



WATERFRONTToronto

Waterfront Design Review Panel Minutes of Meeting #40 Wednesday, December 9th, 2009

Present:

Paul Bedford, Acting Chair
George Baird
Siamak Hariri
Bruce Kuwabara
Anne McIlroy
Brigitte Shim
Betsy Williamson

Regrets:

Peter Clewes
Renee Daoust
Janet Rosenberg
Greg Smallenberg

Recording Secretary:

Margaret Goodfellow

Designees and Guests:

John Campbell
Christopher Glaisek
Robert Freedman

WELCOME

Paul Bedford welcomed the Panel, noting that Bruce Kuwabara had 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 for Planning and Design, provided a summary of project progress.

Sherbourne Park

- The ice rink/splash pad is under construction, and the channel is under way on south side.
- The pavilion should be out of ground by the middle of January.

Sugar Beach

- The promenade is under construction and "silva cell" installation is underway
- The rock outcrops are currently being delivered to site

Gardiner Expressway Environmental Assessment

- Waterfront Toronto is working to issue the "Gardiner Innovative Ideas Competition Request For Qualifications (RFQ)" in the near future

East Bayfront Public Realm

- The Waters Edge Promenade and Public Realm (Dockside) are under construction
- Schematic Design for the remainder of the Waters Edge Promenade & Stormwater Facility has been completed

District Energy – Foundry Building

- The District Energy Centre Phase One RFP has been released
- The chosen site for the first of the District Energy Centre is 153 Eastern Avenue, which is a part of the former site of the Dominion Wheel and Foundry Company
- The District Energy System being planned for the West Don Lands will include permanent District Energy Plants in two or three locations interconnected through the distribution piping network in the streets.

The Acting Chair then thanked Mr. Glaisek for his report.

GENERAL BUSINESS

The Acting Chair asked the Panel if there were any conflicts of interest to declare. Mr. Kuwabara declared that he was conflicted for the George Brown College project. Mr. Kuwabara and Mr. Clewes declared a conflict with the Parliament WaveDeck project as they were in a competitive Request for Proposal process with the adjacent development block.

The Acting Chair moved to adopt the minutes from October 2009. The minutes were then adopted.

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

PROJECT REVIEWS

2.0 East Bayfront Development: George Brown College Health Sciences Campus

ID#: 1023

Project Type: Buildings/Structures

Proponent: George Brown College (GBC)

Architect/Designer: Stantec/Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects in Joint Venture (Stantec/KPMB)

Location: South of Queens Quay, West of Lower Sherbourne Street

Review Stage: Schematic Design

Review Round: Two

Presenter(s): Michael Moxam, Stantec/KPMB; Bruce Kuwabara, Stantec/KPMB.

Delegation: Eugene Harrigan, GBC; Terry Comeau, GBC; Nerys Rau, GBC

2.1 Introduction to the Issues

Margaret Goodfellow, Planning and Design Project Manager for Waterfront Toronto introduced the project noting that GBC is targeting early January for the submission of their Site Plan Application. Ms. Goodfellow noted that the public realm in Dockside, including the Corus and GBC laneways, have been designed by West 8 + DTAH, adding that Waterfront Toronto is currently working with George Brown College's design team to respond to some of the specific

uses envisioned by GBC for the laneway. Ms. Goodfellow then provided a summary of the Panel's comments from September 2009 including: Support for the overall design concept; Support for the height variances – it is a specific response to the site and not a precedent; Consider the experience and character of the North/South streets, while preserving Street "F" as the main address to the facility; Consider the quality of the pedestrian's experience of the building on all four facades; and Enhance the relationship and response to Sherbourne Park and the laneway in between.

2.2 Project Presentation

Michael Moxam, Senior Principal at Stantec Architecture, provided an overview of the design objectives of the project including connections to the park, transparency, and the idea of the "vertical campus". Bruce Kuwabara, Partner with Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects described the building program, sectional qualities, "Ground Floor Animation" strategies and the relationship to the neighbouring Corus building. Jennifer Nagai, Partner with Phillips Farevaag Smallerberg, then outlined the landscaping strategy which blurs the boundaries between inside and out.

2.3 Panel Questions

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

One Panel member asked what the intention was for vehicular use on the GBC driveway. Mr. Glaisek answered that though pedestrians have priority, it was always the intention to have vehicular access to the waterfront to assist in accessing and servicing the piers as well as waterfront retail.

Another Panel member asked what the width of the sidewalk on the North side of the building is. Mr. Moxam responded that the width is 2 metres as per the public realm plan.

