

CITY OF VAUGHAN

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Minutes of Meeting

Meeting 67 – October 25, 2018

The Design Review Panel met on Thursday, October 25, 2018 in Committee Room 241, City Hall, 141 Major MacKenzie Drive, Vaughan

PANEL MEMBERS

Present

Alfredo Landaeta, AL-UD (Acting Chair)

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Ute Maya-Giambattista, SGL Planning & Design Inc.

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

Sheldon Levitt, Quadrangle Architects Ltd.

Absent

Antonio Gómez-Palacio, DIALOG (Chair)

Megan Torza, DTAH (Vice-Chair)

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

STAFF

Rob Bayley, Urban Design

Amy Roots, Urban Design

Shahzad Davoudi-Strike, Urban Design

Misha Bereznyak, Urban Design

Gilda Giovane, Urban Design

Chrisa Assimopoulos, Urban Design
Gaston Soucy, Urban Design
Shelby Blundell, Cultural Heritage Coordinator
Judy Jeffers, Development Planning
Stephen Lue, Development Planning
Gerardo Paez Alonso, Parks Development
Jennifer Cappola Logullo, Development Engineering

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

1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Sheldon Levitt declared a conflict of interest with the first item.

3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES

Meeting Minutes for September 27, 2018 were approved.

4. DESIGN REVIEW

1. Expo City Tower 5

Architecture: Quadrangle Architects Limited
Landscape Architect: DTAH
Review: 2nd Review

Introduction

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

1. How successful is the overall architectural expression of the façade?
2. How successful is the revised design in responding to the first round of DRP comments on resolving:
 - Vehicular circulation wrapping a majority of the site
 - More focus on the northern frontage and pedestrian connections to Edgeley Pond and Park
 - Resolution of the podium design, setbacks and public realm interface

3. How successful is the design of the ramp and structures within the site?

Overview

Panel commended the applicant on a comprehensive and thoughtful proposal. There was overall consensus that the project is evolving in the right direction. Panel summarized the comments into the following categories:

- **Vehicular circulation, layby and access** – There is concern regarding the proposed location and safe functioning of the ramp and layby in relation to the anticipated vehicular circulation along the driveway. Other locations for the layby should be explored including eliminating it altogether. Alternatively, consider raising the entire layby area with rolled curbs to create a clear separation from the driveway to public space and discourage thru-traffic from using the space as a shortcut. This simple move would also improve the connections between the park and the building and help consolidate and strengthen the pedestrianized environment and overall landscape strategy. Explore alternate solutions to resolve the potential conflict from vehicles entering /exiting the ramp and vehicular traffic entering/exiting Maplecrete Road.
- **Podium location** – The move to setback the podium farther away from Highway 7 was well received and thought to be a clear and strong urban design move that not only provides breathing room to the overall development but enhances the pedestrian realm.
- **Landscape and public realm** – The overall high-quality landscape strategy was well received. The panel encouraged the applicant to maintain this high-standard as the project moves forward. The strong design commitment to the public realm should be consistent to the end.
- **Servicing** – There are concerns about the only local street façade along Maplecrete Road being perceived as a service access area. More information needs to be provided on design strategies to mitigate the negative effect on the public realm.
- **Building massing** – The proposed high-quality design and material selection was well received. The panel encouraged the applicant to maintain this high-standard as the project moves forward. Refinements to the design and selection of windows and fenestrations are required to help animate and soften the monolithic character of the tower.

Comments

Site Organization and Landscape

- Provide more information on a wayfinding strategy as there is currently no clear sense of wayfinding to suggest where the building's entrance is from Highway 7 or Maplecrete Road.
- The project would benefit from additional analysis on how the ground floor works to better understand general circulation and location of services and accesses. More

questions should be asked: how will deliveries be handled? Where would a truck go and park when arriving to the site? How does the interim condition work?

- The location, design and/or presence of the layby should be reconsidered as it does not seem to be beneficial for the pedestrian realm at its current location. The current layout allows for it to be used as a shortcut for actual vehicular traffic. Consider relocating it or eliminating it altogether.
- Location of the vehicular ramp was questioned, as it is in the middle of what should be a pedestrian-first area and creates concerns regarding potential conflicts between vehicles coming in/out of the ramp and traffic from the 2-way driveway. Consider relocating it closer to the proposed loading area within the building to consolidate vehicular uses in one place away from the pedestrian-friendly public realm on the north side.
- Consider simplifying and integrating the vehicular and pedestrian realms throughout the site with cleaner and more direct moves. The connection to the park and Edgeley Pond is an excellent opportunity to design something special at the north side with landscaped areas, rolled curbs and woonerf solutions that create one continuous, pedestrian friendly plaza.
- Panel suggested looking into relocating the parking stairs/vent volume along the Highway 7 frontage as it is currently protruding from the ground and interfering with the openness of the landscaped space.
- Consider a more permanent and sustainable 'heritage' solution to the trees being proposed above the underground parking slab as they are currently designed to be replaced in 40 years. Study shifting pedestrian access to take off slab so that at least some trees could be planted unencumbered.

