

CITY OF VAUGHAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL AGENDA: MEETING 1 – October 27, 2011

City Hall, 2141 Major Mackenzie Drive, Committee Room 244, Second Level

- 9:00 am** **Welcome Introduction**
John MacKenzie, Commissioner of Planning
- 9:10 am** **Introduction of Design Review Panel Members**
Appointment of Chair
- 9:30 am** **City of Toronto Design Review Panel Process and Procedures**
Presented by Leo DeSorcy And Hamish Goodwin, City of Toronto
- 10:15 am** **Break**
- 10:30 am** **City of Vaughan Official Plan and VMC Secondary Plan Design Policies**
Presented by Diana Birchall, Director of Policy Planning
- 11:15 am** **Break**
- 11:30 am** **Development Application**
2900 Regional Road 7
Expo City of Vaughan
- 12:30** **Lunch**
- 1:00** **Adjournment**

CITY OF VAUGHAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL AGENDA: MEETING 2 – November 24, 2011

City Hall, 2141 Major Mackenzie Drive, Committee Room 243, Second Level

- 9:00 am Call to Order**
Chair's Review of Meeting Agenda
Confirmation of October 27th Minutes of Meeting
- 9:10 am Discussion by Design Review Panel Members**
Procedures and Protocol of Design Review Panel for First 6 Months
(ie. Interim Chair and Vice-Chair)
- 9:30 am Highway #7 & Interchange Way Development Proposal**
Pre-Application for Site Plan, 1st Review
Easton Development (VMC)
Presentations:
Christina Napoli, Development Planning; Farhad Jalili, Urban Design
Robin Clark Architect / Paradigm Architecture and Design
- 10:40 am Break**
- 10:50 am 7777 Weston Road**
Application for Site Plan
Liberty Development Corporation
Presentations:
Christina Napoli, Development Planning; Farhad Jalili, Urban Design
Kirkor Architects Incorporated
- 12:00 pm Lunch**
- 12:30 pm Rutherford Market Place**
Site Plan Application
FCHT Holdings Incorporated
Presentations:
Laura Janotta, Development Planning; Farhad Jalili, Urban Design
Pellow Architects Incorporated
- 1:40 pm Adjournment**



CITY OF VAUGHAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL AGENDA: MEETING 3 – December 15, 2011

City Hall, 2141 Major Mackenzie Drive, Committee Room 243, Second Level

- 9:00 am Call to Order**
Chair's Review of Meeting Agenda
Disclosure of Interest
Confirmation of November 24th Minutes of Meeting
- 9:10 am Discussion by Design Review Panel Members**
Procedures and Protocol of Design Review Panel for First 6 Months
(ie. Items requiring clarification by staff)
- 9:30 am Greetings to Design Review Panel Members**
Clayton D. Harris, City Manager
- 9:45 am Break**
- 10:00 am Bathurst & Beverley Glen Development**
Application for Site Plan, 1st Review
Liberty Development Corporation
Presentations:
Laura Janotta, Development Planning; Moira Wilson, Urban Design
Kirkor Architects Incorporated
- 11:10 am Break**
- 11:20 am Highway #7 & Wigwoss Drive Development**
Application for Site Plan, 1st Review
2190647 Ontario Inc.
Presentations:
Eugene Fera, Development Planning; Farhad Jalili, Urban Design
A. J. Tregebov Architect
- 12:30 pm Lunch**
- 1:00 pm Adjournment**



CITY OF VAUGHAN

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Minutes of Meeting

Meeting 1 – October 27, 2011

The Design Review Panel met on Thursday October 27, 2011, in Committee Room 244, City Hall, 2141 Major Mackenzie Drive, Vaughan, Ontario, at 9:00 am.

PANEL MEMBERS

Present

Antonio Gomez-Palacio, DIALOG (Chair)
Brad Golden, Brad Golden & Co. Public Art Consulting
Bruce Cudmore, EDA Collaborative Inc.
Harold Madi, The Planning Partnership Ltd.
Janis Fedorowick, Wavefront Planning & Design
Lisa Harmey, Architecture for Humanity
Mansoor, Kazerouni, Page & Steele/ IBI Group Architects
Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Inc. Architects
Paul Nodwell, Schollen & Co. Landscape Architects Inc.
Richard Witt, RAW
Santiago Kunzle, Montgomery Sisam Architects Inc.
Drew Sinclair, planningAlliance & regionalArchitects
Sony Rai, Diamond and Schmitt Architect Inc.

Absent

Sheldon Levitt, Quadrangle Architects Ltd.

