



WATERFRONTToronto

Waterfront Design Review Panel Minutes of Meeting #90 Wednesday, March 16th, 2016

Present:

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

Regrets:

Claude Cormier
Bruce Kuwabara, Chair
Peter Busby

Recording Secretary:

Rei Tasaka
Tristan Simpson

Designees and Guests:

Christopher Glaisek
Harold Madi

WELCOME

Paul Bedford opened the meeting noting that he has been asked by Bruce Kuwabara to Chair the meeting in his absence. The Vice Chair then provided an overview of the agenda before moving to the General Business portion of the meeting.

GENERAL BUSINESS

The Vice Chair informed the Panel that he made a deputation at the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee (PWIC) on March 1st, where he endorsed the Hybrid 3 Alternative Design. Mr. Bedford reminded the Panel that the Gardiner Expressway and Lake Shore Blvd. East Environmental Assessment and Integrated Urban Design Study will be brought to Council on March 31st.

The Vice Chair then asked if there were any conflicts of interest to declare. No conflicts of interest were identified.

The Vice Chair then invited Mr. Glaisek, Vice President of Planning and Design with Waterfront Toronto, to provide a report on project progress.

REPORT FROM THE V.P. OF PLANNING AND DESIGN

Mr. Glaisek provided the following update on project progress:

Gardiner East EA:

- The Public Works and Infrastructure Committee moved that Hybrid Design Alternative 3 be brought to Council as the recommended Alternative Design

Aitken Place Park:

- The 90% design submission received sign-off from Parks, Recreation and Forestry

Jack Layton Ferry Terminal and Harbour Square Park:

- Public Meeting was held on January 26th
- Feedback was received on the Master Plan Refinement and Phase I design proposal
- Waterfront Toronto, the City and the design team are working to commence the Phase I design work

Mr. Glaisek then introduced Steven Street, with WoodWORKS!, Marco VanderMaas and Richard Witt, with Quadrangle Architects to present innovative design opportunities using wood as an alternative structural building material.

PROJECT REVIEWS

1.0 Tall Wood Buildings – Presentation

1.1 Presentation

Mr. Witt began by describing a several Tall Wood demonstration projects that are now underway in Quebec and British Columbia. Mr. Witt noted that discussions should be had regarding the potential for wood buildings along the waterfront. Mr. Witt then introduced Mr. VanderMaas to discuss the background and expression of interest. Mr. VanderMaas began by noting the opportunity that Waterfront Toronto has to embrace wood as a renewable resource. The key to climate change is the reduction in carbon, and by using wood, which is the only renewable structural material available to us, we can aid in reducing carbon. Mr. VanderMaas reiterated that use of timber is currently limited to 6 storeys by code in Canada, but they are hoping to increase this cap. Mr. VanderMaas described the material as being a durable and well-engineered product with very little waste and surprisingly good fire rating when used properly.

Mr. VanderMaas then described buildings in Quebec and Vancouver that have both recently broken ground. Both buildings will be between 13 and 17 storeys. Mr. Witt then described the carpet factory building, designed by Quadrangle Architects in Liberty Village, as a Class A office building made of structural timber.

1.2 Panel Questions

One of the Panel members asked where the wood supply was coming from. Mr. Witt replied that it is engineered at Timmermans in Barrie, Ontario, but the supply comes from Tamagami, Ontario.

Another Panel member asked what the realistic performance potential is, given that it took 2-3 years to increase the allowable height to 6 storeys. Mr. VanderMaas replied that the key is to get rid of the combustible tag on wood buildings given new technology.

One of the Panel members asked about lateral bracing. Mr. VanderMaas replied that the core is concrete. Mr. VanderMaas also noted that there are cost savings to the foundation because wood is a much lighter product. He also noted that wood works well in areas with irregular ground.

The Vice Chair then thanked the presenters for an interesting and thought-provoking discussion.

2.0 350/370/390 Queens Quay (Maple Leaf Quay)

ID#: 1070

Project Type: Building

Location: Central Waterfront, Peter Street Basin

Proponent: Coal Harbour Properties Ltd.

