



CITY OF VAUGHAN

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Minutes of Meeting

Meeting 48 – September 29, 2016

The Design Review Panel met on Thursday, September 29, 2016 in Committee Room 243, City Hall, 2141 Major Mackenzie Drive, Vaughan

PANEL MEMBERS

Present

Sheldon Levitt, Quadrangle Architects Ltd. (Chair)

Alfredo Landaeta, AL-UD

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio Landscape Architecture and Urban Design

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

Megan Torza, DTAH

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Paul Kulig, Perkins+Will

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

Absent

Antonio Gómez-Palacio, DIALOG (Chair)

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

Drew Sinclair, SvN

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Santiago Kunzle, Montgomery Sisam Architects Inc.

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

STAFF

Rob Bayley, Urban Design and Cultural Heritage

Moira Wilson, Urban Design and Cultural Heritage

Shahzad Davoudi-Strike, Urban Design

Behnaz Djabarouti, Urban Design

Audrey Farias, Urban Design

Stephen Lue, Development Planning

Mark Antoine, Development Planning

The meeting was called to order at 9:15 am with Sheldon Levitt in the Chair

1. **CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA**

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Peter Turner declared a Conflict of Interest for item #2.

3. **ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

Meeting Minutes for August 25, 2016 were approved.

4. **APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION**

1. **Expo City Phase 2**

Architect: AJ Tregebov Architect

Location: North East corner of Maplecrete Road and Highway 7, Vaughan
Metropolitan Centre

Review: First Review

Introduction:

City staff sought the Panel's advice on the following:

- How the design of Phase 2 could be improved to better activate and engage the mid-block public realm and frontage connecting to the future Edgeley Pond and Park (to be designed by the City in 2017)?
- Is the architecture and massing successful in addressing the policy context and intent of the design guidelines?

Staff Presentation:

Shahrzad Davoudi-Strike, Urban Design

Overview:

- In the context of the proposed density and the anticipated volumes of traffic from both within and outside of the site, the proposed central courtyard layout does not adequately address functional circulation or navigation issues for either pedestrians or vehicles.
- Panel questioned the skewed orientation applied in repetition to all the towers and site plan layout which, all together, creates "*tremendous monotony in the whole design*".

- Panel recommended that the architect reexamine the proposed window wall cladding of the towers to explore more sustainable options and add more visual interest to the elevations.
- The north-south pedestrian passageway through the building should be designed with greater prominence and consideration of the pedestrian experience through the site. The architecture does not do enough to signify that this is an important connection or convey its public nature.

Comments:

Site Plan

Loading

- The organization of loading for all four buildings has been organized in a rational and coherent manner.

Central Courtyard

- Panel expressed concern regarding the nature of the central courtyard. The proposed idea of the central courtyard as a pedestrian priority place does not translate into the Site Plan which, *“feels like a car place”*.
- More careful consideration needs to be paid to the allocation of space for all the various activities and functions that will happen in the central courtyard, including short term deliveries, daycare drop offs, morning and evening peak hour traffic volume, visitor arrivals etc..
- Panel strongly recommended the removal of the underground ramp from the north side of the central courtyard to reduce the number of vehicles in this area proposed as pedestrian priority. It was noted that the resulting improvement in the pedestrian experience will also work to strengthen the retail experience for towers 3 and 4.
- The connections through the central courtyard are not clear. Further detailed drawings are needed (including sections) to clearly understand and represent the relational experience of place, the critical connections, how activity will flow at grade, relationships to amenity spaces, and how people will move through the buildings and the site.
- More generous and safe pedestrian spaces and connections are needed. There are pedestrian safety concerns with regards to crossing the driveway (street) north-south multiple times to reach the building entrances, especially for wheelchairs. The same issue of how pedestrians move through the site in the east-west direction was also raised. Consideration should be paid to a strong pedestrian desire line going through the central courtyard from both outside and within the site.

- Pedestrian sidewalks should be more generous and with weather protection. The proposed sidewalks are minimum width with clearways constrained in places between the building and planters.
- With a 6.5m wide vehicular travel width, on-street parking will spill over into the sidewalk.

Architecture

The five towers of Expo City will have a significant visual impact on the sky line of the VMC. Panel discussed how the architectural expression will contribute to the experience of place.