STAFF

John Mackenzie, Commissioner of Planning
Grant Uyeyama, Director of Development Planning
Diana Birchall, Director of Policy Planning
Rob Bayley, Manager of Urban Design
Moira Wilson, Urban Design
Farhad Jalili, Urban Design
Christina Napoli, Senior Planner
Lucy D'Acunto, Administrative Assistant

1. INTRODUCTION AND PRESENTATIONS

- John Mackenzie, Commissioner of Planning, opened Meeting One of the Design Review Panel.
- Leo DeSorcy, City of Toronto, presented City of Toronto Design Review Panel Process and Procedures.
- Diana Birchall, City of Vaughan, presented the City of Vaughan Official Plan and the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan Design Policies.

2. OTHER ITEMS

City of Vaughan Design Review Panel process and protocol was discussed. It was agreed that at every fourth meeting, the schedule will include time to discuss proposed adjustments to meeting rules as required. This may be scheduled more frequently within the first six months. Development Planning Department will issue Design Review Panel Procedures and Protocol prior to the next meeting.

The Panel appointed an Interim-Chair, Antonio Gomez-Palacio, for the purpose of the first Design Review Panel meeting with the understanding that the Chair would be elected by Panel Members at the next Design Review Panel meeting, November 24, 2011.

3. APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION

Vaughan Site Plan Application

File no: DA.11.058 (EXPO VAUGHAN METROPOLITAN CENTRE)

Applicant: Mario Cortellucci

Location: 2900 Regional Road 7, On the East Side of Jane Street, North of Regional Road 7

Architect: AJ Tregebov Architect

Review: First Review

Introduction:

City staff outlined the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre area context, history, and policies, and sought Panel's advice on the following:

1. The project is the first mixed-use high rise development proposed for the new Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. Does the architecture and site organization adequately address the physical and policy context?
2. How could the design be improved to better activate and engage the public realm - both open spaces and the proposed street network/ Avenue Seven interface - in Vaughan's new urban centre?

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement

Panel felt that to fulfill the potential for this project's contribution to the public realm, the following aspects of site organization and architectural design should be further considered:

Gateway

The concept of a “gateway” was discussed given the visual prominence of the site. The Panel highlighted that the towers, especially the future south west tower, will be gateway buildings for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. Therefore, the south west tower should engage the street grid pattern, and in particular, Regional Road 7.

Tower

The Panel noted that the towers have a floorplate larger than the 750 sq. m. maximum outlined in the VMC Secondary Plan Built Form Guidelines.

The Panel felt that the rotation of the towers 17° from the street grid, combined with the choice of tinted glazing, will create the overall visual effect of increased volume and bulkiness. Clear rather than tinted glazing was recommended by a Panel Member as an alternative material to minimize the visual footprint.

It was suggested that the projecting vertical surfaces of the towers could also be designed with a sustainability function in mind to limit heat gain on the east, west, and potentially the south sides of the building.

Architectural Design and the Pedestrian Experience

The Proponent was encouraged to continue to explore the relationship of the development with the street network to enhance the experience of the pedestrian realm. It was agreed that a greater degree of connectivity of the building massing at the ground plane (i.e. a compact and permeable interface between interior uses and the exterior pedestrian realm) would contribute to a better pedestrian experience at grade.

At-Grade Residential Units

Panel noted that at-grade residential uses are missing from the development proposal and recommend residential townhouse units at grade for “eyes on the street” and to animate the pedestrian realm.

Retail

Members were unsure of the viability of all the retail space within the proposal, noting that the proposed retail locations vary from the VMC Secondary Plan.

The Panel suggested that the inclusion of grade-related residential units at some of the areas that are currently proposed as retail frontage would be a more appropriate solution within the development, especially in the short term as the surrounding fabric is not yet urbanized. A Panel Member suggested a flexible two-storey townhouse design that could be easily converted to retail units in the future.

Loggia Fronting Regional Road 7

The Panel expressed strong concern with both the loggia concept and its design. Members agreed that the inclusion of a loggia diminishes an important opportunity to animate Regional Road 7 since future pedestrians will likely be drawn inside the loggia away from the public streetscape. Panel agreed that the current pedestrian experience along Regional Road 7 is inhospitable, but highlighted that the project’s podium should contribute and be designed for a future pedestrian-friendly “Avenue Seven” condition rather than the current highway condition.

Podium Materials, Signage and Lighting

Attention to materials, signage and lighting were highlighted as important architectural details for this frontage on Regional Road 7.

