

CITY OF VAUGHAN

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Meeting 91 – May 27, 2021

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, May 27, 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)

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

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

Absent

Ute Maya-Giambattista, SGL Planning & Design Inc.

STAFF

Rob Bayley, Urban Design

Shahzad Davoudi-Strike, Urban Design

Chrisa Assimopoulos, Urban Design

Shirley Marsh, Urban Design

Margaret Holyday, Development Planning

Nancy Tuckett, Development Planning

Marta Roias, Infrastructure Planning and Corporate Asset Management

Michelle Moretti, Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability
Michelle Samson, Economic Development

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am with Megan Torza 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 the HW400 & HW7 project

Wayne Swanton declared a conflict of interest on the HW400 & HW7 project

Peter Turner declared a conflict of interest on the HW400 & HW7 project

Alfredo Landaeta declared a conflict of interest on the HW400 & HW7 project

Henry Burstyn declared a conflict of interest on the 177 Whitmore project

3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES

Meeting minutes for April 29, 2021, were approved.

4. DESIGN REVIEW

177 Whitmore – Trinity Point Developments

Planning Consultant: Bousfields Inc.

Architect: IBI Group

Review: 1st Review

Introduction

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- How successfully has the project responded to the principles and the vision of the emerging Secondary Plan?
- What improvements can be made to the site organization to create opportunities for an integrated open space system and road network?

Overview

- **Overall Presentation** - Panel thanked the applicant for a comprehensive and thorough package and presentation, appreciating the depth and clarity of the work
- **Site Context and the pedestrian realm** – Panel raised concerns on the proposed density relatively to allocation of park space presented in the Secondary Plan.

The overall block/ precinct plan should take into account the microclimate impacts on the open space; tower heights and shadow/ wind impacts, placement and orientation of the towers relative to the open space

Panel was concerned that the scale of the corner treatment may not be supported by the users on site or visiting the site from adjacent properties. Further to that point the social court provided within the diagonal passageway may be perceived as private and as such negating the diagonal movement the public is invited to follow

Panel suggested enhancements along Whitmore and Highway 7 in support of the retail uses along those frontages

- **Hierarchy of space and circulation** – Panel spoke to differences in hierarchy suggested in the emerging Secondary Plan versus to what was presented. The Secondary Plan hasn't prioritized the intersection of Whitmore and Highway 7 and as such heights and densities are not anticipated in this corner but more in other areas of the Weston 7 Secondary Plan. As such the Panel questioned the gateway role of this property and the compatibility of this proposal and future development around that intersection.

Panel also raised a compatibility issue on the open space connectivity and hierarchy as the diagonal walkway is not anticipated in the Secondary Plan and therefore might be taking away the focus from north- south connections that are contemplated in the Secondary Plan

With respect to vehicular patterns, Panel noted that the internal street should be pedestrian-focused at its whole length and not only at the anticipated pedestrian crossing. Lobbies should be strongly connected to that ROW and pick and drop-off should be accommodated within close proximity to the residential lobbies

- **Architecture** – Materiality especially of the podiums should support pedestrian comfort and create a sense of enclosure. Panel asked the applicant to think carefully about the sustainability objectives and explore alternatives to the fully glass facades of the towers as well as how the frontage and the orientation of each tower can be considered from a glazing and solar access perspective

Comments

General

- Panel focused on the hierarchy of the open space, the circulation within and around the site, the treatment and animation of the pedestrian realm and the microclimate conditions and how all these elements tie into the emerging Weston 7 Secondary Plan.

- Panel encouraged the applicant to coordinate with the neighbors to the East to ensure that the vision presented in the Precinct plan will be achieved

