

# CITY OF VAUGHAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

AGENDA: MEETING 97 – January 27, 2022

Virtual Meeting

9:00 am

## **Pre-Meeting**

Committee Members

9:30am

## **Call to Order**

Land acknowledgement

Chair's Review of Agenda

Disclosure of Interest

Confirmation of Minutes of November 25, 2021 Meeting

9:30 am

## **220 Doughton Road - Doughton Residences Corp., Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, High-Rise Mixed-Use Development, 1<sup>st</sup> Review**

Presentations:

Les Klein, Principal, BDP Quadrangle

Colin Berman, Principal, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

10:40 am

## **Break**

10:55 am

## **Blocks 4 and 9 - QuadReal Property Group, Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, Temporary Site Activation and Public Art Program, 1<sup>st</sup> Review**

Presentations:

Stephen Albanese, IBI Group

Rebecca Carbin, ART+PUBLIC UnLtd.

12:05 am

## **Adjournment**

# **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

## **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

### **Meeting 97 – January 27, 2022**

---

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, January 27, 2022. The meeting was recorded and will be posted on the City of Vaughan website.

#### **PANEL MEMBERS**

##### **Present**

Megan Torza, DTAH (Chair)

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will (Vice Chair)

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Alfredo Landaeta, Forrec (not available for the first item)

Henry Burstyn, IBI Group

Sheldon Levitt, Quadrangle Architects Ltd.

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

Ute Maya-Giambattista, SGL Planning & Design Inc.

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

##### **Absent**

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

##### **STAFF**

Christina Bruce, Director, Policy Planning & Special Programs

Nancy Tuckett, Director, Development Planning

Amy Roots, Senior Manager, VMC Program

Carmela Marrelli, Senior Manager, Development Planning

Gerardo Paez Alonso, Manager, VMC Program

Jennifer Cappola-Logullo, Manager, Development Engineering, VMC Program

Shahzad Davoudi-Strike, Manager, Urban Design & Cultural Heritage, Development Planning

Gaston Soucy, Project Manager, VMC Program  
Cory Gray, Project Manager, VMC Program  
Musa Deo, Project Manager, Transportation, VMC Program  
Alex Lee, Development Engineering Lead, VMC Program  
Danny Woo, Development Engineering Lead, VMC Program  
Natalie Wong, Senior Planner, VMC Program  
Sharon Gaum-Kuchar, Senior Art Planner / Curator, Economic and Cultural Development  
Michael Tranquada, Senior Urban Designer, Development Planning  
Shirley Marsh, Project Manager, Urban Design, Development Planning  
Shirin Rohani, Urban Design, Development Planning  
Kevin Huang, Senior Planner, Parks Infrastructure Planning and Development

**The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am with Megan Torza in the Chair.**

**1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA**

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

**2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Michael Rietta, Henry Burstyn and Margaret Briegmann declared a conflict of interest with the second item.

**3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

Meeting minutes for November 25, 2021, were approved.

**4. DESIGN REVIEW**

**VMC 220 Doughton Road - Doughton Residences Corp.**

Architect: BDP Quadrangle  
Landscape Architect: Janet Rosenberg & Studio  
Review: 1<sup>st</sup> Review

**Introduction**

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- Are the proposed ground floor uses, programming, accesses/services and exterior landscape design appropriately responding to the surrounding public realm, and site grading challenges?

- Is the overall building massing and site organization positioned appropriately in response to the context and policy framework as expressed in the VMC Secondary Plan and Urban Design Guidelines?

## Overview

- **Overall Presentation** - Panel thanked the applicant for the presentation but noted that the lack of contextual information in the package has limited the ability for DRP to fully comment on the design and recommended that future presentations include more contextual information such as adjacent, existing and proposed designs as well as other nearby amenities to facilitate the review.
- **Ground floor uses, access and landscape** - The relationship between the podium and the public realm could be improved such that the distribution of uses and podium ground floor heights are influenced more by the grading and surroundings to generate better connections to the streets.
- **Massing and materiality** - The relationship between the architectural expression of the podium and the towers could be explored further so that the generic looking towers relate more to the warm, rich, interesting and friendly expression of the podium. Panel also recommended looking at different design strategies such as spacing, positioning and expression to visually differentiate the two towers from one another and improve views from the units that are currently fronting each other.
- **Loading and Service Areas** - Panel recommended looking into how the west frontage would work in relation to a future project to the west and how the site design could be improved to minimize potential negative impacts from the proposed utilitarian uses on future neighbours.
- **Microclimate** - Microclimate impacts are of concern. Especially around rooftop amenity areas and ground floor entrances.

## Comments

### General Context and Overall Design Strategy

- Recognizing the complexity of the site, Panel commented on the efforts that have been made to improve the original concept to meet municipal standards, noting that most of the proposed north-south road conveyance is being located on site, but commented that the site is too small for the amount of program that's being proposed, which poses many challenges.
- The proposal would benefit from a more detailed context plan and 3D model (including proposed/future projects) that better reinforces - or discourages - the approach of having 2 towers on a podium. Panel pointed out that there is an opportunity to explore doing something different from a typological point of view by reallocating some of the proposed densities in a different form; and challenged the applicant to look at options which might not require two towers, including consideration for stepping down the towers towards the south.

- Given the complexity of the site, Panel expressed their desire to see several sections along all 4 sides of the building to better understand the relationship of the building with the grading and the public realm, as this will inform the design and promote better interaction between the interiors, the landscape and the public realm.

### Site Organization and Uses

- The grading challenges should be seen as an opportunity, as it lends itself to a multi-storey approach to step down the building as it moves south. Panel commented that the design is moving in that direction, and that, although the south side seems to be starting to benefit from such a grading strategy in the proposed community space, the rest of the design is not yet there.
- Panel commented on the positive move to have townhouses along the north-south street but observed that the spirit of having those townhouse there, to provide active uses and eyes on the street, is being weakened by the extensive landscape buffer being proposed which is feeling like a private yard. Instead, Panel recommended that the area in front of the townhouses be better resolved in a more urban way with stepping of the landscape that allows for a pedestrian circulation path with direct access points to each unit.
- It was observed that the podium could be setback more from the south to generate a more substantial public realm by wrapping the southeast corner with gradual stepping while creating more room in front of the community space.
- Panel advocated for studying the relationship between the west side access to the underground, a fully enclosed and compact loading area, some of the residential amenity uses and a potential vehicular drop-off area to provide a better frontage and improve the design and quality of the space. In studying this area, the team should consider its elevation, form and expression by working with building massing to break up the scale while refining pedestrian connections and landscape strategies so that it does not feel so overwhelming and undesirable.
- Panel mentioned that there is an opportunity of taking advantage of the multi-level approach by using the western driveway with the intention of serving as a dual-purpose pickup and drop-off area to a secondary lobby at the P1 level, and as a vehicular turnaround. This would maximize its functionality and allow for other possibilities that produce a more pedestrian friendly environment with walkways and landscape.
- It was noted that the garbage pickup area should be indoors, completely closed off with adequate doors and not just covered with a deck above. Panel recommended properly incorporating this area under the building even if it means relocating some of the indoor amenities which might not require direct sunlight to function.
- Panel recommended studying the possibility of ramping down the western driveway to gain additional height which would allow for the entire loading area to happen below grade and not read as a towering two-storey building right next to the neighbouring property to the west.

- Alternatively, a more utilitarian west frontage could be justified provided that the neighbour to the west does the same. As such, Panel suggested that the applicant illustrate what could potentially happen along that frontage by creating a mock-up of a potential scenario with a similar tower on podium development to the west.
- Panel noted that the frontage along the mews could be improved to allow for a better connection and activation of the public realm, and recommended studying the ground finished floor elevations, uses and opportunities to propose something more interesting and grade related than a dog run which could be relocated elsewhere. Panel also recommended looking at the mews frontage beyond the boundaries of the project to see how it relates to the entire design of the mews and the proposal to the north.

### Architecture and Massing

- Panel expressed significant concerns with the proposed massing in terms of the location of the towers and their relationship with the street and neighbours. There seems to be little consideration as to how these will fit in the overall context and, more specifically, in relation to future adjacent developments to the north and west.
- Panel noted that the proposed 30.0m tower separation is tight and recommended misaligning the towers to allow for more openness between the two facing façades. Further, Panel commented that there is an opportunity to reshape the podium/tower at the south side of the site as there seems to be enough room for the tower to move as far east as possible generating interest and more needed space between the towers while providing more flexibility and space for the future neighbours to the west.
- It was mentioned that the similarity in design of the two towers is too strong in the skyline, making them feel like twin towers. Panel remarked that the design could benefit from more diversity in the façade treatments. As such, it was noted that the podium architecture is interesting and that this approach should translate to the towers which could benefit from unifying the design by transferring some of the richer language and materiality from the podium upward. Alternatively, Panel recommended looking into mirroring one of the towers to help create the desired visual variations.
- Panel recommended bringing the vibe of the perspectives into the drawings themselves as the romantic feel of the renderings, with the warm materiality and design, is not translating to the floor plans. For example, the façade design above the main residential entrance lobby suggests a different use to the proposed residential units in plan. Another example is the south entrance of the community space that needs to be better defined to reflect the grand entrance shown in the perspectives which the current plans are not accurately conveying.
- It was noted that the community centre use and functionality might be challenged by its 2-storey layout and that its overall podium expression could be improved to be more civic-like.
- Panel liked the approach to try and differentiate the design and materiality for the community centre but felt that more will be required in terms of giving it more distinction.

- Panel commented that the community space is the most prominent and most accessible space in the entire project. As such, it should be given a privileged condition but instead is being subdivided by the landscape buffer and retaining wall at the southeast corner. Panel recommended looking at the landscape, retaining wall and building massing as a single entity that is designed in a way that integrates and negotiates the grade through cohesive moves such as stepping terraces.
- Alternatively, Panel mentioned that the applicant could consider exploring the possibility of relocating the townhouses along the Doughton Road frontage and moving the community space to be more central along the podium as this would allow for the potential incorporation of the wide landscape frontage and the corner rooftop terrace to its programming.
- Panel mentioned that the materiality and design of the plinth and signage at the community space entrance have the potential of becoming an interesting and inviting feature, but that its proportion could be improved as it is currently too low in relation to the podium and the public realm. A recommendation was made for the forecourt in front of the community centre to be envisioned as an urban plaza with more hardscaped seating areas.

#### Landscape Architecture

- Panel asked the applicant to consider how the development is currently addressing its proximity to the Black Creek open space system to the west and recommended looking into improving the landscape strategy to address this. For example by adding additional planting along the west side of the rooftop terrace.

#### Microclimate

- It was mentioned that, given the location of the towers and the design of the podium, special attention to microclimate and human comfort will have to be considered at the upper rooftop terrace and at all the ground floor main entrances as wind mitigation strategies might not be enough to make these areas suitable for their intended uses.
- It was also noted that the east side of the site will be shadowed after 1:00 pm. for the remaining of the day.

## **5. DESIGN REVIEW**

### **VMC Blocks 4 & 9 Temporary Site Activation and Public Art Program QuadReal Property Group**

Planner: IBI Group  
 Art Consultant: ART+PUBLIC UnLtd  
 Review: 1<sup>st</sup> Review

#### **Introduction**

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- Is the zoned installation approach curated for the four Public Art sites delivering a harmonious aesthetic and a qualitative art program (i.e. considering materiality | thematics) - one that complements the visual identity and development aspirations for the proposed activation space, and at the same time, fosters public engagement and a meaningful sense of community?

## Overview

- **Overall Presentation** - Panel thanked the applicant for the presentation and agreed that the proposed art program is very comprehensive and robust and that the projected implementation strategies are sound and very well thought-out.
- **Support for the Arts** - The desire of the Panel is for a space that supports the arts through repeat visitations, as this will be critical to the growth and success of this initiative especially if it's being projected to be in place for the next 5 to 10 years as development comes in.
- **Public activation** - An important component for the success of the space will be the creation of a year-round events calendar that takes into consideration seasonality, demographics and community need along with an appropriate rotation of programming, and art, that coincides with the seasons and the continuously evolving context.

## Comments

### General Concept and Overall Strategy

- Panel commented that, even though they understand that this is a temporary proposal, it's a shame that the site is not more permanent as the landscape will be at its prime when it is removed to allow for development.
- There was concern based on how detached the site is from other areas in the VMC, as this might not allow for it to be as pedestrian accessible as anticipated. In that regard, Panel recommended that, in addition to the art program, there should be a public engagement strategy to draw people to the space.
- Panel mentioned that the continuous reprogramming of activities will probably have to go hand in hand with the use of the space and noted that seasonal art and events will be key to the success of the space. Public spaces in Montreal were referenced as excellent examples of continuous activation by way of art and programming throughout the year.
- The design strategy of the spaces within the containers is compelling as it seems to be creating intimate spaces where people can sit to relax and/or contemplate the art. Success will be driven by the programming of these spaces and, just as importantly, the surrounding open spaces peripheral to the containers. These spaces will need to bring in a variety of large-scale events and have the quality and flexibility to accommodate ancillary uses that can create an additional/parallel year-round draw to the area that complements the art and activities happening inside.



- Panel noted that, in addition to the variety and creativity of the programming component, the way the seating, lighting, sun protection and other key features are designed and implemented will be key to the success of the initiative as the landscape will take a long time to establish and create a garden feeling inside the space.
- Panel alluded to the fact that ancillary services such as food/drink and washrooms should be considered to offer visitors other essential amenities that might entice them to stay longer or come back to visit more than once.
- Looking at other ways to activate the spaces, Panel wondered if the current design of the space and its capabilities to draw people could potentially benefit from more community based active programming and less use of garden space. For example, adding a playground and/or a fitness space that better fits with the future neighbourhood, or partnering with community groups to activate the spaces on a regular basis which could start creating strong community bonds. Art could be a critical part of these activations as both could coexist harmoniously.
- With the understanding that the budget is tight, Panel recommended looking at digital and other technological opportunities to help with the overall experience and to connect with a virtual audience in order to create additional interest from other groups. For example, a phone app with curatorial messages pertaining to the place and the individual art pieces.
- It was mentioned that public communication will be vital to draw people to the site and recommended having a strong web and social media presence to promote events and create interest year-round.
- Weary of potential constraints, Panel encouraged looking at opportunities to activate the interior of the containers within zoning allowances so that they can be incorporated into the art strategy, supporting programming from within.

### Placemaking

- Panel expressed reservations that the story of the project might not be realistic and suggested looking at art-driven community development precedents that could better inform the story. For example, the Wynwood Arts District in Miami Beach which started off as an industrial district which fell into economic decline and, through art, has developed into a very successful area.
- Panel observed that the challenge of the proposal is that the art, as proposed, might not be a strong enough catalyst as the actual spaces where it's being proposed does not have a past and seems disengaged from the community. As a result, it might be difficult for the place to become a recurrent draw as it is too small and isolated.
- Panel noted that the art is trying to infuse the space with a sense of identity and narrative, but that the budget seemed too small for the ambition of the project.
- Look at opportunities for artists to create a more enduring bond with the site and its context by connecting with its past, present and future in order to develop a narrative and thematic strategy that can continue beyond the lifespan of this project.

- This initiative could be helped by the creation of partnerships with different groups that can help activate and maintain the space year-round. For example, local arts and cultural organizations, urban agriculture and community gardens groups which could promote significant activation opportunities.
- Panel suggested that maybe the model is as an outdoor art gallery rather than a public space for art - in which case the art will have to be very meaningful and powerful.

### Other Strategies

- Panel mentioned the concept of “the power of ten” as a strategy commonly used to develop successful public spaces where there needs to be 10 reasons for people to want to go to a place in order to make it successful.
- If this is a marketing strategy for the broader development, there is an opportunity to integrate other activities and infrastructure to help with some of the basic requirements to make it successful.
- Another strategy recommended by Panel was to look at this project as a flexible, phased strategy that can evolve as the surrounding areas develop and residents start moving in. This would allow for additional programming to be integrated as demand grows in the future.
- Panel commented that the naming of the place will also affect the way people perceive it. It was suggested that a name such as “container gallery” could potentially work better as it is more descriptive and accurate.
- Containers are an interesting cavass because they allow for flexibility in the art media that could be applied to them. With that in mind, Panel recommended that it would make sense to have the work rotate within the lifetime of the park. That dynamism could happen by relocating the containers and or changing the art pieces.

