adopted.

The Chair then invited Panel member Peter Busby to give a brief presentation on sustainability issues and precedents. Mr. Busby walked the Panel through a series of projects, starting with Dockside Green in Victoria, B.C., which uses a biomass gasification plant which converts clean wood waste into domestic hot water and heat. Mr. Busby then discussed the Blatchford Redevelopment in Edmonton, Alberta which uses sewage treatment to develop energy. Mr. Busby then introduced the Vale Living with Lakes Centre in Sudbury, Ontario, which has a bioswale with limestone to help balance the pH levels of rain. He then introduced the Vandusen Botanical Garden Visitors Centre in

Vancouver, B.C., which uses on-site, renewable sources to achieve net-zero energy. One hundred percent of its raw sewage is treated in an on-site bioreactor.

Mr. Busby concluded by explaining Regenerative Design, which develops buildings that have a positive impact on GHG's while incorporating things that restore nature. This form of design is the next level of sustainable design, going beyond carbon neutral.

The Chair then invited Will Fleissig, Waterfront Toronto's CEO, to say a few words to the Panel. Mr. Fleissig thanked the Panel for their time, energy and dedication to the Waterfront Design Review Panel. He expressed his desire to expand the role and opportunities of this Panel. Mr. Fleissig noted that we need to think about what a 21<sup>st</sup> century neighbourhood looks like and aim to achieve that.

The Chair then asked the Panel for their thoughts on the meeting at City Hall on February 1<sup>st</sup>, where all three Design Review Panels, the City, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, and Waterfront Toronto met to discuss overarching city wide issues. Harold Madi expressed the resounding success of the meeting noting that a design excellence symposium is being pulled together as a follow up.

The Chair then moved to go into a closed session, where the By-laws were amended to create the position of Vice Chair. Paul Bedford was unanimously voted in as Vice Chair.

The Chair then returned to the public meeting and asked Mr. Glaisek, Vice President of Planning and Design with Waterfront Toronto, to provide a report on project progress.

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## **REPORT FROM THE V.P. OF PLANNING AND DESIGN**

Mr. Glaisek gave an overview of the three Hybrid Design Alternatives that were presented to the public on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Glaisek noted that there was a general consensus at the meeting that Hybrid Alternative 3 was the preferred option. Staff will be making a recommendation to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee on February 29<sup>th</sup>, followed by Council in March.

The Acting Chair then moved to the project reviews portion of the meeting.

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## **PROJECT REVIEW**

### **1.0 WDL: Block 16**

*ID#: 1070*

*Project Type: Building*

*Location: West Don Lands, Canary District*

*Proponent: Dundee Kilmer*

*Architect/Designer: KPMB*

*Review Stage: Concept Design*

*Review Round: one*

*Presenter(s): Bruce Kuwabara, KPMB*

### **1.1 Introduction to the Issues**

Mr. Glaisek introduced the project noting that this is the project's first review. Block 16 represents the third market condominium of the Canary District development which will ultimately consist of 5 market condominium buildings as well as two affordable rental buildings. Mr. Glaisek noted that certain aspects of the proposal are not consistent with the West Don Lands (WDL) Precinct Plan and Block Plan. The proposal is seeking additional height of 4 storeys and therefore will require a minor variance. Mr. Glaisek presented an image of the West Don Lands Precinct Plan massing which showed consistent heights along Front Street. He gave the Panel two questions to think about;

1. Is the proposed change from the Precinct Plan massing appropriate?
2. Does the ground floor frontage create an appropriate amount of continuity with the two flanking retail frontages?

Mr. Glaisek then introduced Bruce Kuwabara to give the project presentation.

### **1.2 Project Presentation**

Mr. Kuwabara began the presentation noting the important role that Corktown Common has played in protecting the area from flood risk. Mr. Kuwabara then explained that the proposed massing opens up the courtyard to the northeast and is also mindful of future development to the north. The concept of the shifted slab allows for the corner to be opened up along with 6 corner units on each ground floor that have views of Corktown Common park which is a very important feature. Mr. Kuwabara noted that the design team was also mindful of aligning the building's retail centre with the building to the west. Mr. Kuwabara explained that the fundamentals are in place, however, this is still a work in progress.

### **1.3 Panel Questions**

The Acting Chair asked the Panel for their questions.

One of the Panel members asked if the precinct has been built out yet. Mr. Kuwabara replied that they are not built yet, but will be in the future. The Panel member asked if a precedent was being set, given that development in the area is still to come. Mr. Glaisek responded that this does create a precedent which diverges from the precinct plan, however, our developer agreements allow us to say no.

Another Panel member asked where else Waterfront Toronto has allowed a minor variance. Mr. Glaisek responded that both River City and Monde were granted minor variances for additional height, but this would require a bigger increase than before

One of the Panel members asked about the rationale behind the unit sizes. Mr. Kuwabara explained that in preparation for Pan Am, there was a marketing team determining the unit sizes and mixes. The unit mix is based on the success of surrounding buildings in the Canary District.

