

JURY REPORT

JARVIS SLIP PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN COMPETITION

Overview:

Waterfront Toronto sponsored an innovative design competition for the design of Jarvis Slip Public Space, located in the East Bayfront precinct, to bring a fresh new perspective to the approximate 1 acre site that would serve as a local gateway and destination at the waters edge.

Three Design Teams:

Janet Rosenberg + Associates
Claude Cormier Architectes Paysagistes Inc.
West 8 + DTAH

Design Competition Jury:

Siamak Hariri, Chair, Principal, Hariri Pontarini Architects
Peter Clewes, Partner, Architects Alliance
Greg Smallemberg, Landscape Architect and Partner, Phillips Farevaag Smallemberg
Lisa Rapoport, Architect and Partner, PLANT Architect Inc.

Goals of the Competition:

The jury considered the following design criteria, as outlined in the competition brief, in evaluating the design submissions:

1. Develop a gateway into the East Bayfront precinct
2. Respond and interact with the adjacent buildings
3. Celebrate the marine and industrial heritage of the site
4. Incorporate the central waterfront continuous promenade design
5. Create opportunities for dynamic lighting and new media
6. Maintain the view corridor of the lake
7. Promote sustainable development

Process:

The jury deliberations included the opportunity to attend the public exhibition and presentations by the three competitors held at Metro Hall on Jan. 21, 2008. For jury members that could not attend the presentations, video tapes of the presentation were available for viewing.

The jury met for a full day on Jan 31st to formally review the design proposals and to select a winning scheme and team. The staff of Waterfront Toronto provided a broad overview of the competition requirements and site context.

As part of their deliberations, the jury received presentations from the East Bayfront Stakeholders, and City of Toronto Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Both groups provided the jury with their identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the designs and provided thoughts on the team's innovative approaches.

Julie Beddoes, chair of the Jarvis Slip Public Space Stakeholder Committee provided a summary of the group's response to each of the designs. A detailed report was provided to the jury members.

Sean Harvey from the City of Toronto provided a summary of the TAC response to each of the designs. A detail report was provided to the jury members.

Comment cards that were made available to the public at Metro Hall were also collected, formatted and communicated to the jury members.

In addition to reviewing the design reports submitted by each competing team, the boards, models, and video display installations were set up for viewing at the offices of Waterfront Toronto specifically for the jury deliberations.

Jury Comments:

Title: Weatherfront

Team: Janet Rosenberg + Associates with Charles Waldheim and Ned Kahn

The jury felt that the design panels and model were graphically clear and the design proposed a fascinating art component for the public space. The design also addressed several of the criteria, including providing an open public space for large gatherings and maintaining views to Redpath Sugar. The jury appreciated the proposed wave pavement pattern, particularly how the colour variations, dark/light, would be placed in strategic manner as to create smaller episodes, or micro climates of warm/cool spaces within the larger open space, and the idea of the possibility of an interactive water play component.

However, the jury felt that the design could afford smaller intimate spaces. Proposed planting was limited, and clustered close to the building edge. The proposed design, which offered the largest public open space, appeared over exposed, offering little or no shade/wind protection.

Although the jury appreciated the art component, the jury had concerns regarding the reliance of the design upon the piece, its overall integration with the site, and the effectiveness, of the art component. The proposed design is dependent on the success of the piece. Examples and precedents of similar work involved the cladding of a building. The effectiveness of the experience of the art piece as a free standing element, with the sky as a backdrop, is unknown.

The positioning of the art component was awkward, possibly blocking important views from the space outward. It was noted that views back from the edge of the promenade toward the art component and towards the city would have aided the viewer in further understanding the art component.

The design proposed a lighting strategy, yet the jury expressed concern on the complexity of the proposed lighting and its long term effectiveness in such an exposed site.

Given these strengths and weaknesses, the jury did not select the design proposal from Janet Rosenberg.

Title: Jarvis Slip Public Space

Team: West 8 + DTAH

The jury recognized the innovation, and interaction of the WEST 8 + DTAH design proposal. In particular the creation of smaller pedestrian spaces within the larger space was appreciated by the jury. The design also addressed several of the design criteria and elements of the promenade design.

The jury was concerned that the design, while having the potential for smaller more intimate spaces, seemed very cluttered, and over designed with too many layers. The jury was concerned that the triangular forms would be more obstructive and awkward to the user. In addition, the proposed design restricted views out to the lake and to Redpath Sugar. The orientation of the planting and landforms made the space more inward in its focus.

