

Minutes of the Design Review Panel Meeting 5 – May 12, 2014

The Design Review Panel met on Monday May 12, 2014, in Committee Room 4, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West, Toronto, at 11:30am.

Members of the Design Review Panel

Members Present

Gordon Stratford (Chair): Architect, Senior Vice President, Design Director - HOK Canada	✓
Michael Leckman (Vice Chair): Architect, Principal - Diamond and Schmitt	✓
Carl Blanchaer: Architect, Principal – WZMH Architects	
Calvin Brook: Planner, Architect, Principal - Brook McIlroy	✓
Ralph Giannone: Architect, Principal - Giannone Associates	✓
Charles Hazell: Heritage Specialist, Architect, Principal - Taylor Hazell Architects	✓
Brian Hollingworth: Transportation Engineer, Director – IBI Group	✓
Alun Lloyd: Transportation Engineer, Principal - BA Group	✓
Joe Lobko: Architect, Principal – DTAH	
Jim Melvin: Landscape Architect, Principal - PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.	✓
Adam Nicklin: Landscape Architect, Principal - PUBLIC WORK office for urban design	✓
Roland rom Colthoff: Architect, Director – RAW Design	✓
David Sisam: Architect, Principal – Montgomery Sisam Architects	✓
Sibylle von Knobloch: Landscape Architect, Principle - NAK Design	✓

Confirmation of Minutes

The Design Review Panel confirmed minutes of their previous meeting which was held on April 14, 2014.

DRP Coordinator

Hamish Goodwin: Urban Design, City Planning Division

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45 Dunfield Avenue	
Planning Area	Yonge Eglinton Centre
Design Team	John Shnier, Kohn Shnier Architects
Application Type	Rezoning Application
Review	1 st Review
City Staff	Rong Yu, Urban Design Diane Silver, Community Planning
Conflict of Interest	Alun Lloyd, BA Group
Vote	5 – Refine* ; 0 – Redesign; 1 – Abstain



* Condition: The proponent improve the east-west mid-block connections, and the fluidity of the public realm in the park

Introduction

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

1. Has the proposed development provided an appropriate transition from the Urban Growth Centre to the Neighbourhood on the south side of Soudan Ave?
2. This proposal includes several variations from the Tall Buildings Guidelines. How will these variations impact the pedestrian realm and livability on the site?
3. Has the design cohesively integrated the proposed and existing ground plane uses (park, open space, & service courts) considering the scale of the block?
4. Does the proposed art gallery respond appropriately to the Midtown In Focus Study vision?

The applicant team described the proposal and responded to questions from the Panel.

Chairs Summary

Panel appreciated the opportunity to review an innovative tower-infill proposal within an established residential neighborhood, and one recently subject to a detailed open space integration study. The proposed scheme is exemplary in the way it engages with the landscaped context, occupies and animates the ground floor plane, introduces new uses compatible with the evolving character of the neighborhood, and seeks to re-imagine the tower-in-the-park building type. The presentation material was clear and allowed a detailed review of the design intentions, materiality, and the eye level experience of the proposed spaces and built elements. Key comments from the Panel focused on transition to the low-rise context, tower separations, and landscape continuity.

To emphasize the transition between the towers and the low-rise residential context, it was suggested to increase the height difference between the two towers, and to lower the tower closer to Soudan Avenue. In addition, to increase the separation between the towers, it was

proposed to consider encroaching on the designated green space to the south, with the justification being improvements to overall landscape. To improve landscape continuity and usability, it was further proposed to remove the retaining wall on the north edge of the proposal to allow unencumbered north-south connections through the site. Finally, there was discussion of the internalized drop-off condition: several Panel members felt that due to the proximity of the towers to the adjacent streets, that a lay-by might be more appropriate, potentially liberating additional landscape at grade.

Related Commentary

On the whole, Panel was enthusiastic about this proposal. Members were encouraged by the many innovative and creative elements including the approach to the site plan layout, building articulation, and program. They also recognized that the proposal would benefit from further refinement at grade, and that community consultation would help provide some clarity to the direction of these refinements. The discussion is summarized below.

Has the proposed development provided an appropriate transition from the Urban Growth Centre to the Neighbourhood on the south side of Soudan Ave?

