



Waterfront Design Review Panel Minutes of Meeting #9 DRAFT Wednesday, July 19, 2006

Present:

Bruce Kuwabara, Chair
George Baird
Paul Bedford
Tania Bortolotto
Peter Halsall
Anne McIlroy
Greg Smallemberg
Charles Waldheim

Regrets:

Peter Clewes
Renee Daoust
Siamak Hariri
Janet Rosenberg
Don Schmitt

Designees and Guests:

John Campbell
Robert Freedman
Christopher Glaisek

Recording Secretary:

Pina Mallozzi

WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming the Panel. He reviewed the day's agenda and noted that the first item was a presentation on the draft East Bayfront Design Guidelines, to be followed by a Visioning Session for the Panel.

The Chair then asked Mr. Campbell to provide the report from the CEO.

REPORT FROM THE CEO

John Campbell, the Corporation's President and CEO, began by summarizing progress made during the past month.

West Don Lands

- On the West Don Lands, the Risk Assessment/Risk Management Plan has been submitted to the City and the Corporation is targeting late September for the release of the developer proposal call and zoning approved for district three.
- The demolition is complete with the exception of the two sites where tenants have yet to be relocated.

East Bayfront

- The Corporation submitted the East Bayfront Business and Implementation Plan to the City of Toronto Policy and Finance Committee. It was passed and will go to the upcoming City Council meeting. Upon Council approval, the Corporation will be authorized to proceed with development on the East Bayfront lands.

Lake Ontario Park

- Field Operations has commenced their work on the planning and design for the park.
- Parks Canada did not approve the Discovery Centre that was proposed for the Baselands component of the park.

Organizationally, the Corporation is staffing up, and has filled the following positions: VP Construction, David Whyte; Chief Financial Officer, Robert Siddall; VP of West Don Lands, Brad Seachfield; and Director of Sustainability, Lisa Prime. The TWRC will soon be filling the position of VP of East Bayfront.

The TWRC has moved to new offices at 20 Bay Street and looks forward to hosting future Panel meetings in our new boardroom.

The Chair then thanked Mr. Campbell for his presentation and asked the Mr. Glaisek to provide the project report.

REPORT FROM THE VP PLANNING AND DESIGN

Christopher Glaisek, the Corporation's Vice President for Planning and Design, gave a brief update on project progress over the past month.

Central Waterfront

- The Jury of the Innovative Design Competition recommended that the Corporation undertake an interim trial of the winning design. It was suggested that Queens Quay be closed to traffic this summer and a temporary landscape installation be mounted. This process is now underway and the TWRC has contracted West 8+DTAH to design the temporary landscape, submitted a permit application which was approved by Community Council, and hired a Construction Manager to mobilize the landscape installation. The event is anticipated to run from August 11 – 20, 2006.

Martin Goodman Trail

- Marilyn Bell Park is near completion. The lpe wood boardwalk has been installed and the bike trail is in the process of being paved. Victor Ford is very happy with the outcome and would like the Panel to see the finished product.

West Don Lands

- The design for Don River Park is underway. A public meeting was held on July 12, 2006 and the feedback received was very positive.
- The Corporation is close to issuing an RFP for the design of the public realm and underground infrastructure for the West Don Lands.

East Bayfront

- Draft design guidelines are currently being prepared as part of the rezoning of the East Bayfront, and Michael Kirkland will present them to the Panel later today. The Corporation is investigating how to integrate the West 8+DTAH design into the East Bayfront Precinct Plan.

Lake Ontario Park

- The first public meeting for the Lake Ontario Park Master plan was held on June 8, 2006 at Cherry Beach. James Corner with Field Operations will be in town to meet with the Panel at the upcoming meeting.

The Chair then opened up the meeting for questions or comments from the Panel.

One Panel member asked if consideration was given to extending the interim condition until the Labour Day weekend. Mr. Glaisek explained the fine balance between those who are enthusiastic about it and others who are concerned. He noted that the 10-day time period is an attempt to compromise between these opposing views. The Panel suggested a contingency plan to enable the extension of the installation, beyond August 20, 2006, should it be a tremendous success.