Black Creek and East-West Pedestrian Connection

Members were positive about the idea of a green east-west pedestrian connection that conceptually pulls the Black Creek landscape through the site, and suggest that a linear amenity space design could be explored to strengthen this idea. It was agreed that east-west pedestrian connectivity between the park, open space and street network should be strengthened.

Amenity Space Design

Panel expressed that the circular amenity space surrounded by roadway would be a challenge to make into a successful, animated pedestrian realm because of potentially busy traffic conditions with pick ups and drop offs, microclimatic conditions that may not support year round use, and lack of active uses fronting the space. Furthermore, the design of the space should include clear building frontages with animated uses.

Concern was also expressed regarding the limited one story height of the podium facing the amenity space as it is unlikely to contribute to the consolidation of a frontage able to define the open space,

Pedestrian Infrastructure and Permeability of Site

Members felt that the project would benefit from more generous space for pedestrians moving east-west through the site (McCleary Road extension). A Panel Member suggested that if the central roadway median was removed this amount of space could be added to the pedestrian realm.

A Member recommended that a cross section for Maplecrete Road extension should be developed at this stage of design development to assess if a 23 metre R.O.W. is adequate to support a robust public realm, including the provision of adequate soil volume for street tree planting.

Overall, the Panel encouraged more permeability of the site with more prominent east-west and north-south connections for pedestrians.

Galleria

Members unanimously supported the idea of a Galleria from Regional Road 7 to create a mid-block north-south pedestrian connection, but suggested that it is not spatially or visually prominent enough within the building massing.

Additionally, the Panel felt the Galleria should have a stronger destination at the other side to arrive at. Overall, it was suggested that the design of the Galleria and associated outdoor spaces should be further considered in the context of how the Galleria relates to both the Regional Road 7 streetscape and the amenity space at the north side.

Loading

A Panel Member questioned the proximity of the loading area off the new north-south road at the east side of the development in relationship to Regional Road 7.

Landscape Design Detail

Panel felt that the landscape component is critical for this development's success, and encouraged the Proponent to continue to develop the landscape design to a greater level of detail.

Sustainable Design

The Proponent was encouraged to continue to incorporate sustainability into the design with respect to the landscape architecture, its connection to Black Creek, and the expression of each tower façade as responsive to localized environmental conditions.



CITY OF VAUGHAN

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Minutes of Meeting

Meeting 2 – November 24, 2011

The Design Review Panel met on Thursday November 24, 2011, in Committee Room 243, City Hall, 2141 Major Mackenzie Drive, Vaughan, Ontario

PANEL MEMBERS

Present

Antonio Gomez-Palacio, DIALOG (Chair)
Brad Golden, Brad Golden & Co. Public Art Consulting
Bruce Cudmore, EDA Collaborative Inc.
Harold Madi, The Planning Partnership Ltd.
Janis Fedorowick, Wavefront Planning & Design
Lisa Harmey, Architecture for Humanity
Mansoor, Kazerouni, Page & Steele/ IBI Group Architects
Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Inc. Architects
Paul Nodwell, Schollen & Co. Landscape Architects Inc.
Richard Witt, RAW
Santiago Kunzle, Montgomery Sisam Architects Inc.
Sheldon Levitt, Quadrangle Architects Ltd.
Sony Rai, Diamond and Schmitt Architect Inc.

Absent

Drew Sinclair, planningAlliance & regionalArchitects

STAFF

Farhad Jalili, Development Planning Department, Recording Personnel
Christina Napoli, Development Planning Department
Laura Janotta, Development Planning Department

The meeting was called to order at 9: 03 a.m., with Antonio Gomez-Palacio in the Chair

1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA

That the "Declaration of Conflict" be added to the Agenda and be confirmed as revised.

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

2. APPOINTMENT OF PANEL CHAIR

All present member of the Panel unanimously elected Antonio Gomez-Palacio as the Chair and Richard Witt as the Vice Chair for a term of six months. Members will decide duration of next term for the future elected Chair.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Sheldon Levitt declared conflict of interest with reviewing the Eastons Development application.

Mansoor, Kazerouni, declared conflict of interest with reviewing the Eastons Development application.

Paul Nodwell declared conflict of interest with reviewing the Liberty Development Corporation application.

4. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES

That the Minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, October 27, 2011 be adopted as circulated.