Members were unanimous in suggesting that both tower heights should be lowered to provide a noticeable transition in height down to the Neighbourhood. It was noted that both towers east and west are lower, and that lower heights with this proposal would improve the overall compositional relationship with The Torontonians.

Some Members suggested this noticeable height reduction could be achieved through lowering the towers by approximately 4 or 5 storeys. Others suggested that moving the southernmost tower further south, beyond the Urban Growth Centre boundary, could also help to "unlock" the site and provide more space (more tower separation, and more open space). Noting that the proposal was not currently satisfying transition objectives, the Tall Building Guidelines, and the City's open space ambitions, one Member suggested some further compromise was clearly needed from both sides.

This proposal includes several variations from the Tall Buildings Guidelines. How will these variations impact the pedestrian realm and livability on the site?

Members were supportive of the tower-in-the-park building design and composition for this proposal, as a means of minimizing the (base) building footprint - and thereby maximizing the surrounding open space - and as a contextual approach to site plan layout. They were further supportive of the attempts to animate the ground plane, and suggested that the success of these attempts would be the difference between this tower-in-the-park approach and others that came before it (i.e. an animated ground plane versus the older examples which are generally underutilized). Finally, Members also appeared to be supportive of the composition as a welcome variation to the typical base-middle-top approach of the majority of towers that they have reviewed over the years. It was noted, however, that success of the tower-in-the-park model relies on the extent of space around each tower, and that this element of the proposal was not yet entirely resolved (i.e. more space between towers is needed). Members were encouraged that the towers could be modified with canopies to absorb downward wind shear.

Has the design cohesively integrated the proposed and existing ground plane uses (park, open space, & service courts) considering the scale of the block?

Panel felt that more work was required at-grade to integrate the buildings with the landscape and the surrounding context, in particular addressing the various grade changes on the block to create more fluidity and ease of direct movement through the entire site. This was reflected in their conditional vote of support for the project. Concerns and comments are summarized below:

- Grade Changes
 - The site has many grade changes
 - At the entrance to north of the two buildings
 - Directly behind the art gallery
 - This is problematic if you are really trying to encourage pedestrian permeability through the site
 - It needs to be addressed, and made more inviting
 - The site needs more fluidity and connection to the park
- Landscape design
 - Landscape around the Torontonians has to be better integrated
 - The buildings are sitting really well, but they are uncomfortable with each other
 - They need to be freer, and to connect better
- Movement through and around the site
 - Maintaining the east-west linkage between Dunfield and Lillian is good, but it could be improved further:
 - Perhaps the southern parts could become an extension of the park, ... shared streets
 - The sidewalks on Dunfield are quite narrow; ideally this should be improved through this project
 - The landscape pattern is interesting, but you need to look at it from first principles:
 - How does it facilitate direct and easy movement through the site?
 - It could be tending to inaccessibility
 - Desire lines could be straighter
- Interior drop-off
 - The buildings are so close to the curb, why wouldn't people just be dropped off there?
 - Remove the drop-off, and use the space to improve grade conditions and connections

Does the proposed art gallery respond appropriately to the Midtown In Focus Study vision?

One Member felt strongly that the art gallery was not responding to the Midtown study, and provided the following comments:

- The midtown study resulted in three overarching outcomes:
 - A need for *public* space
 - Parks should have public edges
 - A need to look at every opportunity to provide public connections through sites, particularly ones with large sites and long street frontages
- This site is the last opportunity for a big public park in Midtown
 - Rather than an art gallery as your legacy, provide a very public park

- The park will become a legacy of the proponent
- If one of your [the proponent's] objectives is to provide open space, then you should provide grade-related open space
- The gallery would be better located at Yonge and Eglinton (i.e. in a more urban context)
- If it has to be on the site, the residential buildings easily take this function
- The gallery doesn't flow with the rest of the park
 - it is not one single integrated space, and wont read as an extension of the park at the scale of a pedestrian
- You need to think of it as one single space (the park and the open space)
 - addressing this will require removal of the fence around the park
- Soudan is a quiet residential street; the frontage along this street is the side of the gallery
- The entrance is not on the street, but at the side of the building

Other Members – a majority - were more amenable to the art gallery, felt it had some promise, but that refinements were still required:

