



**WATERFRONT**Toronto

**Waterfront Design Review Panel  
Minutes of Meeting #140  
Wednesday, Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

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**Present**

Paul Bedford, Chair  
Betsy Williamson, Vice Chair  
George Baird  
Peter Busby  
Pat Hanson  
Janna Levitt  
Nina-Marie Lister  
Fadi Masoud  
Jeff Ranson  
Brigitte Shim  
Kevin Stelzer  
Eric Turcotte

**Regrets**

Claude Cormier

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**Representatives**

Chris Glaisek, Waterfront Toronto  
Lorna Day, City of Toronto  
Deanne Mighton, City of Toronto

**Recording Secretary**

Leon Lai

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**WELCOME**

The Chair opened the meeting by providing an overview of the agenda, which included reviews of:

1. 1-7 Yonge St. Phase 4+5 – Schematic Design
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**GENERAL BUSINESS**

The Chair asked the Panel to adopt the minutes from the Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting. The minutes were adopted.

The Chair asked if there were any conflict of interest. No conflict of interest was declared.

The Chair then asked Christopher Glaisek, Chief Planning and Design Officer with Waterfront Toronto, to give an update on last month's projects.

Update on last month's projects:

Mr. Glaisek began by noting that 60 Trinity Street Station A is working to address Panel comments and will provide samples of the brick, mortar, and pattern for Panel review before final selection. The Proponent received a vote of Full Support and is not expected to return to DRP.

Mr. Glaisek noted the Consensus Comments for Lower Yonge Public Realm Implementation have been circulated to the design team and they will meet with Waterfront Toronto in January 2021 to debrief and confirm next steps. The project is anticipated to return to DRP for Schematic Design review next year. One Panel member noted to ensure context and adjacent design images are provided at the next review. Mr. Glaisek noted Waterfront Toronto will compile a package that allows the design team to present all the context while presenting their design at the same time. Another Panel member noted dialogue between West 8 and WSP was missing in the last presentation and encouraged the team to make these relationships clearer at the return review. One Panel member noted bold ideas are welcomed due to the enormity of the scale of the project area. Mr. Glaisek noted a map with all the adjacent projects mapped can be provided and will ask the City to provide more context on the future park located at 55 Lake Shore Block 4.

Construction Update:

Mr. Glaisek provided an update on **Port Lands Flood Protection (PLFP)** River Valley and noted the central river valley underdrain and liner installation is in progress, as well as the excavation at Don Roadway. Mr. Glaisek noted the StarX system will safely treat 1000 cubic metres of soil each week, with a total of approximately 75km<sup>3</sup> of soil using this technology. Mr. Glaisek noted the "hot pads" are under construction and once completed can treat 250m<sup>3</sup> of soil by smoldering combustion every seven days.

Mr. Glaisek then noted the upcoming DRP agenda in January 2021: 11 Bay Issues Identification, 200 Queens Quay West Issues Identification, and Queens Quay East Schematic Design.

Chair's remarks:

The Chair then concluded the General Business segment and motioned to go into the project review sessions.

The Vice Chair noted the passing of architect and friend Barry Sampson, partner at Baird Sampson Neuert Architects, and remarked his career in practice and teaching.

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## PROJECT REVIEWS

### 1.0 1-7 Yonge St. Phase 4+5 – Schematic Design

<i>Project ID #:</i>	1064
<i>Project Type:</i>	Building
<i>Review Stage:</i>	Schematic Design
<i>Review Round:</i>	Two
<i>Location:</i>	Lower Yonge
<i>Proponent:</i>	Pinnacle
<i>Architect/ Designer:</i>	Hariri Pontarini Architects, WSP, NAK Design Strategies
<i>Presenter(s):</i>	David Pontarini, Partner, Hariri Pontarini Architects; Sara Massah, Senior Project Manager, NAK Design Strategies; Juhee Oh, Director, Sustainability & Energy, WSP
<i>Delegation:</i>	Caroline Kim, Waterfront Toronto; Adam Novack, Waterfront Toronto; Nader Kadri, City of Toronto; Ran Chen, City of Toronto; Alex Marshall, Pinnacle; Jodi Buck, Hariri Pontarini Architects; Seanna Kerr, City of Toronto