### Microclimate

- Microclimatic conditions will be critical to inform how the site could be programmed and organized. Especially in the winter and summer months when sun, wind and noise could be a factor in the success of the project.

**END OF MINUTES**

# CITY OF VAUGHAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

AGENDA: MEETING 98 – February 24, 2022

Virtual Meeting

9:00 am

---

## **Pre-Meeting**

Committee Members

9:15 am

---

## **Call to Order**

Chair's Review of Agenda

Disclosure of Interest

Confirmation of Minutes of January 27, 2022 Meeting

9:30 am

---

## **Block 3S, QuadReal/Menkes, Vaughan Metropolitan Centre High-Rise Mix-Use Development, 2<sup>nd</sup> Review**

Presentations:

Russell Fleischer, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Michele Gucciardi, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Neno Kovacevic, IBI Group

10:40 am

---

## **Adjournment**

---

# **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

## **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

### **Meeting 98 – February 24, 2022**

---

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, February 24, 2022. The meeting was recorded and will be posted on the City of Vaughan website.

#### **PANEL MEMBERS**

##### **Present**

Megan Torza, DTAH (Chair)

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will (Vice Chair)

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

Alfredo Landaeta, Forrec (not available for the first item)

Sheldon Levitt, Quadrangle Architects Ltd.

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

##### **Absent**

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Ute Maya-Giambattista, SGL Planning & Design Inc.

Henry Burstyn, IBI Group

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

##### **STAFF**

Christina Bruce, Director, Policy Planning & Special Programs

Amy Roots, Senior Manager, VMC Program

Jennifer Cappola-Logullo, Manager, Development Engineering, VMC Program

Shahzad Davoudi-Strike, Manager, Urban Design & Cultural Heritage, Development Planning

Gaston Soucy, Project Manager, VMC Program

Cory Gray, Project Manager, VMC Program

Musa Deo, Project Manager, Transportation, VMC Program

Alex Lee, Development Engineering Lead, VMC Program

Danny Woo, Development Engineering Lead, VMC Program

Natalie Wong, Senior Planner, VMC Program

**The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am with Megan Torza in the Chair.**

**1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA**

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

**2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Peter Turner, Michael Rietta, Henry Burstyn and Margaret Briegmann declared a conflict of interest.

**3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

Meeting minutes for January 27, 2022, were approved.

**4. DESIGN REVIEW**

**VMC Block 3S, QuadReal/Menkes.**

Architect: Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Landscape Architect: IBI Group.

Review: 2<sup>nd</sup> Review

**Introduction**

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- Has the architectural design successfully addressed previous comments by Panel regarding building expression, tower transition, overall massing and heights to provide a more adequate and diverse approach in relation to the existing and future context?
- Are the proposed updates to the ground floor uses, site plan and landscape design strategies addressing previous comments made by Panel to improve the relationship and activation of the public realm and other proposed publicly accessible open spaces?

**Overview**

- **Overall Presentation** - Panel thanked the applicant for the presentation, acknowledged that improvements have been made from the last presentation and that the essential elements for a good project are there, but noted that refinements are needed to make it great.
- **Site Plan, Ground Floor Uses and the Public Realm** - Panel noted that the mews experience at the pedestrian level will be critical to the success of the

project, as active open spaces are crucial to a healthy public realm and commented on the necessity of a strong and viable retail strategy with attractive and animated windows and frontages along the corridor.

The south connection between the mews and the POPS needs to be carefully reviewed as the proposed 1-storey retail pavilion seems to be impeding views and clear connections between the two spaces. The pavilion should be either reduced in scale or relocated to improve these visuals and connections, as well as its servicing requirements.

At the north end, the narrow mouth and the bridge above it are working against the idea of creating a welcoming gesture for pedestrians.

Panel encouraged developing a mid-block pedestrian crossings at the north end of the mews similarly to what has been proposed to the south.

- **POPS** - The interaction of the POPS with its edges will be critical to its success. This is particularly important along the vehicular turn around and the proposed amenity space to the north where there should be continuous active uses that animate the POPS throughout the day. Panel recommended relocating the residential lobby entrance and adding other related lounge or café seating areas that are constantly animated and do not rely on temporary bookings or programming for activation.
- **Massing and Materiality** - The architectural expression of the podiums and towers should focus on material richness, tactility and warmth to help achieve a more meaningful and special project that is not only unique but warmer, more welcoming and sustainably responsible.

The design of the 50-storey tower should be analyzed very carefully from top to bottom to ensure that its landmark perception is consistent with the expected high quality of design which will be perceived from different vantage points, distances and scales. From its overall design and materiality, to how it lands and interacts with the ground floor at the entrance of the mews.

- **Loading and Service Areas** – Panel recommended looking at reducing the size of the internal service and vehicular turnaround spaces to increase the size of the public realm and other active frontages throughout the site.
- **Sustainability and Microclimate** - Consider how sustainable design influences the language of these buildings by designing each façade differently depending on orientation to address climatic differences throughout the year, and by determining important aspects such as optimal window to wall ratios, quality of window systems, where and how balconies are provided, etc.

Microclimate will be very important in the public realm and rooftop terraces to allow for the comfort of pedestrians throughout the year.

## Comments

### Site Organization and Uses

#### **Mews**

- Panel expressed concern that the width of the mews is still constrained in comparison to the mews to the north, particularly at the east-west street where it abruptly transitions from the north mews.
- The bridge at the north end of the mews is not contributing to the project, as it is only connecting two residential floors and, from a distance, will hide views and create the perception of a street wall which is counter intuitive to the proposed north-south open circulation urban design narrative.

#### **POPS**

- Panel mentioned that the investment in the POPS is not being exploited to its full advantage by the proposed surrounding built form and overall layout, and made the following comments in that regard:
  - The proposed 1-storey, standalone retail building seems large, making it difficult to successfully activate all four sides with desirable frontages, as there will inevitably be an undesirable service side. Additionally, it is currently acting as a visual and physical barrier from the mews to the POPS. Panel suggested reshaping and reducing its footprint in order to make it a true pavilion with a very simple use that will not require the service side and allow for better visuals and circulation through the mews and the POPS. Panel recommended looking at the Nemesis Coffee pavilion in Vancouver which works more as a special “folly” than a proper building.
  - Panel commented that the POPS will need more active uses along the north edge as the proposed amenity programming is not yet clear and does not seem to be addressing the south frontage. As such, Panel recommended carefully looking at the design of this frontage and its intended uses to ensure that these will help activate the POPS. Alternatively, Panel recommended relocating the residential lobby so that it faces the POPS and creates more activity along that frontage.
  - Panel recommended extending the retail space northwest of the POPS eastward so that it creates an active frontage that shields the POPS from the undesirable utilitarian and vehicular oriented activities in the courtyard.

#### **Site Plan Design and Context**

- Panel commented on the importance that the site plan design has in the success of the retail and public realm, especially under the current conditions of the VMC as a suburban area that’s not yet matured into a proper urban environment.
- While there are good individual items in the design strategy, such as a family friendly mews and POPS, a stage for performances, and a highly programmed future park to the south, their success will depend on how the activities interrelate and complement each other so that they, as a whole, feel vibrant. For example, the stage is a good activator, but its placement could be improved to work better with the adjacent spaces and activities including the 1-storey retail pavilion which, in turn, connects to the POPS.

- Panel suggested that the story behind the open spaces and how they work together to create a holistic experience is the question to be answered and encouraged the applicant to keep going and expand the existing vision by building a bigger story that connects all these unique moments to each other and to the greater context, now and in the longer term.
- Panel noted that there is a proposed bump out at the south end of the mews for a pedestrian crossing and suggested doing the same at the north end to reinforce the vision of a more pedestrian friendly north-south connection throughout.

#### **Service Areas**

- Panel was pleased to see the proposed opening above the vehicular turnaround and service areas at the podium between Towers B and C as it will allow for better ventilation and natural light penetration.
- Panel mentioned that the site plan devotes a large amount of ground floor space to service oriented uses such as vehicular turnarounds and recommended trimming or completely eliminating those to give those spaces back to the public realm [wider mews] or to more suitable ground floor uses such as bike parking and deeper retail units.

#### **Retail Units**

- To allow for a more viable, interesting retail strategy that can adjust to change and be more resilient, Panel advised that better sized, deeper and more flexible retail units would increase the possibility of success and promote active frontages instead of shelves on windows which will translate to undesirable vinyl-on-glass frontages along the mews.

#### Architecture and Massing

- Panel was encouraged by the different architectural expressions, materiality and forms, and by the dynamic composition being created by the transferring of the language from Tower B to the upper sections of the podium. However, Panel mentioned that the expression of Tower B could be reworked as it currently has a very 1950's look that should be reimagined in a manner that better reflects the refined vision of an iconic building while addressing the present-day understanding of materials, and environmental and sustainable requirements and systems.
- Panel mentioned that the 50-storey landmark tower is well placed but that its base should be special as it will be an important destination generated by the strong presence of the tower on site.
- Panel encouraged exploring a meaningful building envelope design for the 50-storey landmark tower and the other towers in order to address orientation, energy efficiency and resilience. Panel urged the applicant to look at other options from the proposed window-wall system with balconies that act as thermal bridges by making it special and meaningful in every way while setting it apart from other towers in the area.
- Panel recommended injecting more warmth to the architecture and materiality in the project as it currently looks stark and cold which does not help promote people going out on a street or mews in the cold winter months.



- Panel commented that although the podium has more richness and variety in its massing and heights, it could be improved from a material and textural perspective as it feels starker than the previous version.

#### Landscape Architecture

- Panel noted that some of the rooftop amenities are now overlooking onto the public realm and mews which is a positive move.

#### Microclimate

- Panel acknowledged efforts being made to pay attention to microclimate and human comfort in the upper rooftop terraces and at the ground floor public realm and main entrances to make these areas suitable for their intended uses.

**END OF MINUTES**

# CITY OF VAUGHAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

AGENDA: MEETING 99 – March 31, 2022

Virtual Meeting

9:00 am

---

## **Pre-Meeting**

Committee Members

9:30 am

---

## **Call to Order**

Chair's Review of Agenda

Disclosure of Interest

Confirmation of Minutes of February 24, 2022 Meeting

9:30 am

---

## **Colossus Redevelopment - RioCan**

### **Masterplan, SE quadrant Weston & HW7 Secondary Plan, 1<sup>st</sup> Review**

Presentations:

Mark Reid, Urban Strategies

David Pontarini, Hariri Pontarini Architects

Michael Conway, Hariri Pontarini Architects

Jennifer Nagai, PFS Studio

10:40 am

---

## **Adjournment**

---

# **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

## **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

### **Meeting 99 – March 31, 2022**

---

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, March 31, 2022. The meeting was recorded and will be posted on the City of Vaughan website.

#### **PANEL MEMBERS**

##### **Present**

Megan Torza, DTAH (Chair)

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will (Vice Chair)

Henry Burstyn, IBI Group

Ute Maya-Giambattista, SGL Planning & Design Inc.

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

##### **Absent**

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Alfredo Landaeta, Forrec

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

Sheldon Levitt, Quadrangle Architects Ltd.

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

##### **STAFF**

Christina Bruce, Director, Policy Planning & Special Programs

Nancy Tuckett, Director, Development Planning

Amy Roots, Senior Manager, VMC Program

Jennifer Cappola-Logullo, Manager, Development Engineering, VMC Program

Gaston Soucy, Project Manager, VMC Program

Cory Gray, Project Manager, VMC Program

Musa Deo, Project Manager, Transportation, VMC Program

Danny Woo, Development Engineering Lead, VMC Program  
Natalie Wong, Senior Planner, VMC Program  
Shahrzad Davoudi-Strike, Manager, Urban Design & Cultural Heritage, Development Planning  
Michael Tranquada, Senior Urban Designer, Development Planning  
Shirley Marsh, Project Manager, Urban Design, Development Planning  
Chrisa Assimopoulos, Urban Design, Development Planning  
Shirin Rohani, Urban Design, Development Planning  
Margaret Holyday, Senior Planner – Development, Development Planning  
Kevin Huang, Senior Planner, Parks Infrastructure Planning and Development

**The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am with Megan Torza in the Chair.**

**1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA**

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

**2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

None noted

**3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

Meeting minutes for February 24, 2022, were approved.

**4. DESIGN REVIEW**

**Colossus Redevelopment Master Plan - RioCan**

Architect: Hariri Pontarini Architects  
Landscape Architect: PFS Studio  
Urban Planning: Urban Strategies  
Review: 1<sup>st</sup> Review

**Introduction**

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- How successfully has the Master Plan responded to the principles and the vision of the emerging Secondary Plan; specifically, in balancing intensification and creating an inclusive, well-connected, and well-serviced community?
- How successful is the proposed road network, open space system, massing, and scale?

## Overview

- **Overall Presentation** - Panel thanked the applicant for a thorough presentation and for the clarity of the submission.
- **Secondary Plan Integration** - Panel noted that there are great synergies between what is being proposed and what is anticipated by the Secondary Plan with respect to street network, connectivity, park and open space provisions as well as the transitions from lower densities in the southern portion to higher density in the northern portion of the site.  
Adequate land will need to be allocated to Community Infrastructure to meet the goals outlined in the Secondary Plan and to be incorporated in enlivening the blocks and streets in the community.
- **Transit** - Panel acknowledged that the details of the streets will develop as the design evolves, however, greater provisions should be made for transit and active transportation to be accommodated on the streets considering the volume of people anticipated in the quadrant.
- **Massing** - Panel noted that there is a contradiction between the provisions on massing at a Master Plan level and the profile of the quadrant represented through the North–South Section. Specifically, the heights listed in the legends are higher than the heights represented in the demonstration heights. Panel asked the applicant to review the proposal and revise as necessary for the character of the quadrant to be better expressed and represented through built form and massing.  
Further to the above, the contribution of podiums to street framing and street life should be explored in greater depth and better expressed through design and through the appropriate provisions.
- **Phasing** - Panel commented on how this development phases out relative to neighbouring projects and how the project will develop around the existing resources on the site that the community currently rely upon.
- **Mix of Uses** – Panel spoke on the relationship between the mix of uses provided within the quadrant and transit, as the more jobs provided in the community the less people will need to commute to work.
- **Density** – Panel cautioned the applicant that on the density levels and how they would need to strategically correspond to the traffic management, the transit and the parks infrastructure.

## Comments

### Secondary Plan Integration and Phasing

- Panel noted that overall, the Master Plan follows closely on the Weston 7 Secondary Plan principles.
- Panel spoke to the 30-year built out horizon set by the applicant and how that needs to be coordinated with the 50-year set in the Secondary Plan by the City.

- Further to the above, strong coordination between the 3 owners on the site and continuous monitoring of how the phasing takes place within that 30-year span are necessary.

### Density and Massing

- Panel cautioned the applicant on the density levels and how they would need to strategically respond to the traffic management options on the site. In comparison to Yonge and Eglinton where there 4 available directions for infrastructure, the density on this site is much higher with only 2 available directions for additional infrastructure for the site to connect to the rest of the City and the surrounding community facilities.
- Panel asked for consistency in how density is characterized through the plan and in relation to City standards. The City has clear definitions of height for mid-rise and high-rise development and those will need to be followed when characterizing the different areas of the Plan.  
Based on the City's definition of mid-rise and high-rise developments, the whole site should be considered high-rise. As such, a very cautious review of the amount and location of open spaces in relation to density should take place.

