

CITY OF VAUGHAN

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Meeting 103 – March 30, 2023

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, March 30, 2023. The meeting was recorded and will be posted on the City of Vaughan website.

PANEL MEMBERS

Present

Megan Torza, DTAH (Chair)

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Alfredo Landaeta, Forrec

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

Ute Maya-Giambattista, Fotenn Planning + Design

Henry Burstyn, IBI Group

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

Absent

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

Sharon Sterling, WSP

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will (Vice Chair)

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

Harim Labuschagne, BDP. Quadrangle

STAFF

Shahrzad Davoudi-Strike, Manager, Urban Design & Cultural Heritage, Development Planning

Shirley Marsh, Project Manager & Urban Design, Development Planning

Michael Tranquada, Senior Urban Designer, Development Planning

Chris Assimopoulos, Urban Design, Development Planning

Alex Yang, Urban Design, Development Planning

Shirin Rohani, Urban Design, Development Planning

Margaret Holyday, Senior Planner, Development Planning

Nancy Tuckett, Director of Development Planning, Development Planning

Anna Rosen, Project Manager, Parks Development (VMC), Policy Planning & Special Programs

Gaston Soucy, Senior Manager, Planning and Urban Design VMC, Policy Planning & Special Programs

Natalie Wong, Senior Planner, VMC, Policy Planning & Special Programs

Matthew Peverini, Senior Planner, VMC, Policy Planning & Special Programs

Cory Gray, Manager, Parks & Strategic Initiatives, VMC

Tania Dowhaniuk, Planner, Parks Infrastructure Planning and 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

Sharon Sterling, conflict with the 1st item on the agenda John

Tassiopoulos, conflict with the 1st item on the agenda Harim

Labushchagne, conflict with the 2nd item on the agenda

Margaret Briegmann, conflict with both items on the agenda

3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES

Meeting minutes for February 23, 2023, were approved.

4. DESIGN REVIEW

Chelsea Eagle Point Development Phase I, 2nd Review

Architect: BDP Quadrangle

Landscape: NAK Design Strategies **Introduction**

City Staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- How successful is the revised proposal in addressing the concerns and comments raised on the first DRP regarding the character of McNaughton Road, balancing pedestrian, and vehicular circulation internally and playing a key placemaking role in the context?

- Does the architectural/landscape design and material choices respond well to sustainable best practices and contribute to the site and context?
- How successful is the proposal in responding to the microclimate constraints? Please comment on the proposed mitigative measures.

Overview

- **Overall Presentation** – Panel thanked the applicant for a concise presentation, acknowledged the moves made in response to the previous session, and noted that there are still more opportunities that can be explored.
- **Landscape** – Panel expressed the desire to balance the hardscape and softscape on the east side of the property to increase the pedestrian realm and connection with nature.

Panel suggested consolidating the footprint of the vehicular, and service movements within the block, and changing the secondary vehicular entrance to the pedestrian realm to create a view terminus.

Panel commented on the public realm along McNaughton Road and suggested improving the relationship between public and private amenity spaces by considering how to accommodate the different uses along the pedestrian circulation.

- **Wind Mitigation** – Panel acknowledged that most of the measures in terms of wind mitigation undertaken are reasonable and address most concerns. But noted that there are still some areas continuously showing uncomfortable levels based on the report, particularly around the lobby and entrances. It was suggested the applicant take further action, such as using a canopy or structure to provide shelter for the ground plane.

Panel recommended relocating the ramp or integrating the ramp into the built form to reduce the footprint of the vehicular movement. This coincides with the development of the canopy structure that addresses the wind mitigation concerns around the lobby for Building 3.

- **Architecture** – Panel introduced the idea of biophilia, which is fundamentally the notion that humans desire to be next to other forms of life, such as landscape. This site is adjacent to the golf course, but the architecture did not reflect this unique condition from a material character perspective. Panel noted that the nature of this golf course would inevitably be transformed over time into a naturalistic type of landscape. Therefore, this is an opportunity and challenge for the architect to create a building that introduces landscape into its fabric by adjusting the materials of the east façade to respond to the landscape.

Panel appreciated the design of the triangular building shape and encouraged further exploration of other aspects, such as cladding design, balcony design etc., to ensure the building reflects its unique position and takes advantage of all the opportunities.

Comments

General

- Considering the presentation is the second time in the DRP, Panel appreciated the concise summary of the previous comments and acknowledged the presentation had improved in terms of providing responses on how to address comments from the previous submission.