One Panel member asked how the Corporation would integrate the transit plans for Queens Quay with the winning West 8+DTAH design for Queens Quay. Mr. Glaisek explained that the West 8+DTAH design has been included as one of the options being considered as part of the transit environmental assessment now underway for East Bayfront, West Don Lands and the Portlands. He noted that once the interim condition is complete the TWRC will undergo a revision to the precinct plan for the East Bayfront.

The Chair thanked Mr. Glaisek for his report.

GENERAL BUSINESS

The Chair then asked the Panel to approve the minutes, noting their excellent quality. The minutes were approved by the Panel.

The Chair informed the Panel of the upcoming kick-off for the Toronto Arts Festival which is to take place on July 31, 2006. He explained that this is an annual event that will showcase culture, performing arts and design. It was noted that the organization is very interested in the waterfront because of the existing and future cultural institutions located there. It was suggested that the waterfront could be a permanent host for such an event in the future.

PROJECT REVIEWS

1.0 East Bayfront Design Guidelines

ID#: 1013

Project Type: Precinct/Master Plan

Location: Area bounded Lower Jarvis and Parliament Streets south of Lakeshore Boulevard

Proponent: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation

Architect/Designer: The Kirkland Partnership with Urban Strategies

Review Round: One

Presenter(s): Michael Kirkland, The Kirkland Partnership

Delegation: Pino DiMascio, Urban Strategies; Angus Cranston and Eric Pederson, City of Toronto

1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Mr. Glaisek, introduced this project, noting that Michael Kirkland has been working very closely with the Corporation, the City and the stakeholders to balance many competing interests.

The main issues on which the advice of the Panel was sought include:

- Building envelope and architectural articulation
- Design guidelines as a tool that the Panel will use to evaluate future East Bayfront projects

1.2 Project Presentation

Michael Kirkland, partner at the Kirkland Partnership, gave a detailed presentation of the design guidelines. He began by explaining that many of the ideas he presented would be integrated into the zoning but that others would remain solely in the design guidelines.

Mr. Kirkland explained that the goal of the design guidelines is to create a fabulous, robust public realm which is supported by architecture that enhances the vitality of that public realm. He explained the set-backs and step-backs and building face configurations, the ground floor retail strategy, the enclosable colonnade model and design guidelines principals to ensure there is not a uniform façade along the street.

Mr. Kirkland concluded by explained the height and frontage control mechanisms that are being integrated into the zoning. He demonstrated the model for tower transition from the point tower to the street wall and explained the courtyards and passages that have been integrated into the development blocks.

1.3 Panel Comments

The Chair then asked the Panel for their comments.

One Panel member inquired about the proposed colonnades on the north side of Queens Quay and whether recessed retail shops are economically viable. Mr. Kirkland noted that signage on the exterior facade of the colonnade combined with wider column spacing and a minimum height requirement would ensure visibility of the retail shops. He explained the fundamental rationale behind the colonnade is to create a great place to walk in the winter in order to create year round vitality. It was suggested that the colonnades stop at intersections and enable active open corners. Mr. Kirkland noted that the priority is to create a continuous system.

There was a concern that there are not many good colonnade models in North America and an inquiry about whether the intention is that there must be colonnades or that any colonnades built must follow the specifications noted in the design guidelines. Mr. Kirkland explained that the system of colonnade connections are mandatory on the north side of Queens Quay and the water's edge and are discretionary on the south of Queens Quay.

The Panel expressed concern that the colonnades will be colonized by shop keepers, who may have to put up fences which will minimize the intended permeability of the edge of the colonnades. It was noted that the colonnades may be most successful when the sidewalk outside the colonnade is so minimal that pedestrians are forced to stay within the zone. One Panel member noted that the colonnades at the Park Plaza in Toronto functions well because the sidewalk beyond the colonnade is nominal.

The Panel also inquired about winter use and how one might interact with the colonnade in its closed condition. Mr. Kirkland noted that doors would be located at the endpoints of the system and that the glass walls would be mobile dependant on weather. The Panel noted concerns with the viability of this technology and suggested that more energy be spent in devising a weather control system rather than movable glass walls.