### Architecture and Uses

- Panel spoke to the balance between residential and jobs proposed on the site; noting that the percentage of jobs is minimal compared to the residential component. A greater percentage of mixed-use should be proposed on site, with non-residential uses expanding beyond the ground floor. Mixed-use can also be incorporated along Weston Rd and at the northeast corner of Highway 7.
- Further to the above, even though the ground floors of the proposed towers is dedicated to non-residential uses, a greater percentage of the ground floors will need to be dedicated to servicing the towers, with lobbies, elevators etc. So, the space left for the community, retail and commercial uses may not be adequate and may not achieve the range of destinations envisioned. Other uses such as office should also be incorporated as they can contribute to animating the blocks and open spaces as well as to the viability of the proposed commercial.
- Panel noted that especially community uses, and amenities need to be considered at this phase, as they have design and space requirements that can impact planning decisions at this stage.
- Considering the proposed density and the low level of existing transit infrastructure, the commercial and retail component need to be enhanced on the site to serve this community.
- Panel noted that retail hasn't been a powerful main street function. Even though the articulation and design of the range of destinations is at a high-level, strategies should be put in place to ensure that those spaces will be successful.
- Panel noted the uses currently on the site serve the community and part of the whole City and keep this area vibrant. As such removing tangible benefits and uses might be detrimental for the community. Panel suggested a more flexible, hybrid plan incorporating opportunities for larger format retail or larger footprint flex spaces

- Panel asked for a greater commitment of the proposed podiums in the framing of the streets as they are going to be important streetscape-setting elements; currently they are not clearly represented in the proposal.
- Considering that the grade difference can be severe in some areas of the site, Panel noted that greater setback will be necessary to incorporate stepping and getting active frontages for the proposed uses. A more in-depth study of those interfaces will be necessary.
- The corner of Highway 7 and Weston Rd. was viewed by Panel as one that can be enhanced and host a signature tower.

#### Street network, active transportation and streetscape design

- Panel noted that the Colossus extension can present as one solution to the traffic management and connection to the City, however, there are other strategies to be considered that will contribute to connectivity through the site and with the rest of the City. Weston Rd. should be reviewed from a transit infrastructure perspective that may get future residents over the 407, to a 407 BRT stop or through Highway 7 to the VCM subway station.
- Further to the above, Panel commented on the orientation of Street F as currently it is shown to link to Highway 7 and therefore it misses the opportunity to get future users of the site beyond Highway 400. A more in-depth review of Street F may lead to a better-connected transit network with stronger active transportation connections as well.
- Panel suggested that considering the amount of density proposed for the site, the possibility of an internal transit system needs to be explored.
- Panel spoke to creating urban edges along the proposed streets. Streetscape design should become more urban considering that there is available space to make what is currently a car orientated design to one with more pedestrian and urban focus.
- It was noted by the Panel that at least until Colossus is extended, Famous Ave. will be the key street of the Master Plan and as such it should be celebrated with an enhanced streetscape treatment and open space strategy.

#### Parks and Open Space network

- Panel acknowledged that from a programming and design perspective, the parks and open spaces are successful in taking advantage of the grading and offering programs for all ages.
- From a microclimate perspective Panel noted that the siting of the parks and open space is sound, with only minor issues that may arise around building entrances etc. which can easily be addressed.
- Panel commented on the pedestrian connections to the central park at the southern portion of the quadrant. A stronger urban character will need to be provided with clear language and clean edges around parks and open spaces. In particular for the northeast corner of Park #3, Panel recommended a clear choice between built form and park land.

- Alternatively, Panel suggested for Park #3 to be positioned along Famous Ave., so that the park itself can form part of the edge of Famous Ave. and establish a relationship with Park #1 and #4.
- Panel noted that there are still opportunities for further mid-block pedestrian connections as well as enhancements to the perimeter circuit that can create stronger connections between the perimeter and the main roads, linking the core of the site.
- Urban open spaces, such as but not limited to a public plaza within the entertainment district, were suggested by Panel, responding to the proposed high density.

**END OF MINUTES**



# CITY OF VAUGHAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

AGENDA: MEETING 100 – April 28, 2022

Virtual Meeting

9:00 am

---

## **Pre-Meeting**

Committee Members

9:15 am

---

## **Call to Order**

Chair's Review of Agenda

Disclosure of Interest

Confirmation of Minutes of March 31, 2022 Meeting

9:30 am

---

## **3201 Highway 7, Graywood Group, Vaughan Metropolitan Centre High-Rise Mix-Use Development, 1<sup>st</sup> Review**

Presentations:

Mansoor Kazerouni, IBI Group

Robert Ng, NAK Design Strategies

10:40 am

---

## **Adjournment**

---

## **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

### **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

#### **Meeting 100 – April 28, 2022**

---

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, April 28, 2022. The meeting was recorded and will be posted on the City of Vaughan website.

#### **PANEL MEMBERS**

##### **Present**

Megan Torza, DTAH (Chair)

Ute Maya-Giambattista, SGL Planning & Design Inc.

Alfredo Landaeta, Forrec (not available for the first item)

Sheldon Levitt, Quadrangle Architects Ltd.

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

##### **Absent**

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Henry Burstyn, IBI Group

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will (Vice Chair)

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

##### **STAFF**

Christina Bruce, Director, Policy Planning & Special Programs

Amy Roots, Senior Manager, VMC Program

Jennifer Cappola-Logullo, Manager, Development Engineering, VMC Program

Shahzad Davoudi-Strike, Manager, Urban Design & Cultural Heritage, Development Planning

Gaston Soucy, Project Manager, VMC Program

Cory Gray, Project Manager, VMC Program

Musa Deo, Project Manager, Transportation, VMC Program

Anna Rosen, Landscape Architect, VMC Program

Alex Lee, Development Engineering Lead, VMC Program

Danny Woo, Development Engineering Lead, VMC Program

Natalie Wong, Senior Planner, VMC Program

Monica Wu, Planner, VMC Program

**The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am with Megan Torza in the Chair.**

**1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA**

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

**2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

None conflict of interest were declared.

**3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

Meeting minutes for March 31, 2022, were approved.

**4. DESIGN REVIEW**

**VMC - 3201 Highway 7, Graywood Group**

Architect: IBI Group

Landscape Architect: NAK Design Strategies

Review: 1<sup>st</sup> Review

**Introduction**

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- Is the proposed development improving the original design, uses, architectural quality, and overall site plan layout when compared to the previously-approved scheme? If so, is the proposed architectural design achieving a high-quality, unique building expression and overall massing to provide a diverse approach in relation to the existing and future context as envisioned in the VMC supporting documents?
- Are the proposed ground floor uses, site plan and landscape design strategies successfully addressing a healthy relation and activation of the public realm throughout the site as envisioned in the VMC supporting documents?
- Is the location of the office building providing sufficient exposure and activation for the site in context?

## Overview

- **Overall Presentation** - Panel thanked the applicant for a comprehensive and thoughtful presentation and noted that through thoughtful design refinement, this project has the potential to create an exemplary public realm which could include significant contributions to better city-building, microclimatic and environmental goals.
- **Consolidation of Uses and Services** - Panel noted that consolidation of uses and functions within the overall site organization would greatly benefit the project while improving the public realm and user experience. Specifically, the consolidation of the office use into one of the tower podiums along either Highway 7 or Interchange Way and the concentration of the service ramps/parking/loading to release much needed space to significantly improve the ground floor and public realm.
- **Site Plan and Ground floor Uses** - Panel recommended reconsidering uses as part of the ground floor strategy to ensure that meaningful programming is being added to improve and activate the public realm. Particularly the specific character of the office-related uses and the overall retail strategy on the ground floor.

Panel spoke to the resident experience in and around the project and advised on revisiting some of the proposed locations of key elements such as drop-offs, open spaces, entrances, elevators, and/or amenities which do not seem to be in either a convenient location or within an appropriate distance of each other.

- **Open Space Strategy** - Panel mentioned that the open space strategy needs more work as it should be larger and/or reoriented to play a more significant role in the context. As such, Panel recommended expanding the size and/or location of the proposed courtyard and adding a potential corner plaza once other uses are relocated and/or consolidated in other locations.
- **Architecture and Massing** - Panel commented on the benefits of enriching the architectural design of the project's built form through greater height and massing heterogeneity to promote more diversity and interest by responding to the variety of uses and to their specific locations within the site. This would give more meaning to the individual architectural massing and expression of the 3 buildings while maintaining a cohesive design strategy with subtle diversity in language, etc.

Panel commented on the at-grade townhome strategy and suggested that these uses would be better suited to be positioned along the south and east frontages of the site where future local roads will be located. Additionally, Panel recommended making them more welcoming from a pedestrian scale and standpoint by giving them more room so that they don't feel compressed by the podium massing above.

Panel recommended looking at the language of the podium so that retail, office and residential façades have distinct characters that create subtle but clear distinctions between them. For example, the proposed digital image wall and soffit under the bridge would function better near commercial uses rather than residential. As well, ground floor residential units fronting the street should have less glazing to provide more privacy and separation.

## **Comments**

### Site Organization and Uses

#### **General Comments**

- Panel acknowledged the complexity of the site design which must manage all the peripheral edges while dealing with balancing pedestrian/human uses with utilitarian/service-related uses internally.
- It was mentioned that at one level the presentation addressed and answered most typical urban design issues such as edge definition, etc. but that more detailed and fundamental issues should now be looked at to refine and improve the project.
- Panel noted that the proposed proportion of mixed uses within the project, including the office component, is not aligning with the general targets of a project of this size and scope which should be able to accommodate a higher level of integration that better contributes to the overall vision of the VMC.
- Panel mentioned that the holistic perception of the project would greatly benefit by having all buildings and open spaces better relate and talk to each other in terms of site plan, uses, massing and style.
- Panel commented that the idea behind a mix use development is for all components to seamlessly work together and complement each other rather than work in isolation. Panel suggested using the proposed courtyard amenity space to better integrate the residential, retail and office components of the proposal in a more seamless and cohesive manner that serves all users equitably.

#### **Open Space Strategy and Central Courtyard**

- It was mentioned that the central, north-south driveway might not be required for the site to function adequately and that, as currently presented, this driveway is further isolating the office building from the rest of the proposal. As such, Panel recommended relocating some of the ramps and loading accesses to the east-west driveway and eliminating the north-south component altogether.
- Panel mentioned that the proposed parallel parking at the south side of the courtyard space is taking centre stage and should be relocated away from that prominent location which should be exclusive to pedestrian-related uses.
- It was noted that reducing the massing and heights along the south side of the development is permitting better sun penetration, but this could be further improved by relocating buildings to allow for the early afternoon sun to penetrate into the proposed courtyard for longer periods of time.
- Panel expressed concern that the central courtyard would get very limited afternoon sun which is when it should be getting the most sun exposure.
- The courtyard size should be much larger and more in tune with the scale of this large development and the significant number of associated residents that will be using it.

- Panel spoke of the potential to enlarge the internal courtyard by either widening it or opening it to one of the adjacent streets as this would be beneficial to the project's presence in the public realm.

### **Office Building**

- Panel noted that a single 3-storey office building seems like a missed opportunity and that the office component could be relocated to the podium level along Highway 7 as this would allow for better integration with the rest of the project while providing much better exposure to its tenants. This move would also free up more space on the ground floor to shift things around and create a much more generous exterior open courtyard than the one currently proposed.
- Panel recommended sliding the office building under the southwest corner's residential tower as this would not only consolidate uses but allow for a large public plaza at the southeast corner of the site which would in turn benefit from excellent sun exposure while providing much needed open space. Panel noted that the ultimate location of the consolidated building and plaza should be informed by the related pedestrian level wind study and sun/shadow analysis.
- Panel mentioned that the office building has been located in the least favourable place for it to be easily identified/found/accessed by visitors, especially since it will be built in a location that will not have a proper corner until other adjacent developments are implemented.
- Panel reference the VMC Secondary Plan's distinction of Highway 7 and Interchange Way as two main streets immediately adjacent to this proposal, so exposing uses such as the office building to these main streets would make more sense than locating it along the local, less exposed roads at the southeast corner.
- Panel commented on the need for more activation of the ground floor of the office building as the proposed office uses will not contribute to the VMC vision of having active frontages along public roads.

### **Site Plan and Consolidation of Ground Floor Uses and Services**

- Panel recommended looking at the project's site plan and ground floor design from a resident's perspective and study what it would be like for someone to live there and to move around the site as it seems difficult to navigate on a day-to-day basis with the long distances and internal corridors being proposed. Similarly, getting in and out of the building and getting picked-up and/or dropped-off does not seem convenient. As such, Panel recommended humanizing the project by reconfiguring the distribution of both indoor and outdoor ground floor space to make it more convenient to move around and more pleasant and desirable to experience.
- It was suggested that the retail would benefit by combining the two proposed units into one at the centre of the northern podium and by separating/moving the residential entrances to the corners or the side roads.
- Panel noted the benefits that could be achieved by centralizing and better consolidating the loading and service areas on the ground floor, as this could potentially allow for the redistribution of other more valuable, non-utilitarian uses throughout the site plan. Additionally, Panel suggested relocating most of the

loading/service activities to the basement level to minimize their less desirable impact on the ground floor.

#### Architecture Design and Massing

- Panel commented that the project would greatly benefit from richer and more varied tower heights, instead of a twin tower approach. For example, Panel mentioned that the tallest building could be located at the most prominent corner of Highway 7 and Interchange Way, which could also house the office/residential mix use components of the proposal, while the other smaller residential towers could be placed in other less prominent locations which could also allow for more openness and sky views.
- Panel proposed studying the possibility of making a meaningful gesture to create a 'gateway' feature at the corner of Highway 7 and Interchange Way by playing with the proposed site plan and massing design.
- It was mentioned that the podium elevations would greatly benefit from more variety in built form, texture and materiality to break up the continuity of the massing.
- Panel commented that the southwest residential tower is visually compressing the townhomes below and recommended looking at giving the townhomes more room to improve the pedestrian scale and help relieve this perceived pressure.

**END OF MINUTES**

# CITY OF VAUGHAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

AGENDA: MEETING 101 – May 26, 2022

Virtual Meeting

9:00 am

## **Pre-Meeting**

Committee Members

9:30 am

## **Call to Order**

Chair's Review of Agenda

Disclosure of Interest

Confirmation of Minutes of April 28, 2022 Meeting

9:30 am

## **Zancor Homes - Steeles LP and Steeles LP#2**

**2600 & 2700 Steeles Ave. W., OPA & ZBA, 1<sup>st</sup> Review**

Presentations:

Brendan Griffith, RAF + BIG

Frank Marzo, Bousfield Inc.

10:40 am

## **Break**

10:45 am

## **NJS Developments Inc. - Phase 2**

**3836 & 3850 Major Mackenzie Dr. OPA & ZBA, 1st Review**

Presentations:

Giovanni Tassone, Giovanni Tassone Architect Inc.

Ryan Mino-Leahan, KLM Planning

11:50 am

## **Break**

11:55 am

## **8940 Bathurst**

**OPA & ZBA, 1st Review**

Presentations:

Andrew Muffitt, Kohn Partnership Architects

Aidan Pereira, KLM Planning

1:05 pm

## **Adjournment**



# **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

## **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

### **Meeting 101 – May 26, 2022**

---

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, March 26, 2022. The meeting was recorded and will be posted on the City of Vaughan website.

#### **PANEL MEMBERS**

##### **Present**

Megan Torza, DTAH (Chair)

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will (Vice Chair)

Henry Burstyn, IBI Group

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

Sheldon Levitt, Quadrangle Architects Ltd.

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

##### **Absent**

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

Alfredo Landaeta, Forrec

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

Ute Maya-Giambattista, SGL Planning & Design Inc.