#### 1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Caroline Kim, Urban Designer Manager with Waterfront Toronto, began the introduction by noting the site context, existing site conditions, and adjacent development context of 55 Lake Shore Boulevard East. Nader Kadri, Community Planner with the City of Toronto, provided a recap of the development history, major project programs, the existing LPAT approval, and the project's history at the Design Review Panel. Adam Novak, Design Project Manager, provided a recap of the Lower Yonge Precinct Plan and Concept Plan, including the mid-block connections, streetscape designs, types, sections, public art plan, Queens Quay public realm, and the Lake Shore Public Realm Implementation Plan. Ms. Kim noted the project previously came to DRP for Stage 1 review of Phase A in Dec. 2015, Dec. 2017, and the project is here for Schematic Design for Phase B. Ms. Kim provided a recap of previous consensus comments and noted the areas for Panel consideration: design quality and experience of the north-south pedestrian connections, architectural legibility, integration of the Star building, sustainability, elevated pedestrian bridges, and opportunities for public art. Ms. Kim then introduced David Pontarini, Partner at Hariri Pontarini Architects, to continue the design presentation.

#### 1.2 Project Presentation

##### Building

Mr. Pontarini began by noting the site context, major intersections, adjacent developments, block tower heights, and the two phases of the development. Mr. Pontarini noted Phase A is under construction with updated photos and a breakdown of the areas and programs of Phase B. Mr. Pontarini noted the at grade pedestrian connections, the second level interior connections, the elevated bridges, and the ground floor loading and services. Mr. Pontarini noted the podium designs with perspectives, elevations, and a detailed description of the grade pedestrian zones with respective clearances. Mr. Pontarini noted the overall project sections and the

sectional distribution of programs. Mr. Pontarini introduced Sara Massah, Senior Project Manager, with NA Design Strategies, to present the landscape.

### Landscape

Ms. Massah noted the street sections and material palette of Yonge and Harbour, and the rooftop terrace designs. Ms. Massah detailed the Queens Quay pavement and the corner of the Star building.

### Sustainability

Juhee Oh, Director of Sustainability with WSP, noted the sustainability targets for Phase 1-3 and 4+5: Toronto Green Standards Tier 2, Waterfront Toronto Minimum Green Building Requirements v2.1, LEED BD+C Core and Shell version 4 certification. Mr. Oh noted the key strategies including electrical vehicle, bird-friendly glazing, low-flow plumbing fixtures, rainwater reuse, connection to Enwave District Energy System. The team is determining various energy, carbon, and resilience strategies for commercial office buildings.

### **1.3 Panel Questions**

The Chair then asked the Panel for questions of clarification.

One Panel member asked if the interior of the Star lobby is located at the existing level and the line of glazing meets the pedestrian walkway. Mr. Pontarini noted the team is pulling the glazing line back a little but the floor level has not changed, the ramp has been pushed inward to broaden pedestrian walkway and promenade west of the lobby.

Another Panel member noted the renderings show different levels of reflectivity and asked if more specificity can be provided on the glass' transparency and color. Mr. Pontarini noted the team has not yet developed those details, the idea is to introduce a variety of glass color, tint, to differentiate some of the elements – will be further refined in the next phase.

One Panel member asked for the dimensions of the midblock pedestrian connections and the population density of the block. Mr. Pontarini noted the widths on the plan, the team will refine the exposed columns and structures, and noted that the ground floor is fully covered with no natural light. The team does not have population density information on hand.

Another Panel member asked for more details on the facades and soffits facing the gap between the office and hotel buildings and how the team is dealing with challenges of separation distance and privacy. Mr. Pontarini noted the gap is a natural separation between the different programs, the facades are mostly opaque due to the location of the building core, and the team does not yet have soffit information.

One Panel member asked if the glass is transparent enough to see the structure of the building, the rationale for keeping the Star building, and clarification on loading and parking access off Freeland Street. Mr. Pontarini noted the structure is simple and is not meant to be read, the buildings will be cladded in spandrel to maximize solid to glazed ratio, approximately 60 to 40. Mr. Pontarini noted there was no major advantage for building new and there are no other options for loading and services

other than Freeland Street as Yonge, Harbour, Lakeshore, and Queens Quay are not feasible.