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

5. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF “DESIGN REVIEW PANEL SCHEDULE AND PROCEDURES”

That the “Design Review Panel Schedule and procedures” to be revised and approval to be deferred to the next meeting to include the following:

- Design Review Panel’s Scope of work in terms of geographic boundaries and type of development to be defined
- Description of Quorum in more detail
- Clarification on the application design stage and number of reviews
- Clarification on the procedure where a conflict of interest occur
- Inclusion of Context Plan, Arial Photo, Landscape Plan, Public Art intent, and Phasing Plan to application submission requirements
- Inclusion of all supporting reports, such as Shadow Impact Study and Heritage Assessment Review.
- Inclusion of basic Site Plan information such as, drawing scale, setbacks to major structures, floor plate area, property lines and building heights
- Consideration of a Standard Reviewing Procedure that includes:
 - 1st. Applicant is called to stage the presentation materials and leave the meeting
 - 2nd. Staff present related application information on the project location and site

- 3rd. Panel decides if it prefers to huddle and have an off-line discussion or to proceed with the review.
- 4th. Panel reviews and discusses the proposed design
- 5th. Applicant is called in to present the design concept

The Panel recommended the aforementioned revisions to the “Design Review Panel Schedule and procedures” to be implemented and circulated two weeks in advance to all Panel members. To discuss the revisions, 20 minutes to be added to the next meeting agenda.

RECOMMENDED unanimously by present members

6. APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Vaughan Pre-Application Consultation

File No: PAC.11.101
Applicant: Easton Development Limited
Location: Southwest corner of Regional Road 7 and Interchange Way, municipally known as 3201 Regional Road 7, existing Hilton Garden Inn Hotel
Architect: Paradigm architecture + design and Robin Clark Architect
Landscape Architect: Quinn Design Associates Inc.
Review: First Review

Introduction:

City staff outlined the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre area context, history and area policy priorities sought the Panel's advice on the following:

1. Does the proposed built form, streetscape and landscape strategy facilitate pedestrian permeability and provide a high quality pedestrian environment though the site, as well as along Highway 7, Interchange Way and the proposed future roads?
2. The application preserves the existing hotel structure. Does the new development respect and complement the existing hotel building?
3. Does the proposed building façades contribute to high quality streetscapes along its surrounding existing and future public streets?

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Concerning about the viability of implementation, treatment of the existing Hotel and impact on the surrounding urban areas, Panel found the application is hesitant of delivering and contributing to the City's vision for the VMC. In order to better achieve the vision for the future of the VMC, the DRP recommends the following design considerations be addressed:

Phasing Plan

The VMC is envisioned to emerge from the existing suburban environment to a dense urban centre. To achieve a vibrant downtown, all development applications within the area must consider the future urban setting as a determining design factor. Therefore, providing a design concept, which only responds to the existing condition of the site's surroundings, does not ensure the success of the project in the long run and it may prevent the City from achieving the envisioned urban environment for the area. To ensure the success of the development in future, a phasing plan that exhibits the proposed development as part of the realization of the emerging downtown, in the interim and long-term phases is required. Specifically, if the current configuration is to be pursued, the phasing plan should anticipate the eventual removal of the existing hotel, which would enable an interior courtyard amenity area. In conjunction with the demolition of the hotel, the above grade parking structure can also be redeveloped with parking placed below grade and a positive frontage provided for the future street that will serve the south end of the property.

Existing Hotel

The proposed design strategy in preserving the existing hotel has failed the overall site plan design.

The proposed spacing between the hotel and the new build (e.g. the proposed 5-storey parking structure) is insufficient and does not allow for an adequate amount of air and daylight to reach to the hotel rooms. As a result, the quality of the hotel rooms and the experience of being in the hotel are reduced to an unacceptable level.

Existing and Future Roads

The pedestrian experience along the existing and future roads needs to be clearly examined and included in the design strategy. The site orientation should not hinder the viability of future developments on the neighboring sites by creating blank walls and an inhospitable pedestrian environment along the future local roads.

The applicant should work with the City to establish the anticipated layout and design of future roads.

Parking Structure

The proposed parking structure should not be exposed to the public view. This can be achieved either by moving the parking to underground or to the middle of the block, behind other uses.

The existing banquet hall can be expanded southward to achieve a higher quality frontage along the future east-west local road.

Creating of blank walls along the future roads will set a negative precedent for future developments.

Skyline

The site is designated as “Gateway Site” by the City’s current policies. The proposed design for towers should be enhanced to respond better to the site’s gateway designation and create more interest by suggesting different tower heights, better roof treatment and higher quality finishing materials.

Public Sidewalks

Landscaping and podium facades along Highway 7, Interchange Way and two future local roads need to be more animated. Particularly, an enhanced corner treatment should be considered at the intersection of Highway 7 and Interchange Way.