- Building placement
 - The gallery forms a buffer and reinforces the street edge
- Animation
 - It will provide eyes on the park
 - It will provide warmth in winter
- Unique Creativity
 - It is worthwhile taking a chance, because the merits are there
 - I am thrilled that privately-owned public space will be integrated into the neighbourhood
 - It will give an amazing layer to the Sense of Place
- Rooftop Open Space
 - Truly public accessible space is a wonderful addition
 - Circulation and use on the roof top needs to be developed
 - You come up to the roof, then nothing happens
 - You need to make it meaningful public space
 - It needs to integrate more with the landscape
- Interplay of amenity pavilions
 - The two amenity pavilions seem to be at odds with each other
 - What if the entire landscape was given to these amenities?
 - Develop them more in relationship to each other
 - The interior pavilion needs more sense of grace
 - Don't want to have shadow underneath it

Building Articulation and Materiality

Panel was supportive of the building expression, with less than 40% glazing on its facade, as a refreshing alternative to the numerous glass facades they had reviewed over the years. The sustainable design elements of this expression, including the inset balconies, were also commended. Members were interested in the proposed materiality (prefabricated brick), but expressed unanimous caution about the challenge of this approach.

675 Progress Avenue	
Planning Area	Scarborough Centre
Design Team	regionalArchitects
Application Type	Rezoning Application
Review	1 st review
City Staff	Russell Crooks, Community Planning Janet Lee, Urban Design
Conflict of Interest	N/A
Vote	Refine – 2; <u>Redesign</u> - 5



Introduction

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

Built Form

1. Please provide recommendations on the composition of massing particularly for street level views along Progress Ave, from the School/Park site and from Bushby Ave entering the site from the west:
 - a. Base building and Midrise Heights: Please comment on the base building height, mid-rise buildings and how well they are working together and with the context.
 - b. Tower transition: Please provide comment on the transition of tower heights to the school? For the easternmost tower, a height at approx. 13 storeys versus the 36 storeys proposed would minimize shadow on the school/park site for anticipated popular after-school use. Would this be an improvement to achieving transition in heights and does the Panel have comment on alternate massing arrangements?
 - c. Does the Panel have recommendations on tower floor plate shapes and skyview particularly as seen from street level views?
 - d. Does the Panel have recommendations on the design of the 10 storey building to the east of the small park which will be prominent?

Site Layout

2. Does the Panel have comment on additional opportunities for POPS (privately owned publicly-accessible public space), enhanced private landscaping, pedestrian links or recommendations for the mid-block pedestrian service mews?

The consultant described the design rationale and responded to questions from the Panel.

Chairs Summary

Panel was appreciative of reviewing a massing proposal in a major new growth area in the City. Developments in this area will have the advantage of significant park space, potential access to a major transit node, and access to a neighborhood school – all the components of a successful, vibrant, livable environment.

In general terms, the massing studies represented the intention of providing livable streets with townhouse-like grade related dwellings to complement the high density tall buildings, and these strategies were noted by the Panel. However, the specific proposal seemed to present too many unknowns for Panel to provide effective guidance. Some Panel members referred to it as a jigsaw puzzle with missing pieces. With design parameters for the development on the open space to the east unclear, it was difficult to comment on an appropriate urban edge, or to assess shadow impact.

A few comments were clear: the small park should offer a different experience to the open spaces and parks to the east; streetscapes needed development and did not yet appear to create a consistent legible strategy; the loading dominated mid-block laneway seemed neither service lane nor street; and that a charrette – with participants including TDSB, the City and the proponent - is needed to coordinate the immense design potential of this important site.

Related Commentary

Panel saw merit in the proposal, but on balance did not support it for a variety of reasons which Members felt were either not fully resolved or contained too much uncertainty. Examples included height and shadowing impacts, the location of the school, the relationship to and fit with the broader planned context, and quality of the public realm. Given the early stage of the proposal, Panel felt it would be worthwhile to study some of these issues in greater detail – such as through a charrette with adjacent land owners – and ensure all the cues for successful urbanization are correctly established both on the site and adjacent to it.

10-storey building / small prominent park

Comments provided by Panel focused on the park, its role and sense of place, how best to animate it, and what would be the ideal edge conditions. Members acknowledged the prime opportunity of addressing these conditions at the conceptual stages of development, thereby ensuring it thrives upon completion.

