

CITY OF VAUGHAN

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Meeting 108 – April 27, 2023

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, April 27, 2023. The meeting was recorded and will be posted on the City of Vaughan website.

PANEL MEMBERS

Present

Megan Torza, DTAH (Chair)

Henry Burstyn, IBI Group

Alfredo Landaeta, Forrec

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc

Ute Maya-Giambattista, SGL Planning & Design Inc.

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

Guela Solow Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

Sharon Sterling, WSP / MMM Group Limited

Absent

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will (Vice Chair)

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

Harim Labuschagne, BDP Quadrangle

STAFF

Christina Bruce, Director, Policy Planning & Special Programs

Chris Ainsworth, Ward 4 Councillor

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

Gaston Soucy, Senior Manager, VMC Program

Cory Gray, Senior Manager, VMC Program

Musa Deo, Senior Manager, VMC Program

Chrisa Assimopoulos, Urban Design, Development Planning

Shirin Rohani, Urban Design, Development Planning
Alex Yang, Urban Design, Development Planning
Anna Rosen, Project Manager, VMC Program
Andrea Shotlander, Project Manager, VMC Program
Alyssa Pangilinan, Planning Technician, VMC Program
Natalie Wong, Senior Planner, VMC Program
Shirley Marsh, Project Manager, Urban Design Development Planning
Dana Khademi, Storm Drainage Engineer, VMC Program
Matthew Peverini, Senior Planner, VMC Program

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 am with Megan Torza in the Chair.

1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

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

3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES

Meeting minutes for March 30, 2023, were approved.

4. DESIGN REVIEW

Princess Lands
Vaughan Metropolitan Centre
High-Rise Mixed-Use Development, 1st Review
Architect: BDP Quadrangle
Landscape Architect: Studio TLA

Introduction

City Staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- Is the overall building massing and materiality achieving the pedestrian scale, placemaking objectives and adequate transitions to the immediate context as intended in the VMC Secondary Plan and other VMC supporting documents?
- Are the proposed site plan, ground floor uses and landscape design strategies adequately promoting an activated public realm in a Neighbourhood Precinct as envisioned in the VMC Secondary Plan and other VMC supporting documents?

Overview

- **Presentation** – Panel thanked the applicant for a comprehensive presentation and package.
- **Adjacencies and Context**– Panel requested that the applicant share its broader visions of future phases for the subject lands to identify how the phases will be integrated and function as a whole. Panel encouraged the applicant to think about the overall massing, connectivity, and shadow impact on the provided amenity space. The subject property is located along HWY 7 an arterial road, Barnes Court (a minor collector) and two private roadways. Consider the adjacencies to the north and south and the surrounding uses like the proposed school site to the north. For example, the proposed pedestrian connection is a fantastic thoroughfare, but it is difficult to gauge its effectiveness as it is not known how the areas north and south of the site will function.
- **Architectural Massing and Articulation**– Panel noted that the proposed built form is simple in design and shape lacking interest. Panel encouraged the applicant to play with the materiality of the building – colour and texture to add visual interest and improve the pedestrian experience at grade. The Panel was intrigued by the proposed colonnade and flexible open/closed balconies. They cautioned the applicant to consider the potential shadow impact and harsh environment created by the colonnade facing north and the office like building façade it's design suggests. The Panel recommended varying the tower heights to add more interest to the skyline view and transition to the school site area.
- **Site Plan Design and Placemaking** – Panel voiced concerns about the current site plan. A total of four service driveways are proposed promoting a vehicular-centric development. Panel recommended consolidating these entrances and removing the service exit onto Barnes Court as this would free up the façade interface to activate the public realm. As more than 70% of the Barnes Court frontage is a blank wall, promoting active uses along Barnes Court is essential to creating a vibrant streetscape. The site plan should be updated to include a cycling facility on both the north and south side Barnes Court providing strong connectivity to the subject site and surrounding area amenities like Edgeley Pond and Park.

Comments

Adjacencies and Context

- Panel recommends reviewing the role of the subject property within the larger context and sharing the broader visions for the master plan. The Panel highlighted the importance of connectivity, massing and built form transitions between phase one, future phases and beyond the subject property. Further consideration would be required to analyze the subject property location in relation to the properties to the north and future school site, the south and connection to HWY 7 and transit, the future east employment lands and Edgeley Pond and Park to the west.

Architectural Design and Massing

- Panel encouraged the applicant to vary the tower heights to create interest in the city skyline. Tapering the building height to provide an appropriate transition to smaller building typologies would be an effective strategy. Further to this, it was noted that the proposed buildings lack appeal and recommended changing the building materiality, colour and texture, and draw inspiration to what was done at Expo 5 as a building precedent.
- Panel encouraged the applicant to strengthen the design language of the proposed development at the pedestrian scale. The current building facades are service oriented and lack activation and promotion of the pedestrian experience. The panel encouraged the applicant to raise the podium height to three storeys to align with the standards set out in the VMC Secondary plan.
- Panel took an interest to the proposed colonnade and amenity decks above and alluded their success will depend on the planting that will help define the podium level. Some Panel members questioned the appropriateness of the colonnade as a wind strategy given its location and the Vaughan climate. Others felt that the current podium component does not take advantage of the future school site to the north stating that it should be more residential in scale and better frame the amenity space to the south. The Panel encouraged the applicant to explore the final location and structure of the colonnade to better frame the amenity space and/or public realm.
- The Panel was intrigued by the proposed Balcony design, treatment and materiality. They encouraged the applicant to push and further explore this opportunity as a design feature that could tell the story of the buildings more broadly, and mention sustainability and how each unit's individual exterior amenity space is occupied in a high noise, high wind environment.

Site Plan, Organization and Ground Floor Uses

- Panel encouraged the applicant to reorganize their site plan, consolidating servicing to private roadways while activating Barnes Court and future proofing the proposed amenities at the ground floor level. Panel voiced concerns that the

current site plan configuration is heavily catering towards a vehicular oriented design. Panel drew attention to the four separate loading areas provided noting the blank service-oriented frontage along the public realm, especially along Barnes Court. Panel noted that Barnes court should be highlighted as the front door of the development providing an active frontage and an appropriate right-of-way width to maintain bidirectional cycling facilities. The current site plan suggests a downgrade of Barnes Court to resemble a back of house frontage.

- Panel suggested the outdoor amenity space be relocated to front Barnes Court providing greater public access and a reduced shadow impact in the future, after the properties to the south develop. Adding the north and south cycling facility along Barnes Court would improve the sites connectivity to the surrounding area.
- The Panel encouraged the applicant to future proof the ground floor and ensure a level of flexibility is built in. They suggested the applicant look at the surrounding context – what is built and what is to come – to ensure appropriate amenities can be provided to accommodate a wide variety of people and activities. Understanding the ground floor uses on the existing and future proposed neighbouring properties will allow the applicant to see how services should be provided along the surrounding streets. Further to this, the Panel recommended strengthening the connection between indoor and outdoor amenities. Site plan features like the proposed mid-block pedestrian connection creates a lot of curiosity and interest, however, it would need to be connected beyond phase one of the development.
- Panel requested that a traditional site plan, underground parking and elevations be provided as part of the presentation in the next DRP.

END OF MINUTES