Architect/Designer: Quadrangle Architects Ltd.

Review Stage: Design Concept

Review Round: One

Presenter(s): Les Klein, Quadrangle

Delegation: David Falletta, Bousfields, Shehzad Somji, Retirement Concepts

2.1 Introduction to the Issues

Mr. Glaisek introduced the project by noting that this was the project's first time at Design Review Panel. The applicant submitted to the City of Toronto in February for re-zoning seeking increased density, from 4.92 FSI to 6.76 FSI, and additional height. Mr. Glaisek explained that the proposal is within the Harbourfront Part II Plan area and is consistent with the policy to achieve "high intensity" development in the Central Waterfront. The proposal replaces the existing 3-storey commercial link building at 370 Queens Quay West with a new 29-storey mixed-use building. Mr. Glaisek further explained that the proposal also features renovations to the two 21-storey residential towers (350 and 390 Queens Quay West), including converting curved colonnades to retail spaces on Queens Quay, expanding retail and amenity space along Lake Shore Boulevard, and consolidating all outdoor servicing within the building.

Mr. Glaisek proceeded to inform the Panel of a number of issues for consideration including;

- Separation distance between the two existing 21-storey towers
- Entry location to new tower off Lake Shore vs. basin, and possible connection from parking to the Basin
- Relationship of new retail and residential to the basin
- Extension of ramp into public realm and impact of sidewalk width
- Colouration of the façade
- The view corridor from Blue Jays Way to Lake Ontario as identified in the Railway Lands Central Secondary Plan
- Shadowing of the Southern Linear Park on Lake Shore.
- Importance of enhancing the public realm as part of the application

2.2 Project Presentation

Mr. Glaisek introduced Les Klein, Principal and Co-founder of Quadrangle Architects Ltd. Mr. Klein introduced the owners of the property, Coal Harbour Properties, a division of Retirement Concepts, noting that the property was purchased three years ago. Mr. Klein explained the façade improvements to 350 and 390 Queens Quay, which were recently painted with gradations of grey to reflect the variety of the city scape. Mr. Klein assured the Panel that the client is 100% committed to enhancements to the public realm. Unencumbered views from the Rogers Centre to the lake and vice versa were also a top priority. Mr. Klein described the optional green wall which is proposed for the north façade. Mr. Klein explained that the team researched high quality buildings in the area and noted that they're looking to achieve that level of quality design. The design team is also looking to tie all three buildings together by;

- Adding frames the east and west towers to make them appear thinner
- Introduction of colouration on the new tower's facades – warmer shades on the north side to reflect the character of the city, and cooler shades on the south side to reflect the nature of the water.

- Opportunity to develop further the activation of the public realm

2.3 Panel Questions

One of the Panel members enquired about the back façades and whether they would be installed as a green wall. Mr. Klein replied that a green wall was planned for the back walls. The panel member also asked for clarification regarding the amenities. Mr. Klein replied that residents would have access to the amenities in all three buildings.

Another Panel member asked for clarification on the colour choices of the façade. Mr. Klein noted that nothing is set in stone and the team is looking to ensure that all parties are satisfied with the colour choice.

One of the Panel members asked about the woonerf proposed on the north side of the property. Mr. Klein replied that the idea is to make this a vibrant, friendly and useful space that is accessible. The Panel member also asked if the costs and advantages of 30m and 20m separation versus 25m and 25m had been studied. Mr. Klein replied that the separation distance was decided on the basis of maximizing the view corridor on the west side of the Rogers Centre.

Another Panel member asked what retail was planned in order to activate the space. Mr. Klein replied that they're looking into hospitality, restaurants and event space. Mr. Klein added that retail strategy has not been fully developed yet, however, the client is fully committed to long-term holds and appropriate complimentary uses.