- The proposed towers look banal. More variety is needed within the family including use of detail, material quality and colour to articulate the design intent. *“They can’t just be big, solid, glass blocks.”*
- Panel requested that the architect consider a more sustainable approach to design and materials of the towers. Concern was expressed for using the window wall method with no solar shading, noting that more advanced technologies are available. If the project uses window wall, consider what sustainable elements can be added to detail the façades and break the monotony.
- Active frontages of the architecture along all streets need to be strengthened.
- There is not a clear mid-block connection through the galleria north of the courtyard. The galleria needs to be wider, taller, more transparent and more evident. The heavy corten steel on top of the galleria does not contribute to the pedestrian experience.
- The pavilion idea could be stronger and more focused, framing something happening on the ground plane in front of it.
- The development proposal needs an insertion of the residential scale and quality. The expression of the north elevation podium, in both materials and scale, feels more commercial than residential.
- Panel expressed concern about the portions of towers that reach the ground without a podium and the resulting negative impacts. This is a powerful, expressive gesture that should only be used as a contextual response in strategic locations, to maximize public space, and mindful of the impact of wind on the public realm. Panel suggested wrapping the corner pavilion of tower 4 to reduce the exposed tower foot print in order to mitigate some of the adverse environmental effects and enlarge the retail footprint facing the park.
- Panel encouraged the architect to reorient towers 3 and 4 and to reconfigure the landscape plan to break from the skewed pattern. It was noted that the shape and angles that a pedestrian will have to move through within the site does not follow natural desire lines.

Landscape

- The landscape plan of the central courtyard should be more bold and dramatic. It was noted that many people will be looking down onto the landscape from the towers above.
- Do not use coloured asphalt for the roadway but rather concrete or pavers.
- Courtyard is inhospitable in its current design with no wind mitigation. The shadow impacts of Towers 1 and 2 also need to be considered.
- Pedestrian areas should be continuous, generous and connected. A detailed drawing of the central courtyard supported by elevations is needed to understand the interface with all the edges.

2. File Number: Z.15.023, DA.15.022

Applicant: Norstar Group of Companies
Architect: Turner Fleischer Architects
Location: 1176 Rutherford Road (Carville)
Review: Second Review

Introduction:

City staff sought the Panel's advice on the following:

- Does the site organization and architecture achieve the vision and principles of the Carville District Centre?
- How successful is the revised concept in encouraging pedestrian movement and presence through the site with connections to the surrounding open space creating a vibrant public realm?

Staff Presentation:

Shahrzad Davoudi-Strike, Urban Design

Overall:

- This submission is more in alignment with the Secondary Plan vision than the previous proposal.
- Overall the site is too crowded and the final expression of this site will be compromised by that crowding. The open space needs to be increased to be more substantial and meaningful. Mid-rise scale could be introduced.

- While the diagonals (east-west connections) are a bold gesture and create graphic interest, the symmetry does not create a practical central open space. Panel recommended exploring alternate options to improve the scheme.
- The quality of the architecture needs to be further refined to reduce the perceived massing of the tower, reduce shadow impacts, better transition from tower to townhouse scale, and for a more meaningful corner at Rutherford and Dufferin.

Comments:

Site Plan / Landscape

- The current proposal feels like the overall amount of outdoor amenity space has been reduced, while the unit count has increased. Some reconfiguration is needed and an open space hierarchy established to create more significant landscape and higher quality amenity spaces.
- The bold diagonals of the two east-west paths from Dufferin through the site does not create a good quality central green, given the relocation of the ramp to this area. The ramp has created a fragmented open space. Additionally the view terminus from the open space to the architecture (townhouses) created as a result of this geometry needs to be re-considered.
- The grade change along Rutherford frontage has created a challenge for site permeability; the garage elevator can be relocated into the building to create a gap between the podium and the townhouse for a set of stairs to connect the internal space to the street.
- The 1.2m distance from the face of the townhouses to the sidewalk on the internal street is not sufficient for tree planting.
- Creating a multi-trail path on the TRCA lands is a great gesture. The Panel encourages proper completion of the design, integration with the broader trail network, and consideration of the maintenance regime through engagement with the Conservation Authority and City.

Architecture

- The scheme is an improvement by making the corner of Dufferin and Rutherford into something of significance with the proposed tower. However, Panel encouraged the architect to explore other options to the tower rather than simply an extrusion of the base. The floor plate of the tower (895 m² on floors 13 and up) creates a heavy visual mass, and the proportion of the tower in relation to the townhouses, is overwhelming. The tower should be more slender (750 – 800 m²), with a smaller footprint, and perhaps more rectangular to reduce the impacts of shadowing and on the sky view.
- The podium at the corner seems to be a hybrid expression. Is it a tower-podium relationship or a unique expression at that corner with a relationship to microclimate, sun/shadow, and wind?

- Suggest eliminating chamfering the corner of the tower; create a bold form for the tower to own the corner. The tower can be rectangular oriented along Dufferin Street to reduce the shadow impact. Explore if the mass of the tower can reach the ground to mark the corner with a bold movement.
- Suggest the introduction of a mid-rise piece to help break up the massing.
- In order to create an engaging tower, rely more on the design of the massing and less on the envelope.
- Materiality of the tower seems to be still in progress, the balcony proportions are good but the design can be simplified to a more singular expression for the corner.
- The Block 6 south units are 1 storey lower than the north units which has created blank walls facing the street; these units should match the elevation height of the back units.
- The pedestrian connection through the lobby should be visually stronger, regardless of whether or not it is a controlled access. The building would be interesting if you could see through the building to the space beyond. The landscape beyond the lobby should be something more significant than a 1.2m wide planting area between street and townhouses.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.