##### **STAFF**

Christina Bruce, Director, Policy Planning & Special Programs

Nancy Tuckett, Director, Development Planning

Shahzad Davoudi-Strike, Manager, Urban Design & Cultural Heritage, Development Planning

Michael Tranquada, Senior Urban Designer, Development Planning

Chrisa Assimopoulos, Urban Design, Development Planning

Shirin Rohani, Urban Design, Development Planning

Alex Yang, Urban Design, Development Planning

Letizia D'Addario, Senior Planner, Development Planning

Carol Birch, Planner, Development Planning

Rebecca Roach, Planner, Development Planning

**The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am with Megan Torza in the Chair.**

**1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA**

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

**2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Margaret Briegmann, conflict with the 1<sup>st</sup> item on the agenda

**3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

Meeting minutes for April 28, 2022, were approved.

**4. DESIGN REVIEW**

**Zancor Homes - 2600 & 2700 Steeles Ave. W #2**

Architect: Rafael + Bigauskas

Urban Planning: Bousfield Inc.

Review: 1<sup>st</sup> Review

**Introduction**

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- How successful is the proposal reflecting the secondary plan area's vision and principles, such as developing a consistent, attractive pedestrian environment?
- Is the proposal respectful of its existing/proposed context regarding massing, connections, and figure-ground?
- Please comment on the phasing plan and the interim interfaces between the proposal and existing uses on the neighbouring properties.

**Overview**

- **Overall Presentation** - Panel thanked the applicant for a comprehensive presentation. It is noted that this site has tremendous potential to set the character for Steeles Avenue as it progresses through its intensification over time.
- **Secondary Plan Integration** - Panel suggested that the applicant should reconsider how the proposal could improve by relating it to the Secondary Plan vision. The current proposal does not reflect the Secondary Plan vision,

particularly with respect to developing an attractive and comfortable pedestrian environment.

- **Density and Building Massing** - Panel recommended the applicant to reconsider the height and density as it relates to the larger context. The proposed site should not be designed as a stand-alone parcel without any governing principles or guiding ideas but rather as a site that plays an essential part in contributing to the creation of a pedestrian environment that is comfortable and a successful neighbourhood along Steeles Avenue.
- **Shadow Study** – Panel mentioned that the current proposal failed to demonstrate creating a viable space for people to live at grade due to the lack of sun exposure. The scale and the layout of the development should be reconsidered to minimize shadow impacts and create a pedestrian comfortable environment.
- **Road Connection** – Panel suggested for the internal roadway to comply with the City’s vision. The orientation of the roadway as it is set out in the visioning documents plays an important role in the larger community. Instead of ignoring the existing City documents that are already established, Panel would like the applicant to reconsider their proposal and its role in the community and work towards integrating it efficiently into the bigger context.

## Comments

### General Comments

- Panel mentioned the importance of creating a complete community with service facility study. The applicant should propose community service facilities to reflect a complete community and take action on the study to ensure a sustainable and successful design.
- Panel acknowledged that there are opportunities to leverage the amenities across the street at York University in creating a complete and mixed-use community. However, further discussion about the opportunity for a shared uses agreement and partnership with York University was required.
- Panel encouraged the applicant to create a livable and successful complete community by providing more space for service facilities, such as daycare. Note that the right kind of density that is supported by the City of Vaughan, especially the high density as proposed in this application, will require more thought and studies to ensure the proposed community works from a functional perspective.
- Panel highly recommended getting a landscape team involved to further explore how to develop pedestrian-oriented urban edges and create actively viable open spaces for the community. Considering there are needs that have not been met by York University, a comprehensive look at the community to support the people in this neighbourhood should be prioritized.

### Architecture and Massing

- Panel was concerned about the viability of the seven of 48-75 storeys towers with a 750m<sup>2</sup> building footprint in this situation. Considering the number of cores and other mechanical facilities in the tower. Managing the ground floor functions with the rest of the space should be further investigated.
- Panel recommended reconsidering the towers and how they are applied on the site. As shown in the current proposal, all the towers are of the same height, and the same orientation does not represent a well-informed idea. Further adjustments should be made, such as removing a tower or shuffling around the building height.

### Site Plan Organization

- Considering the density of this site will be much higher than what was proposed in the Secondary Plan, the way to create a functional and viable space for this community should be reconsidered.
- Panel was concerned about the viability of the retail spaces along the north side of Steels Ave and asked the applicant to evaluate how the retail spaces function in this wide cross-section with a big green space in between.
- Panel acknowledged the effort that the applicant put in proposing mixes of uses on the site, as well as considering removing the courtyard and drop-off circles as continually developing the concept. It is encouraged to continue to improve the plan by solving issues such as the tower adjacent to the park and creating viable spaces for people to congregate.
- Panel commented that the east-west road alignment is an essential element according to the Urban Design Guidelines. This is fundamental as the site plays an important role as a piece of a neckless north of Steels Avenue making a smaller block north of Steels Avenue; this block structure permits a mid-rise approach along the road and a higher density to the north.
- Panel highlighted that the east-west road alignment should first reach an agreement with the City before the organization of the site plan. The road alignment could also introduce a better location for the park.

## **5. DESIGN REVIEW**

### **NJS Developments Inc. - Phase 2**

Architect: Giovanni Tassone Architect Inc.  
 Urban Planning: KLM Planning  
 Review: 1<sup>st</sup> Review

### **Introduction**

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- How successful is the proposed design massing and scale and the transition to the neighbouring low-rise townhouses for this community?
- How successful is the proposed circulation and open space?

## Overview

- **Overall Presentation** - Panel thanked the applicant for a thorough presentation and for the clarity of the submission. And noted that the applicant has made efforts to address the necessary transition to the north and the west and provide generous open space areas and connections through them. Panel encouraged the applicant to continue working on these elements and simplifying the overall design.
- **Built form transition** - Panel noted that the building in its current form is too massive and bulky. Panel suggested that a clear delineation and articulation of the built form be incorporated, either by designing physically separated components or by significant terracing. This can lead to a more effective transition to the neighbouring properties both to the west and to the north. Currently the project heavily relies on terracing towards the necessary directions, however it has not effectively resolved the issue of transition.

Panel was in favour of the proposed C-shape and of the courtyard facing west.

- **Circulation** - Panel suggested enhancing the pedestrian porosity of the site, both along the north-south and east-west taking into consideration the new park coming to the neighbourhood in the northeast of the site. Panel also noted that a desire line to the new park should be established to enhance the connectivity and overall pedestrian experience.

Furthermore, Panel noted the significance of sidewalks for the community, and encouraged the applicant to provide a sidewalk along the east considering the extent and nature of the development proposed on the site.

Panel encouraged the applicant to reduce the footprint dedicated to vehicular circulation to the extent possible. For example, by taking a more urban approach to drop-off, designing it as part of the street as opposed to internal to the site.

- **Open Space** - Panel noted that the location and orientation of the courtyard is favourable, however, the location of the parking ramp, the location of visitor parking, and drop-off have a significant impact on the courtyard. Panel encouraged the applicant to integrate the ramp in the building footprint.

Microclimate conditions should also be considered for the design of the courtyard as currently the wind study shows that there is no opportunity for standing/sitting during the winter and in some locations during the summer in the courtyard.

Creating more significant transitions and providing more significant setbacks from the podium and upper components will create better wind conditions within the courtyard.

## Comments

### Built Form and Massing

- Panel commented that the C-shape is a strong design decision, that the terracing relates to the neighbouring townhouses.
- Panel noted that the overall massing is overwhelming and encouraged the applicant to think the massing in terms of components and their identity; how they relate to their local micro-context; how they differentiate between ground-related and sky-related; which would fit into a tower-and-lobby character, etc. Currently all components blend into the whole building because these ideas have not been reinforced through the massing design.
- Further to the above, Panel suggested multiple configurations to address the massing bulk issue;
  - i. One iteration is to physically breaking the building in two L-shaped buildings with two towers each with their own core and a central breezeway. This would allow for the project to be more scaled and respond better to the surrounding community.
  - ii. An alternate design iteration could include 1 L-shaped building with varying heights, higher along Sunset and lower along Major Mackenzie, and stacked back -to-back townhouse units along Sandwell with a clear separation between the two volumes.
  - iii. A different configuration to consider could be introducing a clear configuration of 3 parts of different heights, for example a 3-storey part, a 6-storey part and a 12-storey part, instead of the terracing currently proposed. Each part can be represented with different materials to reduce the perceived mass of the building.
- Panel suggested that the podium massing be reviewed as the 2-storey podium is not benefiting the building. The applicant was encouraged to explore a 1/3 to 2/3 relationship of podium to the building for the built form to be perceived as less massive.
- Panel, noted that a more pedestrian scale should be created along the edge of the courtyard to enhance the residents' experience within; stepping and staggering the building can help in that direction.

### Architectural Expression and Uses

- Panel encouraged the applicant to think of the building design in phases, even though the development is not phased, for a greater differentiation of the individual components of the building to be achieved. Currently there appears to be no functional reason as to why all the components need to be linked together since they are serviced separately.
- To contribute to reducing the building volume, Panel encouraged the applicant to create visual breaks through architectural treatment while maintaining a single building configuration.
- Panel suggested a simpler architectural approach with a horizontal expression instead of the vertical expression currently proposed.

- Further to the above, Panel noted that the frieze on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor, represented by a thickening horizontal line and a strengthened verticality, creates the impression of a much heavier building. Replacing it with a horizontal expression can make the project lighter while successfully breaking up the mass.
- Panel spoke to materiality and fenestration as tools the applicant can use to express the identity of the different massing components, for example residential spaces compared to amenity spaces. Currently everything looks the same.
- The applicant was encouraged to think about the backs and fronts of the building, and to resolve conflicting decisions that don't benefit the project, such as having the waste storage by the main entry.
- Amenity at the ground floor may not be successful; live-work units and other more active uses that take advantage of the street visibility will need to be introduced to strengthen the relationship with the street and activate that frontage. Amenity can be moved to a higher level.

### Circulation

- Panel identified that servicing restrictions on the site have had an impact on the design. Specifically, the loading is located further away from the intersection, and it is kept away from Sydney Circle to be respectful to the neighbours, this location has created a parallel driveway to Sydney Circle, causing disruption to the public realm, traffic, more impervious surfaces with stormwater management issues. It was therefore suggested:
  - i. Integration of the ramp in the building with a possible access off Sandwell;
  - ii. Elimination of the on-site parking and instead providing parking on the street;
  - iii. Providing lay-by or drop-off to at least one of the lobbies, if possible to the one on Sandwell;
  - iv. A reduction of the servicing footprint making that area of the courtyard the key area as it receives more sun;
  - v. The relocation of the loading as south as possible; it can occupy a one-storey structure with its roof being dedicated to private amenity;
  - vi. The exact location of loading should consider elevator connections for efficiency.
- Panel noted that the project needs more porosity and views through the building, to make the overall scheme lighter and allow it to better integrate into the neighbourhood.
- Panel noted that for a building of this size and density, one vehicular entrance is sufficient. The access can be provided from Sunset terrace instead to allow for a drop-off area to be designed along the drive-through.
- The ramp and loading can be incorporated in the building; replace the parking with a pick-up drop-off area and tie in the lobbies to the drop-off area for the courtyard to reach its full potential.
- Pedestrian connections from the courtyard to the existing community to the west can be provided.

- Panel encouraged the applicant to provide a sidewalk along Sandwell St. to serve the site. Also, the walkway through the amenity area linking to Major Mackenzie should either be public or have a public easement to serve the community.

### Open Space design

- The treatment of the surrounding public frontage should be more urban, currently it has a suburban character with the lawn and sidewalk configuration.
- Panel noted that the courtyard is at an ideal location, however the programming, the character, and the connections to the community will need to be further explored and enhanced. The applicant was encouraged to look at the project from the perspective of Sydney Circle to unlock all its potential as an open space for the community.
- Panel suggested the applicant to explore the possibility for the courtyard or parts of it to be shared with the neighbouring property to work as a relief for the community, extending the programming of that space.
- The character of the courtyard can be more urban. The underground ramp, the loading and servicing can be better integrated in the building to leave room for a pedestrian orientated urban courtyard.
- Furthermore, the breezeway is very vehicular in nature and an awkward relationship is established between the amenity space and the driveway, parking area, drop-off, and ramp. A more pedestrian-focused design should be implored that would allow for a greater activation of the amenity space, an extended programming as well as the possibility of shared elements of that courtyard with the neighbouring property.

## 6. **DESIGN REVIEW**

### **Kohn - 8940 Bathurst**

Architect: Kohn Partnership Architects  
 Urban Planning: KLM Planning  
 Review: 1<sup>st</sup> Review

### **Introduction**

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

1. Does the proposed massing provide an appropriate transition to the immediate context?
2. Does the proposed ground floor contribute to the context and provide a functional interface (Both internal and external to the site)?

### **Overview**

- **Overall Presentation** - Panel thanked the applicant for a comprehensive and thoughtful presentation, and acknowledged that the applicant has made efforts to



consider the integration of the plan into the surrounding context by understanding the development to the north and the existing community to the south.

- **Massing** - Panel supported the applicant's approach with their general transitioning. However, Panel suggested simplifying the massing strategy and vehicular circulation by putting higher density closer to Bathurst Street and stepping down to the west.

Panel was concerned that the proposed at-grade amenities along Bathurst Street might be empty most of the times. Therefore, Panel suggested providing different uses to ensure an active street interface along Bathurst Street.

- **Transit** - Panel encouraged the applicant to take the initiative and make the decision to develop their own access road on the north of the site. This road will be an essential part of the development and improve the efficiency of the vehicular circulation. Further communication with the neighbour to coordinate the share of uses for this road would be encouraged.

Panel recommended simplifying the vehicular circulation by considering a few strategies as below:

- i. Considering the removal of the extra ramp in the middle of the site as the traffic volume only requires one ramp.
- ii. Reducing the asphalt area within the courtyard spaces and the outdoor amenity spaces.
- iii. Exploring opportunities to relocate the north-south road or convert it to a pedestrian connection to allow for a more effective transit.

Panel recommended improving the connectivity and comfort of the sidewalks by further refining the landscape design. For example, refining vent locations, street tree plantings vs private tree plantings and considering the landscape design for people of all ages.

- **Open Space** - Panel suggested creating a more meaningful connection between the outdoor amenity spaces and the neighbouring SWM Pond facility by changing its orientation to make a stronger visual and physical connection. This connection will benefit both the residents within this development as well as the existing community.
- **House Typology** – Panel encouraged the applicant to explore new housing typologies to accommodate a better transition between the elder care facility to the north and current housing stock. For example, creating a different stacked townhouse model that has barrier-free at-grade units. Taking advantage of the extra setback from the sidewalk shown on the current plan to provide adequate privacy for those units.

## Comments

### General Massing

- The transition of the massing will be challenging for this site due to the complicated context that includes a large development to the north and low-rise existing communities to the south. Panel appreciated that the applicant had put great effort into experiencing different iterations of massing to work out a transitioning strategy.
- Panel appreciated the variety of house types that the applicant proposed and agreed on the height along Bathurst Street. However, Panel addressed concerns that the 12-storey building did not smoothly transition to the adjacent stacked townhouses and that the two stacked townhouses appeared orphaned as they are surrounded by the two mid-rise buildings and separated from the other towns. It was therefore suggested that:
  - i. In general, locating the taller massing towards Bathurst Street and further transition down to the west.
  - ii. Relocating the two isolated stacked townhouses and moving them together with the other townhouses to form a better low-rise development pocket.
  - iii. Alternatively, merging the two townhouses into a wing of the mid-rise building. This would allow it to marry up a bit better and not appear as isolated.

### Circulation

- Panel noted that the east-west road to the north of the site is an essential part of this development, and it needs to be addressed prior to other design configurations.
- Further to the above, considering the east-west road is located on the neighbouring property, there are challenges to coordinating with the neighbour in this early stage to fully work out the alignment. Panel suggested the applicant work independently on this access and provided the following recommendations:
  - i. Providing a 6.0 m driveway access off Bathurst Street to the northeast corner of the site and developing it independently. The access could lead to a shared loading area and the ramp without interfering with the green courtyard. This helps the courtyard gain potential to be programmed in a whole different way and become a better green space.
  - ii. Nudging the two mid-rise buildings south to accommodate the 6.0 m driveway access.
  - iii. Relocating the pick-up/drop-off area on the new driveway and removing the “lollipop drop-off” in the current plan to reserve the sunny area for pedestrian.

