



## **Waterfront Design Review Panel Minutes of Meeting #15 Wednesday, April 11, 2006**

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**Present:**

Bruce Kuwabara, Chair  
Paul Bedford  
Tania Bortolotto  
Peter Clewes  
Siamak Hariri  
Anne McIlroy  
Janet Rosenberg  
Greg Smalenberg

**Regrets:**

George Baird  
Renee Daoust  
Peter Halsall  
Don Schmitt  
Charles Waldheim

**Recording Secretary:**

Pina Mallozzi

**Designees and Guests:**

John Campbell  
Robert Freedman  
Christopher Glaisek

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### **WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed the Panel, noting that Project Symphony will be the only item on the agenda, and that the Panel would conduct an In-Camera session prior to the review in order to discuss who the Project Symphony tenant is and how they anticipate animating the ground floor to the building.

The Chair then invited Mr. Glaisek, the Corporation's Vice President for Planning and Design, to provide his report.

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### **REPORT FROM THE VP PLANNING AND DESIGN**

Mr. Glaisek provided a summary of the revised site plan for Project Symphony developed by the Corporation over the past month in response to the Panel's comments at the last meeting.

Mr. Glaisek explained that the revised site plan enables the building to retain its proposed floorplate but that by shifting it to the east, roads from the north can be extended south of Queens Quay Boulevard towards the water, and a more generous public space on Jarvis Slip can be accommodated. Mr. Glaisek explained that the revised site plan will maximize views to the lake and provide for a public space on the waterfront on the scale of other great waterfronts.

Mr. Glaisek noted that the Corporation, who is the master developer of the East Bayfront, believes this plan is a major step forward in reconciling the needs of Project Symphony with the East Bayfront Precinct Plan, and has worked hard with TEDCO and the City of Toronto to reach agreement on this. He asked the Panel to accept the change as a given in their review.

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## PROJECT REVIEWS

### **1.0 Project Symphony**

*ID#: 1017*

*Project Type: Building Design*

*Location: South of Queens Quay Boulevard, East of Jarvis Slip*

*Proponent: Toronto Economic Development Corporation (TEDCO)*

*Architect/Designer: Diamond and Schmitt Architects Incorporated (DSAI)*

*Review Round: Three*

*Presenter(s): Jack Diamond, DSAI*

*Delegation: David Dow, DSAI; Jeff Steiner, Chris Barre, and Ron Soskolne, TEDCO*

#### 1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Mr. Glaisek introduced the project, noting that the draft minutes of the last meeting were circulated to the design team in order to expedite their work, and expressing his belief that much has been done to try to address the Panel's concerns since the last meeting. Mr. Glaisek then asked the Panel to focus its review on the design of the building itself within the context of the new site plan, and reminded the Panel that the Corporation's Board of Directors was relying on them to provide their best professional opinion. The main issues on which the advice of the Panel was sought include:

- Whether the design of the building in principle meets the Corporation's standards of design excellence.
- Whether the ground floor uses are consistent with the Corporation's ground floor animation strategy.
- Whether the building facade successfully relates to the surrounding public streets, sidewalks and open spaces.

Mr. Glaisek concluded by reminding the Panel that the overall massing of the building provides a useful buffer between the industrial uses on the west side of Jarvis Slip and the future uses to the east of Project Symphony.

#### 1.2 Project Presentation

Jack Diamond, partner with Diamond Schmitt Architects Incorporated, began by stating his belief that Project Symphony would be a catalyst for the East Bayfront community by bringing 1,100 jobs to the waterfront and providing year round animation at the water's edge.

Mr. Diamond then provided an overview of the design of the building, highlighting the changes since the last Panel meeting. These included deflection of the ground floor façade to respond to a suggested amphitheatre in the public open space, introduction of asymmetry between the two wings of the building, addition of a public forecourt to the atrium with public access from the below-ground parking garage, consolidation of the loading docks lining the north side of the building, provision of a café and production studio opening onto the Jarvis Slip public space, and reconfiguration of the media tower into a "lighthouse" within the public open space. He concluded by showing a computer-animated fly-through around proposed building.

#### 1.3 Panel Comments

The Chair then opened the meeting to questions of clarification from the Panel.

One Panel member asked about the degree to which the atrium would be public. Mr. Diamond explained that the forecourt at the south end would be publicly accessible. This would enable those visiting the café/restaurant to access the parking garage through the atrium space.

Another Panel member asked if the tenant is concerned that the studio space has been decreased in order to accommodate the public atrium space. Mr. Diamond explained that he has not yet heard any concerns from the architect who is developing the interior plans for the building.

One Panel member asked what consideration was being given to ensuring sustainable design. Mr. Diamond noted that green terraces have been included in the design of the building and that his office is very committed to LEED and has in the past designed LEED Gold buildings.

Another Panel member asked what impact the loading docks will have on the street, particularly the pedestrian experience. Mr. Diamond explained that while the service entry has not yet been fully resolved, BA Consulting has been retained to aid the team in devising an alternative that has the least impact as possible on the abutting street.

The Panel then asked for further clarification on the location of the entrances to the building. Mr. Diamond explained that the entry on the east façade is the main entrance to the building and will primarily serve those arriving by vehicle, while the walking entrance will be from the public space on Jarvis Slip on the west side of the building in anticipation of the transit stop being at Jarvis and Queens Quay Boulevard.