Transit and Circulation

- Panel addressed that there is a missing opportunity to take advantage of the golf course frontage as the service lane goes through the entire interface with all the loading and servicing oriented towards it. To improve pedestrian realm and vehicular circulation, Panel suggested several strategies as follows:
 - i) Consolidating the loading and ramp through the middle of the block and minimizing the laneway.
 - ii) Further balancing the pedestrian and vehicular circulation to deal with the continuity of the loading and ramp locations along the edge of the golf course for two separate buildings.
 - iii) To break the linearity of the narrow long condition, introducing a pedestrian sidewalk or underlaying the laneway to allow a wider pedestrian realm similar to the frontages along McNaughton Road, especially at the secondary lookout area between the two towers, and providing additional landscape at the end of the intersection.
 - iv) Incorporating the Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas together, if possible, and exploring opportunities that could have only one ramp and one garbage pickup for all the buildings to minimize vehicular circulation, which would leave more land up against the golf course.

Landscape and Public Realm

- Panel complimented the POPS design, for the good interface that is well utilized and how the topography has been used to showcase the landscaping and program. Panel further suggested incorporating the golf course layout into the design and considering fencing off some areas to maintain safety from golf activities.
- Panel had concerns that the POPS is isolated and disconnected from the rest of the development and suggested creating a better interface with Building 3 by removing the road in between so that the children's play area could be extended to create more interaction with the rest of the site.

- To improve the overall pedestrian experience and public realm for the development, Panel suggested creating an interconnected public space throughout the site and recommended the following strategies:
 - i) Creating a public element at the street terminus between the two towers.
 - ii) Covering the ramp between Buildings 2 & 3 with an amenity space, which could use a similar technique that was used in the POPS topography and provide an overlook to the golf course.
 - iii) Consolidating the loading and ramp within Building 2 and removing the road connection at the south end of the site to allow a direct connection between Building 3 and POPS for more public engagement.
 - iv) Providing more pedestrian east-west connections to promote permeability.
- Panel encouraged the applicant to explore more on the pedestrian experience on both the west and east sides. And suggested the following:
 - i) On the west side, considering the sidewalk is small and separated from the patio space, Panel suggested creating an interesting plaza with more articulation that connected to the pedestrian crossing, which allowed people to move around the site.
 - ii) On the east side, the current plan proposes a continuous 6m wide service lane and a rigid edge between pedestrian and vehicular circulation. Panel recommended creating a woonerf type of promenade, with an articulated edge that is wide in some places and narrow in others. This helps to create a more interesting pedestrian space and blurs the harsh line that separates pedestrian and vehicular circulation.

Wind Mitigation

- Panel acknowledged that the applicant had implemented many good strategies regarding mitigating the wind impact, such as landscape and tree clusters. However, the wind report still identified some problem areas, and Panel addressed an opportunity to improve the lobby area by pulling it back and providing increased cover.
- From a building material and wind mitigation perspective, instead of the basic combination of metal panels, precast concrete, and glass, Panel encouraged the applicant to explore more innovative strategies to improve the micro-climate condition.

Architecture and Material

- Panel complimented the design of the triangular shaped tower, and appreciated the effort in approaching a unique and iconic built form in Vaughan.

- Panel commented on the horizontal banding on the elevation for Building 3 that feels too even between the base and the upper portion. They recommended using other materials at the grade, such as brick or a different kind of metal panel or colours, which provides more contrast between the base and the above.

25 Interchange Way – Intergreen Developments (BT) Inc. Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, High-Rise Mixed Use Development, 1st Review

Architect: Graziani + Corazza Architects
Landscape Architect: Land Art Design Landscape Architects

Introduction

City Staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- Is the proposed building massing providing an appropriate transition towards the Neighbourhood Precinct and school sites to the west?
- Is the proposed architectural site plan design and the related ground floor uses adequately responding to the policy and context envisions in the VMC Secondary Plan and the other VMC Guidelines and documents?

Overview

- **Presentation** – Panel thanked the applicant for a comprehensive presentation and package.
- **Architectural Massing and Articulation** – Panel recommended reducing the substantial building heights and reorganizing the distribution of built form massing on site to better suit the surrounding site context. The proposed tower heights do not respond to the subject property location, located in the south precinct, meant to serve as a transition zone from the station precinct to the north and neighbourhood precinct to the west.

The panel encouraged the applicant to consider reducing the height of the podium and adjusting the materiality to create a more intimate setting at the ground scale. The introduction of a more diverse palette of materials and textures would further improve the pedestrian experience at grade by softening the imposing and monotonous scale and massing of the proposed built-form and podiums.