An improved pedestrian experience at grade level can be achieved by considering a better relationship between the hotel’s concourse and the sidewalk.

Internal Circulation:

The proposed internal vehicular circulation should be minimized to allocate more at-grade amenity space and enhance pedestrian access.

Exterior Amenity spaces:

The proposed exterior amenity spaces are limited, and have limited exposure and access.

b. Vaughan Pre-Application Consultation

File No:	PAC.11.090
Applicant:	Liberty Development Corporation
Location:	Northeast corner of Regional Road 7 and Weston Road, municipally known as 7777 Regional Road 7, existing commercial use
Architect:	KirKor Architects and Planners
Review:	First review

Introduction:

City staff outlined the area context, history and area policy priorities and sought the Panel's advice on the following:

1. Does the proposed plan present an appropriate massing with regards to the human scale on the surrounding public sidewalks and private amenities?
2. Does the proposed design concept encourage pedestrian movements by providing sufficient level of pedestrian permeability to the site and high-quality landscaping?

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Panel felt the proposed design was positive and successful in providing podium articulation and variation, articulation of the towers with creative rooftop mechanical room treatment, high-quality landscaping, corner access and treatment. Panel also agreed the proposed design responds well to the challenging existing site context and developed a precedent for the future developments in the area. The proposed development delivers a true mixed use development which is a positive response the City's vision for future of Highway 7 as a rapid transit priority corridor.

Panel suggested the following recommendations to further enhance the proposed development:

Midblock Pedestrian Connections

The panel considered that given the relative scale of the site, no midblock connections are needed. However, given that the proposed design does include several midblock connections, the following should be considered:

- The internal road should be taken to the next level of design to include a safe pedestrian access.
- The internal retail corridors should be regarded, and function, as alternative pedestrian midblock connections.
- The possibility of a safe pedestrian midblock connection through the development from Highway 7 to Northview Boulevard should be explored.

Site Orientation

The possibility of relocating the proposed residential and office towers should be considered to minimize the shadow impact on the proposed courtyard. The office tower could be directly connected to Highway 7 or Weston Road to encourage transit use among the future employees.

The opportunity of providing daylight for the internal pedestrian accesses should be explored by breaking the podium into smaller sections.

Loading Areas

Loading areas should be internalized to minimize the truck traffic conflict with the surrounding pedestrian movements on public sidewalks.

Pedestrian Scale:

There are some questions about the pedestrian experience all around. The podium designed should be revisited to address the pedestrian scale through and around the site.

Viability of Commercial Units

The proposed indoor retail may reduce pedestrian activities on the exterior public realm of the project, and of future adjacent developments. More attention should be paid to determine the type, function and amount of internal retail. Priority should be given to the street front retail to ensure a dynamic pedestrian environment on the surrounding public sidewalks.

Courtyard Configuration

To encourage pedestrian activities within and around the site, the possibility of dropping the provided courtyard to the street level should be explored. Re-examine the scale (i.e. overall size and height) of the courtyard in relation with the residential uses.

Landscaping

The overall landscape design creates positive environments within the public and private realms. The landscape plan can be further enhanced with use of native and drought resistant plants, as well as the placement of raised planters between the Highway 7 sidewalk and roadway.

Cultural and Social Aspects

Considering the site context, the inclusion of cultural uses and public art will greatly enhance the quality of social interactions within the site and its surroundings.

c. Vaughan Pre-Application Consultation

File No:	PAC.10.123
Applicant:	Rutherford Market Place (FCHT Holdings)
Location:	Northwest Corner of Bathurst Street and Rutherford Road, known municipally as 9350 Bathurst Street
Architect:	pellow + associates architects Inc
Review:	First review

Introduction:

City staff outlined the area context, history and area policy priorities and sought the Panel's advice on the following:

1. Does the proposed site organization and massing provide a high quality environment for the pedestrian areas within the site and the surrounding public sidewalks?
2. Does the overall design concept of the proposed development appropriately relate to its immediate urban context?

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Panel realizes the fact that the proposed development is within a status quo type of retail plaza and appreciates the attempt to push the envelope and deliver a project that is more in keeping with the City's objectives of intensification and quality urban environments. The Panel intends to support this direction and to help to achieve the goal by recommending the following design considerations:

Building "3" Design Interventions

Acknowledging the fact that the Building "3" has been processed and approved by the City, the Panel encourages the applicant to revisit the concept and provide a street related building that elevates and enhances George Kirby Street residential environment. The solutions to the problem range from changing the building use to site orientation and include the following:

- Replacing Building "3" with a residential or mixed-use street-related building by transferring some of residential density from the proposed tower. Live-work may offer a solution to replace the proposed commercial.
- Relocating, reconfiguring or internalizing the proposed loading areas to minimize their negative impact on the public realm.
- Replacing the proposed loading area with a service access located in the middle of the building that allows for two active facades along George Kirby Street and towards the plaza.