Another Panel member asked for clarification on the design of the colonnade. Mr. Diamond explained that an open colonnade runs along the west façade of the building, with a glass canopy at the south-west corner of the building connecting to the colonnade along the south façade of the building. The Panel expressed concern that this configuration might have the effect of constricting public passage from the west side to the south side of the building. Mr. Diamond countered that it is intended to be a welcoming gesture.

One Panel member asked why the design gives such prominence to the parking garage through the grand staircase and opening to below. Mr. Diamond explained that the goal was to bring natural light into the parking garage and to create a great experience when coming out of the garage into the atrium. The Panel asked who will use the parking. Mr. Steiner explained that the parking is for the tenants of the building during weekdays and public parking will be available on weekends and evenings.

Several Panel members asked about the grade of the building in relation to the public promenade. Mr. Dow explained that the building is approximately 600 mm above grade to avoid going down into the water table, and suggested that because the dockwall will be reinforced it could be raised to accommodate the elevation change. The Panel then inquired on whether any studies had been done to consider parking on multiple levels instead. It was noted that if the garage were to go down to bedrock it would be approximately four levels deep, and given the time constraints this would not be feasible. Mr. Steiner also noted that the Parking Authority feels that the market does not prefer going down that many levels.

One Panel member asked if the design team plans to express the entrances so that they feel important. Mr. Diamond explained that the intention is not to make the doors prominent, and that the design team is not yet at that level of detail in any case.

There being no further questions, the Chair then opened the meeting up for Panel comments.

One Panel member expressed a strong conviction that the site adjacent to Jarvis Slip is a significant one which should have an iconic or exquisite building that the world might notice and expressed concern that although the scheme has come a long way since the first Panel meeting, it still does not engage the water. It was felt that the building for this site should be distinctive enough to establish a standard for design excellence on the waterfront. Another Panel member added that the building should be innovative and bold and attract architecture students and professionals from around the world to see it.

Another Panel member felt that the design quality of this building should be on par with that of the public realm projects being undertaken by the Corporation, and expressed concern that this building is not at that level. The Panel felt the design does not yet feel distinctively unique, noting that a building on the waterfront should have certain qualities and characteristics that distinguish it from a building elsewhere. The Panel suggested that the “lighthouse” structure offers a degree of uniqueness, but since it is not part of the commission the building alone may fall short of the Panel’s expectations.

The Panel expressed satisfaction with the massing concept of two buildings connected by an atrium, however it was suggested that the atrium space become more publicly accessible. One Panel member stated that only those who drive will enjoy it, while those who walk or bicycle will enter elsewhere. It was suggested that it would be ideal if the interior public space could provide a covered alternative route across the site during inclement weather.

The Panel expressed support for the increased size of the Jarvis Slip public space, but felt strongly that nothing should block the view to the water. The Panel recommended removing the “lighthouse” structure from the Jarvis Slip public space, feeling that the space should be the subject of an international design competition and that the “lighthouse” structure would place unnecessary restrictions on the designer. One Panel member shared Mr. Diamond’s concern about the winter climate, and recommended that the microclimate of the public space design be carefully considered in the design. Another Panel member noted that they were certain that the Corporation could develop a great public open space on this site.

The Panel expressed concern about the relationship of the building to the public realm, noting that the building should seamlessly interact with the public realm. Another Panel member noted a concern with the grade of the building with relation to the public promenade and the boardwalk. It was noted that the grade of the boardwalk with relationship to the water is very important and that these grade changes should be carefully considered.

One Panel member felt that encouraging the ground floor uses to have a public face is very positive. The Panel suggested that further attention be given to the north-west and south-east corners of the building, which should spill out more into the public realm. One Panel member suggested that even uses like Starbucks are preferable for creating animation than windows onto office space.

Several Panel members expressed concern with the colonnade. It was suggested that the design of the canopy at the south-west corner should be more dramatic. The Panel noted that the revised design of the canopy from the last iteration was preferred because it enabled different experiences along the building face.

One Panel member stated that the facades should be more dynamic given that the building will respond to its context on all four sides. The Panel expressed support for the recessed ground floor on the west façade, but suggested that it does not necessarily have to be part of a formal composition of the public space.

Another Panel member suggested further refinement of the roof structures, noting that the curvy elements could contribute to the image of the building. It was suggested that the colour and shape of the elements be carefully considered as they proceed through the design process.

The Panel felt that overall the design needs to push a bit further to create a building which reflects its context on the waterfront. The Panel also felt that in its simplicity, the building could still be very powerful.

#### I.4 Summary of Panel's Key Issues

The Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- i. Support in principle for the project to proceed, provided more detailed designs are presented prior to final sign-off.
- ii. Support for the revised building configuration of two wings connected by a central atrium space.
- iii. Support for the revised site plan and larger Jarvis Slip public space, with a strong recommendation that it be the subject of a design competition.
- iv. Objection to the "lighthouse" structure.
- v. Support for the consolidated approach to loading and servicing.
- vi. Desire for the design to better accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.

#### I.5 Proponent's Response

Mr. Diamond thanked the Panel for their comments, noting his exception to the Panel's view that the building must be iconic and bold. He noted that there is a philosophical difference between this approach and the one which his firm aspires to, and suggested that a well designed building that creates a great public realm would be his measure of success for the first building on the waterfront.

Mr. Steiner thanked the Panel for their support of the building in principle and reiterated TEDCO's commitment to continuing to work with the Panel towards achieving design excellence.

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### **CLOSING**

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

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