Overall Site Organization and Context

- Panel spoke to the need to review closely the hierarchy anticipated within the Secondary Plan and the opportunities created in the area to locate and orient this development appropriately.
- Concerns were raised on the proposed densities relative to the parks existing and anticipated within the Secondary Plan area.
- Panel questioned the placement of the towers and overall organization of the site with respect to the emerging Weston 7 Secondary Plan and invited the applicant to reconsidered their proposal to closely follow the park, open space and built form alignment contemplated in the Secondary Plan.
- Further to the above, the back-of-house should be clearly identified and its location and treatment should be coordinated with the Secondary Plan. Currently, it is depicted at the North-east corner where the future entrance to a public thoroughfare from Highway 7 to the park is contemplated by the Secondary Plan. Considering the above Panel suggested that the gateway proposed at the North-west corner site moves to the North-east corner to create a strong connection between the park and Highway 7
- Concerns were raised by the Panel on how the social court at the corner of Whitmore and Highway 7 will be activated as currently it reads as a private space. If it is to be public then its public character will need to be readily addressed

Architecture, Built Form and Massing

- Panel questioned the scale and treatment proposed at the corner of Whitmore and Highway 7 considering that currently there isn't a planned context in support of that nor a mix of uses that would generate large numbers of people.
- It was noted by the Panel that the terraced podiums may be more appropriate compared to the continuous 8 storey podium contemplated in the Secondary Plan however materiality of the podiums should be revised to create pedestrian comfort and a sense of warmth and enclosure.
- Panel questioned whether the articulation of the North-west corner through multiple columns would be successful and suggested that a stronger character may be achieved through limiting the number of columns proposed
- Considering the location of the project Panel suggested more flexibility in the proposed uses. Especially the units along Highway 7 between the retail and the tower could host employment or other complementary uses.
- The roofs of the townhouses will need to be treated appropriately as they will be prominently visible from the towers

Hierarchy of open space and circulation

- At a Block/ Precinct plan level, two cul-de-sacs from Wings Rd. that wouldn't intersect the North-south future POPS road were suggested. At this stage one of

the cul-de-sacs will be provided to accommodate the drop-off and can be extended in future phases to form part of that “loop” road

- Considering the location of the park on one side of the development the pedestrian character of the mews will need to be enhanced and established throughout the whole length of the mews, acknowledging that some vehicular traffic will need to be accommodated therein such as pick up and drop-off, deliveries etc. With the appropriate treatment, such as curb-less edges and decorative paving, a balanced approach between vehicles and pedestrians can be achieved,
- Further to the above location of lobbies should take into account the pedestrian circulation within the site and to transit, accessibility and pick up and drop-off; while being clearly visible and strongly relating to the public/ pedestrian realm. The two middle lobbies should be therefore reconsidered as to how they address the street and respond to the criteria above, while the lobbies to the south could gain access from the mews if its pedestrian character is established appropriately.
- Panel noted that the landscape treatment along Highway 7 will need to be upgraded to create pedestrian scaled spaces to support the retail uses, engage and activate the public realm and create pedestrian comfort

Microclimate

- For the overall block/ precinct plan Panel raised concerns on the microclimate impacts on the open space; tower heights and shadow/ wind impacts, placement, orientation, sculpting and materiality of the towers relative to the open space
- More specifically to the above, Panel raised concerns on the microclimate conditions created at the public space orientated around and through the corner of Whitmore and Highway 7 as it will be exposed to prevailing winds due to its location and orientation and with no access to sunlight due to design

HW400 & HW7 – SmartCentres REIT

Architect: Turner Fleischer Architects
Landscape Architect: MHBC Landscape
Review: 1st Review

Introduction

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- How successfully has the project responded to the principles and the vision of the emerging Secondary Plan?
- At the urban block scale considering the DRP comments on the master plan (Feb 2020), how successful is Phase #1 and how can the site organization change to create opportunities for a successful public realm

Overview

- **Overall Presentation** –Panel thanked the applicant for a comprehensive package and presentation and
- **Compatibility with the emerging Secondary Plan** – Panel noted that diagrams should be provided speaking to each of the considerations of the Secondary Plan and how the proposal has addressed the themes and intent.

Regarding the open space, Panel raised concerns about the scale of the open space available to the public, its position and visibility on the site and whether its public character can be truly achieved when it is accessed through a network of private roads

- **Phasing of the Development** – Panel noted that phase #1 of this development being at the center of the block and not on a ROW where development is already occurring enhances this project being isolated
- **Site Organization and Connectivity** – Panel questioned the nature of connectivity to the site from a pedestrian perspective. The physical proximity to amenities may be not translate to good connectivity if the pedestrian linkage to them is mired with unfavorable conditions. Density will then need to be reviewed under this light to ensure that residents wouldn't be required to walk across the HW400 to get to key amenities.