The jury members were intrigued by the Jarvis arms, especially from an interactive and possible lighting point of view. They were in agreement however that the arms did not engage the greater site or water's edge. Furthermore, the jury thought that they could be placed anywhere within the city and seemed more of a place holder at the waterfront.

The jury also expressed concern with the northern Ontario representation of the tortured jack pine trees. The iconic trees represented are the product of time and constant weathering in exposed harsh conditions. The jury was in agreement that this would not be achievable at this site.

Given these strengths and weaknesses, the design by West 8 + DTAH was not chosen.

Title: Sugar Beach

Team: Claude Cormier Architectes Paysagistes Inc.

Planning Partnership; Leni Schwendinger Light Properties Ltd.; Beth Kapusta

The jury selected the Claude Cormier's team as the winning submission. The jury recognized that it was the most effective design in addressing the principles set fourth in the design criteria, and appreciated the big idea approach for the design of Jarvis Slip with its proposed connectivity and integration to the promenade design, and the proposal for the establishment of a larger greater system of beach designs throughout Toronto's waterfront.

The overall spatial organization allowed for the creation of intimate spaces, while supplying an appropriate amount of space for public functions adjacent to the Corus building, and the successful integration of the promenade scheme. The diagonal walkway was unanimously received as a strong organizational move that successfully ties the distinct spaces together.

The conceptual reference for "Sugar Beach" based on the industrial heritage of the adjacent Redpath Sugar Factory was well received. The jury was very interested in the position and layout of the sand beach, and its function as a space for viewing the ongoing functions of Redpath Sugar. In addition, it allowed for maintained views towards the lake. The rock formations offered flexible landforms that could be positioned to allow for both public and private interaction.

The conceptual reference for "Sugar Beach" based on the industrial heritage of the adjacent Redpath Sugar Factory was well received. The jury agreed that the design had a confidence, purity, and a playfulness that would make the space a favourite destination.

Jury Recommendations for Implementation:

1. The jury recommends that the design team re-conceptualize the beach idea as to not have another HTO project.
2. The beach re-conceptualization would include re-thinking the design/function of the proposed umbrellas. The current proposal copies/mimics the HTO design. The jury was unanimous in that the umbrella should be removable and made out of different material than the HTO project. The idea of the "system of beaches" would be stronger if elements are transformed at different locations.
3. The design should include a significant water feature that is fun, and visually and physically engaging. People who will use the space will need to be cooled off more than with the proposed foot wash.
4. The functionality of the design should be addressed in greater detail. The need for change rooms, storage of umbrellas/seating in a possible cabana, and concessions would be coordinated

with the space. In addition the jury felt strongly that public washrooms be incorporated into either the block I building just north of the site, or in the Corus building just east.

5. The jury felt that the strategy presented be re-thought with low level lighting from the ground and underneath the trees. The lighting design should provide sufficient levels and security for the overall site. It should enhance the design; allow views of the beach without overwhelming the site.
6. The proposed tree planting should respect and maintain the promenade design. Maintaining the connectivity of the WEST 8 + DTAH Central Waterfront scheme is recommended. This can be achieved without losing the transgression of the willow trees across from the beach across the space.
7. The jury recommended that the singular idea of the beach theme be explored elsewhere throughout the waterfront, including possibly Parliament Slip.
8. The design needs to fully explore and incorporate site services and media infrastructural requirements that are necessary for public use and planned events. It should not be an after thought to the design.
9. The jury recommended that the design needs to address issues of public safety, in particular children's proximity to the dockwall edge in the beach area. The precedent of the toe rail is effective when there is a large separation from the beach area; the current design has a min distance.
10. The design team should consider sloping up from the existing dockwall 1.5 m rather than removing the top of the dockwall. Building up rather than cutting down may aid in addressing design transitions with the Corus building.
11. Development of the bench detail, along the diagonal promenade, should be a collaborative process with the WEST 8 + DTAH team.
12. The jury stressed the importance of the need of a high level of refinement in the detail design. The detailing should be a step up from the referenced HTO project. The details that worked at HTO could not work at Jarvis Slip. The design elements need to have a level of specificity and precision, and the overall design needs to be well executed.
13. The design needs to examine in greater detail the relationship between the sugar mist and proposed beach, potential water feature, and site furnishings, including maintenance requirements.
14. The design needs to incorporate issues of sustainability, including material detailing, treatment of water, drainage, and power requirements.