

# **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

## **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

### **Meeting 109 – May 25, 2023**

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, May 25, 2023. The meeting was recorded and will be posted on the City of Vaughan website.

#### **PANEL MEMBERS**

##### **Present**

Megan Torza, DTAH (Chair)

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

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will (Vice Chair)

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

##### **Absent**

Henry Burstyn, IBI Group

Alfredo Landaeta, Forrec

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

Sharon Sterling, WSP / MMM Group Limited

Harim Labuschagne, BDP Quadrangle

##### **STAFF**

Sharon Gaum-Kuchar, Senior Art Curator and Planner

Gaston Soucy, Senior Manager, VMC Program

Cory Gray, 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

Natalie Wong, Senior Planner, VMC Program

Shirley Marsh, Project Manager, Urban Design Development Planning

Michael Tranquada, Senior Urban Designer

Julia Crane, Landscape Architect, VMC Program

**The meeting was called to order at 9:15 am with Megan Torza in the Chair.**

**1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA**

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

**2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

No conflicts of interests disclosed.

**3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

Meeting minutes for April 27, 2023, were approved.

**4. DESIGN REVIEW**

**7800 Jane Street**

**Vaughan Metropolitan Centre**

**Public Art Plan, 1st Review**

Planning: KLM Planning Partners Inc.

Public Art Consultant: Public Art Management

## Introduction

City Staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- Does the overall vision and project objectives align with the strategic directions outlined in the VMC Culture and Public Art Framework?
- Do you feel public art expression and viewer experiences can be achieved successfully through the proposed strategy of integrating three distinct public art installations within their respective locations as well as a cohesive program?

## Overview

- **Presentation** – Panel thanked the applicant for a comprehensive presentation and package.
- **Adjacencies and Context** – Panel requested that the applicant consider adjacent site uses, sight lines and circulation when determining locations and selecting works. The area identified as Site 1, at the corner of Jane Street and Highway 7, sees significant vehicular and pedestrian traffic and is an opportunity for a landmark art installation within the VMC. Panel was divided on the scale and nature of the installation within Site 2, along Jane Street and Apple Mill Road, given its proximity to residential development and role as a pedestrian route. Panel indicated that Site 3, the galleria, is a more intimate space and questioned whether a large art installation is appropriate but agreed that this location provides a unique opportunity. Panel noted that an art installation within Site 3, the galleria, may require collaboration with the architect to create a piece that is responsive to the proposed building architecture.
- **Distribution of Budget** – Panel indicated that the total budget for the three art installations should be distributed based on a hierarchy that reflects the exposure of each identified site and accessibility at both the vehicular and pedestrian scale. Panel agreed that Site 1 should see more funding due to its prominent location and exposure to vehicles and pedestrians. Site 2 will see substantial pedestrian traffic from the subway extension and Edgeley Pond and Park and should not be overlooked in importance. Site 3 will see the least amount of exposure. Panel voiced concerns that while the installation is public, the location within a private development is limiting to Site 3's potential.
- **Art Theming** – Panel emphasized that the subject development is located on indigenous lands and directly adjacent to Edgeley Pond and Park, providing an opportunity for artists to draw upon its history, ecological and cultural significance in their proposals. The exploration of incorporating natural materials and/or man-made materials to mimic the surrounding natural features and building architecture will create a placemaking opportunity and strong correlation to the adjacent site context.
- **Artist Selection and Involvement** – Panel encouraged the applicant to engage the artist early to coordinate the proposed art installations with the proposed building design. This will allow for a seamless integration between the art installations and the proposed development.

## Comments

### Adjacencies and Context

- Panel recommends reviewing the transportation infrastructure and natural systems within the greater context of the site to better identify the placement, scale and nature of the art installations, given its proximity to transit systems and Edgeley Pond and Park. Opportunities to connect the art installations to their surroundings through their subject matter or materiality should be explored to strengthen a sense of place and wayfinding within the site and beyond.
- Panel noted that the site caters to different users who will form different relationships with the proposed art installations. Residents, commuters, passersby and drivers will all see the installations at varying distances and intervals, creating unique individual experiences to all.
- Panel agreed that Site 1 is the strongest opportunity for a landmark or “gateway” art installation, given its prime location on Jane Street and Highway 7 and exposure to vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- The role of Site 2 on Apple Mill Road was divisive among the Panel. Benefits of the site were identified as its position in the centre of a pedestrian thoroughfare between transit facilities and the adjacent Edgeley Pond and Park, giving the opportunity for an art installation of human scale. Conversely, points were raised that Site 2 is in a primarily residential area, a long space to fill, and an art installation in this location will not see as much traffic or visitors as Site 1. Panel identified this site as having potential for wayfinding components.
- Panel indicated that Site 3 within the galleria was likely the lowest priority, with the most barriers across the three sites. Panel was complementary towards the existing design and questioned whether an art installation was ultimately needed. Concerns were raised over the role of the galleria as a passive space. Its location within a private development has potential to limit the art installation as a boon to the public realm. Panel agreed that the structure of the galleria raised a unique opportunity for an art installation involving light, sound, or kinetic movement.

### Distribution of Budget

- Panel encouraged the applicant to put additional consideration into the distribution of the budget between the three art installations. Site 1, at the corner of Jane Street and Highway 7 was identified as a key site in creating a “gateway” feature within the VMC, and should see a larger portion of funding.
- The applicant was encouraged to consider the circulation of pedestrians and vehicles within and around the site, as a means of determining the scale and funding for each installation.
- Panel raised concerns over the nature of Site 3. Questions were raised over the appeal and functionality of the galleria as a public space and circulation route, given its passive nature. As such, a scaled-back art installation in Site 3 may be an opportunity to distribute increased funding to Sites 1 and 2, which hold more potential.

### Art Theming

- Panel suggested integrating elements of the site context into the call for proposals, indicating potential materiality or themes for the artists to channel. The east frontage along Edgeley Pond and Park suggests connective tissues to nature while the historical and cultural significance calls upon honouring the indigenous teachings of the area. Emphasizing the site's history, and adjacencies provides a unique wayfinding and visioning opportunity for the site. Consider how this site can contribute to the story being told amongst the larger framework of the VMC. Proposals should be tailored to each of the three sites identified instead of a generalized approach for the site as a whole.

### Artist Selection and Involvement

- Panel encouraged the early selection and engagement of an artist for the public art specifically within the galleria. Coordination between the architect and artist may be required to finalize an installation that is sensitive to the surrounding architecture and to determine appropriate anchorage or attachment methods to the building, if necessary.

**END OF MINUTES**