- **Site Plan Design and Placemaking** – Panel voiced concerns about the vehicular-centric development noting that more than 50% of the ground floor is dedicated to servicing. The panel noted that the proposed podium is not appropriate for the subject site as it heavily focused on accommodating the high pedestrian yield with little emphasis on the pedestrian realm and its immediate surroundings. The panel encourages the applicant to revisit the site plan design with an emphasis on creating a more urban, pedestrian service vision.

The panel encouraged the applicant to relocate the townhouses to front the proposed parklands and adjust the location of the proposed retail to wrap along Interchange Way supporting the vision set out in the secondary plan.

- **Loading and Dropoff** – Panel noted that consolidating loading and services to the east façade is a critical component for activating the street frontages and park. Relocating the service access away from the north side of the building will stimulate activity and lessen the opportunity for the road south of the park to read as a service road.
- **Adjacencies and context** – Panel questioned how the proposed development relates to the larger VMC context specifically the adjacencies to larger park framework and the neighbourhood precinct to the west. The Panel emphasized the importance of ensuring the development responds appropriately to its adjacencies as set out in the VMC Secondary Plan and visioning documents.

Comments

Architectural Design, Massing and Transitions

- Panel raised concerns of the overwhelming architectural scale and massing of the subject development. The proposed development appears out of place as it does not accurately respond to the surrounding site context. The panel recommends reviewing the role of the block within the larger context; rethinking the scale, built form transitions and massing. Consider the location of the subject property relative to the north park property, west neighbourhood precinct with the potential school site, south station precinct and further residential uses proposed to the east. The architectural massing should respond to the location of the subject property as a transition area between the two precincts and highlight the connectivity of the proposed park relative to the larger park framework. Further review the frontage along the north-south road of Interchange Way as it will create a desire line to the proposed park and cater to the neighbourhood precinct - and potential school site - to the west providing a frontage that is inviting to pedestrian traffic.
- The current parking ratio is prohibiting the quality of the podium, active frontages, and proposed units. Panel members concluded that the quality of the project is being negatively affected by the amount of density which in turn is affecting the parking. The panel encourages the applicant to reduce the parking rates and/or relocate the above grade parking below ground. Reducing the podium height will create a more intimate experience at the ground floor level. The podium must consider the immediate surroundings and the contributions to the public realm.
- The panel encourages the applicant to strengthen the design language of the proposed development. The current building facades are service oriented and lack activation and promotion of the pedestrian experience. Considerations should be made of how the interior building footprint informs the exterior amenity and ground floor level of the site. Activating street edges should be the number

one priority. The panel suggest incorporating a more diverse range of materials and textures at the podium level to soften the built form and create a more intimate setting.

- The Panel encouraged the applicant to revisit the building massing in relation to the prepared sun/shadow study. Further considerations should be made to address the shadow impact on the adjacent lands and across the building podium. The panel encourages the applicant to play with the location of the towers and the building typology.

Site Plan, Organization and Ground Floor Uses

- Panel voiced concerns that the current site plan configuration is heavily catering towards a vehicular oriented design, more typical of a suburban development. Panel drew attention to the three separate loading areas provided noting the blank service-oriented frontage. The loading area fronting onto the park site jeopardizes the opportunity for an intimate residential frontage reading as a service road type. Panel proposes consolidating the access/loading entrances to one location along the east façade to achieve the urban pedestrian service vision. Reviewing the ground floor footprint and reducing the parking yields will allow for more porosity across the site.
- Panel recommended relocating the proposed townhouses along Interchange Way to front the proposed park to support the residential frontage envisioned by the secondary plan and ideals set out in the adjacent neighbourhood precinct. This will allow the roadway located between the park block and development to serve as a pedestrian focused area well suited for the residential setting.
- Panel noted that the character of the urban park in the southwest quadrant will cater to the surrounding residential frontages differing greatly from the proposed urban park in the northwest quadrant. The role that the park plays shall be honoured in the design of the architecture and the design of the future street. Panel encourages the applicant to allow for that residential character to influence the streetscape proposing a public road instead of a private road.
- The panel encouraged the applicant to reconfigure the location of the retail space along the West and South of Interchange Way to align with the secondary plan and provide for a dynamic street frontage.
- Panel encouraged the applicant to remove the strata component from the park as creating a strata condition will limit the future design and capacity of the proposed park space.

END OF MINUTES