

Jury Report

Innovative Design Competition Jack Layton Ferry Terminal on Harbour Square Park

April 10, 2015

Jury Members:

Donald Schmitt, Diamond Schmitt Architects (Jury Chair)

Claude Cormier, Claude Cormier + Associates

Antonio Gomez-Palacio, Dialog

Pina Petricone, Giannone Petricone Associates

Sevaun Palvetzian, CivicAction

Harbour Landing
West 8, KPMB, Greenberg Consultants
SELECTED ENTRY

The Jury was impressed by the design balance achieved between a new heavily landscaped Civic Park, an elegant, iconic Ferry Terminal whose naturalistic form echoes the landscape topography and an overarching plan which makes strong connections to the emerging public realm of the waterfront.

The park design transforms Harbour Square with dramatic form and topography. Heavily planted, it forms a green counterpoint to the tall surrounding concrete towers and urban context. We felt the park benefitted from its simplicity, from its scale and reach, encompassing the entire 7 acre site, from its avoidance of over programming and its ability to support large numbers of visitors informal gatherings, picnics and play. The park topography forms a valley directing access and views to the southwest to the water, drawing park visitors to the western precinct of the park, its water basin and the gazebo café overlooking the harbour. The landscape form and planting is used to frame views of the Harbour and the Islands. The elevated hills provide panoramic vantage points. The powerful shaping of green spaces of varying sizes and the simplicity of its organization create a civic destination of repose in a dense urban context and will become, we believe, a wonderful green living room on the waterfront.

The park design is multi functional, accessible, is thoughtful about both winter and summer uses and retains The Jack Layton Memorial at the prominent central crossroads of the Park.

The architecture of the Ferry Terminal creates an open, sheltered place for gathering, protected from sun and rain. The ticketed area enjoys broad views of the harbour and the Ferries and is enclosed with a beautiful roof exposed wood with structure, undulating in height. The Jury notes that its architectural character of the Terminal is heavily dependent on the exposed wood and slender column structure. It is essential these elements be retained as the design is developed. The form of the roof is clearly shaped in response to the topography of the park and is accessible again providing

panoramic views and places for natural enjoyment. Planted, accessible to pedestrians and green, it extends the natural habitat and ecology of the park. The form of the Terminal achieves a simple line, elegance, beauty, particularly when seen from the water.

The organization of ticketing, entry and exit control and the ticket holding area was seen as considered and realistic. The Jury felt this was perhaps the one competition entry that most directly addressed the functional needs of Ferry Terminal operations, large crowds in the summer and smaller numbers in off-season. The size of the Terminal nevertheless must be studied further. Lozenge pavilions under the roof provide support services and enclosed warming areas for cold weather were seen as appropriate well planned and situated if perhaps undersized.

Some aspects of the Terminal were questioned. The Lozenge shaped pools of water contributing to enclosing the ticketed zone and providing views to aquatic habitat were seen as possibly too complicated. Some of the swooping roof form creates low, dark areas, which may be undesirable. The design must ensure adequate natural light to all areas under the canopy.

The operative to the Terminal upon arrival from the north is broad and welcoming, thought should be given to enhancing its visibility within the landscape.

The operations planning for the handling of cargo and deliveries to the Island, the services for the Island residents, Island School and Island Park activities is straightforward and thoughtful.

A clear, robust strategy for sustainable design and operations was presented as well as a convincing Phasing and Implementation Plan.

While the design keeps the park area free of vehicular parking and roadways in general the tunnel entrance at the park entry at Bay Street requires further study.

Civic Canopy - MENTION

Diller Scofidio + Renfro/Hood Design/Architects Alliance

The architecture of the Ferry Terminal pavilion Civic Canopy was greatly admired by the Jury. The beauty of the structure and canopy is bold, inspired and very beautiful. While the structure, placed on the axis with the Bay Street corridor blocked views of the water, the spatial excitement underneath the Canopy and on the second level are remarkable. The many programmed elements including Mist Rooms in summer, Ice Cave in winter, Grow House, inflatable protective bubbles and On Demand Programs are exciting if a bit complex from an operations perspective. The second level boardwalk that lifts up so that ferry passengers may pass beneath it, while maintaining uninterrupted public waterfront access, was handled in a realistic and positive way. However, strategies for management of ticketing and ticketed passenger were not fully resolved.

The Jury however was not persuaded by the landscape design. The landscape relied on extensive hardscape and a relatively minimal planting program which did not exploit the civic park opportunities. The open space maintained and extended surface driveways for private car access both to neighbouring condominiums as well as across the site reaching below the Terminal Canopy. These driveways had the impact of bisecting and disconnecting open space into a series of small parcels. While the realism of the driveway against the condominium and replacement Visitor Parking Lot was noted the numerous driveways occupying the crossroads of public gathering was a concern.

The Quays as lily pad marshes and the Floating Wetlands were a concern given the depth of the water and the active harbour uses along the dock walls.