Another Panel member noted the LPAT agreement recommended underground pedestrian connections and asked for the status of the elevated bridges. Mr. Kadri noted the bridges are under consideration. The Panel member asked if the public realm design is generally proposed to align with the precinct plan and the height clearance for the covered midblock connections. Mr. Kadri noted the midblock connections align with the precinct plan but are different in form and function. Mr. Pontarini noted the height is 4.5m, a one-storey clearance.

One Panel member asked for the clarification on the location of the sequence of renderings and if any wind or micro-climate studies were completed for the public realm. Mr. Pontarini noted the intersections where the views have been taken and the team does not have the studies on hand to fully respond.

Another Panel member asked for the level of the hotel rooftop terrace and the wind mitigation measures. Mr. Pontarini noted the terraces will have high wind screens on all sides to provide a comfortable and safe environment.

One Panel member noted the difference in pedestrian clearance on the ground floor and asked why it is not consistent throughout. Mr. Pontarini noted the clearances shift to balance pedestrian and vehicular areas, a bit of pushing and pulling at various points.

Another Panel member noted the DRP reviewed WSP's presentation on Lower Yonge Public Realm Implementation last month and asked how the coordination will procedurally take place. Mr. Marshall noted the team met with WSP few weeks ago and will help them deliver the urban realm concept design through the Lower Yonge Public Realm. Along Yonge and Lake Shore, the landscape is in line with WSP for the Lake Shore Public Realm and conforms with the approved EA.

One Panel member asked if the number of parking is required given the site's proximity to Union and Queens Quay transit. Mr. Kadri noted there is a desire from the developer to provide that number to meet market demands and it is not finalized. Mr. Marshall noted it is the minimum parking number. The Panel member asked if the foot of Yonge Street can be marked with public art as there is already an old City of Toronto installation there that requires restoration. Mr. Marshall noted the team has advanced public art plan for the north block, the south is still undergoing rezoning and has secured funds through Section 37.

Another Panel member asked for the heating source and if the design of the air system including indoor air quality is informed by COVID-19. Mr. Pontarini noted the design is not quite there. Juhee Oh, Director with WSP, noted the team is looking at potentially combining various renewable systems and is being discussed with Pinnacle.

One Panel member noted Toronto Green Standards V3 Tier 2 is a great commitment and asked for a run-down of the strategies to maintain compliance, specially how the

team plans to meet GHGI of 15 and the TEDI value. Ms. Oh noted the design is at very early stages and WSP has experience to meet these.

Another Panel member asked for if the 10mm water reuse requirement is correct. Ms. Oh noted 10mm is required from the Toronto Green Standards but agrees that stormwater management is a challenge for this project.

#### **1.4 Panel Comments**

One Panel member congratulated the team on moving the project significantly forward and commended the substantial improvement to the design. The Panel member noted the line of glazing at the Star building lobby is worryingly high and suggested to bring it down as close to grade as possible to ensure animation and improve views into the building. The Panel member strongly opposed the elevated bridge over Harbour Street, that the two phases need not be connected, and the openness should be preserved for the brand-new Harbour Street. The Panel member has no issue with the hotel bridge and recommended that the north-south pedestrian connection should not be narrowed to accommodate loading. Consider light cones from the second floor along the ground floor pedestrian connection, it will improve the second-floor retail interior and the ground plane experience.

Another Panel member noted the buildings do not demonstrate innovation in the façade treatment and is the standard visual of large Toronto buildings. Given the status of the development, consider further developing the façade designs. The Panel member does not support the pedestrian spine with no natural light and that the 10m width clearance should be maintained throughout by moving the vehicular areas. These requirements were accomplished in Phases 1-3 and should be met here as well. To bring light down to the ground floor, reconsider the placement of the ballroom.

One Panel member noted many aspects of the cladding and facades have been further developed and improved, yet there is opportunity to improve placemaking and make the site more authentic and rich, consider stronger architectural expressions. On slide 25, the Panel member asked the team to take advantage of the public realm opportunity to pedestrianize the crossing, notwithstanding vehicular movements to the buildings, a stronger connection crossing Freeland St. to access the future park.