- iv. Considering Plan B for the future, when the neighbouring development takes place, this driveway could be widened and shared to provide a more generous entrance for both developments.
- Panel commented on the courtyard design overcomplicating the traffic circulation due to the inappropriate location for access, ramp, and pick-up/drop-off area. It is also noted that the north-south vehicular connection and the second ramp might not be needed. To improve the overall circulation, Panel suggested the following:
    - i. Consolidating the access to the south if possible.
    - ii. Converting the north-south vehicular connection into pedestrian-only that potentially further connects to the SWM Pond facility to the south.
    - iii. Moving the two stacked townhouses together with the others to form a townhouse edge with this pedestrian connection in the middle.
    - iv. Locating the higher density close to Bathurst Street to create a consolidated block that includes the two mid-rise buildings and shares the pick-up/drop-off, courtyard, and ramp.
    - v. Moving the ramp close to the vehicular entrance. This could simplify the circulation and reduce the asphalt area because people could access the underground parking quicker without travelling through the whole site.
    - vi. The second ramp is not needed due to the traffic volume for this development.

#### Open Space and Public Realm

- Considering there is a large existing amenity area located to the south of the site that includes an SWM Pond facility and other amenities. Panel recommended the applicant build a green connection to it by adjusting the orientation of the amenity space. This connection would extend the continuous green gesture and benefit both this development and the existing community.
- An alternative way is to use the proposed north-south pedestrian connection as a green mews to connect instead. Therefore, the courtyard could move further east to function as an internal amenity space that serves the two mid-rise buildings.
- Panel recommended proposing a boulevard along Bathurst Street as it currently shows the sidewalk directly against the driveway. Adding a boulevard in between the sidewalk and driveway would provide a landscape buffer against the traffic and greatly enhance the pedestrian street experience.
- Further to the above, Panel suggested putting a sidewalk along the proposed private road to the north and connecting it to Bathurst Street, which would make a more comfortable and connected public realm.
- Panel noted that the streetscape is “awkward” on the south side of the development because of the transition from different dimensions. The plan

proposed a double sidewalk with a large setback to the west and a single sidewalk with a small setback to the east. This transition should be improved by clarifying the uses and relation between the building edge and the street to create a stronger scheme.

- Considering there are proposed senior apartments in the neighbouring development to the north, Panel encouraged the applicant to provide more seating zones for seniors, particularly at the corner to enhance their short loop walking experience. There are opportunities to coordinate with the neighbour to enhance the open space together and provide a better service for the whole community.

### Architecture

- Panel asked for a street-related lobby entrance that could be directly accessed from the courtyard. The mid-rise building in the middle of the site has its lobby faced on to a dead-end street and therefore it was suggested to flip to face the courtyard to the east.
- Panel was concerned that the proposed amenity uses along Bathurst Street on the ground floor may not be successful, because the previous practices demonstrate that ground floor amenity would be empty most of the time. To allow it to work better for the street experience, it was therefore suggested replacing it with 2-storey live/work units to create more active uses.
- Panel commented on the architectural expression of the mid-rise buildings that the podium design and the upper level should not be submissive to the rest of the building. For example, using some solid materials instead of the glass on the upper floors could help to get the open ratio down and improve the overall building energy performance.
- Panel recommended simplifying the townhouses architecture by only using two brick materials to form a vertical expression and reflect a classic townhouse style.

**END OF MINUTES**

# CITY OF VAUGHAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

AGENDA: MEETING 102 – June 30, 2022

Virtual Meeting

9:00 am

---

## **Pre-Meeting**

Committee Members

9:30 am

---

## **Call to Order**

Chair's Review of Agenda

Disclosure of Interest

Confirmation of Minutes of May 26, 2022 Meeting

9:30 am

---

## **Q-Tower - Major Mackenzie Dr. & Fossil Hill Rd. Mid-Rise Mixed-Use, SPA/ OPA & ZBA, 1<sup>st</sup> Review**

Presentations:

Kregg Fordyce, KFA Architects and Planners

Rosemarie Humphries, Humphries Planning Group Inc.

10:40 am

---

## **Adjournment**

---

# **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

## **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

### **Meeting 102 – June 30, 2022**

---

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, June 30, 2022. The meeting was recorded and will be posted on the City of Vaughan website.

#### **PANEL MEMBERS**

##### **Present**

Megan Torza, DTAH (Chair)

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will (Vice Chair)

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

Sheldon Levitt, Quadrangle Architects Ltd.

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

Ute Maya-Giambattista, SGL Planning & Design Inc.

Alfredo Landaeta, Forrec

##### **Absent**

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Henry Burstyn, IBI Group

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

##### **STAFF**

Christina Bruce, Director, Policy Planning & Special Programs

Nancy Tuckett, Director, Development Planning

Shahzad Davoudi-Strike, Manager, Urban Design & Cultural Heritage, Development Planning

Michael Tranquada, Senior Urban Designer, Development Planning

Chrisa Assimopoulos, Urban Design, Development Planning

Shirin Rohani, Urban Design, Development Planning

Alex Yang, Urban Design, Development Planning

Letizia D'Addario, Senior Planner, Development Planning

Carol Birch, Planner, Development Planning

Rebecca Roach, Planner, Development Planning

**The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am with Megan Torza in the Chair.**

**1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA**

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

**2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

None noted

**3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

Meeting minutes for May 26, 2022, were approved.

**4. DESIGN REVIEW**

**Q-Tower – North-east corner of Major Mackenzie Dr. and Fossil Hill Rd.**

Architect: KFA Architects and Planners

Urban Planning: Humphries Planning Group

Review: 1<sup>st</sup> Review

**Introduction**

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- How successful is the proposed massing, scale, and the transition to the neighbouring low-rise community? Is the project successful in creating infill intensification within established community?
- Has the project successfully responded to Major Mackenzie in terms of uses, streetscape and architectural design?
- Please comment on the architectural character, expression, and materiality of the building and landscape?

**Overview**

- **Overall Presentation** - Panel thanked the applicant for a comprehensive presentation. It is noted that this project has tremendous potential as a mid-rise building in this area.
- **Site Organization** - Panel is supportive of the scale and intensification proposed, considering this is an intensification site. However, the arrangement of density

and that of the open space is not benefiting the project and that stems from the represented symmetry on the plan. Panel recommended an asymmetrical solution that characterizes the relationship of each of the frontages and the desire lines on the site. The applicant should look at the massing and the open space distribution on a frontage-by-frontage basis, and consider the future users of those spaces, bearing in mind that a POPS is not truly publicly accessible if it cannot be seen from the principal public ROWs.

- **Vehicular Presence** - Panel stressed the need for consolidation of loading, pick-up and drop-off, and the need to reduce the footprint of space dedicated to vehicular circulation to maximize the open space.  
The woonerf design, clear delineation of the bike and pedestrian network, and curb radius etc., can affect the footprint of the vehicular space on site, and therefore, coordination between the landscape architect and the engineering consultant is necessary to create a balance between pedestrian and vehicular presence.
- **Streetscape Design** - Panel spoke to the streetscapes flanking the site as an incredible opportunity to create public amenity for everyone. The Major Mackenzie streetscape could be made more commodious with more seating and tree planting. The streetscape along Fossil Hill is a neighborhood street that is adjacent to a main intersection that will invite a lot of pedestrians to walk by; as such, the POPS should be made accessible or at least visible from Fossil to serve the community better.  
The mid-block pedestrian connection should be revised in terms of location, width, and frontage to ensure that a comfortable space can be created.
- **Back Side Design** – Panel identified the western flank as a possible back side of the building, towards the rear yards of the existing residential. Therein avoiding the creation of gathering spaces that do not have meaningful connections and where sight lines are not consistent. Furthermore, avoid creating spaces where loitering from non-residents might be seen as attractive.  
Similarly, all pedestrian connections through the built form should be adjacent to interior areas that are occupied more frequently, therefore, lobbies would be more appropriate compared to amenity areas.
- **Ground Floor Uses** – Panel noted that there might be more opportunity for 2-storey townhouses on this property. Concerns were raised regarding the scale of the proposed amenity spaces and their lack of contiguous outdoor amenity. Panel suggested roof-top amenity that can host indoor and outdoor spaces, as it can serve the residents better compared to amenity at the back of the building.
- **Design Feasibility** – Panel, in general was in support of the materiality approach but did raise concerns on the economic feasibility of limestone as cladding throughout, and whether the inevitable value engineering may lead to a non-supportable material.  
Similarly, the Panel raised concerns on the economic feasibility of the proposed massing step-backs and other elements of the functional design.



## Comments

### General Comments

- Panel noted that the scale and proposed intensification is appropriate for this site in general.
- Panel commented on the economic feasibility of the current design with regards to the massing step-backs, the servicing, the materiality and specifically the limestone cladding throughout the site, as well as the extent of the commercial uses on the ground floor. The applicant was encouraged to examine the project from a constructability and economics perspective to come up with a stronger design.
- Panel raised concerns on the strict symmetry imposed on the site and noted that it negatively impacts the layout and might not allow the project to fully take advantage of the edge conditions.  
Specifically:
  - A certain number of units have been designed very narrow and long which can be proven inefficient.
  - The vehicular circulation has been imposed on the courtyard minimizing the necessary pedestrian character for the POPS to be successful.
  - And lastly, the northeast corner of the building which is a significant corner for the project is currently lacking prominence in design.
- Synergies should be established between the different elements of the design such as the POPS, the mid-block connection, the 45-degree angular plane, the mid-rise typology etc. for the whole project to work together and embrace the opportunity to be something special.

### Site Plan Organization

- Panel noted that moving away from a U-shape crescent arrangement that is subdivided by a mid-block connection will help to create a larger and more significant green space and improve the balance between pedestrian and vehicular circulation.
- Panel raised concerns on the location of the proposed POPS, as it is only accessible and visible from a secondary street, which minimizes its contribution to the community. The POPS space therefore should be located at a key frontage and be directly connected to the building's interior amenity, lobbies, main entrances, or retail.
- Panel questioned the need of a two access points off Sibella Way as well as the need for a woonerf with 4 visitor and 2 drop-off spaces for this scale of development. It was suggested that only one point of access be provided with the loop configuration for the woonerf rather than a drive-through, and for vehicular accommodations to be minimized to what is necessary on site. Drop-off areas can also be considered on Sibella Way.

- Further to the above Fossil Hill Rd was identified as a frontage where a more significant contribution to the community can be made. It is encouraged that the POPS relates to this frontage and is supported by a larger boulevard with retail frontages.
- Considering pedestrian desire lines in relation to transit, the northeast corner is again the key point for the site and as such Panel advised that pedestrian walkways and bike facilities are arranged through and around that corner. Introducing this diagonal element that speaks towards and around the corner may also help with massing and transitions. Articulating the corner also speaks to the treatment of the other corners around that intersection and enhances the sense of community that Fossil Hill can foster as mentioned above.
- Alternatively, the POPS space can be relocated to the west connecting through the mid-block connection to Major Mackenzie, which would allow for a dedicated service lane on the east side of the site consolidating servicing and minimizing vehicular circulation through the site giving back space to pedestrians.
- With regards to the mid-block connection, it will need to be more generous in width at the base. Panel questioned whether the mid-block is meant to invite pedestrians to the POPS or whether it is meant to channel residents from the south to Major Mackenzie. These elements should be taken into consideration to determine the design and location of this connection.
- The walkway connection through the west wing of the site might raise concerns by the residents. Panel suggested that the applicant examine the pedestrian desire lines and potential points of arrival and identify better channels of pedestrian circulation.
- Lobbies should be located at key areas of the site where they can relate to foot and vehicular traffic, possibly at site corners or straddling the mid-block connection and/or the drop-off areas.

### Open Space

- Overall, the design of the open space should respond to the context and should take into consideration the user's needs, the pedestrian desire lines, the points of entry and arrival, and the potential connections to the surrounding community.
- Further to the above, access to the POPS will happen either by pedestrians permeating through the frontage of the POPS and/ or through the east and west corners. The corners, however, are disrupted by loading aisles and driveways.
- With regards to the programming of the POPS, Panel noted that the precedent images envisioning a more urban character is appropriate for this site. Under that lens the applicant was encouraged to explore the programming options that would simplify the design, reduce the number of activities, and make the space more flexible.
- The character of the woonerf should be clearly communicated through the

design. Woonerfs have a shared pedestrian and vehicular character that allows for pedestrian activity. Currently the design is heavily vehicular relating to a more suburban condominium arrangement of drop-off and parking with paving “bleeding” across. The proponent should minimize the use of asphalt and reduce the curb radiuses to 6 m giving priority to pedestrians.

- With regards to the mid-block connection, Panel noted the necessity to have eyes on that space to make it safe and comfortable. As such, lobbies and other active uses would be more appropriate in making that space successful.
- Panel commented that the landscaped area between the building and the existing dwellings to the west might encourage unwanted loitering from non-residents. That space can be redesigned to provide a spill-out amenity for the residents and possibly a cut-through for the community, maintaining a flexible character in terms of design and programming.
- Panel encouraged the applicant to explore ways to contribute more tree canopy on Major Mackenzie.

#### Architecture and Massing

- Panel noted the appropriateness of the proposed mid-rise on this site and acknowledged the applicant’s effort to fit the massing in the existing context establishing the appropriate transitions. However, the step-backs should be closely reviewed to determine their extent, responding to the site and the surroundings as currently they are a bit excessive, and the articulation can play a supportive role in how the mass is perceived.
- The northeast corner of the building is significant in how the building will be perceived. Currently its prominence is minimized as it is treated very similarly to the rest of the building from a massing, design, and materiality point of view. Panel suggested revising the massing distribution to create two buildings; one would be a 4 to 5-storey building or stacked townhouses to the west side of the site to complement the existing residential, and the other would be a mid-rise L-shaped building with a stronger urban edge on the east side. This would allow for the low-rise to front the POPS and back onto the existing dwellings, it would allow for a stronger presence at the corner, and lastly it would allow for the service areas within the building, such as elevators, to be minimized.
- Further to the above, Panel identified the attempt for verticality and suggested a height distribution honing the northeast corner while the rest of the site could have a horizontal rhythm. In coordination with the comments above regarding the location of the POPS, the corner can become the epicentre of this development with the height, the mass, the POPS, the Public Art, and the retail gathered there. Then the design would transition the mass and uses, complementing the community to the west and south.
- Panel noted that though the 15 m is a permitted distance between mid-rise buildings, it would not create an ideal condition and would create a challenge if habitable windows are provided.

### Architectural Expression and Materiality

- Panel commended the applicant for the high-quality materials proposed, however, it was noted that through materiality and articulation the certain elements of the project can be differentiated. For example, the northeast corner, the residential character versus the other users, and the relationship of the POPS with the retail etc.
- Panel emphasized modifying the horizontal rhythm of the building and suggested that it is perceived in three layers, base, middle and top. Floors 1-3 can have different architectural expressions depending on the uses, floors 3-6 will be the core of the building and then floors 7-10 can potentially be a window wall.

### Ground Floor Design and Uses

- Panel mentioned that there are conditions especially at the ground floor that are not conducive to what a mid-rise building could contribute to the community for example, but not limited to:
  - The building appears to have a “split personality” as the planning and massing moves identify Major Mackenzie as the frontage while access can only be provided at the back.
  - Due to the above there are some very convoluted circulation moves. For example, bike storage facilities are only accessible through the mid-block connection or through the back and are not visible nor accessible from the Major Mackenzie where the multi-use trail is. Similarly, though ceremonial lobbies are facing Major Mackenzie, drop-off areas can only be provided at the back of the building.
  - The location of the waste storage is impacting several units, visually but also due to odour and noise.
  - The mid-block connection does not have clear points of arrival and departure. Also, in terms of design it should be more significant in width and establish a clear character.
  - The underground ramp is dubious in terms of location and design, as it might be too close to the curb, and it might require the removal of a unit for the necessary headroom to be achieved.
- Panel considers the proposed location of the retail appropriate, however, its economic viability should be examined.

