



**WATERFRONT**Toronto

**Waterfront Design Review Panel  
Minutes of Meeting #58  
Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

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**Present:**

Bruce Kuwabara, Chair  
George Baird  
Paul Bedford  
Jane Wolf  
Betsy Williamson  
Brigitte Shim

**Regrets:**

Claude Cormier  
Don Schmitt

**Recording Secretary:**

Margaret Goodfellow

**Designees and Guests:**

Christopher Glaisek  
Robert Freedman

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**WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed the Panel and provided an overview of the agenda, before moving to General Business.

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**GENERAL BUSINESS**

The Chair asked if any Panel member would like to move to adopt the minutes from April 2012, noting that an updated set had been distributed by email. Two Panel members moved to adopt the minutes, and the minutes were unanimously adopted.

The Chair then asked the Panel if there were any conflicts of interest to declare. Claude Cormier declared a conflict with the York Quay Revitalization Phase II project as he had designed a previous version of the scheme. Mr. Cormier also stated that he would also be recusing himself during the review of 1 York Street, as he is working with the developer on other projects. Mr. Kuwabara stated that although Waterfront Toronto does not constitute the latter as a “material” conflict of interest, that they would respect Mr. Cormier’s desire to recuse himself from the review. Mr. Baird then stated that he would be recusing himself from the review of the TCHC project as his firm was previously involved with the project.

There being no other comments, the Chair then invited Mr. Glaisek to give his report, specifically requesting an update on all the precincts.

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## REPORT FROM THE VP PLANNING AND DESIGN

### *Queens Quay*

- TTC Street car service will stop as of July 29<sup>th</sup> to allow work to commence, beginning with the demolition of the existing tracks.
- A Construction Liaison Committee (CLC) has been struck allowing area residents easy access to construction updates and voice concerns.
- The construction team anticipates a 2.5 year construction timeline.

### *Parkside (Great Gulf Development)*

- Coordination of the public realm is ongoing and the team is working on their Site Plan Application.
- The development will be coming back to DRP one more time.

### *Bayside (Hines Development)*

- Working on the Retail Plan
- Starting work on two commercial buildings that line on Queens Quay East

### *Pan Para/Pan American Games Athletes' Village*

- Detailed design of the buildings are progressing
- WT has been involved in reviewing the designs. Most of the concerns that WT raised were regarding the ground floor and retail plans are coming to a close.
- "Early Works", (below-grade infrastructure) are currently under construction

### *Don River Park*

- Work is still being completed on the "wet" side of the berm.
- The park will not open this year because the "wet" side (along the river) is not complete, but this will allow the plantings to get established before the park opens.

### *Underpass Park*

- Blocks 19/20 will be complete and open July 2012.
- Block 18 is currently under construction and should be complete by the fall
- The art piece "Mirage" is being fabricated and will be installed in June

### *Lower Don Lands/ Port Lands*

- Still in the review process with the City and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, looking for optimizations for alignment of the river and the business case.
- The goal is to make the river project and public infrastructure sustainable through private investment, without the vision getting lost.

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

One Panel member asked what the status of Light Rail Transit was in the East Bayfront.

Mr. Glaisek stated that WT's original Long Term Plan had \$150 million going towards transit in the East Bayfront, but the price has gone up for many reasons including poor soil conditions and old buried infrastructure, putting the total estimate at \$300 million. Mr. Glaisek stated that WT has engaged a new consultant firm to find ways to implement an interim transportation solution,

adding that WT has not given up on permanent solution, but currently is looking at surface bus and streetcar routes that don't require expensive tunnels and turnaround loops.

One Panel member stated that transit creates value, adding that without it, the Waterfront is not appealing.

With no more questions, the Chair then proceeded to the project review portion of the agenda.