Role / Sense of Place

- Built form massing is crucial to the success of the park
 - o The proposed heights will compromise the park quality and experience
 - o The absence of sunlight is significant
- Consider where people will gather in this precinct
 - o They won't want to mingle or linger on McCowan or Progress
 - o The park should serve this role - a "centre of gravity" which will draw people in
- With this role, it needs to have a special scale and character
 - o Currently it seems isolated, more like a neighbourhood park, being surrounded by residential townhouses

- It should be more than a neighbourhood park (i.e. a park with swings and play equipment) because it is already so close to the school yard where these facilities would exist

Animation

- The interface with surrounding building will help establish a special character for the park
 - The townhouse base is relentless
 - A commercial edge would provide better animation
 - Cafes are unlikely to thrive on Progress; this is the place for them
- Make the interface more exciting, more diverse
- Without this, the success of the park as a generator of people is questionable

Edge Conditions

There was general agreement that the park would be improved by moving some of the land uses around, so that it truly becomes the focus of the development. The impact of the wide Bushby Av ROW on the park was also identified; various suggestions for how to address this impact are noted further below.

- Issues with animation and interface would be best addressed by moving some of the development blocks around; specifically, swap the school site with Block 4:
 - This would address concerns with sunlight on the school yard
 - It would also provide the park with a variety of edge conditions, that would assist with animation (residential, retail, and school uses)
- The variety of edge conditions would bring in different users, assisting with animation at various times throughout the day:
 - Families, office workers, and residents
- Examine the West Don Lands PanAm village as a precedent for how to frame a park with built form:
 - There might be a similar opportunity here to blend mixed-uses with the public park
- Consider shaping the southern edge of the 10-storey building so that some of the park space "leaks" through to Street C and connects it visually with the larger open space
- A step-back from the base building would assist with built form definition

Site Plan Layout

Location of School

In response to the issue of shadowing on the school lands, Members identified some merit in exploring alternative sites for the school, such as Block 4. Another alternative posed to resolve this issue was relocating the 36-storey tower from Block 2 to Block 4. This move would establish an 8-10 storey streetwall on Street C, which Panel felt was a more appropriate transition to the current proposed school site.

Bushby Avenue

Panel saw some merit in the Bushby extension acting as a Promenade, given that it connects with the intermodal hub, the town square (mall), and the civic centre. However, they were unanimous in questioning the proposed dimensions of this right-of-way, with the general sentiment being that it seemed too large for the volume of traffic it would serve and for the urban conditions that are forthcoming. Its abrupt terminus at East Highland Creek was also seen to be uncharacteristic of the experiential cues that this dimension is

establishing (ie the dimensions suggest it is leading to a grander or more significant moment). With these doubts and questions, Members felt the Bushby Avenue frontages required strengthening and buffering. Suggestions for this included:

- redistributing the park space into a linear shape, providing Bushby with a green-connector character
- locating trees adjacent to the street and inseting the bike lanes, so that the trees enclose the street and mediate issues of conflict between bikes and cars.

Pedestrian Realm & Mixed Uses

Panel pushed for more active uses (retail, community uses etc.) to be located at grade throughout the site and not just concentrated on Progress Ave, to help animate a greater portion of the site. In tandem with this, permanent on-street parking was also recommended to aid retail success.

Laneway

One Member suggested the laneway on west side of site should be thought of as shared lane. This Member was also struck by how a significant portion of the western elevation is taken up by servicing and access. The implication being that this would be a lost opportunity (a blank unanimated frontage) if the site immediately west was to redevelop in a similar manner.

Response to Context

Panel expressed a desire to know more about the future context of the McCowan Precinct, particularly in terms of built form, including heights, and how this proposal would relate.