One of the Panel members asked what the intentions are for the parking structure to the west. Mr. Klein noted that the parking structure is to remain, however, they are in the process of cleaning it up. The Panel member then asked if the team had considered a tower on the parking structure. Mr. Klein replied that they had thought about the potential of a fourth tower in addition, but not instead of the proposed tower. The Panel member then proceeded to ask if they had considered taking over Peter Street Basin as part of Privately Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces (POPS). Mr. Klein replied that subject to financial operations, it would be a great idea.

2.4 Panel Comments

The Vice Chair then asked the Panel for their comments.

One of the Panel members recommended splitting the tower separation to 25m on each side and lowering the height of the podium to open up the view to the lake. The Panel member also recommended hiring a colour consultant to help determine a suitable colour for the façade.

Another Panel member noted that in their experience, north-facing green walls have not succeeded. The Panel member mentioned that it would be best to see the money put towards improving the public realm in the Peter Street Basin rather than the green wall.

One of the Panel members was appreciative of the buildings feeling more like an ensemble rather than 3 separate towers. The Panel member also liked the idea of turning the service lane into a woonerf.

Another Panel member was also sceptical of the viability of the green wall, noting the potential opportunity of having north facing units if the green wall was removed. The Panel member also agreed with reducing the height of the podium to open up views south to the lake. The Panel member concurred with previous comments about colouration of the façade, cautioning the team to be cautious regarding colour choice.

One of the panel members also agreed with the opportunity of having north facing facades, eliminating the feeling of having the building's "back" turned against the city. The Panel member also emphasized generous connections to the basin and a visual connection through the lobby to the basin.

Another Panel member also emphasized the importance of the basin noting that there needs to be a reason to circumnavigate it. In terms of the ramp, the Panel member felt that it was not viable to allow the ramp to extend into the sidewalk and further consideration of location was needed.

2.5 Summary of the Panel's Key Issues

The Vice Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- **Public realm related comments:**
 - Great front porch to the waterfront and Queens Quay.
 - Unique opportunity to get it right.
 - Explore all alternatives including, land exchanges, transfers, etc, in order to figure out how this will come to life and be maintained over time.
- **Buildings related comments:**
 - Important to have a view from the back lobby through to the front of the building.
 - The retail strategy needs to receive a lot of attention given the history of previous uses not working well. Need to determine the mix and whether it will be small boutique or larger floorplates.
 - **Facing distance:** lower the podium so you can see the water.
 - **Colour:** good idea, needs a lot of study, to achieve harmony
 - **Parking:** should be eliminated if possible
 - **North façade:** Do not treat it as a back end
 - Show the future basin improvements in the plans

2.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Vice Chair then asked for a vote of Support, Conditional Support or Non-support for the project. The Panel voted in Conditional Support of the project.

3.0 Project: Under Gardiner

ID#: 1073

Project Type: Master Plan

Location: Land beneath the Gardiner Expressway between Strachan and Bathurst

Proponent: Waterfront Toronto on behalf of the Matthews Foundation

Architect/Designer: Public Work

Review Stage: Design Concept

Review Round: Two

Presenter(s): Marc Ryan, Public Work, Ken Greenberg, Greenberg Consultants Inc.

Delegation: Lauren Abrahams, Public Work, Adam Nicklin, Public Work

3.1 Introduction to the Issues

Pina Mallozzi, Director of Design with Waterfront Toronto, introduced the project noting that this was the project's second time at Design Review Panel, returning for Design Concept approval. Ms. Mallozzi gave a brief design update to the Panel noting that the team has decided to keep the path system as the dominant idea, however, changes have been made to add a seasonal component to the path through the introduction of a skating trail. The team has also been working on "places" including, Strachan Steps, Bent 91 Pavilion, Lake Plaza, and Shingle Beach. Ms. Mallozzi proceeded to raise a number of questions for the Panel's consideration including;

- Is the trail appropriately connected to the surrounding network of parks and trails?
- Do the nodes and their character create a stronger sense of place?
- Is this the right mix and distribution of uses throughout the space?
- Is the suspended bridge an appropriate design expression for crossing Fort York Blvd.?

