



WATERFRONTToronto

Waterfront Design Review Panel Minutes of Meeting #23 Monday, January 21, 2008

Present:

Bruce Kuwabara, Chair
George Baird
Paul Bedford
Tania Bortolotto
Anne McIlroy
Janet Rosenberg
Greg Smallenberg
Charles Waldheim

Designees and Guests:

John Campbell
Christopher Glaisek
Robert Freedman

Regrets:

Don Schmitt
Peter Clewes
Renee Daoust
Peter Halsall
Siamak Hariri

Recording Secretary:

Margaret Goodfellow

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed the Panel, wishing them a Happy New Year. He provided an overview of the agenda and 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 over the past month.

Jarvis Slip Public Space

- The three short-listed teams for the Jarvis Slip Public Space Design Competition will be presenting their schemes tonight at Metro Hall, between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. The designs will be on exhibit during the week of January 21st to January 25th, during which time the public is invited to comment. As part of the deliberations, a Stakeholder Advisory Committee report, a City Staff Technical report, and a preliminary costing report will be provided to the jury. The winning scheme will be announced on February 1st.

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

One Panel member asked who was on the jury. Mr. Glaisek stated that the jury members are Peter Clewes, Siamak Hariri, Greg Smallemberg, and George Baird acting as Chair.

The Chair moved to General Business.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Noting the time limitations that this re-scheduled meeting had, the Chair moved to Project Reviews, adding that the previous month's minutes would be adopted by the Panel via email.

PROJECT REVIEWS

1.0 Project Symphony

ID#: 1017

Project Type: Building Design

Location: Jarvis Street south of Queens Quay on the south-east side of the Jarvis Slip

Proponent: TEDCO

Architect/Designer: Diamond and Schmitt Architects

Review Round: Six

Presenter(s): Jack Diamond, Diamond and Schmitt Architects

Delegation: Carlo Bonanni, TEDCO; Rowland Fleming, Chair of TEDCO Board of Directors; David Dow, Diamond and Schmitt Architects

1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Christopher Glaisek, Waterfront Toronto's Vice President Planning for and Design, introduced the project, noting that this was the sixth time that the project has come before the Panel.

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

- The overall evolution of the project and the proponents' response to the issues raised in November's Panel meeting,

1.2 Project Presentation

Jack Diamond, Principal with Diamond and Schmitt Architects Inc., began by thanking the panel for their constructive criticism and support for design excellence to date. Mr. Diamond then described the evolution of the project since the last presentation including; replacement of "the egg" with a central studio with an operable electronic screen, the proposed configuration for "the Hub", specification of materials for the columns and wall surfaces, curtain wall details and systems, relocated access to the below-grade parking, elimination of the "double atrium" at the south entrance, rearrangement of the number of operable doors onto the public realm, and the 8th floor pergola and green roofs.

1.3 Panel Questions and Comments

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

One Panel member enquired as to which areas were intended to be publicly accessible. Mr. Diamond stated that although the interior will not generally be open to the public, programmatic

elements such as the sound stages and studios with doors that will open onto the new Jarvis Slip Public Space are expected to animate the exterior at grade. Mr. Diamond added that the Hub will also be open to the public on special occasions, and that the restaurant will always be publicly accessible.

Another Panel member wondered what the connection was between the Hub and the adjacent outside space, and asked if the Hub had an outdoor component. Mr. Diamond stated that the Hub could be entered by the public realm when the south atrium doors are open, but that he was not sure how the Hub was going to be controlled.

One Panel member asked why the restaurant was not adjacent to the Jarvis Slip Public Space. Mr. Diamond stated that besides the kitchen area of the restaurant having better access to loading and garbage service on the east side, the tenant requested that the Hub be placed at this location. Mr. Diamond reiterated that the Hub will be active 24 hours a day. Several Panel members expressed a lingering doubt around the viability of the restaurant on the south-east corner of the site, noting that it was a lost opportunity not to have it on at Jarvis Slip year-round. One Panel member disagreed, stating that the Hub will help to animate the south west corner at Jarvis Slip, and that the restaurants' location closer to street will make it more accessible, and suggested moving the doors east to provide more convenient access in the winter.