Another Panel member wondered what the usage would be of the stairs versus the elevators in the building. Mr. Kuwabara stated that they were conscious of the volume of students that flood the halls when classes get out, adding that they were attempting to discourage people from always relying on the elevator. Mr. Kuwabara added that the building offers clarity of circulation and makes the stair an attractive and visible option.

Another Panel member enquired about the nature of the below-ground sunken courtyard. Mr. Kuwabara stated that it was a continuation of the interior space intended to bring south light into the lowest level.

Another Panel member asked how City staff felt about the bridge connecting Blocks 3 and 5. Mr. Kuwabara stated that the City seemed amenable to discussing it, feeling that up at the 5th level of the building, it could be an amazing space.

Another Panel member asked about the materiality of the cladding. Mr. Kuwabara stated that it was a combination of different types of glazing with areas clad in zinc, adding that colour was used strategically to highlight elements.

Another Panel member wondered how the West façade was treated along the Corus Driveway. Mr. Kuwabara stated that the ground plane has been designed by the public realm designers West 8 + DTAH, noting that limiting distances reduced the percentage of glazing that could be utilized on the building.

2.4 Panel Comments

The Acting Chair then opened the meeting to Panel comments.

Several Panel members felt that the presentation was very strong, feeling that it would be a fantastic addition to the waterfront. Another Panel member felt that the vertical circulation engenders collegiality.

One Panel member felt that the breaking the massing down into its constituent parts was a solid move. Another Panel member felt that that it was a well composed elevation. Another Panel member felt that the strength of the upper zinc piece could be heightened by removing the glazed portions and making it more solid. Another Panel member stated that the building read as different volumes, feeling that the elevation was the resultant condition. Another Panel member agreed, feeling that it should read more as a solid block anchoring the glazed public zone. Another Panel member felt that the design was driven by a diagram. Another Panel member felt that the opacity on the west elevation was not as convincing as the rest of the elevations. Another Panel member agreed, feeling that there were perhaps too many different types of conditions.

Another Panel member felt that having the entrance volume be opaque and larger may help to anchor the lightness of the glazing. Another Panel member felt that the entrance felt a bit small. Another Panel member agreed, citing the Bahen Centre at the University of Toronto where the vestibule is rendered useless by the volume of students entering and exiting constantly.

Another Panel member felt that the landscape should reinforce the connection to Sherbourne Park, noting that currently the orientation of the benches seem to block the connection more than enforce it.

Another Panel member wondered if there was an opportunity to wrap the entire building with bicycle parking.

Several Panel members had no issues with the proposed bridge given its height above the public realm.

One Panel member expressed concern regarding the intended vehicular use within the laneway, feeling that it would invite confusion and that the consequences would be ad hoc solutions after it is already built. The Panel member felt that this issue should be looked at rigorously. Mr. Glaisek stated that the design team has worked with City staff and traffic engineers to study these roads, adding that a presentation of these ideas should be given to the Panel. Another Panel member added that retail consultants were adamant that cars be able to access the waterfront in order for businesses to survive.

2.5 Summary of the Panel's Key Issues

The Acting Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- 1) Overall Support for the direction of the project - it represents a powerful idea on the waterfront.
- 2) Supportive of efforts to break down the massing
- 3) Study the composition of the elevations further, especially the West elevation
- 4) Fine tune the integration with the park – bike racks, benches, seating etc.
- 5) South facing courtyard-make sure it is a great space all year long
- 6) Study the proportion of the entrance vestibules to accommodate the amount of students entering and exiting

- 7) A presentation on traffic engineering as it relates to vehicular access on the laneway should be given to the Panel and discussed.

2.6 Proponents Response

Mr. Moxam and Mr. Kuwabara thanked the Panel for their feedback.

2.7 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Acting Chair then asked the Panel for a vote of support or non-support for the project. The Panel voted in Support of the project and the intended Site Plan Application.

2.0 **East Bayfront Public Realm: Parliament WaveDeck**

ID#: 1021

Project Type: Public Realm

Location: Parliament Street Slip

Proponent: Waterfront Toronto

Architect/Designer: West 8 + DTAH

Review Stage: Schematic Design

Review Round: Two

Presenter(s): Adrian Geuze, West 8 + DTAH

Delegation: Adam Nicklin, West 8 + DTAH

2.1 Introduction to the Issues

Antonio Medeiros, Planning and Design Project Manager for Waterfront Toronto introduced the project noting that Schematic Design has now been completed and will be submitted to the City for their review. Mr. Medeiros reminded the Panel that the project integrates storm water management infrastructure with pedestrian amenity, noting that the design focuses on creating Parliament Slip as a place while responding to both the East Bayfront and North Keating Channel Precinct Plans. Mr. Medeiros added that the construction schedule will be tied to the servicing requirements of the adjacent developments. Mr. Medeiros then provided a summary of the Panel's comments from July 2009 including: Support for the direction of the project and that views to the water from Queens Quay should be maintained.