Overall Design Concept

The design approach should be shifted from the proposed interior focused type of development to a public realm oriented building design. A proper transitioning from the commercial plaza to the neighbourhood is a key factor in the success of the project.

Building Frontages and Life on Street

The proposed Building "2" podium is located far from the sidewalk which discourages pedestrian activities and street life. Bringing the podium closer to the street and orienting grade level access (e.g. double-storey residential units) to face the neighbourhood will help to create a more active urban environment and inviting streetscape along the external perimeter of the site. As proposed, the distance and extensive landscaping along the street reduces 'eyes on street' opportunity and

security in the neighbourhood.

Building Articulation

The elevations of the building could resemble more residential by considering the following design options:

- Masonry finishing material for the podium.
- Break down the monolithic, slab nature of the residential block facing the existing residential street fabric. Perhaps more articulation in the reading of the units
- Addition of balconies to tower (adding texture to the look of the tower and relating the tower to the surrounding neighbourhood).
- Lighter finishing materials for the tower.
- The proposed tower would be more appropriate if sits on the podium all around.

Courtyard / Plaza Design

In conjunction with the existing commercial plaza, the proposed courtyard is a public/private space which is not clear how successful it could be. Placement of any residential units along the proposed courtyard should be avoided, unless the court is more private. Landscaping solutions can be utilized to increase the privacy for the courtyard.

The courtyard will permanently remain in the shadow as it proposed. Changes to the courtyard location and building massing should be considered to ensure sunlight penetration. The development should allow for more pedestrian permeability. A direct pedestrian connection from the courtyard to Ilan Ramon Boulevard is desirable.

The use of public art should not be considered as an appropriate or sufficient means of addressing the architectural shortcomings of the access to the plaza space. To enhance the quality of the pedestrian experience, an overall and more comprehensive approach to public art and landscaping across the site should be considered.

The proposed staircase to the underground parking blocks the view to the plaza and should be relocated.

Parking:

Since the application has included underground parking, it would be beneficial if the amount of surface parking is reduced. The reduction of surface parking will allow for better transitioning from the commercial plaza to the residential uses and allows for a higher quality courtyard design.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.



CITY OF VAUGHAN

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Minutes of Meeting

Meeting 3 – December 15, 2011

The Design Review Panel met on Thursday December 15, 2011, in Committee Room 243, City Hall, 2141 Major Mackenzie Drive, Vaughan, Ontario

PANEL MEMBERS

Present

Antonio Gómez-Palacio, DIALOG (Chair)
Brad Golden, Brad Golden & Co. Public Art Consulting
Bruce Cudmore, EDA Collaborative Inc.
Harold Madi, The Planning Partnership Ltd.
Janis Fedorowick, Wavefront Planning & Design
Lisa Harmey, Architecture for Humanity
Paul Nodwell, Schollen & Co. Landscape Architects Inc.
Santiago Kunzle, Montgomery Sisam Architects Inc.
Sheldon Levitt, Quadrangle Architects Ltd.
Sony Rai, Diamond and Schmitt Architect Inc.

Absent

Drew Sinclair, planningAlliance & regionalArchitects
Mansoor Kazerouni, Page & Steele/ IBI Group Architects
Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Inc. Architects
Richard Witt, RAW

STAFF

Moira Wilson, Development Planning Department, Recording Personnel
Farhad Jalili, Development Planning Department, Recording Personnel
Laura Janotta, Development Planning Department
Eugene Fera, Development Planning Department

The meeting was called to order at 9: 10 a.m., with Antonio Gomez-Palacio in the Chair

1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA

The Agenda was confirmed by Harold Madi and seconded by Santiago Kunzle.

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Paul Nodwell declared a conflict of interest with reviewing the Liberty Development Corporation application.

3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES

That the Minutes of the meeting of Thursday, November 24, 2011 be adopted with revisions proposed by Brad Golden, Sony Rai and Harold Madi.

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

The Chair requested that the three members submit their amendments to meeting minutes in writing to Rob Bayley, Development Planning Department.

The Chair suggested that for future meetings, if members have proposed amendments to the meeting minutes, they could be written down prior to the meeting and read verbatim, to expedite the process.