Another Panel member asked if consideration had been given to issues such as how the outdoor restaurant would be defined if alcohol were being served, citing European examples of terraces where servers must pass through the public right of way to get to their customers. Mr. Diamond replied that those issues had not been addressed, and should be worked out with the designers of the promenade.

One Panel member enquired as to the grade relationship between the building and the Water's Edge Promenade. Mr. Dow stated that their building is approximately two feet higher than the dockwall, with the difference either being negotiated by a slope or steps. Mr. Dow continued that it was beyond their prueve to design beyond their property line, but that they are willing to work with West 8 + DTAH on that.

One Panel member asked which of the loading options was preferred. Mr. Diamond stated that they had studied several options for an interior loading court, but that they reduced the restaurant space, so they have chosen not to have internal loading. Mr. Diamond reminded the Panel that they have made every effort to reduce the number of apertures on the street, and that this scheme already represents a reduction in what the City of Toronto originally required. Mr. Diamond suggested that the use of rubber doors would help reduce noise and would be an attractive alternative to typical steel doors.

Another Panel member asked if the "green wall" was still in the building. Mr. Diamond stated that it was, and remains in its same location near the south atrium wall.

One Panel member asked if the public could park in the underground parking area. Mr. Diamond stated that that was the intention.

One Panel member asked if the presentation accurately represented the design intention for the interior. Mr. Diamond stated that it did in principle, but probably not in its details. Mr. Diamond assured the Panel the Corus and their Architect, Quadrangle, were fully coordinated on the overall approach.

Another Panel member asked how large the 8th floor was. Mr. Diamond stated that it was 3,600 square feet with a large canopy.

One Panel member asked if there were any details on the large operable door on the south façade, expressing concern that the rendering implied mullion-free panels nearly twenty feet high, when in reality there will have to be intermediate members that might reduce visibility. Mr. Diamond stated that it was still being designed, and acknowledged that no structure was represented, noting that their intention was to make it as sheer as possible.

One Panel member asked for a clarification on the nature of the radio studios at the north-west corner of the building, and whether they were actual broadcast rooms or equipment rooms. Mr. Dow stated that they are mostly DJ studio spaces with some technical support. Another Panel member asked if there were going to be speakers on the outside of the building, so the public could hear as well as see the programs being broadcast as is done so successfully in the NBC Studios at Rockefeller Center. Mr. Diamond stated that he was not sure.

One Panel member asked what types of signage were being proposed. Mr. Dow answered that they are working on the signage for the parking, and are working with Corus to integrate it into the design of the building.

One Panel member asked what they were currently thinking of for public art, as they had hired Karen Mills as their public art consultant. Mr. Diamond stated that they would like public art to be incorporated into the large opening on the west façade.

The Chair then thanked Mr. Diamond for his presentation and opened the meeting to Panel comments.

One Panel member felt that the atrium space had been improved, adding that attention should be given to the treatment of the inner walls of the atrium.

Another Panel member felt that the massing had also been improved, noting that the building reads more clearly as two distinct volumes with the glazing of the atrium being recessed, and the reinstated 8th floor and canopy help the building's profile and character, especially at night. Several Panel members agreed, but stated that the scale of the canopy needed to be bolder.

Several Panel members expressed continued concern that the loading took up too much of the east façade, but felt that the detailing mentioned could make it better. Another Panel member stated that black rubber may not be the best choice for the service doors and suggested they be glass, like those of a firehouse, to produce some animation along an otherwise blank wall.

