

CITY OF VAUGHAN

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Minutes of Meeting

Meeting 70 – February 28, 2019

The Design Review Panel met on Thursday, February 28, 2019 in Committee Room 242 & 243, City Hall, 141 Major MacKenzie Drive, Vaughan

PANEL MEMBERS

Present

Megan Torza, DTAH (Chair)

Henry Burstyn, IBI Group

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will

Alfredo Landaeta, FORREC

Sheldon Levitt, Quadrangle Architects Ltd.

Ute Maya-Giambattista, SGL Planning & Design Inc.

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Absent

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

Antonio Gómez-Palacio, DIALOG

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

STAFF

Rob Bayley, Urban Design

Shahrzad Davoudi-Strike, Urban Design

Nancy Tuckett, Development Planning

Carol Birch, Development Planning

Chrisa Assimopoulos, Urban Design

Misha Bereznyak, Urban Design

Gilda Giovane, Urban Design

Gaston Soucy, Urban Design

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am with Megan Torza in the Chair.

1. **CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA**

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Henry Burstyn declared a conflict of interest for item #2.

3. **ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

Meeting Minutes for January 31, 2019 were approved.

4. **DESIGN REVIEW**

1. **Liberty Development, Rose Garden, 1890 Highway 7**

Architecture: Kirkor Architects
Landscape Architect: Scholen & Company
Review: 1st Review

Introduction

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

1. Considering the grade change along the regional road 7 and west property line, how could the site plan organization and courtyard design be improved to foster urban streetscape, pedestrian connectivity and place making.
2. How could the proposed massing and transitions be improved to better fit within the proposed context of Concord Go Centre Secondary Plan?

Overview

Panel noted that there were critical drawings missing such as elevations, site cross-sections and underground parking plan proving difficult for the Panel to analyze this development. This is an important site with many complicated issues to be resolved for a successful neighbourhood to be envisioned. Panel summarized their concerns into the following categories:

- **Masterplan:** Panel emphasized that the masterplan is the backbone for all the phases of development and will set the stage for high quality work. The masterplan should confirm in detail the current and future conditions for the following: context, transit, ravine and trail network and phasing strategy.
- **Highway 7 frontage:** Maintain ongoing, consistent discussions with TRCA to resolve grading on the south and advocate a positive approach to TRCA lands such as the importance for transit connections.

- **Key Building Elements:** The courtyard, plaza and lobby are disconnected. The courtyard is overburdened by cars and Panel recommended review of its orientation on the site. The plaza is the gateway for the site and should establish desire lines and movement through the site. The lobbies should also invite movement through the site and be connected to engaging frontages.
- **Landscape:** Proximity of the ravine and language of trails should give priority to landscape within each development phase.
- **Architecture:** How can the architecture speak directly to sustainability, ecology and negotiation of grade.

Comments

Masterplan

- Panel felt that the masterplan is incomplete and important pieces need to be resolved. There was not a clear vision for how it will look in the end and connect to the vivaNext, Bowes Road and the potential Go Station.
- The one item that responds to the intended transit context is the proposed density.
- Panel strongly recommended to do everything possible to promote public transportation and to encourage ground floor connections to the vivaNext station and potential Go Station.
- Panel noted the importance of planning for phasing and long-term vision when other key neighbourhood elements come online such as the community centre. Perhaps current amenity spaces transition to larger retail spaces; a clear long-term retail strategy needs to be investigated.
- Panel emphasized the importance of the main road as a ceremonial drive and to plan for retail as soon as possible. Early thought should be given to the east side of the main retail road to complete this vision. Panel suggested zero setback to promote retail.
- Panel recommended more variety in the massing of the masterplan as the 27-storey building height is a bit “soldier” looking.

Site Organization and Landscape

- The development should elevate the community to have interesting ground floor spaces and positive connections. For example, Panel recommended a strong pedestrian connection from the courtyard to the vivaNext station.
- Focus on creating an interesting gateway opportunity at the south-east corner. Re-think the location of the private pool adjacent to the gateway plaza and consider an opportunity for retail and/or an open-air connection to the courtyard to promote pedestrian connection.
- Bicycle storage is located underground, explore the ground floor layout for opportunities to bring it to the ground floor to support active transportation and better connection to the GO and vivaNext station.