Massing and Architecture

- In spite of the visual strength from the elegant staggering of the tower volumes, the architectural expression and materiality of the building is still very monolithic. The design moves to create deep window mullion caps are not strong enough to break the monotony and create the desired expression and variety that can stand the test of time. It was proposed that the balcony depth should be more visible/evident to help animate the façade more, break the monotony and recreate the window depth from the original proposal which gave it a more desirable residential feel – at least along the podium levels where it is more visible from the ground. The balcony guards' style should also be reevaluated as the currently-proposed metal pickets do not match the rest of the building's aesthetics.
- The wind mitigation strategies – trees, podium canopies and window fins – might not be enough to create a comfortable public realm. Consider alternatives to address wind concerns at pedestrian levels.
- The canopy at the podium is too large, high and not at a pedestrian scale. It does not provide a comfortable human scale, nor proper weather protection to pedestrians.
- Consider a stronger gesture at the pedestrian entrance that clearly demarcates the building's main access point.

- The originally-proposed concept of a pedestrian ‘green’ ramp connection from the park to the building’s podium was lost due to functional and massing issues. Perhaps a ‘visual’ green linkage might help re-establish this connection between the building and the park.
- Consider bringing down some of the materiality from the tower to the podium to better integrate the two and visually allow for the heavier tower to connect to the ground. Alternatively, consider glass from the podium to move up to the tower.
- There were questions as to how the ground floor lobby space would function as an open, free-flowing space without affecting privacy and security. The separation between the public (café, gallery access) and the private, residential lobby should be addressed by considering separate entrances.

2. VMC East Block-Phase 1

Architecture: Diamond Schmitt Architects
 Landscape Architect: Claude Cormier + Associés
 Review: 1st Review

Introduction

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

1. How successful is the overall site organization, including land use distribution, circulation, loading and servicing, access and public realm design?
2. How successful is the design of the podium in framing the open space and public realm, and in reflecting the spirit of the precedents?

Overview

Panel thanked the applicant for the detailed presentation and appreciated the overall rationale provided in the package. Panel summarized the comments into the following categories:

- **Phasing** – While the panel commended the applicant on the overall preliminary design strategy and approach, and understanding that the application is for Phase 1 (north part of the site) only, there was concern that not looking at both the north and south phases together presents a challenge in understanding the overall functioning and performance of the entire project. Panel asked the applicant to consider a more holistic approach that further develops Phase 2 in terms of massing, connectivity, traffic, shadowing, winds, etc. in order to make more informed decisions moving forward with Phase 1.

- **Sun and Shadows** – Panel expressed great concern from the shadow studies provided as they show a negative impact from the south-west podium and tower on the proposed open courtyard. Furthermore, the potential shadows from the Phase 2 development to the south would put the proposed open spaces in Phase 1 under permanent shadows for most of the year.
- **Building Massing and Expression** – The podium’s height was deemed to be too high by the panel members. At 8-storeys, it is 2-storeys taller than the Secondary Plan built form policies and is not achieving the desired pedestrian-friendly scale. Panel agreed that the expression and materiality of the podiums and towers should also be looked at to create more architectural diversity.

Comments

Site Organization and Landscape

- It was recommended that both phases - 1 (north) and 2 (south) - should be studied at the same time to better understand their effects and implications on each other. Items like traffic, wind and shadow impacts as well as connectivity, should be explored in more detail.
- While the panel applauded the proposal of the privately owned, publicly accessible corner plazas and central courtyard, there were serious concerns regarding wind speeds and shadow casting on these areas. Special attention was drawn to the 2 diagonal plaza accesses, as they appear to be under long-term shadowing for most of the year. Consider looking ahead at the Phase 2 development design as it could have a negative effect on the central landscaped courtyard by also exposing it to shadows for most of the year. Wind speeds were of particular concern at the pinch points between the diagonal connections and the central courtyard resulting in unfavourable micro-climate conditions.
- Consider additional strategies to mitigate high winds and lack of sun at central courtyard and north-east and north-west diagonal connections. Consider bouncing light into the space. Consider planting that is resilient to wind and shadow conditions.
- Creating a summary of the comprehensive wind study would help the panel better understand the wind impact more efficiently.
- The current tree planting strategy at the central courtyard would require trees to be replaced after approximately 45 years. Consider a tree planting strategy that allows for a more sustainable, longer tree lifespan.
- The panel was supportive of the inclusion of rental units as part of the development.
- The panel questioned the idea of deleting the north-south road with respect to the portion providing access to the office development to the south, as it will help alleviate the development’s access and servicing. Consider a woonerf solution to maintain a pedestrian-friendly, functional connection.

- Panel recommended carefully studying the relationship between the landscape courtyard to the north and the proposed mid-block open space to the south. Special attention should be placed on the design of visual and physical connections, building placement and proposed active uses.
- Consider studying the pedestrian flow between the north and south blocks with more detail as there will be a greater amount of movement towards the south to take advantage of the connections to public transit and Transit Square. The design of the phase 2 development's south façades and public realm will be extremely important.
- Consider flipping the northwest entrance plaza to the southwest to enhance the pedestrian flow through the site.