2.2 Project Presentation

Adriaan Geuze, Principal with West 8, began the presentation by reminding the Panel that the Water's Edge Promenade is not a promenade in the "Copacabana" style, but a waterfront walk with special spaces and moments along the way. Mr. Geuze stated that the storm water management tank represents a major investment, noting that the congruence of nature, fantasy and filtration is celebrated in the public space that caps it. Mr. Geuze then presented the plans and views of the wavedeck as well as studies of the wetland habitat, forms and materiality.

2.3 Panel Questions

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

One Panel member wondered if there was vehicular access along the Parliament Slip. Mr. Geuze answered that there were no cars along the slip, that it was water's edge promenade.

Another Panel member asked if there was the intent to have commercial activity at the bottom of the slip on the West side. Mr. Nicklin answered that there is a plan to locate a school there, though there is a potential for mixed uses.

Another Panel member asked if it was feasible to build the wavedeck in advance of the storm water tanks if the demand for the infrastructure is not there yet. Mr. Nicklin answered that they are inherently linked and could not be separated.

Another Panel member wondered if the 14m dimension was fixed. Mr. Nicklin stated that the dimension was set by the dockwall and the tanks for the storm water management system.

Another Panel member asked how the storm water management system would be serviced. Mr. Nicklin answered that they do not require much maintenance as they are settling tanks, but that divers or robotic equipment can access them for sediment removal.

One Panel member asked if the shaping of the holes was related to the storm water filtration process underneath the deck. Mr. Gueze replied that there is no equipment, noting that the tank consumes the area beneath the deck. Mr. Gueze added that the logic and design behind the size and placement of the holes will be consistent with what is required for light penetration into the storm water management system.

Another Panel member wondered what the status of the Victory Soya Mills silos was. Mr. Glaisek stated that the silos are privately-owned and are Heritage Designated, adding that to his knowledge, there is currently no use envisioned for them.

Another Panel member asked who was responsible for designing the East side of Parliament Slip. Mr. Medeiros answered that Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates Landscape Architects are designing the Keating Chanel Neighbourhood as part of the Lower Don Lands Precinct, adding that the two teams are working together on the union of this space.

One Panel member asked if this space was the only one where the water's edge promenade wrapped up the sides of the slip. Mr. Nicklin answered that it was not.

Another Panel member asked if restaurants would survive on the southern edge of the site without vehicular access. Mr. Nicklin answered that the restaurants could be accessed from the inner streets which permit vehicular traffic.

2.4 Panel Comments

The Acting Chair then opened the meeting to Panel comments.

Several Panel members felt that the design direction was strong and compelling, noting that it utilizes infrastructure for public benefit. One Panel member stated that they had never seen a design like this, adding that there is now confidence to do this after building the Simcoe WaveDeck.

One Panel member felt that it would be helpful to see the two precincts on a context map to get an idea about how they are being integrated.

Another Panel member felt that the sustainability story was driving the design too much, adding that the holes in the deck were not as successful and potentially detracted from the strength of the design. Mr. Glaisek noted that the storm water management system is making it possible for the Parliament WaveDeck to be constructed, adding that it was a process of evolution from the original infrastructure. Another Panel member felt that the holes helped to brake up the scale and create more intimate spaces on the wavedeck.

Another Panel member felt that the even dimensions of the east and west sides of the water's edge promenade were not reflective of the importance the designers were placing on the east side of the slip.

One Panel member wondered if there was an opportunity to build momentum around this site in advance of the full build out.

Another Panel member felt that the public space had to work at the scale of the community, noting that although the proposed green plot needs to be designed the team should try not to over program it.

2.5 Summary of the Panel's Key Issues

The Acting Chair then summarized the recommendations of the Panel:

- 1) Strong overall support for the design direction
- 2) Create a space that could accommodate large events and small gatherings
- 3) Ensure that the East Bayfront and Lower Don Lands precincts seamlessly integrate in this location
- 4) Push the opportunity to make the storm water management system more visible

2.6 Proponents Response

Mr. Gueze and Mr. Nicklin thanked the Panel for their feedback.

2.7 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Acting Chair then asked the Panel for a vote of support or non-support for the project. The Panel voted in Support of the project to move forward to the Design Development phase.

CLOSING

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