Landscape Design / Pedestrian Realm

Panel was encouraged by the site plan layout as a means of urbanizing the area, but felt further work was required to establish a pedestrian-friendly environment throughout. Some of these comments applied to the park conditions, and have been noted above; others applied more generally to the larger site, and its setting amongst large-scale buildings and wide roads:

- Want to see more development of edges with respect to public space
- Resolution of the landscape component is significant; this is where the promise of public realm gets established
 - o want to see a much stronger commitment to this
 - o currently it is under-developed

Tower Floorplate

The following comments were provided:

- Ensure the buildings on Block 3 and 4 are shaped in a way that deflects rather than captures noise from the SRT
- The site layout is very orthogonal; explore ways of mixing this up

3445 Sheppard Av East	
Planning Area	Sheppard/Warden Avenue Study Area
Design Team	Architecture Unfolded
Application Type	Rezoning Application
Review	First review
City Staff	Willie Macrae, Community Planning Xue Pei, Urban Design
Conflict of Interest	none
Vote	Refine – 0; <u>Redesign - 7</u>



Introduction

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

1. Please comment on the revised park location/design and overall site layout?
2. Can the Panel provide recommendations as to how to increase the visibility of the rear townhouse units from Sheppard?
3. Does the Panel have any ideas for refinements to the built form and articulation of the two larger buildings fronting on Sheppard? In particular, please comment on the stepbacks and facade articulation along the private street and the park.

The consultant described the design rationale and responded to questions from the Panel.

Chairs Summary

Panel appreciates the proponent team's efforts made to develop their design since the last review. However serious concerns remain about the new proposal that need to be addressed, with the following suggestions:

- Locate the park between the two buildings fronting Sheppard Avenue East
- Develop open space connectivity with the townhouses inside the site
- Reintroduce the mid-block laneway strategy to improve site circulation
- Rethink the proposed townhouse entries strategy to achieve a safe, accessible pedestrian realm, and strong relationship with relocated park.
- Create a high quality landscape strategy for the overall site.

Related Commentary

Despite significant changes to the site plan layout, Panel remained concerned with a number of elements to the extent that they were still unable to support this proposal. Concerns related to the larger-grained challenges of site planning and building placement, to finer-grained ones such as landscape and public realm design.

Park Placement and Design

While appreciative that their direction from first review was to provide the park with a street frontage, Members indicated at this review that the provision of this street frontage was no guarantee that the park would succeed. In response to the current proposal, Panel indicated that much further work was still required to provide the park with a sense of place, to successfully integrate it into the site, and respond appropriately to the surrounding context. Specific issues identified for resolution through design and building program included traffic intensity, noise, privacy, circulation, edge conditions, and animation. Increasing the size/scale of the park was one potential solution identified to help resolve these issues – for example, assuming the corner site at Sheppard and Warden – but Panel acknowledged this was highly unlikely to happen. Instead, a high level of design and public realm attention was recommended, as would be provided by a landscape architect.

Additionally, Members felt strongly that a more suitable location for the park would be between the two buildings on Sheppard, for reasons including:

- It would help animate the park;
- It would be more attractive for the residents; and
- It would increase views to the rear townhouses.

There was some acknowledgement there would be an issue in implementing this move (with the park being on top of underground parking), and that the western building would get longer, but on the balance, Members felt these were appropriate trade-offs.

Rear Townhouses / Visibility

Panel expressed strong concerns with the back-to-back townhouse condition on the interior of the site, including the lack of visibility through to the rear of the site:

- Back-to-back townhouses have the potential to be unsafe if not designed properly
 - o This is exacerbated here by the lack of sight lines and accessibility issues (e.g. the pizza delivery test)
- There is territory that does not get claimed by anymore
 - o If it is unclaimed, it is residual, and therefore problematic
- Private outdoor space should be provided for all townhouses

In addition, Panel also suggested the above conditions would likely affect the marketability of the project, and suggested that reconsideration of this condition was warranted.

Site Plan Layout

Members were unconvinced the vehicular circulation route through the site would function adequately. As a cul-de-sac typology, they felt it would feel exclusive and uninviting. They also felt the reliance on reversing maneuverability would be problematic, and expressed a preference for the lane/private street to loop through to a public point of entry/exit. One Member questioned the elimination of all surface parking, noting that some will be needed for the proposed retail uses.

Toronto 360 Wayfinding Strategy

discussion item

Financial District, Pilot Implementation

Steer Davies Gleave

Public Realm Section, Transportation Services



Introduction

City staff outlined the project background and context, and sought Panel's advice on three prototype/product options, and the map design. The consultant described the design rationale and responded to questions from the Panel.