Another Panel member asked the team to ensure public realm coordination between the WSP and HPA and provide more clarity on procedural details. Midblock connections are part of an emerging public realm network at the waterfront linked with walkability, it is paramount to the success of the neighbourhood. Provide population and density information at the next review. The Panel member noted the pedestrian widths less than 10m is not ideal, even less when considering its connection to the future park, consider revisions. Even with a high ceiling, the covered public realm is still too unpleasant for this quality of a project, it is important to improve this design. The Panel member noted re-skinning the Star is an opportunity to rethink the generic and uninspired building and asked the team to consider bringing the same level of aspiration from Phase A to Phase B. Moreover, the Panel member does not support the north south pedestrian bridge, especially when its function of carrying people into the food court can be met with an underground connection. The Panel member understands there are political and timing challenges with the 55 LSBE park but

commented that all Waterfront Toronto projects are led by landscape whereas here it is going last. Considerations should be made now so it is aspirational instead of residual - a conversation around the park can will define the design of the entire neighbourhood. Even if it is not being implemented, the Panel member encouraged the City to start the conversation now as the adjacent built-forms are already underway. The Panel member recommended the team to return with large, detailed, sections to understand the experience of the public realm as proposed.

One Panel member supported the other Panel member's comments on public realm and suggested the City to oppose the proposed above-grade bridge connection as it is a strong no from this panel. The Panel member believes that the design team can design an alternative strategy that can greatly improve the north-south linkage. At the same time, the Panel member felt the ground floor hotel loading is too enclosed, like the Sheraton, when it should be a grand, galleria-type space with natural light.

Another Panel member supported the public realm and park comments, asked the team to think about the public realm at the foot of Yonge as critical infrastructure that should be prioritized. The Panel member is concerned with year-round thermal comfort, consider seasonality and proximity to the lake, also seasonal heat-loss and cooling required to keep the spaces comfortable. Provide more simulation and studies of these micro-climates, effects, and impact on user comfort, ensure these will be programmable and active. The Panel member opposed the bridge and asked the team to provide key plans for the perspectives to improve legibility. Overall, the Panel member was troubled with the quality of the landscape drawings as they seem to lack specificity and understanding.

One Panel member strongly agreed with the public realm comments, felt the project needs to meet a higher level of design standard due to its scale and site. Outdoor experience, with the emphasis of a pandemic, is very important and should be a functional landscape - consider bringing the urban nature experience to a population of a small town. On the landscape drawings, the Panel member noted clearer diagrams can help with the reading and understanding of the design. Finally, reconsider the elevated bridge and bring natural light to the ground floor pedestrian realm.

Another Panel member appreciated the overall massing and employment uses in the heart of the waterfront. Looking at Phase A, the ground floor pedestrian realm is a tall, light filled space without vehicles, consider rethinking the Phase B midblock connections to achieve another positive experience. Consider rethinking the loading and drop-off so it is as close to the hotel as possible, i.e. the Ritz Carleton design that brings cars to the lobby instead of deeper into the pedestrian interior of the block. The Panel member suggested to create an experience for the drop-off: horizontally and vertically column free and light filled. The Panel member asked the team to provide more environmental studies on wind and other impacts on the various levels of private roof terraces and open spaces. The Panel member noted the bridges risk setting a precedent, are not necessary, and recommended to remove the elevated bridge.

One Panel member asked the team to provide a site plan that represents the experience of the public realm as it is currently difficult to understand. All entrances to retail spaces are along the perimeter, the sense of porosity is belied by the lack of

entrance – consider more entrances from within the interior of the block to engage with the midblock connections. The Panel member felt the Star building is an opportunity to establish a more unique identity, such as bolder cuts into the floor plates, carving out entrance areas at the southern end, and a deeper north-south walkway. The Panel member noted the landscape on the roof has more information than the ground, consider less supergraphics and return to Panel with more serious annotations: a well-represented site plan to understand the four-sided nature of the block and the experience between buildings and streets.