**END OF MINUTES**

# CITY OF VAUGHAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

AGENDA: MEETING 103 – July 28, 2022

Virtual Meeting

9:00 am

## **Pre-Meeting**

Committee Members

9:15 am

## **Call to Order**

Chair's Review of Agenda

Disclosure of Interest

Confirmation of Minutes of June 30, 2022 Meeting

9:30 am

## **185 Doughton Rd., Melrose Investments Inc.**

### **Vaughan Metropolitan Centre**

### **High-Rise Mixed-Use Development, 1<sup>st</sup> Review**

Presentations:

Billy Tung, KLM Planning Partners Inc.

Clifford Korman, Kirkor Architects and Planners

10:40 am

## **Development Framework for The Village at Vaughan Mills**

### **255-299 Bass Pro Mills**

### **High-Rise Mixed-Use Development, 1<sup>st</sup> Review**

Presentations:

Mark Reid, Urban Strategies

Michael Conway, Hariri Pontarini Architects

Kay Laidlaw, Ferris Landscape Architects

Paul Ferris of Ferris Landscape Architects

11:50 am

Adjournment

# **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

## **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

### **Meeting 103 – July 28, 2022**

---

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, July 28, 2022. The meeting was recorded and will be posted on the City of Vaughan website.

#### **PANEL MEMBERS**

##### **Present**

Megan Torza, DTAH (Chair)

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will (Vice Chair)

Henry Burstyn, IBI Group

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Sheldon Levitt, Quadrangle Architects Ltd.

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

Alfredo Landaeta, Forrec

Ute Maya-Giambattista, SGL Planning & Design Inc.

##### **Absent**

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

##### **STAFF**

Christina Bruce, Director, Policy Planning & Special Programs

Nancy Tuckett, Director, Development Planning

Amy Roots, Senior Manager, VMC Program

Jennifer Cappola-Logullo, Manager, Development Engineering, VMC Program

Shahrzad Davoudi-Strike, Manager, Urban Design & Cultural Heritage, Development Planning

Gaston Soucy, Project Manager, VMC Program

Cory Gray, Project Manager, VMC Program

Musa Deo, Project Manager, Transportation, VMC Program  
Michael Tranquada, Senior Urban Designer, Development Planning  
Chrisa Assimopoulos, Urban Design, Development Planning  
Shirin Rohani, Urban Design, Development Planning  
Alex Yang, Urban Design, Development Planning  
Anna Rosen, Landscape Architect, VMC Program  
Alex Lee, Development Engineering Lead, VMC Program  
Danny Woo, Development Engineering Lead, VMC Program  
Natalie Wong, Senior Planner, VMC Program  
Margaret Holyday, Senior Planner, Development Planning  
Kemi Apanisile, Planner, Development Planning  
Monica Wu, Planner, VMC Program

**The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am with Megan Torza in the Chair.**

**1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA**

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

**2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Margaret Briegmann, conflict with the 2<sup>nd</sup> item on the agenda

**3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

Meeting minutes for June 30, 2022, were approved.

**4. DESIGN REVIEW**

**185 Doughton Rd., Melrose Investments Inc. – Vaughan Metropolitan Centre**

Architect: Kirkor Architects and Planner

Urban Planning: KLM Planning Partners Inc.

**Introduction**

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- Is the overall building massing, architectural expression and variety in building typologies appropriately responding to the Neighbourhood Precinct placemaking objectives as envisioned in the VMC Secondary Plan and Urban Design Guidelines?

- Are the proposed architectural design and land uses providing a suitable transition from the Neighbourhood Precinct to the existing industrial uses to the east?

## Overview

- **General** - Panel thanked the applicant for their presentation and noted that the VMC Secondary Plan currently envisions a transition between the existing industrial employment lands to the east and the projected residential and mix-use neighbourhood to the west. While there are considerations being explored to potentially propose expanding the VMC boundary to the east as part of the on-going VMC Secondary Plan update, not knowing with certainty what will happen next makes this project challenging to review. Panel based their comments on the assumption that future, longer-term conditions will allow for more urbanity to happen towards the east.
- **Built-form and Transition** - Panel agreed that the proposed built form, massing and transitions are reasonably sound and was generally supportive of the design. However, Panel acknowledged the challenges presented by an ever evolving context and noted that the next steps and details on the project's design evolution will be key to its success.
- **Site Plan and Ground Floor Organization** – Panel stressed the importance that the ground floor design will have in the ultimate success of the project and expressed the desire to have the applicant revisit the podium ground floor uses and related redesign of the piazza to become a more public space. Panel recommended removing the barriers between the public and private open spaces and making the ground floor design more flexible to allow for ease in potential change of uses in the future, should this be required.

Panel was generally pleased with the porosity of the site plan expressed through the many entrance points to the building but recommended improving the pedestrian desire line connections towards the north, northwest and towards the transit system to facilitate and improve the interior and exterior walking experience through the site.

- **Architecture** - Panel recommended devoting special attention to the design and character of the podium in relation to the piazza and the pedestrian realm; in particular, its scale, massing, architectural materiality, character, how it addresses the ground plane, and the uses contained within it so that it is perceived as less institutional and private and more welcoming and public.

Panel recommended looking at the existing and proposed future context as this should inform how the architectural façade design of each face of the building responds and adapts to the immediate surroundings, in particular the towers. Not only from a sustainability perspective, but also from a land use and built form perspective.

## Comments

### General Comments



- Panel recommended taking advantage of the possible future vision from the Secondary Plan in the surrounding context to ensure that the development addresses those adjacencies appropriately through key considerations such as shadow impacts to the prospective future land uses to the east.
- Panel commented that the overall design strategy of proposing a transition through a landscaped buffer, such as the courtyard, is the correct approach, but that the details as to how this is resolved and programmed will determine its success. In that regard, Panel mentioned that the proposed idea of subdividing the courtyard into granular, separate private and public spaces and uses should be revisited as it's subverting the intention to create a more cohesive public realm strategy.

### Site Plan, Organization and Uses

- It was mentioned that the public piazza's anticipated urban activity would not necessarily have the type of animation shown on the conceptual renderings based on the proposed ground floor uses and u-shape podium massing. As shown, it feels like a privatized dead-end space that is neither inviting nor offering other opportunities to connect to the broader context. Panel suggested exploring different design options that provide better conditions for healthier pedestrian flows and usage, such as creating more openings through the buildings, and/or a linear approach that provides a wide promenade along the eastern edge of the site.
- Panel noted that the renderings give the impression that the piazza is not fronted by live-work units but something more active and public and that the piazza would be better served by straight retail uses which offers more flexibility to adapt to the existing and future context. It was recommended that extending the retail from Doughton Road to a portion of the courtyard might help activate it better.
- Panel stated that one big challenge of being in a transition zone is how the ground floor and piazza can be future proofed to adapt and perform efficiently in 10 to 15 years. Panel suggested looking more carefully at what will happen along the edges of the public piazza and recommended the possibility of flipping the configuration along the north part of the project by placing the residential lobby entrance at the northwest corner and pulling the east side of the podium further away from Maplecrete Road to create a bigger opening at the northeast corner while extending/wrapping the retail around and into the piazza space.
- Panel recommended looking at relocating the live-work units to the west side of the piazza so that they face and activate the open space and create a more inviting and stimulating frontage as opposed to the currently proposed institutional feel being conveyed by the long circulation corridors in that area.
- Panel noted that having four pedestrian entrances to the buildings was commendable and acknowledged the efforts made at the ground floor level to keep a strong street edge definition.

- It was noted that, once the massing and ground floor uses are redefined to better activate the piazza, the landscape design must play a key role in reinforcing the intended character of the space as either a more public or mixed public/private open space.
- Panel commented that the project's circulation is very accessible and promotes responsible vehicular and pedestrian movement. However, the landscape design along the pedestrian circulation desire lines on the building's west frontage would benefit from more refinement in the landscape transitions between the utilitarian and pedestrian intended spaces.
- It was noted that a project within an envisioned transit-oriented community such as the VMC, will need to address pedestrian flows that go beyond the property lines and propose interim pedestrian connections to the rest of the existing network in the VMC.
- Panel suggested directing all the efforts to the central piazza and, as such, recommended studying options to make it the main focal point of the entire project by repositioning other smaller open spaces to a central location that would make the central space bigger; having all lobby entrances and retail/live-work units directly face the piazza, and relocating other key functions such as the vehicular pickup/drop-off from the back of the building to Maplecrete Road. This would allow for the building to shift away from the central open space, allowing it to grow, activate and become the true heart of the project.
- Additional comment made through the chat during the live session: the landscape design would benefit from stronger integration with ideas from the VMC Streetscape and Open Space Plan. The cycle tracks and on-street parking proposed for Maplecrete Road support the idea of activation of the piazza. The Blue Street ideas for Doughton Road can integrate greater sustainability and the ideas around landscape types - including groves, meadows, etc. can influence planting strategies for an enlarged piazza.

### Architecture and Massing

- It was noted that the lower tower heights proposed are a refreshing change from recent trend of very tall 50+ storey towers being proposed, which speaks to a good contextual approach from this development.
- Panel commented on the sameness of the architectural design and expression of the towers and pointed out that, although each side has very different orientation, the façades do not seem to have different responses to their surrounding context, positioning or sun exposure.
- Panel recommended studying and reconsidering the tower locations to address sun penetration based on the fact that according to the shadow studies, the piazza will be in shadow for most of the active portions of the day and, in that regard, mentioned that it would be good to, as a precautionary measure, also reconsider the tower locations with respect to their sun/shadow impact on the potential expansion zone to the east.

- It was mentioned that the southern-most tower seems to come straight down and that it would be beneficial if it were to step back more to create a better transition towards the ground floor and the pedestrian realm.
- Panel noted that the podium setback offers some relief along Maplecrete Road, and that the piazza will create a welcoming area for the development, but that the podium 8-storey height where it connects from north to south in front of the piazza might be overwhelming that open space.
- Panel mentioned that although there seemed to be a good balance between the solid and open/glazed materials, making the podium more solid and adding more texture would improve the project's pedestrian friendly qualities while minimizing its current, less desirable, institutional character.
- Panel recommended studying the idea of using the live-work units design to modulate the podium façade and create interest along the frontage by generating height differentiation that helps articulate and soften the massing.

### **BentallGreenOak – 255 Bass Pro Mills Drive**

Architect: Hariri Pontarini Architects  
 Urban Design: Urban Strategies Inc.  
 Urban Planning: MHBC  
 Landscape Architecture: Ferris + Associates Inc.  
 Review: 1<sup>st</sup> Review

### **Introduction**

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- How successful does the proposal reflect the Vaughan Mills Centre Secondary Plan vision in terms of uses, road network, streetscape, massing, scale, and transitions?
- How effectively do the ground floor uses relate to and support the public realm strategy?
- How successful is the proposed public park, mews, and POPS in contributing to the open space network?

### **Overview**

- **Overall Presentation** - Panel thanked the applicant for a comprehensive presentation. Particularly acknowledged the direction that was undertaken for the careful consideration of the principles and how they were taken forms in the master plan.
- **Block Pattern and Context** - Panel was concerned about the block scale might not be appropriate with respect to frontage conditions, vehicular movement and loading area. Panel expressed their desire for the applicant to reconsider the mid-block organization by providing a larger development block that allows for a

more satisfactory hierarchy of frontages and vehicular movement, and which could also help with differentiating pedestrian and service vehicle circulation.

Panel recommended the applicant taking initiative to make guesses about how the adjacent development parcels might develop prior to the block planning stage and work closely with Leon's property owner for better collaboration. It could help with informing the block pattern design and achieve a successful plan.

- **Park and Open Space** - Panel encouraged the applicant to work closely with the City to understand the programming of the city park to the east of the site and ensure the principal park established within this development does not duplicate the character and programming ambition of the city park.

The POPS related to Street B on the west flank could be relocated further away from the principal park to reserve the frontage potential that development could have up against the principal park.

Panel was concerned about the east-west pedestrian connection between the principal park and Edgeley Blvd could not achieve viable pedestrian space because of the inactive street frontages on both sides.

Panel suggested establishing a clear hierarchy of vehicular movement that allows for more space occupied by pedestrians and the adjacent ground floor uses that could also benefit the overall open space system.

- **Massing** – Panel commented on the distance and spacing between towers on the property and expressed their desire of seeing more variety in terms of height and scale.
- **Building Uses**– Panel appreciated the consideration of including a great portion of rental housing within the development given the concern of affordability and the current high price of the housing market.

The opportunities for the Internal Ring Road to accommodate retail should be reconsidered with respect to their viability. Panel suggested replacing some of the townhouses with retail uses to animate the frontages that face the POPS and park.

Further to the above, the evolution of the ground floor uses should be considered. For example, the ground floor uses along the Internal Ring Road and Bass Pro Mills Drive should allow it to be converted from retail to residential to live/work and to other institutional uses with the site being developed over time.

Panel reminded that the plan should consider the transit access, which influences the distribution of uses in this property. More specifically, the office uses currently located at the west end of the site which is the furthest away from the transit access. Panel recommended relocating it to the east in the next iteration and considering using podiums to accommodate employment or office spaces.

- **Sustainability** – Panel recommended a carbon neutral and carbon responsible development and the consideration of the microclimate impacts for both sun

shadow and wind. It noted that there are towers within the development that are zero setbacks to the podium below which potentially have negative wind impacts.

## **Comments**

### General Comments

- Panel agreed that the master plan has a very cleared and defined bullet of objectives which can be identified within the overall concept. In addition, the principles implemented through the master plan are solid and well-accepted. Adding density to this development is reasonable as the overall plan help with the viability of retail and infrastructure.
- Panel appreciated the introduction of rental housing and the commitment to the community by the applicant. Considering that 30% of the units are rental units is a large commitment, Panel acknowledged that it is a great solution for the affordability of the high market price but also noted that there hasn't been enough encouragement by the municipality currently.
- Panel questioned the fine-grain approach for the overall block pattern. The precedent images showed dense and busy blocks which suggest bigger development blocks that allow for a consolidated loading area and a more interesting streetscape. But it could not be accommodated by the fine-grain block pattern. For example, the middle block on the southwest of Street A and B is too small to accommodate ramps and loading.
- Panel appreciated the efforts made by the applicant in providing lots of great graphics and detailed materials. However, the elaborated renderings with building elevations are not necessary at the conceptual stage and could potentially make the changes more difficult in future iterations.

### Park and Open Space System

- Panel agreed on relocating the public park to the east. And the idea of locating the park in phase 1 was well received, however, Panel encouraged the applicant to communicate with Leon's property to ensure a cohesive plan can be developed and suggested the City should help facilitate the communication if necessary.
- Further to the above, only moving the park to the east without considering the gateway to the west as described in the Secondary Plan would make the open space inconsistent due to the lack of green space interruption. Panel suggested proposing a POP or linear park on the west end of the site to provide some breathing room.
- Panel suggested creating a sequence of parks and POPS that forms a meaningful and active open space system. For example, the large park is passive and creates a streetscape that allows people to move from one place to another. The POPS could provide engagement spaces with active retails or other ground floor uses. And it could be further enhanced by giving them more meaningful interconnections throughout the site.

- Panel highlighted the importance of coordinating with the City to understand what programming was proposed for the neighbourhood park to the east of the development site.
- As the precedent images show good public engagement for the ground floor uses at the park frontages, the current plan did not provide appropriate uses to encourage ground floor engagement. For example, the T shape of the public park connected to Edgeley Blvd was intended to encourage pedestrian connection, but it might not be supported by a blank wall with loading and services on one side and daycare uses which may require privacy on the other side.
- Further to the above, the POPS immediately west of Street B subverted the central park. Panel suggested tightening it up against the central park to form an urban condition and framing it appropriately with active uses.
- With regards to the east-west pedestrian connection, the T-shaped finger might not be necessary as there is an opportunity to provide a much stronger green connection along Street A that supports an urban structure and pedestrian-oriented streetscape.

