



WATERFRONTToronto

Waterfront Design Review Panel Minutes of Meeting #53 Wednesday, November 9th, 2011

Present:

Paul Bedford, Acting Chair
George Baird
Peter Busby
Brigitte Shim
Don Schmitt

Regrets:

Bruce Kuwabara
Claude Cormier
Jane Wolff
Betsy Williamson

Designees and Guests:

Christopher Glaisek
Robert Freedman

Recording Secretary:

Melissa Horwood

WELCOME

Paul Bedford welcomed the Panel, noting that Bruce Kuwabara has asked him to act as Chair this month. The Acting Chair then provided an overview of the agenda and invited Christopher Glaisek to provide his report.

REPORT FROM THE VP PLANNING AND DESIGN

Christopher Glaisek, Waterfront Toronto's Vice President of Planning and Design, provided a summary of project progress.

Lower Yonge

- Applications are now coming forward for a high level urban study of the Lower Yonge area. This will not be a full precinct study but will come to the Panel for review.

Queens Quay

- Queens Quay is still going ahead as planned, but the potential City of Toronto lockout may impede the schedule. Currently, the project is scheduled to begin work in March 2012, with Bay Street to Peter Street being the first phase and Peter Street to Spadina Avenue being the second phase. The project is scheduled to take two years to complete, with car traffic back to normal in 12-18 months. Eastern Construction, the construction manager, has a full time communications person working with our Construction Liaison Committee to ensure structure to the information process.

City Approvals Process

- Mr. Glaisek stated that Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto are trying to formalize the Design Review Panel for the review of private developments within the Designated Waterfront Area.

The Acting Chair asked the Panel if there were any questions or comments.

One Panel member asked what the status of the York Street ramp was. Mr. Glaisek stated that the project is still alive, but there is currently no funding allocated towards it. The City of Toronto ran the Environmental Assessment and is currently looking for funding for the removal of it. The EA concluded that it would benefit traffic to take down the ramp and put a park in its place.

One Panel member asked if the ramp does come down, will the area still be a park or is there a potential for it to become a development site. Mr. Glaisek stated that the community really wants a park on the site.

One Panel member asked if there was currently a plan in place to provide transit to service the East Bayfront and West Don Lands, wondering if there anything in place other than busses.

Mr. Glaisek stated that the cost to develop this as per the EA has risen by \$100m, including the new tunnel and portal for the East Bayfront. Mr. Glaisek stated that they are currently looking at a temporary or partial build until the financing becomes available. Mr. Glaisek stated that the temporary solution would likely provide enough capacity for the next 5-10 years, and that a study would be done in advance.

The Panel member asked if the study would come to the Design Review Panel. Mr. Glaisek stated that although it would not typically be something that would come to the Design Review Panel, it could be presented for information.

GENERAL BUSINESS

The Acting Chair moved to adopt the minutes from September and October 2011. The minutes were adopted. The Chair then moved to adopt the minutes from the Pan Am meeting in October 2011, with those being adopted as well.

The Acting Chair asked the Panel if there were any conflicts of interest to declare. No conflicts were declared.

There being no other comments, the Acting Chair moved to the Project Review portion of the meeting.

PROJECT REVIEWS

1.0 East Bayfront Development Proposal: Parkside

ID#: 1037

Project Type: Buildings/Structures

Location: North of Queens Quay, east of Sherbourne Common

Proponent: Great Gulf (Downtown Properties) Limited

Architect/Designer: SafdieArchitects

Review Stage: Design Development

Review Round: Three

Presenter(s): Isaac Franco, Safdie Architects

1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Christopher Glaisek, Vice President of Planning and Design, introduced the project, noting that it last came to the Panel in March 2011.

1.2 Project Presentation

Isaac Franco of Safdie Architects, provided an overview of the project including; site context, massing, materiality, and clarification of the uses. He noted that this was the third time the project has come to the Design Review Panel. Mr. Franco addressed the change in location of the daycare and the mid-block connection as well as the increase in the amount of green space in the project. Mr. Franco also stated that the balconies have increased in size, from 2.0m in width to 2.5m.

1.3 Panel Questions

The Acting Chair then asked the Panel for questions of clarification only.

One Panel member asked how vehicular drop-off for residents and daycare would be addressed. Mr. Franco stated that drop-off would happen along Bonnycastle or in the underground parking.

One Panel member asked what percentage of the building is glazing. Mr. Franco stated that almost 100% of the building is clad in glazing, with variations in the translucency of the glass. The Panel member then asked if they can provide an energy model. Mr. Franco stated that the energy model was almost complete, and would be presented at the next meeting.

One Panel member asked why the glass canopy is not continued along Queens Quay. Mr. Franco stated that architecturally speaking, the canopy did not work well along Queens Quay. Mr. Franco also stated that the cost was a factor as well.

One Panel member asked what the air quality was like at the proposed daycare area, noting its proximity to the Gardiner Expressway. Mr. Franco stated that the air quality report for that location meets provincial guidelines.

1.4 Panel Comments

The Acting Chair then opened the meeting to Panel comments.

One Panel member felt that the west elevation had improved a lot. The Panel member also felt that the facade along Bonnycastle needs improvement, conceding that there is a challenge along waterfront buildings, as they do not have a “back”.

One Panel member felt that there should be a continuity along Bonnycastle both north and south of Queens Quay, noting that it may be helpful if Hines, the Bayside developer, and Safdie Architects work together to create a cohesive idea. Another Panel member felt that Bonnycastle could have a different feel north and south of Queens Quay.

One Panel member stated that there is a lack of continuity for the public realm. Many Panel members felt that the public locations need to read more legibly as public.

