

# **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

## **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

### **Meeting 90 – April 29, 2021**

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The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, April 29, 2021. The meeting was recorded and will be posted on the City of Vaughan website.

#### **PANEL MEMBERS**

##### **Present**

Sheldon Levitt, Quadrangle Architects Ltd.

Alfredo Landaeta, Forrec

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will (Vice Chair)

Ute Maya-Giambattista, SGL Planning & Design Inc.

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

##### **Absent**

Megan Torza, DTAH (Chair)

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

Henry Burstyn, IBI Group

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

##### **STAFF**

Amy Roots, Acting Director, VMC Program

Gerardo Paez Alonso, Manager, VMC Program

Gaston Soucy, Project Manager, VMC Program

Natalie Wong, Senior Planner, VMC Program

Cory Gray, Project Manager, VMC Program

Sharon Gaum-Kuchar, Senior Art Curator, Economic and Cultural Development

Rob Bayley, Urban Design

Shahrzad Davoudi-Strike, Urban Design  
Chrisa Assimopoulos, Urban Design  
Shirley Marsh, Urban Design  
Nancy Tuckett, Development Planning  
Michelle Samson, Economic Development

**The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am with Alfredo Landaeta in the Chair.**

**1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA**

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

**2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Margaret Briegmann declared a conflict of interest on VMC Block A5 Temporary Art item

**3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

Meeting minutes for March 25, 2021, were approved.

**4. DESIGN REVIEW**

**Chelsea Eagle Point – Major Mackenzie & McNaughton Rd E. – York Major Holdings**  
Planning Consultant: KLM Planning  
Architect: BDP quadrangle  
Review: 1<sup>st</sup> Review

**Introduction**

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- How successful is the built form interface and the at-grade uses in animating McNaughton Rd. and transitioning to the development proposed on Eagle Rock Way?
- How successful is the overall master plan in building upon the principles of the Maple Go Secondary Plan to create a successful Mobility Hub?

## Overview

- **Overall Presentation** - Panel thanked the applicant for a comprehensive and thorough package and presentation and acknowledged the challenges of the site
- **Site Context and Animation of the pedestrian realm** – The Panel noted the necessity to enhance the urban character of the McNaughton Rd. through lobby design, landscape, parallel parking and the appropriate flexibility of uses.
- **Hierarchy of space and circulation** – The Panel questioned the need of an internal road and proposed the redesign of the North-south access with a stronger pedestrian focus. In general, the Panel noted the need to establish a balance between pedestrian needs and car use, with more efficient vehicular connections to the existing network
- **Architecture** – The Panel spoke to creating a signature piece that would hold a placemaking role for the community.

Views to the golf course should be celebrated, through tower placement and architectural design as well as reimagining the internal road and the uses at-grade along that frontage and between the two towers

## Comments

### General

- Panel focused mostly on traffic and accessibility issues that the site generates due to the geometry of the site. Comments were mostly focused on the golf course edge questioning the character of the internal road network as well as the need for activation of the McNaughton frontage

### Overall Site Organization and Context

- The Panel spoke to the need to better relate and create strong connections with rest of the master plan area.
- Panel questioned the need for an extensive internal road network that connects the whole site as it gives priority to cars over pedestrians, with little space dedicated to pedestrians. Various revision options were suggested by the Panel:
  - Eliminate the intersection along Eagle Rock Way and replace it by two entry points to the north and south, with an access at the extension of Hill Street, connecting to roads within the rest of the masterplan area to the west.
  - Further to the point above concentrate all the parking and traffic access along the two entry points, one on the north end and one on the south and offer a lay-by area for drop-off in front of the towers. If necessary, retain the internal road for servicing and loading but not as a full access
  - Take advantage of the linear shape of the site to create a balance between the East and West side. Introduce a north-south multi-use trail that gives priority to and creates a special space for pedestrians. Revise the pick-up and drop-off area to bump-outs.