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## **PROJECT REVIEWS**

### **1.0 CWF Development: York Quay Revitalization, Phase II**

*ID#: 1032*

*Project Type: Building/Structure and Park/Public Space*

*Location: York Quay, located between Simcoe Street and York Street, south of Queens Quay*

*Proponent: Waterfront Toronto and Harbourfront Centre*

*Architect/Designer: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Landscape Architects (MVVA) with designer/artist James Carpenter Design Associates (JCDA), Beyer Blinder Belle Architects (BBB), Young & Wright Architects, GHK International.*

*Review Stage: Design Development*

*Review Round: Four*

*Presenter(s): William J.S. Boyle, CEO Harbourfront Centre; Michael Van Valkenburgh, MVVA; Gullivar Sheppard, MVVA*

#### 1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Bill Boyle, CEO of Harbourfront Centre, introduced the project noting that the last time the project was presented in March 2011, there was no funding for the open space on top of the underground garage. Mr. Boyle stated that since then, the Province has contributed \$10 million toward the creation of "Ontario Square". Mr. Boyle then stated that the underground parking garage will be open in June 2012, with the public spaces having a target opening date of spring/summer 2013.

#### 1.2 Project Presentation

Michael Van Valkenburgh, Principal with MVVA, provided an update on the overall design of the public spaces including Canada Square, Ontario Square and the Cultural Landscape noting that the spaces were different but complimentary.

#### 1.3 Panel Questions

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

One Panel member asked what the intended configuration of tents would be in Ontario Square during events, noting that the circular space seemed in contradiction with the typical grid that tents set at during events at Harbourfront Centre (HFC). Mr. Van Valkenburgh stated that various layouts had been tested and work, adding that they were balancing the need to make a space that has a dynamic and physical intensity even when it is not programmed. Mr. Boyle added that the programming teams at HFC have reviewed the plan, noting that tents are now laid out in a more organic fashion during events.

Another Panel member asked how the booths and tents were serviced. Mr. Sheppard stated that there are electrical stub-ups that has all been integrated into the paving design.

Another Panel member asked if HFC was committed to maintaining the intensive landscape elements. Mr. Boyle answered that HFC was committed to maintaining this landscape at a high level, adding that elements such as the coppiced landscape are intentionally designed to be low maintenance.

Another Panel member asked for more information on how the Power Plant was addressed and the linkages to the lake. Mr. Sheppard answered that between Queens Quay is less formal in its expression, and not a paved line. Mr. Van Valkenburgh added that it was originally a really strong allee of trees, but that it did not work well with the two spaces. Mr. Sheppard stated that the same paving materials used along the waterfront will be integrated around Canada Square. Mr. Boyle added that there is also a future plan to expand the Power Plant and redesign the entrance so the designs for Canada Square and Ontario Square are taking this need for flexibility in the area into account.

Another Panel member asked how Ontario Square relates to Queens Quay. Mr. Van Valkenburgh stated that Ontario Square is set back from Queens Quay.

One Panel member asked how fast the Metasequoia trees will grow. Mr. Van Valkenburgh stated that they are an extremely fast growing species that will start out at 20-30 feet tall when transplanted onto the site.

Another Panel member wondered how the coppicing of the landscape works on top of the parking garage entrance. Mr. Van Valkenburgh stated that there are a few ways to do it including cutting back  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the Aspen trees every four years which would result in a very dynamic landscape. The Panel member then asked what the worst case scenario was if it was not maintained to that degree. Mr. Van Valkenburgh answered that they would be left to grow and just edited back periodically. Another Panel member asked if the trees would regenerate as multi-stem. Mr. Van Valkenburgh answered that they would, adding that the habits of the trees would become increasingly idiosyncratic.

#### 1.4 Panel Comments

The Chair then opened the meeting to Panel comments.

Several Panel members stated that the design had evolved and improved since it was last reviewed in March 2011. One Panel member stated that they liked the strategy of planting or landscaped “rooms”. Another Panel member felt that the Jamie Carpenter art piece was good.

One Panel member urged the team and HFC to ensure the viability and long term health of the Power Plant and Enwave Theatre by giving them a “front door”.

One Panel member stated that time-based drawings would help communicate the “coppicing” and how the spaces change over time.

Another Panel member urged the team to increase the legibility from the City side to the lake side. Another Panel member agreed, adding that they did not feel there needed to be a formal allee, but also did not want the connection to be a left over space.

One Panel member felt that the taxi drop off area should be coded more to avoid messy or undefined zones.

One Panel member felt that the Queens Quay edge felt like the butt-edge of the parking ramp, adding that the team needed to consider how the space is read from Queens Quay. Another Panel member agreed, feeling that there should have been a rendering depicting the Queens Quay perspective. Another Panel member stated that there should be a drawing from building edge to building edge to get a sense of the conditions of the whole site.