Chairs Summary

Panel commends the proponents for a creative, comprehensive and graphically coherent submission. The proposed wayfinding strategy will be a valuable addition to the City's public realm. Care will be needed in implementation since this realm often does not have sufficient space to accommodate all of the elements needed for a high quality, supportive environment. The final product should exhibit design clarity and elegant simplicity, allowing it to be distinctive while fitting into Toronto's varied built form context.

Related Commentary

Panel was generally supportive of the pilot project, and saw merit in a cohesive and integrated wayfinding system. Panel discussion focused mostly on general design considerations, project clarifications, and how the system would function in the urban fabric (e.g. issues such as placement, clutter and pedestrian clearways). A summary of these discussion points is below. Panel did not provide a preference for the options, although there was general consensus that Option 3 was not suitable. Reasons for this included:

- The diagonal lines are distracting, and don't help the sign to blend in
- Integrating the square fingerpost could be challenging on some city streets

Relationship to Existing Info Pillars

- Info Pillars without advertising are easier to move, and can be moved out of the pilot area
 - They could also potentially be used by the BIA to provide local business information (restaurants, stores etc.)
- The Info Pillars with advertising won't be moved, but their maps will be updated
- The wayfinding pillars will have a higher design quality, but will provide some reference to the existing product, through design cues.

Maps

- Publically accessible spaces will be emphasized, not just public streets
- PATH entrances will be identified, but not the full network
- The map information and design is almost more important than the structure itself

Signage and Clutter

- Give consideration to the role that the wayfinding system can play in helping to consolidate signage and remove clutter:
 - some signs are privately owned and will remain
 - Others might be removed if there is information overlap
- Give consideration to how wayfinding would integrate with other established systems (e.g. University of Toronto)
 - Ideally the two systems would work together

Placement Criteria/Guidelines

- What are the criteria to locate the systems?
 - Signs need to be placed where they are needed, where they will support pedestrians
- Ensure they stay in the furnishing zone
- Ensure they enhance, rather than stress, the public realm

Lighting and Accessibility

- The systems will not have lighting, but will be adaptable for this in the future
 - Ducting will be provided within the foundations
 - Solar is a potential in the future, but not at the moment
- Tactile information is better than brail, from experience

Fabrication

- In response to a question about construction (design-build), the consultant indicated a fabricator has been secured as part of their team

Technology Integration

Some Members were disappointed with the lack of technological integration. They saw potential for some systems, in key locations (e.g. such as near Union Station or other busy transit shelters), to provide an interactive experience, or to perform an added public function such as acting as wi-fi hotspots. In response, it was noted that rapid technology changes are challenging to address, and that interactive displays in general are difficult – and more expensive – to maintain.

Design Considerations

- For the long-term roll-out, ensure the system does not detract from/dilute the uniqueness of place
 - There is a need to be conscious about supporting the existing character of the city
- Don't try to be too unique with the design
 - They should have a certain neutrality
 - They should not compete with the urban fabric
- Bear in mind that people will lock their bikes to the finger posts
- Ensure the systems are designed for all seasons (i.e. winter durability)

5245 Dundas Street West	
Planning Area	Etobicoke Centre
Design Team	DSAI
Application Type	Rezoning Application
Review	1 st Review
City Staff	Julie Bogdanowicz, Urban Design Christian Ventresca, Community Planning
Conflict of Interest	Alun Llyod, BA Group
Vote	<u>Refine – 5</u> ; Redesign - 0



Introduction

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

1. Does the proposed transit oriented development demonstrate active and interesting building facades which interact positively with the public realm, streets, public spaces and the adjacent mobility hub and does the design include convenient and identifiable entrances which provide access to, and address for, the building?
2. Does the massing and the architectural treatment of the base building appropriately address the change in grade from north to the south and does it activate ground-level public realm? Does it successfully achieve animated retail facades which enrich the pedestrian experience?
3. Does the proposed tower placement achieve adequate separation distances between the existing tall buildings? Is the tower's geometry and architectural treatment appropriate given its prominence and highly visible location in Etobicoke Centre?

The applicant team described the proposal and responded to questions from the Panel.