Another Panel member asked what the sheer wall ratio is in order to create larger units in the future and whether there was a capacity for this. Mr. Kuwabara replied that they

had not looked at this yet, however they will be looking at the adjacencies of units. He noted that the team has plenty of experience with transitioning units due to the Pan Am games.

#### **1.4 Panel Comments**

The Chair asked the Panel for their comments.

One of the Panel members noted that once Front Street opens up, it is going to be a very unique part of the city, and questioned the precedent being set for divergent height. The Panel member noted that the block to the south is not being shown in the drawings and if they were to get the same height as the proposed building, it could fundamentally change the intent of the precinct plan.

Another Panel member felt that maintaining continuity of the façade on the north side of Front Street is the most important. The Panel member noted that the choice of materiality needs to be understood within the larger massing of the street. The façade right now is notional which raises many questions.

One of the Panel members mentioned bringing the “yellow” portion of the building, shown in the drawing, down slightly. This wouldn’t give the proposed additional 4 storeys but it would give an additional 2 storeys. The panel member also recommended bringing the 2<sup>nd</sup> balcony forward. The Panel member also agreed with previous comments regarding the unit count.

Another Panel member concurred with previous comments noting that the townhouse component is very common in Vancouver, however, there should always be a porch and some raise in grade from the street to allow for privacy. The Panel member also recommended that the design team includes 3 bedroom units as there is growing demand for family housing in the city. The Panel member requested the team to show more diversity in units for the next round.

One of the Panel members expressed reservations about the void above the ground floor at the east end, and proposed extending the slab to the east.

#### **1.5 Summary of the Panel’s Key Issues**

The Acting Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- Applying 21<sup>st</sup> century building to this context means providing choice, variety and accommodating families. There should be 3 bedroom units available.
- The vision in this Precinct Plan for Front Street as an urban room needs to be considered in the context of surrounding buildings filling in.
- Further work needs to be done on the massing options – different ways in which the transition of scale and height are needed for “stepping” up.
- Need to hear more about sustainability such as making the green roof accessible and usable.
- Positive feedback on the townhouses, but privacy needs to be increased.
- The increase in height was not opposed in principle, but how the massing is handled is very important.

## **1.6 Vote of Support/Non-support**

The Panel then voted Conditional Support of the project providing the recommendations and conditions are addressed when the team returns to DRP.

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## **2.0 TO Core Study – Presentation by Sarah Phipps, City of Toronto**

Mr. Glaisek then introduced Sarah Phipps, with the City of Toronto to give a presentation on the TO Core Study. Ms. Phipps began the presentation by noting that a new Secondary Plan is needed as there hasn't been one in the downtown since the 1960s. Phase I is complete and City Planning is just starting Phase II which involves many interdivisional processes. This required the cooperation of 14 Divisions and 8 supporting partners. Ms. Phipps explained that they're looking to take lessons from city wide studies and apply them to the downtown context.

Ms. Phipps explained that close to 15,000 people have been engaged in the process through public consultation. This includes stakeholder meetings, community consultation meetings and Planners in Public Spaces (PIPS).

There has been an extremely rapid growth in population and jobs in the downtown core. There has been a 20% growth in residential population in 4 years, and 12% growth in downtown employment in 4 years. Ms. Phipps explained that the diversity of activities is not just employment and residential, but also sports and entertainment. The plan requires a renewed vision, a more defined structure, and incorporation of multiple elements. Completion is targeted for June 2017.

Ms. Phipps explained that different working groups and consultants are bringing content into the Secondary Plan, whether its policies, maps, or independent documents. In terms of parks and public realm, there is a high demand on public space. Ms. Phipps noted that there has been a 45% increase in POPS and 25% increase in parks since 2005. The problem is the lack of large sites available and the appreciating land values make it difficult to acquire land downtown.

Ms. Phipps explained the *Public Life Study* which is prioritized as an important city-building outcome of the TO Core Study. The study is targeting 8-20 spaces downtown and determining how people use the spaces and what aspects users enjoy about the space.

## **2.1 Panel Questions**

One of the Panel members asked if councillors have been following this study. Ms. Phipps replied that they have started briefing some of the councillors.

Another Panel member asked whether developers have a requirement to give land. Ms. Phipps responded that the city can take up to 10% of the lot area. Traditionally they haven't been taking the land because the land is so small, which is why the city is looking at off-site dedication.

One of the Panel members asked what the ratio of open space to people is. Ms. Phipps was unsure of an exact number but did note that there is a serious deficiency of open space.

Another Panel member asked what the best case scenario was for the study. Ms. Phipps replied that the parks and public realm master plan is a key deliverable along with infrastructure funding and how to obtain it.

One of the Panel members noted that there needs to be a very strong vision for a 21<sup>st</sup> century downtown. There is strong demand to live in the downtown core and we should be aiming high in terms of vision. The Panel member noted that political will is important and there needs to be broad-based support.

One of the Panel members asked to see a 3D model of the downtown core showing all of the current and proposed developments.

### **CLOSING**

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

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