Another Panel member expressed concern that the perimeter of the landscaped areas would leave them prone to being walked and abused by the public.

One Panel member felt that the design of the temporary cultural landscape area could be pushed further.

#### 1.5 Summary of the Panel's Key Issues

The Acting Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- 1) Request for more information in the form of;
  - a. An elevation from Queens Quay, and
  - b. Time-based drawings that depict how the coppiced landscape will evolve.
- 2) Ensure a robust operations and maintenance strategy.
- 3) More clearly define how the "Lake walk" is used and read.
- 4) Ensure that the Power Plant is given an address on Queens Quay.

#### 1.6 Proponents Response

Mr. Boyle, Mr. Van Valkenburgh and Mr. Sheppard thanked the Panel for their feedback.

#### 1.7 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Chair then asked the Panel for a vote of support, non-support or conditional support for the project. The Panel voted in support of the project, requesting that they be updated on the progress with the additional information requested.

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## **2.0 Private Development Proposal: 1 York Street**

*ID#: 1047*

*Project Type: Buildings/Structures*

*Location: 1 York Street*

*Proponent: Menkes Developments Ltd.*

*Architect/Designer: architectsAlliance (aA) with Sweeny Sterling Finlayson & Co. Architects Inc. (&Co)*

*Review Stage: Conceptual/Schematic Design*

*Review Round: Two*

*Presenter(s): Peter Clewes, architectsAlliance*

*Delegation: Mark Sterling, &Co.; Adam Feldman, aA; David Copeland, &Co.; Jude Tersigni, Menkes*

### 2.1 Introduction to the Issues

James Parakh, Urban Designer with the City of Toronto, introduced the project, reminding the Panel of the context and the comments from March 2012.

## 2.2 Project Presentation

Peter Clewes, Principal with Wallman Architects, presented the project's evolution since the last presentation in March 2012.

## 2.3 Panel Questions

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

One Panel member asked how the tower separations conform to the City's "Tall Building Guidelines". Mr. Parakh answered that the guidelines state that the separation should be 25m exclusive of balconies, adding that a more recent consultant study recommended 20m inside the downtown area.

Another Panel member asked for further description of the skin of the office tower. Mr. Clewes answered that on the south side, it was a simple flush glazed system with vertical frit on the glass, and on the West side there are a series of vertical fins. Mr. Sweeny added that it is a high performance curtain wall that is insulated and fritted, adding that they are targeting LEED Gold.

Another Panel member asked what the urban design strategy was for Harbour Street. Mr. Clewes answered that the ground floor is set back 3m creating a 6-7m sidewalk.

## 2.4 Panel Comments

The Chair then opened the meeting to Panel comments.

Several Panel members congratulated the team on the presentation and the degree of responsiveness to the issues brought up at the first meeting. Another Panel member commended the team for taking the large program and humanizing the scale of the development.

Another Panel member stated that they were concerned over the potential lack of animation on the York Street façade, noting that they were concerned about the vast stretch of potentially empty space.

Another Panel member stated that they were not convinced by the "weaving" façade of the residential towers, feeling that they would like to see another option. Another Panel member agreed that the weave should be developed studied further.

Another Panel member felt that the office tower should be presented in more detail, noting the focus of this presentation was weighted toward the residential towers and podium. Another Panel member agreed, feeling that it did not look like a floorplate of a "Class A" office building. Another Panel member agreed, feeling that more development needed to happen on the office building, and how the lobby relates to the York Street corridor.

One Panel member felt that the site seemed like a "traffic island", noting that it is a challenge to domesticate the edges. Another Panel member questioned Harbour Street as an urban realm, feeling that a greater understanding of the traffic implications of this development would be helpful to the Panel. Another Panel member agreed, feeling that more background of the proposed PATH system, including what has been built and what is planned, would be helpful. One Panel member liked that the residential towers had direct access to the PATH without having to go all the way to the ground floor.

Another Panel member urged to team to more fully consider the play between the programmatic elements represented in the form and massing, feeling that the office tower compresses the residential towers and creates an awkward relationship. Another Panel member agreed, feeling that the elements should read as an urban ensemble or composition.