Many Panel members were concerned about the daycare drop-off location. One Panel member suggested consulting with the daycare provider about their needs. One Panel member said that they were comfortable with the location of the daycare drop-off.

One Panel member stated that it was hard to understand the outdoor space along the north facade.

Many Panel members felt that the south elevation reads as an office building, noting that with the removal of the atrium, the facade now reads like a remnant of a previous idea. One Panel member suggested removing the visual gap on the south elevation to reinforce the continuity of the podium.

One Panel member felt that the scale of the midblock connection is very powerful.

One Panel member felt that the projecting balconies still seem like a frightening place to be, even though they have increased from 2.0m to 2.5m.

One Panel member stated that the west facing glazing will have a large amount of solar gain.

Another Panel member stated that the Panel will be looking forward to seeing the details of stone versus pre-cast concrete.

One Panel member suggested having a Manhattan like drop off condition, with weather protection from the building all the way to Queens Quay.

Another Panel member suggested that the Panel would benefit from seeing an elevation of the relationship between the Gardiner Expressway and the north facade.

Many Panel members stated that a light study should be performed for the proposed outdoor daycare space. Another Panel member felt that the Panel should see an energy model soon, with the materials of the building selected.

One Panel member felt that the retail along Queens Quay needs to be strong to ensure its success.

Another Panel member felt that the glass canopy needs to be all the way around the building.

1.5 Summary of the Panel's Key Issues

The Acting Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- 1) Reevaluate the need for canopies along Queens Quay
- 2) Consider an alternative treatment of the former atrium facade
- 3) Reconsider the location of the outdoor daycare space
- 4) Develop energy model and sun studies

1.6 Proponents Response

Mr. Franco thanked the Panel for their feedback

1.7 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Acting Chair then asked that Panel for a vote of support, conditional support or non-support for the project. The Panel voted in conditional support.

2.0 EBF Development Proposal: Bayside Phase 1

ID#: 1040

Project Type: Buildings/Structures

Location: Bounded by Sherbourne Common, Bonnycastle Road, Queens Quay and Lake Ontario

Proponent: Hines

Architect/Designer: Arquitectonica

Presenter(s): Bernardo Fort-Brescia, Arquitectonica

2.1 Introduction to the Issues

Andrew Gray, Vice President of Development for Waterfront Toronto, introduced the project, noting that the project is not back for formal approval, but rather to address some of the Panels comments from the previous presentation. Mr. Gray stated that the proponents would like the feedback of the panel before moving to Design Development.

2.2 Project Presentation

Bernardo Fort-Brescia, Partner at Arquitectonica, presented the project, noting that they had taken the concerns from the Panel and have reconfigured the parking entrance and the loading entrance and have moved the location of the pedestrian east-west connection.

2.3 Panel Questions

The Acting Chair then asked the Panel for questions of clarification only.

One Panel member asked what the amenity spaces the building had. Mr. Fort-Brescia stated that there is a theatre, storage, gym facilities and other amenity spaces would be in the building.

One Panel member asked if the curtain wall was all glass. Mr. Fort-Brescia stated that yes it was all glass with spandrel panels.

One Panel member asked if the building was within the zoning limits. Mr. Fort-Brescia stated that yes, they are within the zoning limits but that they are asking for the “cube” to be shifted into a normative relationship with the building.

One Panel member asked if the concrete elements were a structural frame. Mr. Fort-Brescia confirmed that the concrete is structural.

One Panel member asked what the material was on the bridge connections. Mr. Fort-Brescia stated that the material was fritted glass.

One Panel member asked if a wind study had been performed. Mr. Fort-Brescia stated that it had not yet been done.

2.4 Panel Comments

The Chair then opened the meeting to Panel comments.

One Panel member stated that they liked the new location of the parking entrance and the east-west pedestrian connection.

One Panel member felt troubled by the amount of glazing on the building and felt that an energy model should be completed soon.

One Panel member stated that the facades on the building are very large but that they appreciate the attempt to break it up architecturally. Another Panel member felt that the strategy of breaking up the large block with recesses, different planes, and different glazing was interesting. The Panel member suggested pushing the idea further to see if it can be broken down more.

Another Panel member stated that this project is an opportunity to develop a different building model than Toronto has seen in the past.

One Panel member suggested investing the amenity spaces with more occupancy, perhaps in the bridge connections where there is lots of natural lighting. The Panel member also suggested that the spaces could become a community opportunity, where there are neighbourhoods within the large community.

One Panel member encouraged the development of the envelope to be high performance. Another Panel member stated that it is hard to get a high quality poured-in-place concrete in Toronto.

One Panel member stated that they appreciated the development of the plasticity of the building.

One Panel member felt that the more the spandrel glass can be suppressed, the better.

Many Panel members felt that the east-west pedestrian connection was in an improved location. One Panel member felt that it was best to make these connections work as much as possible, so they become well-loved in Toronto.

One Panel member felt that moving the amenity space on the roof is a better location. Another Panel member suggested the developers sell allotment gardens on the frames of the building.

One Panel member stated that the “cube” seems to be the least developed and encouraged developing it more.

One Panel member stated that there needs to be more clarity in the public nature of all four sides of the ground plane.

2.5 Summary of the Panel’s Key Issues:

The Acting Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- 1) Further break down the mass of the large block
- 2) Research potential landscaping opportunities in residential areas with allotment gardens/terraces/green spaces
- 3) Develop an energy model and wind studies

2.6 Proponents Response

Mr. Fort-Brescia thanked the Panel for their feedback.

2.7 Vote of Support/Non-Support

As the project was not at the panel for formal approval, no vote was held.

CLOSING

There being no further business, the Acting Chair then adjourned the meeting.