A clear distinction and a strong connection between public space and private amenities needs to be established to ensure that there is no uncharacterized space that is left unutilized

With regards to main building entrances, they would all need to be clearly visible and strongly relating to the street, offering weather protection and the required drop-off areas in close proximity

Panel asked for more details on the spine road running through the development

- **Accessibility** – Panel encouraged the applicant to review this project under the light of the increasing diversity within the population living in high-rise condominiums in this part of Ontario and their mobility and accessibility needs during all seasons and at all weather conditions. Site organization, Architecture and Landscape design should contribute towards accessibility
- **Architecture** – Panel questioned the balcony approach on the towers from a seasonality/ feasibility of use and sustainability perspective

Ensure that Building C addresses the street appropriately and that the wall presented to the pedestrian realm along the public street is mitigated through active uses at the base and animated built form

Comments

General

- Panel focused on the activation and programming of the ground floor and the amenity areas, the integration with the existing and future context in terms of scale and placement of buildings, streetscape design, diversity and accessibility

- A more detailed Area plan should have been included in the presentation showing the pedestrian and mobility connections between the site, the buildings and the surrounding context

Site Context and Organization

- Panel noted that though a connotation to a continuous street network through Phase 1 that is still not evident on the plans. Also, though a conscious effort for the buildings to respond to landscape is evident, it still seems that there is a missing piece in terms of an actual park that will be significant enough to serve this community
- Panel noted the great physical separation between this site and the VMC. Though the VMC is at a close physical proximity the pedestrian connection between the two is not pedestrian focused nor encouraging
- Further to the above greater attention should be paid to the community being built in the Weston 7 especially at the proposed density; currently the project is not closely connected to transit and it is lacking richness at the ground floor plane.
- Panel raised concerns on the connectivity to the west as the proposed Building C hasn't taken into account desire lines and doesn't allow for a successful integration

Pedestrian Realm

- Panel noted that at the base of the towers active uses should be programmed to enhance the public character of the linear park and other common areas. Bringing residential uses at grade and relying on the landscape to create a pedestrian thoroughfare might not be a successful strategy. Variety along the spine road that will be inviting to pedestrians should be introduced
- The juxtaposition of the towers and Building C seems unbalanced with permeability on one side and a long continuous mass on the other. Panel was concerned on the experience that is created at the ground level as well as Building C putting a strong stop to the permeability suggested on the east side of the site
- The pedestrian experience along all other streets other than the spine road should be enhanced and designed with more detail, providing an upgraded streetscape design
- Panel raised concerns on the functional quality of the open spaces as oftentimes a tower in the park design approach creates amenity spaces that are vague and nebulous in terms of their character and use and such they result in being underutilized. Panel suggested that a more robust functional programming is introduced along the spine road in order to engage that edge, invite people to populate and use those spaces and overall create a community between the towers and Building C
- Consider, as the design advances, diversity of age, cultural backgrounds and mobility needs of the groups that may potentially populate the proposed buildings. The transition between the indoors and outdoors will then need to be made as seamless as possible while the public amenity spaces at grade should

be barrier-free accessible. As such items of concern would be: the drop-off locations and weather protected main entrances and drop-offs, seasonality and accessibility of personal private amenity spaces such as balconies and barrier-free design for all ground floor public amenity.

Architecture

- Currently, two distinct Architectural expressions are being proposed on the two sides of the spine road, one is an urban 15-storey building and the other is towers-in-park, however both will need to enhance their relationship with the street contributing to a more pedestrian scaled streetscape. For all buildings, an effort to find some terracing in the width can help in that direction. Specifically, for the 15-storey building Panel suggested that it is redesigned in scale and with a different distribution of mass while the towers can draw stronger direct connections to the street
- Panel commented on the Architectural expression, which is dependent mostly on from the wrap-around balconies and less so on the shape of the towers, and as such it might not be as successful. Panel encouraged the applicant to look for more sustainable design strategies

END OF MINUTES