4. CORRECTION OF “DESIGN REVIEW PANEL SCHEDULE AND PROCEDURES”

The panel discussed the following “Design Review Panel Schedule and procedures”:

- Panel Members requested receipt of package two weeks prior to meeting. Rob Bayley confirmed the packages will be couriered via next day service to Panel Members for future meetings.
- Clarification of Quorum at 8 Members. To ensure Quorum, it was agreed that Panel Members would email non-attendance or conflict of interest in advance of the next meeting to Rob Bayley, Manager of Urban Design. If Quorum is not reached, a meeting cancellation will be sent via email.
- Clarification of Conflict of Interest.
- Clarification of inclusion of Shadow Impact Study in the supporting package at site plan stage. At staff discretion, the Shadow Impact Study may be required at pre-application, Official Plan Amendment or Zoning stage.

Review Panel Schedule and procedures” to be implemented and circulated two weeks in advance to all Panel Members. To discuss the revisions, 20 minutes to be added to the next meeting agenda.

RECOMMENDED unanimously by present members.

5. APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Vaughan Official Plan Amendment

File No: OP 11 007

Applicant: Liberty Development Corporation (1541677 Ontario Limited)
Location: 7890 Bathurst Street, Bathurst Street and Beverly Glen Boulevard, Lot 7, Concession 2, Vaughan
Architect: Kirkor Architects Incorporated
Review: First Review

Introduction:

City staff outlined the Thornhill Town Centre area context, vivaNext plans and area design policies and sought the Panel's advice on the following:

1. What design recommendations can you provide to better integrate the proposed 'gateway' development with the surrounding community and for a positive contribution to its adjacent public realm (park/ woodlot and streetscapes)?
2. Does the proposal meet the intent of, and vision illustrated in the draft Centre Street Urban Design Guidelines for the Town Centre area, with special consideration given to the promotion of alternate forms of mobility (pedestrians, cycling and transit)?

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Overall, the panel felt that a transit-oriented development on this site has the potential to bring tremendous value to the community by contributing to the creation of active, urban streetscapes, and by creating a built edge to the adjacent public park.

However, it was felt that the relationship of the proposed building with the public realm should be improved (from the suburban plaza typology) to engage and contribute to its emerging urban context.

The following design recommendations were proposed:

Emerging Context

Panel proposed that this development has the opportunity to connect, animate, and integrate the existing and emerging context – including the park, transit, a community in transition– in a way that delivers on the future vision for the area.

Panel noted that the site is one of the most valuable locations in the Thornhill Town Centre, adjacent to a future vivaNext transit stop, and therefore the site plan should respond to this opportunity with pedestrian and transit oriented development. It was noted that the most landscape detailing for pedestrians was at the south east corner of the site, whereas the future transit stop will be located at the north east corner at Beverley Glen and Bathurst.

Panel noted that the plan, as proposed, does not deliver a welcoming, pedestrian-oriented environment, around the perimeter of the site. Nor does the built form contribute positively to creating frontage along the adjacent streets or the park.

Site Organization

The Panel recommended that the building should be brought closer to the street edges (North Park Road, Beverley Glen and Bathurst Street), and engage all four site edges with active frontages and pedestrian interfaces.

A Panel Member suggested a through street with lay-by parking on the west side of the building could be explored.

Park

The Panel highlighted that the adjacent park, as one of the most important in the Thornhill Town Centre, is an important opportunity and frontage for this development and the ground level relationship between the development and the park and pedestrian access should be expanded upon.

It was noted that creating active frontage onto the park-woodlot would increase security through “eyes on the park”.

It was noted that the proposed parking along the park edge creates a separation between the development and the park rather than building a ground level relationship.

Parking

Surface parking is not a desirable frontage for either the streetscapes or park, and does not anticipate or support a future increase of pedestrian activity on Bathurst Street.

A Panel member suggested exploring above-grade structured parking internal to the building mass an alternative approach to parking for this site - this move would push the building to the edges of the site to engage the public realm, eliminate the dominance of surface parking, and allow for the potential preservation of the existing mature trees along Bathurst Street.

Architecture and the Ground Plane

The Panel felt that the building’s first three floors could and should better respond to the pedestrian experience at ground level, including the opportunity to capitalize upon and contribute to the adjacent parkland, the adjacent streetscapes, and to create more encouraging ways to walk to and from the future vivaNext stop at Beverley Glen and Bathurst.

The grade differential could be an opportunity to integrate the podium with street level.

Transition to Low Density Residential Community

Panel members noted the shallow block depth and noted that a precedent has already been set in the area to use mid-rise buildings as a transition between low rise to high rise.