- Consider the steps on the south as grand features, i.e. the Spanish Steps and revise adjacent amenity spaces to more active uses such as a café.
- Pull the pedestrians away from Highway 7 and up against the building where there are canopies and amenity spaces.
- Panel noted that the courtyard should be as “car-less” as possible and to organize all loading and underground access on the north private road. The private lane should be more utilized and garbage loading should be consolidated and kept out of the courtyard. Limiting the vehicle circulation will allow more room for landscape opportunities in the courtyard.
- Panel suggested flipping the massing along the east-west axis to allow for a south facing courtyard that ties into the berm on Highway 7.
- Lobbies are oriented to serve the pick-up/drop-off and don't face the perimeter for residents using transit.
- The townhomes on the west should also better engage the street.

Massing and Architecture

- Panel encouraged more solid facades instead of window wall and projecting balconies.
- Consider the ecology of the site to determine how the idea of sustainability can be furthered in the architecture and quality of the building.

2. Chabad Flaming, 8001 Bathurst Street

Architecture: IBI Group
 Landscape Architect: MBTW Group
 Review: 1st Review

Introduction

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

1. How could the proposed massing and transitions be improved to better fit within the surrounding context?
2. How could the site plan organization and design be improved to maximize potential for streetscape, landscape and overall circulation?

Overview

- Panel acknowledged the clear and comprehensive material presented and had positive responses to the scale of the development and the meaningful integration of residential on an institutional site for good community building.
- Concerns were raised regarding vehicles being a main driving force in the development of the ground floor and Panel suggested a more consolidated solution by locating the loading and garage access on the south.

- A more unified approach to locating the building entrances would provide pedestrians with better movement across the site.
- The architecture is very considerate of the existing synagogue building, but the panel encouraged the applicant to look at other ways of addressing the existing building context and the juncture between the buildings such as a reveal.
- Allow for a rational density distribution, revisit the single laded residential arm that is expensive and inefficient.

Comments

Site Layout

- Panel recommended integration of the new and existing building entrances on the east. The existing synagogue entrance plaza is being beautified but is adjacent to a “back-of-house” use that is the u/g garage access. The relocation of the loading and garage access to the south end of the site would allow for better adjacency between the new residential and synagogue entrances.
- Panel recommended moving the drop-off closer to the middle of the site.
- Panel noted too much space is dedicated to vehicles, including 3 driveway access points, and very little space for people. An effort to segregate cars and people would benefit the site especially for young families with children.
- As the location of the residential entrance on Bathurst is relatively arbitrary the Panel encouraged the applicant to create a fantastic entrance opportunity for both uses at the location of the “Social Hall Extension” by creating an allée for the residential and synagogue entrances.
- Panel encouraged the applicant to consider a straight forward ‘L’ shape addition instead of ‘U’ shape. The 2 and 3 bedroom townhomes on the south are generally very expensive and the development could benefit from choosing not to extent out on the east creating a sunnier community oriented space. Also, eliminating the three-storey component and maintaining the new building footprint as north as possible would be a positive intervention in the eyes of the residential neighbours.
- Pedestrian connection between east-west is important to connect the existing community to bus transportation on Bathurst.
- Investigate opportunity to provide dedicated access for visitors to synagogue with direct access outside from u/g.
- Panel noted a cost analysis should be investigated to determine if there is any incentive to build a new synagogue on the existing parking lot and locate the residential building at the corner proper.

Architecture

- While the applicant is considerate of the existing synagogue architecture, but the Panel does not recommend integrating features of the existing building into the new building treatment.
- The architecture could benefit from breaking away from the existing architecture. Consider a clear cut from the old building in terms of architectural expression.

- The glazed 12-storey addition that cantilevers over the existing synagogue could be more solid with smaller more solid balconies.

Landscape

- A zero setback along Bathurst Street is unreasonable, Panel recommended the building frontage to align parallel to Bathurst Street.
- Given the proximity to the regional intensification corridor, 2 m sidewalk on Bathurst Street is insufficient, Panel encouraged a greater setback on Bathurst to improve the streetscape condition.