Another Panel member noted their surprise to see the retail component of the building in the black, monolithic box instead of the double wall with digital patterning previously presented. Another Panel member stated their strong support for the material palate. Another Panel member felt that the choice of cladding in the podium seemed to override its reading as a continuous element, adding that the office lobby breaks up the reading of the façade.

Another Panel member felt that the relationship between the building and the Gardiner Expressway should be studied further, feeling that the design should respond to the columns and concentrate on how it is perceived from the north and the south. Another Panel member agreed, feeling that the project should be presented within the context of what is happening at 10 York Street as well.

Another Panel member felt that the entrance court to the residential towers was underdeveloped, noting that it can potentially add a lot of value to the project. Another Panel member agreed, feeling that the drop off and pick up areas in general seem under developed.

One Panel member stated that the team was seeking a lot of height and density that needed to be earned in the Public realm.

## 2.5 Summary of the Panel's Key Issues

The Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- 1) Further develop and define the office building and lobby space related to the York Street corridor.
- 2) Present the office tower in more detail at the next Design Review Panel meeting.
- 3) Provide more detail on the "animation" strategies for the ground floor.
- 4) Provide more detail on the Sustainability strategies for the buildings.

## 2.6 Proponents Response

Mr. Clewes and Mr. Sweeny thanked the Panel for their feedback.

## 2.7 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Chair then asked the Panel for a note of support, non-support or conditional support for the project.

The Panel voted in conditional support of the building, with one Panel member voting in non-support of the project.

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### **3.0 West Don Lands Development Proposal: TCHC Blocks 21 & 23**

*ID#: 1019*

*Project Type: Buildings/Structures*

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

*Proponent: Toronto Community Housing Corp. (TCHC)*

*Architect/Designer: Core Architects with Scott Torrance Landscape Architects*

*Review Stage: Construction Documents*

*Review Round: Seven*

*Presenter(s):* Babak Eslahjou, Core Architects; Scott Torrance, Scott Torrance Landscape Architects

3.1 Introduction to the Issues

Christopher Glaisek introduced the project reminding the Panel that the public realm for River Street was designed by DTAH and finalized in March 2010, while St. Lawrence Street and King Street are being designed by the Proponent in the spirit of the Public Realm plan. Mr. Glaisek added that Waterfront Toronto and TCHC have been working together to ensure overall consistency between the previously approved public realm plan and the TCHC building and landscape design. Mr. Glaisek concluded by stating that below-grade excavation has begun on the project with occupancy scheduled for late summer 2013.

3.2 Project Presentation

Babak Eslahjou, Principal with Core Architects, presented the project's evolution since the last presentation noting that the changes that come about in response to the Panel's comments. Scott Torrance, Principal with Scott Torrance Landscape Architects, then presented the landscape for the project.

3.3 Panel Questions

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

One Panel member asked if there was the potential for seating at the south end of the courtyard. Mr. Torrance answered that there is seating along the edge of the planter.

Another Panel member asked how many species of trees were planned for the planter area. Mr. Torrance stated that there were 5 species.

3.4 Panel Comments

One Panel member felt that the project had improved since the last presentation. Another Panel member thanked the team for responding to the Panel's concerns from the last meeting, noting that the change to brick cladding was good.

One Panel member felt the design should encourage cross generational conversation by promoting ways for seniors to come over and sit in the courtyard, adding that seniors should be able to walk and sit under this grove of trees and not feel like they're intruding on a different territory.

Another Panel member stated that there needed to be a simplification of the species list in the central courtyard, feeling that 10 trees made up of 5 species seemed like quite a lot of variation. The Panel member added that the splashy colour differences may be less important than a consistency of habit and scale.

One Panel member felt uncomfortable with the narrow slit windows on the ground floor of the family units.

Another Panel member stated that they wished more information was provided on the pergola. Another Panel member agreed, feeling that less detail was presented now than in earlier presentations.



Another Panel member stated that the project had improved, but still felt it could have been better.

### 3.5 Summary of the Panel's Key Issues

The Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- 1) Consider editing the number of species of trees within the courtyard planter
- 2) Further refine the detailing of the pergola.

### 3.6 Proponents Response

Mr. Eslahjou and Mr. Torrance thanked the Panel for their feedback.

### 3.7 Vote of Support/Non-Support

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

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## **CLOSING**

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