- At a masterplan level, frame McNaughton with a linear park on the East and the proposed towers to the West making McNaughton a community promenade offering views to the golf course

#### Architecture, Built Form and Massing

- Panel spoke to how the project should contribute to the creation of a strong urban environment along McNaughton while transition to the golf course by creating a softer edge and an environment around the views to the golf course and the natural feature
- To the point above it was noted that the strong character on McNaughton needs to be balanced with the private character of the proposed residential. Architecture and landscape design with setbacks need to be coordinated to manage the fine balance between public and private
- The placement and distance between the towers are not favorable as they create the sense of a wall, chamfer with the equilateral triangle shape to create a point tower that is not triangular. Allow for the form of the towers to contribute as a terminus to the mobility hub
- A concern was voiced about the towers being a bit stumpy and as such it was suggested that a change in their proportions be explored to have a slender form

#### Hierarchy of open space and circulation

- Create a terminus point, with a strong public character, meaningful connections to the rest of the masterplan area and a window to the golf course.
- Create a sense of arrival to the project lobbies should have a stronger presence on McNaughton and speak to all road users
- Following the point above Panel suggested that active uses be introduced at the ground floor along McNaughton Rd to activate that frontage and create a strong pedestrian edge, but also to frame the vista to the golf course and invite people to experience the view
- Understanding the constraints created due to the medians on McNaughton it was suggested that the applicant works with the City to arrive to a POPS instead of a central driveway that works as a vista to the golf course.
- Revisiting the size of the proposed open space between the buildings and Major MacKenzie will allow for an increase of the distance between the towers opening up to the golf course creating strong, interesting public point and fostering active uses such as a restaurant/ cafe or convenience retail
- Explore the possibility to incorporate in the development the Greenland area to the North, on the East side of Phase #3, to create another point of public interest there

#### **700 Centre St., Thornhill – SmartCentres REIT**

Architect: Hariri Pontarini Architects  
 Landscape Architect: MHBC Landscape  
 Review: 2<sup>nd</sup> Review

#### **Introduction**

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- How successful is the revised proposal in responding to the first DRP comments with respect to:
  - Creating a pedestrian oriented community both in interim and ultimate phases that connects to the broader context
  - Clear edge conditions and ground floor synergies between adjacent parcels to mitigate the impact of the above ground parking structure
- Please comment on the revised built form and the architectural expression of the podium, structure, townhouses and towers

## Overview

- **Overall Presentation** –Panel thanked the applicant for a comprehensive package and presentation and noted the significant improvements made compared to the 1<sup>st</sup> review
- **Site Context and Coordination** –Panel noted that the North-south mews is a great addition that can work as an interesting feature between this and future development.

Panel raised a concern regarding the interim condition for the townhouses, in the phase #1 of the development as they will be facing the back-of-house of the existing retail.

- **Connectivity** – Regarding the mews Panel noted that coordination with the neighboring owners to the North will be necessary to create a meaningful connection in the future but also provide a better design of the terminus of the mews for phase #1.

Panel spoke to the number and the placement of lobbies as they relate to the two towers, the street and the existing retail of Disera Dr., to bike access and storage and pedestrian access and circulation

- **Architecture** –Panel noted that overall, the revisions on Architecture are a great improvement. The changes in massing, height distribution and tower separation were steps in the right direction.

However, there are still concerns about the height and treatment of the North façade facing the existing buildings to the North.

Panel encouraged the applicant to revise the podium and towers to better relate to the neighbors and offer greater solar exposure to the landscape area.

Greater articulation and enhanced materiality, color and texture differentiation can help to break down the massing and unitarian style of the towers

- **Microclimate** – The proposed landscape edge along the north boundary is in a challenging location and will be in shade for most of the year; a landscape strategy should be put in place to ensure growth and maintenance

## Comments

### General

- Panel appreciated the improvements made after the 1<sup>st</sup> presentation such as:
  - the change in massing and height distribution
  - lowering the podium to create a more pedestrian interface
  - the relocation and redesign of the lobby entrance creating a more meaningful connection with the public space/ public realm, complimenting the North-south promenade, consolidating the ground floor retail making it more flexible/ commercially viable and dissolving the imposing symmetry making the development more approachable
  - creating a more workable site circulation for both vehicles and pedestrians
  - limiting the access to the westerly edge to deal with parking and
  - the addition of townhomes.