3.2 Project Presentation

Ms. Mallozzi introduced Marc Ryan, Principal of Public work, and Ken Greenberg, Principal of Greenberg Consultants Inc. to present the Design Concept. Mr. Greenberg noted that there is now 70,000 people living within a 2km radius of this stretch of the Gardiner Expressway. All of these neighbourhoods are relatively new and not well connected to each other. Mr. Ryan explained the importance of connectivity to the city network. He noted that movement through the space could take a different form based on the season. Mr. Ryan explained part of the proposal which includes a winter trail that dovetails with the warmer season trail.

Mr. Ryan proceeded to explain the organization of the project which is comprised of 3 districts: the residential community, frontage of Fort York, and the east community link. Within these districts, the spaces are broken into “rooms” which include hardscape and landscape areas. The Hardscape rooms consist of, Shoreline Plaza and Shingle Beach Plaza, which will be furnished by textured aggregate floors, unique to each room. The landscape rooms will build on the existing historical narrative embedded in the landscape. Mr. Ryan explained two of the other major infrastructure projects, the elevated pedestrian crossing and Strachan gate. Both pieces “bookend” the Fort York Visitors Centre and are intended to bring material coherence to the area. Mr. Ryan also expressed the need for a more formal amenity pavilion which is why they created Bent 9 located south of the bents. Mr. Ryan then concluded by walking the Panel through the project from east to west.

3.3 Panel Questions

The Vice Chair then asked the Panel for their questions.

One of the Panel members asked about the technics of the skating trail given that outdoor skating is a dying practice due to climate change. Mr. Ryan replied that the skating trail would be mechanically chilled.

Another Panel member asked if the budget was \$25M. Mr. Ryan replied yes, adding that the area near Fort York and the skating trail are the predominant areas to focus the investment – public lands that the team is able to control.

One of the Panel members asked about the proposed at-grade crossing at Bathurst and Dan Leckie and whether they’re confident that this will happen. Mr. Ryan replied that the City has committed to a signalized intersection at Housey and Bathurst.

Another Panel member asked about the notion of the rooms noting that nothing was mentioned of them during the presentation. Mr. Ryan replied that the team is looking at bundles of rooms as groupings of characters. The team is trying to allow input back from the programming consultant and public input as to how to define them. Mr. Ryan noted that so far what they have learned from the programming consultant is the need for flexibility to host a variety of events.

3.4 Panel Comments

The Vice Chair then asked the Panel for their comments.

One of the Panel members expressed concern about the multitude of design moves being made and the absence of a management entity to inform decisions. Mr. Greenberg clarified that the team has ongoing weekly discussions regarding management.

Another Panel member recommended not showing any renderings that depict the Gardiner without its roof. It give a false sense of openness and light.

One of the Panel members noted that the diversity of programming is remarkable, inclusive and complex, and in that lies a new way of thinking about public spaces in the city. The Panel member explained that what makes this project extraordinary is the bents and how powerful this piece of infrastructure is. The Panel member also noted that making this space accessible is key.

Another Panel member expressed the need for a more permanent material palette, noting that if all the other elements did not materialize, it should still hold together.

One of the Panel members stressed the importance of cohesion and tying together the material in a formal design approach, to avoid it looking like a jumble of unrelated elements. The Panel member also felt that there should be more of a permanent material palette and raised a question of what would be left if everything was taken away?

Another Panel member asked the design team to figure out the cadence of walking and how long it takes to get to each area. The Panel member also noted that the bridge is a really interesting opportunity as it affords a new point of view.

3.5 Summary of the Panel's Key Issues

The Vice Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- The Waterfront Making Waves plan of removing barriers and making connections needs to be embedded throughout the project.
- Needs to be more elaboration of how the rooms look and feel – focus on one room in detail for the next review
- Combination of messy and clear, permanent and temporary
- Need more detail on the management entity.

3.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Vice Chair then asked for a vote of Support, Conditional Support or Non-support for the project. The Panel voted in Conditional Support of the project.

CLOSING

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