One Panel member stated that a lot of work had been done on the materiality of the façade. Another Panel member felt that the glazing system was still suburban in appearance, noting that the proportional relationship between the spandrel and glazing panels give the building a very corporate look, especially at night when the large spandrels will be dark. The Panel member added that careful detailing of how the glazing and soffit come together would be critical to how the public arcade space reads, as either public or corporate.

One Panel member felt that there was not enough clarity around the relationship of the building to the public realm. Another Panel member agreed, adding that the most important issue with

this project is the public interface and relationship to the public realm, citing Rockefeller Center in New York as a great example of the intimate relationship a broadcaster can have with the public. The Panel member then cited the CBC building as an example of “dismal urbanism”, adding that large single use buildings can either be magical or deadly. Another Panel member agreed, adding that Corus should consider their programming and how it can help to make the building feel more public. The Panel member cautioned against creating a fish bowl effect where the public can see in but is not invited, noting that although this is a private building, it is being built on a prime piece of publicly-owned waterfront property.

Another Panel member cautioned that the very nature of information-based private corporations and public access are potentially in conflict with each other, and that if there isn't some form of commitment from Corus to ensure a strong, interactive program of the uses and activities between the inside of the building and the public realm, that no amount of design will deliver what the Panel is hoping to achieve.

One Panel member stated that elements such as signage, furniture, and bike racks are missing pieces which would help to create the vision for the liveliness of everyday life on the waterfront. Another Panel member concurred, feeling that offering only one bench was out of scale with the size of the project.

Several Panel members expressed concern that Quadrangle Architects did not present the interior of the building, wondering if what they have seen is what will actually be built. Another Panel member expressed concern about how all the pieces will come together. One Panel member stated that the winning design for the Jarvis Slip Public Space also needs to interact with the building. Another Panel member agreed, adding that a consolidated presentation would give the proposal some real context and should be made with Jarvis Slip, the Water's Edge Promenade, the interior, and the exterior of the building all together.

The Chair then asked how the Panel would like to conclude its review. One Panel member stated that they were satisfied that the current design had addressed the Panel's concerns, noting that they were willing to approve the project at this point.

Another Panel member agreed that the proponent had responded to many of the Panel's specific concerns, but questioned whether it was a great building and where the spirit was. They added that there is still room for improvement, even given the tight timing, noting that great architecture is formed under great pressure.

One Panel member stated their interest in seeing the evolution of the media wall, adding that they have seen spectacular examples and ones that are failures. They requested that Quadrangle present at the next Panel meeting before the Panel give approval.

Rowland Fleming, Chair of TEDCO's Board of Directors, asked the Chair if he could address the Panel, and the Chair agreed. Mr. Fleming stated that Corus is in the business of communication, and is confident that their plans are quite exciting. Mr. Fleming reiterated that TEDCO and Corus have the same objectives in mind and that this feedback will be shared with Corus.

Several Panel members felt that, given the history of the design elements being deleted for budget reasons, that a guaranteed mechanism was needed to ensure what was presented today, which took the building from a “pass” to a “fail”, is what actually gets built. One panel member cited Vancouver as an example where bonds are posted to guarantee this. Another Panel member

cited a condominium project in Toronto, at Yonge and Eglinton, where specific language was written into the Site Plan Agreement to ensure what the developer promised to build would happen.

Mr. Campbell stated that compliance was going to be a waterfront-wide issue, and that Waterfront Toronto's Board had directed management to work on developing an appropriate mechanism. Mr. Campbell added that Waterfront Toronto is seeking advice from the Panel on the design, and does not want to delay any motions over the final wording of the process.

Mr. Fleming stated that the building as presented has been approved by TEDCO's Board of Directors and they are confident and determined that they will deliver what you see. Mr. Fleming added that he would not make such a promise unless they had completed detailed costing of the building and were confident in their budget numbers. One Panel member asked if they were carrying design costs in their budget line items. Mr. Fleming answered that they were planning to rely on the project contingency money to pay for the design elements, adding that they don't see any other big issues arising that will deplete those funds.