#### Building Massing and Uses

- Panel suggested creating more building variety in terms of height and activities. Only maintaining a 30 m tower distances is not enough for creating a desirable community. Removing one of the towers and making it into a midrise building to create more variety or considering adding a linear north and south park to create a more interesting experience.
- Panel recommended the applicant understand the context better with respect to the uses to the north and south, and how the proposed retail responds to that. Considering the north and south connection is critical to this development, Panel suggested designing the ground floor uses by allowing them to evolve and grow over time.
- Panel encouraged more public engagement along the perimeter up against the park and POPS. Noted it is not necessary to have every single inch of the frontages activated but providing more variety of uses and reducing the residential frontages along the public open space is recommended. In addition, a grocery store or other smaller shops are also recommended.

#### Site Plan Organization

- Panel commented on the plan that should consider more about the context and communicate with neighbours. The following factors should be further investigated.
  - i) The Internal Ring Road is the main street of a bigger neighbourhood, however, it was treated as a preferential edge to this site instead of the main street that serves a bigger community.

- ii) Further studies should be taken such as what is the character of the Internal Ring Road and Bass Pro Mills Drive. Which one is the front or back? And how can it be mediated by this development?
  - iii) The main transit access is from the east which should have an influence on the allocation of office spaces. The current plan located the office building to the west end which is furthest away from the transit access.
  - iv) There is a large city park adjacent to the east edge of this development that should be considered in the design process and addressed as an important feature on the site plan.
- The proposed woonerf was not well received as it functioned as a service lane that connected to several services and loading docks. Panel suggested changing it to a service lane that allows for busy traffic and servicing trucks. Instead of creating a woonerf street, enhancing an existing public street that allows for a green and pedestrian-active streetscape might be a better solution.
  - Panel commented on the fine grain block pattern that might not be appropriate for this type of scale and massing. More specifically, the middle block between Street A and the street south of it is too small to allocate spaces for service and loading. To allow it to function properly, Panel suggested a bigger block and a consolidated loading area to avoid truck maneuvering in public spaces. There is a potential to make a spectacular plan with a larger block pattern that allows for functional loading spaces and a pedestrian-orientated mid-block connection with fewer cars.
  - Panel suggested the applicant refer to June Callwood Park as it has a similar scale and form. The park site organization may influence the design of this development in terms of the streetscape, retail allocation, parking, and servicing management.

**END OF MINUTES**

# CITY OF VAUGHAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

AGENDA: MEETING 104 – October 27, 2022

Virtual Meeting

9:00 am

## **Pre-Meeting**

Committee Members

9:15 am

## **Call to Order**

Chair's Review of Agenda

Disclosure of Interest

Confirmation of Minutes of July 28, 2022 Meeting

9:30 am

## **Block 4S, QuadReal/ Menkes Vaughan Metropolitan Centre High-Rise Mixed-Use Development, 1<sup>st</sup> Review**

Presentations:

Stephen Albanese, IBI Group

Ralph Giannone, Giannone Petricone Associates

Neno Kovacevic, IBI Group

10:40 am

Break

10:50 am

## **Elite M.D Developments 7034 & 7040 Islington Avenue High-Rise Mixed-Use Development, 1st Review**

Presentations:

Martin Quarcoopome, Weston Consulting

Claudia Salgado, Brooklyn Construction

Przemyslaw Myszkowski, KNYMH Inc.

Alyson Naseer, Weston Consulting

12:00 pm

Break

12:10 pm

## **Kleinburg Village Streetscape design and improvement City of Vaughan, 1st Review**

Presentations:

Mike Dartizio, Stantec

1:00 pm

Adjournment



# **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

## **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

### **Meeting 103 – October 27, 2022**

---

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, October 27, 2022. The meeting was recorded and will be posted on the City of Vaughan website.

#### **PANEL MEMBERS**

##### **Present**

Megan Torza, DTAH (Chair)

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

Alfredo Landaeta, Forrec

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

Ute Maya-Giambattista, SGL Planning & Design Inc.

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

Harim Labushchagne, BDP. Quadrangle

##### **Absent**

Henry Burstyn, IBI Group

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will (Vice Chair)

##### **STAFF**

Nancy Tuckett, Director, Development Planning

Shahzad Davoudi-Strike, Manager, Urban Design & Cultural Heritage, Development Planning

Gaston Soucy, Project Manager, VMC Program

Cory Gray, Project Manager, VMC Program

Anna Rosen, Landscape Architect, VMC Program

Shirley Marsh, Project Manager & Urban Design, Development Planning

Michael Tranquada, Senior Urban Designer, Development Planning

Alex Yang, Urban Design, Development Planning

Rebecca Roach, Planner, Development Planning

Tania Dowhaniuk, Parks Planner, Parks Infrastructure Planning and Development

Cynthia Chiu Chen, Trails Coordinator, Parks Infrastructure Planning and Development

**The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am with Megan Torza in the Chair.**

**1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA**

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

**2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Michael Rietta, conflict with the 1<sup>st</sup> item on the agenda

Peter Turner, conflict with the 1<sup>st</sup> item on the agenda

John Tassiopoulos, conflict with the 3<sup>rd</sup> item on the agenda

**3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

Meeting minutes for Oct 27, 2022, were approved.

**4. DESIGN REVIEW**

**Block 4S, QuadReal / Menkes – Vaughan Metropolitan Centre**

Architect: Giannone Petricone Associates

Landscape Architect: IBI Group

**Introduction**

City Staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- Are the overall building massing and proposed building typologies providing an appropriate transition towards the future Neighbourhood Precinct to the south?
- Is the architectural design, materiality and expression achieving the placemaking objectives for a mixed-use development in the Station Precinct as envisioned in the VMC Secondary Plan and Urban Design Guidelines?

**Overview**

- **Overall Presentation** – Panel thanked the applicant for a comprehensive and thoughtful presentation and noted the unique and highly ambitious approach to the project that was welcome and appreciated by the panel as a whole.

- **Built-form and Transition** – Panel recommended reviewing opportunities to transition the built form more significantly towards the future neighbourhood precinct to the south and establish a clearer architectural hierarchy and hierarchy of uses through the site. Consideration should also be given to the internal system of the block where variation in podium height, language and massing was encouraged to improve and diversify experiences for residents and pedestrian visitors to the block.

Panel highlighted the opportunity to create a more robust connection to the green open space to the west of the site and thus a stronger connection to the overall VCM Parks and Open Space system.

- **Driveway and Service Area** – Panel suggested relocating the driveway and servicing entrance from Commerce Street to the local road located along the north edge of the site to improve the continuity of the public realm and its active frontages along the minor arterial to the east.
- **Design and Placemaking** – Panel appreciated the design put forward during the presentation and encouraged expanding on the type of spaces available to site users by adding areas that are quieter and less prescribed. Panel recommended creating spaces of varied characters or ‘scenes’ that support different energy levels and appeal to a wider range of user groups and ages and allow for engagement with the retail spaces, entry spaces, podium spaces as well as landscape spaces.

Panel also noted the importance of microclimate considerations and pedestrian comfort that must be fine-tuned through the site design process as well as building placement, massing, and articulation.

- **Architecture** – Panel recommended exploring the possibility of a residential component to the podium, which would add to the heterogeneity of the podium façade, which is primarily retail based, and create a quieter street frontage; particularly along the south and western edges of the property.

Panel encouraged exploring and optimizing the relationships between retail size, façade articulation, number of retail entrances and pedestrian animation to create both a functional retail and appropriate levels of activation. Additionally, further exploration of the role of rooftop amenity spaces in the design, and their associated overlooks and relationship to the spaces at grade, was encouraged.

## Comments

### Master Plan, Urban Design and Massing

- The panel commended the breakdown of the typical rectilinear street grid, through the use of open space, finding it both an interesting and innovative approach within the VMC.

- Panel suggested further fine-tuning the building massing and focusing on scaling down the development to improve the transition to the neighbourhood precinct to the south. Adding variation to the podium heights was also encouraged to provide varied transitions and experiences for residents and pedestrian visitors into the block interior while working more seamlessly with the finer grain of the proposed plan.
- The panel proposed integrating the idea of blue streets into the open space palette that was created as part of a masterplan sustainability strategy for the block.
- Panel noted that the connection between the interior diagonal open space and the peripheral open space to the west and southwest is critical and should be refined to allow for a stronger dialog between the public and private interfaces at the northwest corner of the site.

#### Site Plan, Organization and Ground Floor Uses

- Panel mentioned that there is a strong interconnection between retail and the internal pedestrian experience however it felt that the ground floor uses can benefit from a hierarchy of different frontages. Panel suggested exploring the benefits of residential frontages at grade along the south and west street frontages, which will help distinguish the different active frontages and at the same time strengthen the interior pedestrian retail connection.
- Panel noted that Commerce Street is not benefitting from having vehicular access along the minor collector creating an interruption in the cycling facility and the planting within the public realm. Panel recommended moving the loading access to the local street to the north of the site where it will have a lesser impact.
- Panel praised the well minded and ambitious approach and acknowledged the inherent difficulty of creating a fine-grained public realm and pedestrian scale with a sense of place with little existing context. Panel proposed to approach the design of the pedestrian public realm through the creation of various scenes that would help in diversifying the pedestrian spaces and experiences by toning down some elements and thus introducing hierarchy into the project as it currently feels quite overwhelming.
- Building on the previous comment, panel encouraged supplementing areas of playfulness and high level of activity with passive areas that invite unstructured play and allow for quieter uses. The use of simpler landscape gestures with the purpose of targeting larger user groups of varied ages including those that would not directly engage with the retail was recommended.
- Panel remarked on the importance of the landscape design strategies being self-sufficient in accommodating the day-to-day life of residents and providing

varied opportunities for programming especially in instances when the retail is closed or if it takes time to establish.

- Panel praised the effort to bring nature into the design of the site and the rooftop amenity spaces and the overlooks created by the terraces onto the diagonal space at grade. The panel encouraged further exploring the role of the terraces in the design, whether they form public amenity spaces or private terraces, as well as optimizing their overlooks and relationship to the ground floor plane.

### Architectural Design and Massing

- Panel noted that the retail facades along the interior diagonal open spaces are irregular and jagged and questioned whether the building and design will stand the test of time and remain relevant in the future and adaptable to potential future changes in use. Panel encouraged to flush out the bones of the design first and then re-evaluate the architecture and its associated space through the lens of scale, materiality, and experiences. Some simplification can go a long way in creating a more adaptable and future proof design.
- Panel encouraged developing the idea of fronts and backs as currently, the design of the architecture shows a single hierarchical level. Panel suggested to consider areas that could be simplified and softened versus those that should be played up thus adding variation and relief.
- Panel appreciated the attempt at creating an interesting and irregular retail façade, however it voiced a concern with regards to the potential difficulty associated with merchandizing such a fragmented frontage.
- Panel noted that the ground floor plan shows large commercial retail units (CRU), which typically translate to few entrances. Since the activation of the public realm is often directly related to the number of entrances, and the flow of people through them, there is a concern that the small number of potential entrances and the irregular façade may hinder the activation of the public realm. Panel proposed to explore methods to encourage the activation of the public realm, whether through subdivision of the interior retail or creation of a single CRU with multiple entry points, fine-tuning the architecture of the façade and consideration of the block length. Panel further suggested exploring the idea of flexible façades that can allow spill out into the public realm.
- Panel noted that the podium blocks are often long and homogenous around the periphery and encouraged to visually break down the blocks by varying heights, setbacks and materiality, creating a finer grain system of sub-spaces within the larger block. Panel proposed using the functionality of the retail and other uses at grade to help guide the articulation of the podium block and ground floor layout. This approach will improve ground floor programming and enhance activation of the associated sub-spaces in the interface between building and landscape.

- Panel talked about the importance of the massing being consistent with the design intents for the interior open spaces and recommended to further explore and fine-tune how the podiums and towers work with relation to the pedestrian realm. On the north side, the pedestrian is shielded from the impact of the tower by the podium and the tower setback, however on the south end the vertical presence of the tower is much more noticeable as it is closer to the podium's edge.
- Panel noted that pedestrian comfort and onsite microclimate are important considerations to keep in mind both in the articulation of the building façades, position of the towers and of landscape elements. Panel encouraged optimizing the orientation and/or placement of the flat iron building to improve sun penetration and decrease wind tunneling effects as well as exploring alternative architectural and site design strategies for improving microclimatic conditions.

### **Elite M.D Developments – 703 & 7040 Islington Avenue**

Architect: KNYMH Inc  
 Urban Planning: Weston Consulting  
 Landscape Architecture: OMC Landscape Architecture  
 Review: 1<sup>st</sup> Review

### **Introduction**

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- How successful does the proposed massing transition to the immediate context?
- Does the proposed ground floor provide a functional interface to support the public realm strategy?
- How effective is the podium design strategy at addressing the Islington frontage and concealing the above-grade parking?

### **Overview**

- **Massing Transition** – Panel criticized that the overall design prioritized height and density above anything else. Too much reference was made to the Primont development to the north to justify the yield for this development. However, the size and design parameters of the two sites are very different, this has caused many issues and constraints for this development. Panel requested adjusting the built form and the massing to make the current proposal more appropriate for this site.

The details around the podium and the ground floor do not successfully fit into the existing context and are lacking a meaningful relationship with the ravine and Islington Avenue.

Panel was concerned that there was no space for safe pedestrian movement between Islington Avenue and the front of the building, as well as connectivity to the ravine. This made some ground floor spaces including the corner commercial infeasible due to the lack of pedestrian connectivity.

Panel also found the 5-storey podium is not active at and above grade. Panel suggested using more appropriate uses such as residential units to address the frontages to screen any above-grade parking on both the east and west sides. This would take advantage of the most valuable views, overlooking the ravine, as well as improve the streetscape along Islington Avenue, making it feel more residential and pedestrian friendly.

Panel suggested undertaking a block plan exercise with the neighbours collaboratively and sharing resources like access between properties. This may unlock more opportunities not only for this site but also for the neighbours as well.

- **Ground Floor Plan** - Panel expressed their concerns that 75 to 80 percent of the frontages are dominated by cars and trucks which is not an acceptable ratio at the ground floor level. The basic requirement is to allocate parking and loading underground and free up the ground floor for active uses that can provide safe pedestrian connections between Islington Avenue, the building, and ravine.

Avoid using blank walls from facing pedestrian routes and side yards which ultimately face other developments. This would have a negative impact on existing conditions and future development of these sites.

Panel was concerned about the commercial space at the corner not being viable. They suggested using more appropriate uses located in the southeast corner to allow better animation.

Panel also noted that because of the gas station the southeast corner would be highly visible along Islington Avenue and more exposed to the intersection and view corridor. It will be necessary to treat the design of the corner with greater attention due to its prominence along the streetscape and as Islington Avenue develops.

- **Podium Strategy** – Panel criticized the podium as too bulky and lacking other uses wrapping around it. Residential frontages should be provided, as opposed to a cladding solution to screen the structured parking. This will allow for a better relationship with the architecture and will respect the overall site, view, and animation of the podium.

Panel suggested taking the lead in becoming a candidate for alternative parking methodologies such as parking elevators or other technologies that deal with the physical constraints in a more effective way to create a more desirable podium condition.

## Comments

### General Comments

- Panel acknowledged there are two major challenges for this development. One challenge is to deal with the evolution of Islington Avenue as it is a suburban environment as of today and will change in the future. The other challenge is the tightness of the site which constrains the loading and servicing.
- Panel felt the applicant was working backwards focussing on yield first. They recommended responding first to the main urban design issues, and prioritizing pedestrians, amenities, and people's living experience first, then yield would follow.
- Panel suggested the applicant work on a block plan by considering the surrounding context, including the single-family residential to the south of Steeles and the mixed-use development to the east of Islington. Creating an appropriate transition from the north development to the existing southern and eastern context would guarantee a successful design for this site.
- Panel encouraged the applicant to coordinate with both the northern and southern neighbours to work together collaboratively and explore opportunities to share the services and access.