One Panel member suggested that one of the most efficient ways of tempering the outdoors is heating sidewalks. It was also noted that solar panels could be used to power the heat source. It was noted by one Panel member that an efficient design would consider wind patterns and design protection from them. Mr. Kirkland noted that the colonnades are an attempt to create microclimate.

One Panel member suggested that the best place in the East Bayfront for the colonnades to work is on the east side of the Sherbourne Park area because of its adjacency to the park which would serve as an anchor.

Mr. Campbell noted that while he likes tempered spaces for public use, how people penetrate the space needs to be developed further. He was concerned that given that the north side of Queens Quay will always be in private ownership, placing controls on how the glass functions will be a challenge. One Panel noted that there should be an understanding about how the colonnade is operated so that on an unusually warm winter weekend it may be opened.

One Panel member noted that many of Toronto's streets without colonnades are very vibrant all year round and that a major factor in street vitality is the character of the retail. The Panel member questioned whether it is possible to put controls in place to ensure great retail shops. Mr. Kirkland noted that the Corporation is in the process of developing a Ground Floor Retail Strategy to address this. The Panel suggested that the retail experience be curated and suggested the Corporation invite ten great retailers wanted on the waterfront.

Another Panel member suggested that if the colonnades are about creating signature architecture, and given the Corporation's commitment to design excellence, a full-scale model should be built on Queens Quay to test if it will create viable public and retail space. It was suggested that the colonnade mock-up could be reused as the marketing building for the development.

It was noted that the East Bayfront plan has 12-storey buildings and colonnade features, both of which Toronto has not been successful at implementing in the past. It was recommended that given that the precinct's success is dependant on these concepts, the Corporation should revisit particularly the colonnade element along Queens Quay.

Mr. Glaisek noted that given that the concept is to create a great icon, it will have to be a consistent architectural feature. It was suggested that in order to create consistency one architect design the entire colonnade structure. This may involve significant costs and the Corporation may need to consider funding this element as part of the infrastructure.

There were concerns raised about whether colonnades can be written into zoning, how the colonnades would be maintained long-term and whether other successful retail streets provide lessons which should be considered further.

Angus Cranston, planner with the City of Toronto preparing the zoning bylaw, stated that timing is a concern. He noted that the goal is to prepare a bylaw that reflects the precinct plan and to have it approved by City Council in September and to the OMB in November. It was suggested to have the colonnades written into the bylaw and in six months, if they are less viable, they can be taken out. Alternatively, the concerns can be noted in the staff report and can be revisited at a future date. He noted that the fundamental question at this point is whether the colonnades should exist at all and the details can be refined as implementation begins.

One Panel member noted that in developing design guidelines for landscape features, one control mechanism should be soil quality. It was suggested that a drawing of the open spaces should map what soil conditions are expected in each public space. Mr. Kirkland noted that the

public realm system would undergo a comprehensive design process which the Panel would be integral to. He suggested that providing any additional detail at this point would be speculative. The Panel member noted that although you could not predetermine circumstances you could determine a set of typologies and develop controls that would facilitate desirable landscape elements.

There was a question about how detailed the design guidelines will be. Mr. Kirkland noted that they are still struggling to determine the level of specificity that will be written into the design guidelines but suggested the guidelines may ask for specific lighting requirements and durable materials as an example. One Panel member suggested that the same flexible guidelines be determined for the horizontal surface that might be developed for the façade.

The Panel discussed tower slenderness and that the controls suggested should be included in the zoning. It was felt that the approach enables a rigorous outcome while allowing sufficient flexibility. One Panel member suggested that the rule be tested by an architect like Peter Clewes who has substantial experience in residential tower design.

1.4 Summary of Panel's Key Issues

The Chair then summarized the Panel's comments:

- The Panel has a more negative opinion of the colonnade than a positive one, and recommended that the concept be better resolved before being adopted.
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1.5 Proponent's Response

Mr. Kirkland thanked the Panel for its input.