Another Panel member supported the strategy of prioritizing loading and services along Freeland to ensure other frontages are strongly animated. In terms of sustainability, the Panel member appreciate the good start but there are many details outstanding and should be confirmed. GHGI and heating loads are very important, today's standards will not be adequate for tomorrow. Carbon load will be difficult to meet, consider carefully how these buildings can be designed to meet the standards of tomorrow.

One Panel member appreciated that the structure of the Star building is preserved as there are major carbon savings there. The Panel member noted Toronto Green Standards Tier 2 is above the minimum requirement, but the requirements will be updated quickly – provide more specific energy information and strategies when the project returns for a more thorough review.

## 1.5 Consensus Comments

The Chair then summarized the Panel comments on which there was full agreement.

### General

- Appreciated the detailed presentation of a complex project.
- The foot of Yonge Street is a very important and prominent location, consider the design very carefully as it is a 100-year decision for the site.
- Strong non-support for the above-grade pedestrian bridge over Harbour Street, consider the following:
  - The bridge creates an undesirable environment at grade and blocks sightlines down the new Harbour Street.
  - Many major North American cities with similar climate such as Chicago and New York do not have similar above-grade bridges.
  - The proposed bridge brings people from Phase A into Phase B's food court area, this function can be adequately met with an underground connection that does not obstruct the street.
- Provide more information on the project's population. An accurate understanding is important in considering how the design connects with the rest of the City.
- While the number of parking spots is proposed to meet market demands, the project is very close to many transit options including Union Station, consider further reducing the overall number of proposed parking spots.
- The project shall support the evolution of Queens Quay as a main street eastward, ensure the ground level retail along Queens Quay is designed to support a main street experience.

## Planning

- The pedestrian links need to embody a special quality for this unique site: inviting, powerful, and clear. As a frame of reference, consider the qualities of Calatrava's BCE Place galleria as an aspiration.
- Consider redesigning the ground level midblock connections:
  - Ensure the public realm is exposed to daylight
  - It is important for the ground level pedestrian spines to be consistent in width to ensure strong linkages.
  - Provide clear separation between pedestrian and vehicular, explore alternative strategies so the pedestrian clearance is not reduced to accommodate parking and loading.
- Ensure the design is tightly coordinated and linked with adjacent on-going major design projects: Lake Shore Public Realm, Queens Quay East, and the Lower Yonge Public Realm Implementation.
- The new park at 55 Lake Shore Boulevard trails behind all the developments contrary to the principle of leading with landscape. It is important for the City to start a conversation now to discuss how it will function so the design of the park will not be siloed when all adjacent projects have already been developed.

## Building

- Supported the removal of the existing Star building lobby stairs and opening up the ground floor. Ensure the glass area at the lobby is maximized to animate the corner and increase exposure.
- The building facades appear generic, consider more development and explore other possibilities to create an interesting ensemble of building envelopes.
- Consider alternative strategies in the façade and materiality to mark the original Star building in an interesting way and improve legibility of the project.
- The hotel drop-off feels uninviting, consider a more opened, naturally lit, loading area that does not interfere with the pedestrian links.
- Provide large scale sections through the building base and public realm at the next review.

## Public Art and landscape

- It is important to recognize Yonge Street at the corner of Queens Quay with public art, provide more information at the next review.
- Provide key plans to help understand the perspectives. Some Panel members felt the drawings were difficult to understand, ensure clear public realm drawings are provided for all four frontages.

## Sustainability

- Provide more information on TEDI, GHGI, heating sources to demonstrate how the project plans to achieve Toronto Green Standards Tier 2.
- Consider the impact of the carbon tax in the future and develop strategies to further reduce carbon demand.

## 1.5 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Chair then asked for a vote of Full Support, Conditional Support or Non-support for the project.

The Panel voted unanimous Non-support for above-grade pedestrian bridge, the public realm, and the building base. The Panel took a separate vote of Conditional Support for the project in terms of general massing provided that the comments will be addressed when the project returns to the Panel.

The Chair then asked if the proponent would like to provide a brief response.

Mr. Pontarini thanked for Panel for their comments, the team has a clear understanding of the basis for commentary and will work to address them pushing the design further.

### **CLOSING**

There being no further business, the Chair then adjourned the public session of the meeting after a vote to go into a brief in-camera session.