Massing and Architecture

- The panel agreed that the expression of the towers may need to vary as the design evolves further and encouraged the applicant to look at the larger scale to ensure that repetition in context is avoided. The podium expression and materiality should also be reconsidered as it was deemed to be lacking the finer craft/grain and monumental qualities recommended in the Urban Design Guidelines. Energy performance of buildings should be considered as predominantly glass façades are highly inefficient.
- While the panel liked how the proposed landscaped courtyard was framed from three sides, it was determined that a lower, 6-storey podium would create a better, pedestrian-friendly scale on the overall composition of the space. The same applies to the exterior periphery along all four roads.
- Consider relocating the towers, chamfering back buildings at the south-east and south west corners and/or stepping-back the podium's 5th and 6th storeys to allow for maximum sun penetration to the central courtyard.
- There is concern regarding the pinch point at the north-west and north-east corners diagonal pedestrian connections as the podiums compress and funnel to the central courtyard. Besides the negative wind and shadow impact, the facing distance between podium units at those narrow connections might compromise the resident's privacy. Consider widening the distance to something more appropriate.
- If a building has shared uses, contemplate creating separate lobbies for each use. Consider relocating lobbies towards the centre of the buildings, away from corners and adding retail and community spaces at the southern ends of both buildings.
- Consider creating more porosity and flexibility at the ground floor level by having smaller, retail uses – and/or community spaces – spread out along the periphery. Expanding retail or a potential community use towards the central courtyard should also be considered to help animate the space.
- Consider opening the ground floor residential units to the courtyard common space and giving them a small private 'back yard' area that is visually buffered from the public

central space with low fencing and/or dense planting. Creating a secondary access from the courtyard space to the ground floor residential units would also allow for flexibility, as these could be easily converted to commercial uses with independent accesses if required.

- Study the possibility of spreading amenity space to all 3 buildings as opposed to centralizing it in one area. One option could study adding a rooftop bridge to connect all rooftops and create amenity spaces on all 3 podiums. Inclusion of at grade amenity space was encouraged.
- While relocating most loading and garbage below grade was most welcomed, leaving only one single garbage collection area on the north building's ground floor might prove to be an operational problem for such a large-scaled project. It was strongly recommended that this should be looked at in more detail to guarantee that it is not undersized.
- Portage is becoming too service oriented. Concentrating servicing, loading and parking along Portage Parkway is creating a negative effect on the pedestrian realm. Consider activating this area with more uses and animating the blank façades to improve the pedestrian experience.
- Parking access ramp on west building could open to Millway Avenue to eliminate any curb-cuts and vehicular traffic along the sidewalk.

3. 89 & 99 Nashville Road, Village of Kleinburg

Architecture: Rafael + Bigauskas Architects
Landscape Architect: Strybos Barron King Landscape Architecture
Review: 1st Review

Introduction

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

1. Please provide comments on the overall framework and site integration including built form, massing, pedestrian circulation, amenity area, and servicing and loading?
2. How successful is the interface along Regional Road 27 and Nashville Road in the context of the Kleinburg-Nashville Heritage Conservation District?

Overview

Panel thanked the applicant for the thorough presentation and appreciated the cross sections and renderings provided in the package. Panel commented that:

- The quality of the development should feel more like a village instead of dense residential housing. Provide an opportunity to see around buildings and open up the amenity area, between units #11 and #12, by remove 2-3 units.
- To ensure the heritage houses are well located and clearly communicate to the public that they are heritage homes, Panel asked the applicant to consider the alignment and placement of the structures.
- Panel commented on the podium wall on Regional Road 27 (RR 27) and the massive scale. They asked the applicant to consider revising the stone wall so that it is not flush with the brick above.

Comments

Site Layout

- Panel questioned the leftover spaces and wedges and noted that they appeared to be unusable.
- Panel asked the applicant if they had considered grouping up some units, so residents could have views out of the development. The wedges and slots are too tight.
- Panel asked the applicant to consider opening the gap between units #11 and #12 to provide view to amenity area.
- To create a village feeling instead of dense residential housing Panel recommended removing some units.
- Stairs from the central green connecting to the south should be considered to integrate the public landscape with the private amenity area.
- The spacing around the heritage homes is too tight and could use 3 additional meters between them.
- Panel noted that the alignment of the heritage homes, could benefit from a slightly skewed alignment rather than a strict alignment.
- Panel recommended that the townhome block (units #3 and #4) lose one floor or provide more space beside 89 Nashville Rd. The scale of the block appears overwhelming next to the heritage home.

Architecture

- Panel questioned the differentiation between the entry doors internal to the development versus along RR 27.
- Panel commented that the mill wall along RR 27 is too massive and the units appear repetitive.
- To improve the interface along RR 27, Panel suggested bringing the brick materiality all the way down or alternatively to provide a physical break and setback above the stone wall to reduce the scale.
- Reconsider use of fake field stone to express historic style architecture.

- Review material palette for quality and simplicity for elegant and attractive housing to promote the valuable property.
- Panel recommended reviewing the Loretto Lofts, on 385 Brunswick St. in Toronto, as an example of Victorian-Georgian housing.