Chairs Summary

Panel commends the proponent team for the creative response to a demanding site and surrounding context, and the potential for an elegantly simple design solution. To achieve the above, care is needed to abide by Tall Building Guidelines, specifically, shifting the proposed tower further away from existing ones. As well, adding pedestrian-scaled street-level weather protection, high quality landscape and enhanced retail animation will mitigate the podium's imposing presence and establish a more urbane context.

Related Commentary

Panel was generally appreciative of this proposal. One Member described the site as being in desperate need of some urbanity and with this in mind, Panel was supportive of the fundamental moves to animate the primary frontages through retail uses, and to generally

improve the pedestrian environment throughout. A variety of suggestions were provided to enhance the site plan layout and the tower placement. A summary of comments follows.

Does the proposed transit oriented development demonstrate active and interesting building facades which interact positively with the public realm, streets, public spaces and the adjacent mobility hub and does the design include convenient and identifiable entrances which provide access to, and address for, the building?

Driveway

One of Panel's biggest concerns with the proposal was the driveway connection to Auckland Avenue at the southern edge of the site. They felt there was a strong likelihood that this would be heavily used as a short-cut for to avoid the signalized intersection and the Dundas Street environment. Traffic calming was recommended to discourage this behaviour, or at least tame it so as to be safe and more forgiving for pedestrians (e.g. a woonerf configuration).

Residential Entrance

The majority of Members did not directly comment on the suitability of the residential access being provided from Viking Lane. One felt that instinctively it should be provided on Auckland. Another felt if it was to be provided on Viking, that the sidewalk east of the pumping station should be prioritized (quality, dimensions etc.). In all cases, the need for a comfortable walkable surface to the entrance was identified.

Weather Protection / Trees

Members indicated it was desirable to have weather protection and street trees on the Auckland and Dundas frontages, but identified a potential conflict between the two. Further examination was recommended to resolve this conflict so that tree growth isn't affected by an overhang (e.g. canopies versus recessed ground floor).

Taxi Drop-off

Panel was not supportive of the proposed widening for a drop-off at the corner of Dundas Street West and Viking Lane. Comments included:

- Dundas is hostile enough as it is
- The proposed widening seems to be going backwards [i.e. a non-urbanizing move]
- Having a drop-off so close to Dundas would be a little concerning in that area
- Isn't there enough room already for drop-off functions?

Loading and Servicing

With four public frontages, Members were aware of the challenge of servicing and providing access to the site. Panel felt that the right moves had been made in this regard – vehicular access from Viking and loading off the private drive – but that further attention was required to screen these functions, and to enhance the pedestrian realm:

- Hope there is a wider sidewalk on the east edge of the building
- Provide a landscape buffer rather than just a blank wall
- Looking at the building from the south, you don't want to see loading doors or a ramp – provide a visual screen to buffer that edge

Does the massing and the architectural treatment of the base building appropriately address the change in grade from north to the south and does it activate ground-level public realm? Does it successfully achieve animated retail facades which enrich the pedestrian experience?

Members were appreciative of the base building as an anchor for the corner, with strong retail frontages allowing visual access into the building and aiding animation. A general desire to see "more happen" at the south-west corner was expressed by one Member. Another questioned if the retail on Aukland could be more nuanced, stepping down so it meets the sidewalk and the bottom corner.

Panel was supportive of the overall building articulation, expressing appreciation for the simplicity in the existing context. One Member described the overall treatment as being elegant.

Does the proposed tower placement achieve adequate separation distances between the existing tall buildings? Is the tower's geometry and architectural treatment appropriate given its prominence and highly visible location in Etobicoke Centre?

Some Members were concerned with placement of the base building as it related to separation from the existing tower, while others were not. However, concern was expressed almost unanimously in regard to the tower placement and the impact upon tower separation. While acknowledging that guidance on this matter allows for some flexibility, Panel felt that further work was needed to increase separation, daylighting, and sky views, and to adjust the disposition of massing within the broader composition of tall elements.

Comments were as follows:

- Can the tower be moved west, perhaps to zero lotline?
- Push the tower further west
- Consider moving the tower more to the north, or to the south, so it is less stuck in the middle
- The tower is very iconic; have you explored setting it 45 degrees to the offset?
 - o This could help open skyviews and relieve the separation issue substantially