### Site Context and Organization

- Panel acknowledged that limiting the vehicular access to the westerly edge of the site is an improvement however suggested that the applicant explores placing more of the parking underground
- Further to the point above Panel noted that with some of the parking moving underground a better condition along the North can be achieved with the appropriate setbacks from the neighbor, a north-facing courtyard or residential at grade
- Panel urged the applicant to look closely at the relationship with the retail to the South to create a more consistent and cohesive public realm

### Connectivity

- Coordinate with the neighbor to the North to provide a more pedestrian friendly connection through the North-south mews since it is mentioned that this will be a significant linkage to the open gathering space further south
- Though the placement of the lobby now at the South-east corner is a sensible choice however reaching the West lobby still presents a challenge as currently the connection proposed is through a long corridor without openings. Panel suggested a smaller/secondary lobby or access be added to the West
- A strong visual connection to the back lobby should be established for it to function successfully
- More attention should be paid to the relationships between the north-west mews with the residential at grade and the existing retail. The Panel is concerned that the townhouses and mews will be impacted by the back-of-house uses and parking of the retail
- More meaningful and direct connections should be established to the bike storage facilities.

### Architecture

- For Panel the treatment and height along the north facing façade is still a concern

- Consider a further reduction of the podium to mitigate the impact of the project to the existing development to the North and to provide better solar access to the parkade
- Though the material palette may present a fresher modern aesthetic approach, bringing a lightness to the neighborhood, additional variety in materials and textures may be introduced to break down the volume of the massing and create a less unitarian perception of the towers

## VMC Temporary Site Activation & Public Art Mural Program - SmartCentres REIT

Art Consultant: LNDMRK  
 Review: 1<sup>st</sup> Review

### Introduction

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- Is the proposed temporary Public Art vision and creative design concept complementary with the existing urban design context and the placemaking and cultural aspirations of the VMC as expressed in the supporting Council endorsed documents?
- Does the scale and prominence of the mural design concept provide a cohesive anchor for the complement of planned site activations?

### Overview

- **Overall Presentation** – Panel thanked the applicant for a stimulating and complete presentation, was supportive of the idea and agreed that this is a great initiative to successfully promote community building through art and public realm activation in the VMC.
- **Legacy Planning through Art and Culture** - The project is on track to become a positive sociocultural event which should continue to unfold as the VMC develops. The challenge will be growing this positive community building momentum through arts and cultural programming moving forward and cementing it by finding a permanent home for it to continue once the VMC is fully developed.
- **A balance of art driven initiatives** - Panel commented that the community building success of this initiative will depend on the effective balance and diversity of other background activities and programming which should include art as the common denominator.
- **Year-Round Activation** - It will be important to ensure that other essential amenities, such as the food truck area and the outdoor activity spaces for gathering and socializing, are active throughout the year.

## Comments

### General

- The project is in keeping with the Council endorsed documents which envision community building through art and culture.
- Panel commented that it will be very important to integrate art components into an overall holistic strategy, not only as part of the mural.
- The proposed mix of activities gives the impression of a 'mini-expo', with events akin to those offered in larger urban squares which could start to create a very positive experience in the VMC. The key will be to keep the initiative going in order to help develop a distinct character and identity for the VMC as it grows.
- Introducing a bit of 'grittiness' into the VMC at this stage of development is good, as it will start to generate the unique character that more mature urban areas typically have.
- Panel suggested selecting several artists, rather than giving the entirety of the large building to one artist. This would not only give exposure to more artists but create more variety around the building.
- To extend the public spatial experience, Panel suggested that a landscaped linear park could be created around the building to stop and enjoy the art. Also, an extension of this narrative could be explored at the interior of the decommissioned building where temporary art exhibits could be installed.
- Provision of food and heated areas will be big drivers to the success of the space throughout the year. Panel encouraged animating the spaces through the shoulder and winter months with heating pods, and other activities that adapt to the seasons. Panel commented on the potential to activate some of the interior spaces of the decommissioned retail building with food and other indoor activities during the winter months.
- Panel commented on the possibility to subtly illuminating the murals at night.
- Panel recommended relocating the proposed food area to the centre of the site so that it becomes a part of the art activation centrepiece and commented on the idea of introducing a Japanese style vending machine emporium that works as a year-round attraction.
- The potential to include art in the roof area is a fascinating idea that stimulates the imagination through the possibility of activating the fifth façade with something other than utilitarian equipment.
- Panel thought that engaging a greater group of the population by creating a place for kids to do street art and paint over on a regular basis would be beneficial.

- Panel referenced the applicant to other successful art districts such as the Miami Wynwood Walls.

**END OF MINUTES**