A street-oriented podium with increased height was suggested to create a stronger interface with the street, and to achieve density with lower tower height.

A panel member suggested that "landscape" type built forms such as sloped and terraced blocks might be used to better integrate the proposal and mitigate the significant overshadowing.

Sustainability

A Panel Member reiterated the project's desire for an architecture reflective of the era, noted the building's window walls and slab edges of balconies, and proposed that as a core of contemporary practice, sustainable design should be at the forefront to achieve this desire.

b. Vaughan Zoning By-Law Amendment / Site Development Application

File No: Z.11. 026 & DA.11.073
Applicant: 2190647 Ontario Inc.
Location: Northwest corner of regional Road 7 and Wigwoss Drive, municipally known as 4800 Regional Road 7.
Architect: AJ Tregobov Architect
Review: First Review

Introduction:

City staff outlined the area context, history and area policy priorities and sought the Panel's advice on the following:

1. Does the proposal meet the intent of the City's policies for Mid-Rise Mixed-Use developments within Intensification and Transit Stop Areas?
2. Does the proposed building separation and site orientation protect an acceptable level of privacy for the future building residents and appropriate transition to the adjacent low-density neighbourhood?

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

Concerning design issues surrounding neighbourhood integration, site configuration and general massing of the proposed development, Panel found the emphasis on the architectural details has taken the design to the point where basic site programming principles are overlooked. To assess and identify the design principles, Panel suggests the applicant restudy the site plan and building envelope objectives, and involve the community in the design process through a public consultation design strategy.

Panel also recommends the following design considerations to achieve a more responsive development to its surrounding urban character:

Neighbourhood Integration and Character:

Panel encourages and appreciates contemporary architecture and architectural expressions that are a reflection of our time. Panel also recognizes the importance of articulating a transition between different building typologies and architectural styles, in a way that is harmonious and respectful of each other.

Furthermore, generating support and buy-in for the chosen architectural form and aspirations with the community members, was raised as a potentially significant issue that would need to be addressed.

The development should explore responding to adjacent building typologies and character (west, north, and east) by incorporating elements of the building form and materials, creating a more complete resonance across streets and adjacencies.

Street Frontage

The urban design and building frontages, as proposed, were not deemed to create a welcoming, pedestrian oriented environment along Highway 7, nor along the residential street to the north. Doing so, should be a priority.

Site Programming / Transition in Scale and Form:

A proper transition from a potentially active and vibrant Regional Road 7 frontage through the site and to the residential character of Benjamin Drive was recognized as a priority for the site.

To respond better to Regional Road 7 transit oriented development policies and vision, Panel suggests the applicant review related documents and design guidelines and reorganize the site to achieve the related design attributes. This may lead to bring the retail to the corner of the Regional Road 7 and Wigwos Drive, where proposed rapid transit stops will generate more pedestrian presence and movements.

The four-storey podium is probably the most visible and innovative part of the building in terms of form and function and can include at-grade service-oriented retail. However, it has been tucked away from the transit stop which seems to be counterproductive. To enhance the building in terms of programming, the podium should be moved to the corner of the Regional Road 7 and Wigwos Drive.

Pushing the density closer to Regional Road 7 can also provide a better opportunity to transition from the street to the community through the site. This design strategy may increase the efficiency of the site by allowing a row of townhouses along Benjamin Drive and a significant green space to form a courtyard in between. The placement of the townhouses along Benjamin Drive would benefit the adjacent community optically by visibly diminishing the 10-storey building from the neighbours' sight. More townhouses could also face the laneway on the west to increase the yield and complete the courtyard. The laneway can also be utilized to provide at-grade lay-by parking to support the retail.

The proposed site programming error also has resulted in locating the residential backyards towards Regional Road 7 and Wigwos Drive intersection which has negatively impacted the corner treatment at this location. Putting a prohibiting wall like screening between the building and public realm to provide privacy for the residential units is not an acceptable design approach.

Stepping down the building height from ten storeys on the southeast corner to four storeys on the northwest corner can also help to achieve the desired transitioning and filling the gap between the two frontages.

Ultimately, these alternative distributions of the density through the site can reduce the need for building height and mitigate the shadows which the applicant cited as a problem for any middle courtyard space.

The other alternative design approach suggests more naturalized frontages by allocating generous landscape amenity areas along the north and west sides of the property. This site orientation allows for a great looking building on the southwest corner and offers a landscaped opens space for the community to the north.

Other Design Considerations:

The proposed surface parking is a legacy of the past and should be changed.

The loading area seems to be a challenge and should be better designed.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.