Several Panel members reacted with great concern that these latest design features were dependent upon the project contingency funds not being needed or other unforeseen circumstances, and asked that Waterfront Toronto's nine million dollar contribution be earmarked specifically to ensure the design features are delivered.

Mr. Fleming reiterated TEDCO's commitment to working out any remaining issues with the Panel, but was uncomfortable with any conditions being included in the approval of a motion that could delay receiving Site Plan Approval or Building Permits, and thus a possible delay in the development timeline and delivery to Corus. Mr. Fleming added that they were contractually obliged to deliver this building to Corus. Mr. Fleming stated that Corus is a great tenant, and asked the Panel to be sensitive to those issues when framing the resolution.

Several Panel members asked that TEDCO be sensitive to their position, having promised things before in the project that were subsequently taken out, making it difficult for them to rely solely on representations.

Mr. Fleming stated that he was under the impression that if all the Panel's concerns were addressed for this presentation that Waterfront Toronto would release the remaining funds, noting that the Panel has already agreed that Diamond and Schmitt have made every effort to respond to all the Panel's concerns. Mr. Fleming stated that the question everyone was here to answer was whether or not the design was acceptable the Panel, not how the funds would be monitored.

The Chair then asked someone to move a resolution. One Panel member read the following:

- 1) That the building receive conditional approval subject to the satisfactory resolution of the issues and comments of the Design Review Panel at today's meeting;
- 2) That the final design of the building be brought back to the Design Review Panel in conjunction with the final interior design and in synergy and recognition of the winning scheme for the Jarvis Slip Public Space;
- 3) That all details and materials shown in the final building design (as shown in annotated 1:50 scale elevations) be incorporated into a binding and legal Site Plan Agreement;

- 4) That Waterfront Toronto, the City of Toronto, and TEDCO ensure that the above understanding is legally enforceable, without fettering the interests of the City, and that a Building Permit be subject to all provisions of the Site Plan Agreement.

Mr. Fleming responded that the notion of legal guarantees would not be supported by TEDCO, and that with the City of Toronto, Corus and Waterfront Toronto all putting pressure on TEDCO to deliver a great building for the Waterfront, that in and of itself would be a sufficient guarantee.

The Panel then voted unanimously in favour of the motion.

I.4 Summary of Panel's Key Issues

The Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- i. The building design is deemed conditionally acceptable pending guarantees, the review process continuing through construction documents, and linkage of the approved design features, details, and materials to the funding.
- ii. The elevation details at the radio studios in the northwest corner need to be developed, where the opportunity exists to create an intimate and interesting experience between a private branded radio host, interviewees, and the public. There needs to be a stronger idea about the public interaction, such as how the design will focus attention and view, provision of audio speakers for those outside the glass, seating if possible, coordinated signage for stations such as "Q 107", and lighting for nighttime broadcasts.
- iii. The south side needs stringent guidelines for where public pedestrian access runs along the building face, possibly coincident with the drip line of the cantilevered portion of the building above.
- iv. There needs to be a coordinated strategy for the restaurant's outdoor terrace, including size/capacity, railings/delineation, power, signage, umbrellas, and all the other details as this will form a critical part of the character of the water's edge.
- v. Glass doors should be used for the service area, which should be conceptualized as industrial activity, well lit, like a fire station with a community presence.
- vi. The roof element should be strengthened, possibly projected further to the west and made deeper as a bolder visible element.
- vii. There needs to be much greater detail on the central studio as an animated media element in the heart of the building.
- viii. Corus and their design team need to present their commitment to the interactivity shown in the drawings and to demonstrate precisely the design integration between inside and outside, between the fit up and base building, as that will have a major impact on the character of the ground floor.
- ix. Alter the proportions of the spandrel panels to the glazing units in order to maximize the transparency of the building.

I.5 Proponent's Response

Mr. Diamond and Mr. Fleming thanked the Panel for its input.

CLOSING

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

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