Cloud Park - MENTION

Stoss Landscape urbanism, nArchitects, ZAS Architects

The landscape architecture of Cloud Park was greatly admired by the Jury. The sensitive of The Grove shaped with mixed hardwood trees as a green precinct established with clear axial vistas to the water and inform shaded spaces for gathering was strong. A series of undulating hills to the west created a strong natural counterpoint to the urban enclosure of condominium towers. The mist enveloping the bridge over the Bay Street axis, is a poetic responses to existing visual obstructions, although some concerns were raised about impact of different weather conditions and temperatures. The programming of the pools Hot Tub while somewhat complex presented a compelling approach to expending public use to the west precinct of the park. The edges between green lawn and paved plaza presented many places for gathering. The powerful ecology and landscape architecture uniting the site was much discussed by the Jury.

On the other hand the Jury was not convinced by the architecture of the Ferry Terminal pavilions. Small in scale, widely separated and without the reach to address large summer crowds in a protected environment remained a concern. The design of the roof and wall elements of the Terminal was not seen as adequate to the needs of the major public transportation terminal.

Clement Blanchet Architecture, RVTR + Batlle I Roig

The clarity of the planning and its cross-axial order was much admired. The elevated belvedere cantilevered over the water is a very powerful and positive element of the proposal. However, the width and dominance of the rising platform leading from Queens Quay was seen as overwhelming. The axis dramatically reduces public space and use of the ground level and forces the public off the axis at a narrow entry point at Queens Quay onto the Terminal to the east and onto undersized paths to the Park on the west. The Jury was convinced the upper walkway couldn't support the growing conditions for the dense tree planting shown. While seen as diagrammatically strong the proposal was not seen to have the robust straightforward landscape required over the longterm life of a heavily used park exposed to widely varied weather conditions.

Quadrangle/All Design/Janet Rosenberg Studio

This submission was seen by the Jury to be full of colour with a playfulness that was admired. The design relies on many objects to make the Harbour Ferry Square precinct. The design is not about forming space either in the park landscape or in the Terminal and, as a consequence, was felt to be cluttered with objects lacking a landscape coherence commensurate with the 7-acre scale of the precinct cohesion. The elevated walkway was admired as a viewing platform. However, the limitation of only two or three points of access down to ground along its considerable length was seen as a bit of a trap.

The enormous scale of the geese [L'umbrellas] was noticed and appreciated.

Two General Comments From The Jury

- It was the view of the Jury that a continued lease of City owned lands for surface visitor parking by the adjacent condominiums is inappropriate. The publicly owned land are surrounded by Harbour Square Park and should be, as soon as feasible be integrated into the Park and its Master Plan as public open space.
- A second concern to the Jury was the continued presence of the bridge or passarel linking condominiums to the west and the Hotel to the east across the Bay Street axis. The bridge blocks public views to the Lake, Harbour Square Park and the Ferry Terminal. It also blocks views towards the north and the Bay Street corridor. Given that the bridge is used only by condominium residents for hotel access, the greater public good would be served by its removal. This would presumably result in considerable maintenance cost savings for the Condominium Corporation.

Jury Advice for the Harbour Landing Team

The Jury had a number of comments, qualifications and conditions which should be taken as advice in the development of the Master Plan for the Ferry Terminal and Harbour Square Park.

- Harbour Landing has an underwhelming presence, visibility and identity at its north entry from Queens Quay on the Bay Street Corridor. While this weakness was shared by all the entries the Jury recommends this presence and identity be significantly strengthened.
- The view to the water, the sky along the axis of the Bay Street corridor south from Queens Quay should be studied further to ensure strong views.
- The Terminal design has made a valiant effort to make the enclosed area open to view. It is however our view that further development including sky lighting and opening to natural light from above is important. The sense of compression created by the roof reaching very low to the ground should be developed further to avoid low areas which may be problematic and hidden.
- The water filled lozenges which, in plan, enclose the secure ticketed area in the Terminal were seen as interesting views to water habitat below but perhaps too complex.
- The form of the Terminal roof is clearly designed to be seen as part of the landscape topography of the Park. While this was much admired the Jury feels that further refinement in the relationship between Park form and Terminal roof would be beneficial.
- The Jury recommends that the provision of playground space for children closer to the Terminal be explored.
- The provision and adequacy of bike storage should be developed to accommodate greater numbers of bikes.

- The open space edges along the base of the hotel would benefit from further development.
- The Jury regrets the continued use of the traffic tunnel at the gateway to the Park at Queens Quay. A more realistic and cost effective strategy to handling vehicular access and visitor parking adjacent to the condominium on the west would be useful.

Public, Stakeholder and Technical Reviews

The Jury was impressed by the extent of public interest in the submissions to the Competition, the depth of consideration and comment and the degree to which the public community is focused on the opportunity for the revitalized Harbour Square Park and Ferry Terminal. Over 250 attended the public presentation by each team. Each proposal was viewed online an average of 3700 times.

Seven design elements were identified in the competition as important aspects of the designs. The results of the public input after reviewing the submission show that each and every one of these were supported by a majority of public respondents.

Similarly the Jury benefitted from a comprehensive and thorough review of each submission by a Technical Advisory Committee Made up of City staff in Parks, Planning, Emergency Services, Security, Transportation and Cycling Infrastructure, Waterfront Parks as well as the Toronto and Regional Conservation Authority, this Committee provided valuable insight into each submission.

Thirdly, the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, including many who have first hand knowledge of the site using the Ferry Terminal on a daily basis or living in close proximity to Harbour Square provided to the Jury a very thorough and detailed review of the competition results in general and each of the 5 submission in particular. This provided valuable insight.