### Site Plan Organization

- Panel encouraged improving the overall connectivity for the development as the current design was lacking meaningful uses and continuous paths of travel for pedestrians. The connectivity could be improved in the following ways:
  - i) Creating a meaningful and safe pedestrian connection from Islington Avenue to the ravine and potentially connecting to the future amenities in the bigger context.
  - ii) Improving the pedestrian experience at the southern pathway by avoiding a blank wall facing the pedestrian corridor and providing meaningful space and an active frontage to ensure the connection is viable.
  - iii) Ensuring a continuous path of travel by relocating the air shaft at the end of the path which blocked the pedestrian pathway to the ravine.
- The proposed commercial space located at the corner and facing the carwash is not well-received, as it lacks service area, visibility, and connectivity. Panel suggested relocating the commercial space to face Islington Avenue and considering how the street would evolve in the future to ensure making a high-quality urban streetscape approach.
- Panel suggested improving the servicing and loading layout by consolidating and internalizing them inside the building instead of locating them in the main frontage along Islington. Having the truck loading in front of the building would significantly impact public safety and the pedestrian experience.
- Panel suggested flipping the ground floor plan 180 degrees, which would allow the loading on the south side, and integrate with a shared ramp. Therefore, all the loading and servicing could be accommodated below grade. In addition, this



site organization could avoid having a narrow unfunctional space between two properties.

- Panel recommended moving the building core to the east to allow better opportunities for the residential units or amenities facing the ravine. Taking advantage of the beautiful TRCA lands and providing more ravine-facing residential units would be more desirable.
- Panel commented on the front yard treatment including benches and other mitigation measures that are not appropriately located because it creates a false sense of pedestrian priority while the space is a truck loading area.

### Parking and Servicing

- Having the loading and pick-up/drop-off activities in front of the building was not supported by Panel because the frequent activities could not be accommodated on Islington Avenue from a practical and safety perspective.
- Panel was concerned that the visitor parking on the ground floor would not work from a vehicular maneuvering perspective. They suggested relocating the visitor parking and consolidating loading and waste collection underground to free up more space on the ground floor.
- Panel encouraged using residential veneer on the upper floors facing Islington Avenue and the TRCA ravine lands. Relocating the parking underground would be more efficient with two double-loaded aisles for the layout.
- Panel said the ramp should be tested for two-way traffic flow as it may not be able to accommodate the vehicles for a two-way simultaneous maneuver in this layout.

### Building Massing and Uses

- Panel was concerned that the density parameter for this site is too high, and that it caused many issues such as the relationship between TRCA lands, the access for services, visitor parking at grade, and the lack of viability for the commercial spaces. Panel recommended scaling the massing down to have more manageable parking and a shorter podium.
- Further to the above, Panel commented that the overall massing of the building should be scaled down to better respond to this site and deliver all the expectations to the neighbours as well as framing Islington Avenue.
- Considering the site would be a highly visible corner as it is located in the Islington and Steels intersection. It would be a landmark for the foreseeable future. Therefore, the façade of the podium is important. Panel was concerned that the podium might not provide a positive visual impact on the surrounding neighbourhood and the reasons are as follows:
  - i) Accommodating structured parking on the podium even with a well-designed cladding strategy would not change the fact that the podium is still a parking structure.

- ii) The current podium had an institutional veneer that looks like an office, which is significantly noticeable from the neighbouring residential properties. A residential project should have a different quality for liveability.
- Panel suggested enhancing the appearance of the podium not with a skilled cladding solution, but with a more elegant architectural solution. The applicant should seek to integrate the floor heights and articulate them with some actual uses to align with the residential frontages, while also ensuring a pedestrian focussed and comfortable streetscape at grade.

## **City of Vaughan – Kleinburg Village Streetscape Design and Improvement**

Key Stakeholders: Region of York, TRCA, Utility Companies, Heritage Vaughan Committee, Kleinburg BIA, McMichael Art Gallery, Area Schools, Ratepayers & Residents, City Design Review Panel (DRP)

Review: 1st Review

### **Introduction**

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- Do you think the proposal is successful in achieving the objectives set out in the Master Plan: creating a unique streetscape, increasing safety, advocating place-making, balancing unity, and diversity along the streetscape?
- What is your opinion from a design and/or operations perspective regarding the proposed site furniture, landscaping, and the use of unit pavers in the lay-by parking, driveway crossings and within intersections?
- What is your opinion about the layout and treatments of the proposed sidewalk/cycling network; change in material for sidewalk from concrete to pavers and change in location of bike lane from in-boulevard to on-road? Do you foresee any concerns related to the different layout and treatments?

### **Comments**

#### General Comments

- Panel complimented the overall comprehensive and thoughtful presentation and noted the refinements have already been made to greatly improve this place. The design proposal was very inspiring, the colour selection was elegant, and the Panel was excited to see this project.

#### Traffic and Bike Circulation

- City staff was concerned about the safety of the cyclist and pedestrians because the speed limit might not be enough to reduce vehicular and cycling/ pedestrian conflicts. And asked Panel's opinion about implementing other design strategies that could reinforce lower speed limit and force people to slow down.

- In response to City's concerns, Panel commented that the Kleinburg village core should be considered as a woonerf for the living street, in which everyone including the cyclists should be aware that it is a special area with traffic calming and site signals. Such treatments should be encouraged to allow cyclists to slow down or to get off their bikes for a few blocks.
- Further to the above, Panel suggested using paving or patterns through the landscape and streetscape to intuitively slow people down. For example, having a road crossing with a different pattern or using bump-out to narrow the road width at the major intersections.
- Panel suggested considering alternative treatments for the bike lanes along Islington Avenue if possible. Such as bi-directional bike lanes or multi-use pathways.

### Maintenance

- City staff expressed their concerns that the movable planters may raise operations and maintenance issues for the city as they are more easily damaged, shifted around and or stolen.
- Panel supported the movable planters as they could provide different scales and types of plantings on different levels. In response to City's concerns, Panel commented that if the planters are big enough and hard to move, it could minimize the maintenance concerns.
- From the life cycle cost perspective, Panel suggested avoiding using pavers from a special category and choosing pavers that locked together well to help the long-term viability.
- From an operating cost perspective, Panel asked the City to consider adding a level of responsibility for maintaining the village core because this is a special place that deserves the extra investment. The additional help from the city would allow more opportunities and flexibility to make this place better and more special.

### Street Furniture

- Panel suggested implementing loose tables or chairs if the maintenance issues could be minimized. As for place-making, it provides a "village feeling" and strengthens the heritage character.
- Considering there is a lack of alternative places for people to sit down other than private café locations, panel suggested using some of the in-ground or movable elements such as steps or planters and combining them with the street furniture to increase the sitting capability.
- Panel recommended improving accessibility by introducing sound elements to help those with disabilities to navigate the street.
- Panel highlighted that this area should be unique and recommended using furniture with unique craftsmanship and creativity to preserve the character of

the community. Avoid selecting standard street furniture through the common catalogue that is similar to every other place.

- Panel commented that the benches that face the sidewalk are not preferred. Using a better way to integrate them into safer and quiet location as opposed to the places with high traffic. For example, locating the benches surrounding the light standards to create a place for gathering.

### Parking

- Panel encouraged having bigger bump-outs with longer stretches of parking instead of having smaller bump-outs everywhere. This would allow larger landscape islands, more substantial plantings and more efficient parking stalls.
- Further to the above, having more substantial plantings on the bigger islands would create the opportunity to green up the street with more ground-cover plantings or planters. Panel also mentioned an option of using soil cells that could run under the layby parking which could accommodate larger canopy trees.
- Panel suggested creating a second layer of parking that is off the main street. Coordinating with BIA and implementing an App that could direct people to the available parking spots near the area.

### Paving and Materials

- Panel acknowledged the difficulty due to the conflicting interest between the vehicle and the cyclist, especially at the village core. And recommended using different surface materials between the cycling path and vehicle travel path. Or considering other physical barriers such as bollards.
- Panel agreed on the proposed overall paving pattern as they are well-designed and tight to the heritage character. However, at the intersection area, Panel suggested simplifying the paving by using a simple scene.
- Panel recommended using concrete for paving instead of interlock pavers as the practical experience demonstrated that the paver might not survive due to operation and maintenance issues.
- Panel agreed that using dark paving materials for the vehicle lane is a good choice because it is durable as it withstands stain for a longer period. And encouraged the applicant to continually figure out what type of paver could better integrate into the layby parking as the next step.

### Public Art

- Panel complimented the idea of making the gateways iconic with the treatment of the sculpture and the creation of spaces. Furthermore, Panel encouraged carrying this punctuation throughout the whole streetscape. Considering there are other intersections and small streets coming into Islington, extend the iconography in these spots through architecture, sculpture, landscaping, or signage to give the street more definition.

- Panel suggested that instead of working on many different themes, using one artistic sculpture element and allocating more of it throughout the main street. This would tighten the space together as it allows people to experience a cohesive theme on different scales, and in different ways.
- Panel commented that the scale of the art elements in the gateway areas might be too small as cars are driving relatively fast in those locations. And recommend making these elements bigger and bolder.

**END OF MINUTES**

# CITY OF VAUGHAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

AGENDA: MEETING 105 – November 24, 2022

Virtual Meeting

9:00 am

## **Pre-Meeting**

Committee Members

9:15 am

## **Call to Order**

Chair's Review of Agenda

Disclosure of Interest

Confirmation of Minutes of October 27, 2022

Meeting

9:30 am

## **Block A6 - Penguin-Calloway (Vaughan) Inc.**

### **Vaughan Metropolitan Centre**

### **High-Rise Mixed-Use Development, 1<sup>st</sup> Review**

Presentations:

Paula Bustard, SmartCentres

Michael Attard, Hariri Pontarini Architects

Greg Costa, MHBC Planning Urban Design & Landscape Architecture

10:40 am

Break

10:45 am

## **Avenue 7 Developments Ltd.**

### **2267 Highway 7 & 7700 Keele St. 1st Review**

### **High-Rise Mixed-Use Development, 1st**

### **Review**

Presentations:

Dev Mehta, BDP Quadrangle

Paul Ferris, Ferris + Associates Inc

11:55 pm

Break

12:00 pm

## **2951-2957 Highway 7 and 180 Maplecrete Road - 1834371 Ontario Inc.**

### **Vaughan Metropolitan Centre**

### **High-Rise Mixed-Use Development, 1st Review**

Presentations:

Tony Volpentesta, Bousfields Inc.

Gianni Ria, ARCADIS | IBI Group

1:10 pm

Adjournment

# **CITY OF VAUGHAN**

## **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

### **Meeting 103 – November 24, 2022**

---

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, November 24, 2022. The meeting was recorded and will be posted on the City of Vaughan website.

#### **PANEL MEMBERS**

##### **Present**

Megan Torza, DTAH (Chair)

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

Alfredo Landaeta, Forrec

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Henry Burstyn, IBI Group

Harim Labushchagne, BDP. Quadrangle

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will (Vice Chair)

##### **Absent**

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

Ute Maya-Giambattista, SGL Planning & Design Inc.

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

##### **STAFF**

Shahrzad Davoudi-Strike, Manager, Urban Design & Cultural Heritage, Development Planning

Gaston Soucy, Project Manager, VMC Program

Cory Gray, Project Manager, VMC Program

Matthew Peverini, Senior Planner, VMC Program

Anna Rosen, Landscape Architect, VMC Program

Shirley Marsh, Project Manager & Urban Design, Development Planning

Michael Tranquada, Senior Urban Designer, Development Planning

Shirin Rohani, Urban Designer, Development Planning

Alex Yang, Urban Designer, Development Planning

Chrisa Assimopoulos, Urban Designer, Development Planning

Christina Ciccone, Senior Planner, Development Planning

Cynthia Chiu Chen, Trails Coordinator, Parks Infrastructure Planning and Development

Dana Khademi, Storm Drainage Engineer, Policy Planning & Special Programs

**The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am with Megan Torza in the Chair.**

**1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA**

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

**2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Harim Labushchagne, conflict with the 2<sup>nd</sup> item on the agenda

Henry Burstyn, conflict with the 3<sup>rd</sup> item on the agenda

**3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

Meeting minutes for Nov 24, 2022, were approved.

**4. DESIGN REVIEW**

**Block A6, Penguin-Calloway (Vaughan) Inc. – Vaughan Metropolitan Centre**

Architect: Hariri Pontarini Architects

Landscape Architect: MHBC Planning Urban Design & Landscape Architecture

**Introduction**

City Staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- How successful is the proposed road deletion, ground floor land uses, public realm and open space network strategy in providing appropriate access and activation to the ground floors of all buildings?
- Are the overall building massing and proposed building typologies providing an appropriate transition towards the potential school and future Neighbourhood Precinct to the west?



## Overview

- **Overall Presentation** – Panel thanked the applicant for a comprehensive and thoughtful presentation with well-articulated supportive graphics that clearly illustrated the design concepts. The highly ambitious pedestrian-focused open space approach was acknowledged and appreciated by the Panel.
- **Built-form, Massing, and transitions** – Panel recommended reorganizing the distribution of built-form massing on site to maximize sun penetration necessary for creating successful programable open spaces. Careful consideration should also be given to transitioning the built-form more significantly towards the future neighbourhood precinct and school site to the west.

**Design and Placemaking** – Panel appreciated the ambition to create a pedestrian-centric public realm and encouraged a more rigorous exploration of block porosity, hierarchy and scale of open spaces and their relation to retail and other ground floor uses. A clearer delineation of private versus public spaces was also suggested.

Panel encouraged embracing vehicular movement and servicing within the interior of the block creating a woonerf condition that accepts vehicles as part of the urban 'noise' that accompanies successfully activated urban city centers. Panel further encouraged activating the pedestrian right-of-way along the perimeter and strengthening the relationship to peripheral anchors, namely the north urban park and school site, to tie the heavily internalized development block back to the VMC.

Panel also noted the importance of incorporating microclimatic considerations and pedestrian comfort into the site design and building placement strategies. Panel encouraged the use of relevant precedents that are comparable in scale and density and use modeling to guide the process of exploration and refinement.

- **Pedestrian & Cyclists Circulation** - Panel recommended creating areas of pause within the block and avoiding excessive through routes. To that effect Panel recommended adding sufficient bicycle parking to cater to residents and visitors to the block.

With regards to the pedestrian bridge, Panel felt that an at-grade midblock pedestrian crossing at Edgeley Boulevard would better serve the public and align with the narrative of the proposal compared to a pedestrian bridge construction which would separate cyclists and pedestrians from grade where they are supposed to be.

## Comments

### Architecture, Urban Design and Massing

- Panel commended the logic and strategy that was applied to the built-form massing resulting in a stepping down of tower heights from Portage Parkway to the north urban park at the south. Panel suggested further fine-tuning the building massing by improving the built-form transition to the Neighbourhood Precinct and future school site to the west, which could benefit from reduced tower heights.
- Panel encouraged further exploration of the built-form volume and massing in relation to the on-site microclimatic and seasonal levels of wind and sunlight penetration. Of note was the northeast block courtyard, which experiences an excessive amount of shading, in particular during the shoulder and winter months, as well as the east-west connection that experience low daytime and seasonal light levels during the winter months.
- Building on the previous comment, Panel felt that tower K is poorly placed within the site contributing a significant amount of shadow into the proposed east-west pedestrian connection. Panel suggested removing the tower and redistributing densities between other towers to the north and east, thereby improving the interior ground level microclimatic conditions necessary for effective future site activation during the shoulder and winter seasons.
- Panel was conflicted around the necessity for an interior, pedestrian-only, east-west connection. One concern stemmed from the internalization of site activation at the expense of peripheral streets, and the movement of servicing and loading towards major collector roads. Panel felt that such an approach isolates the block from the VMC street and block network creating a very inward facing development which jeopardises the activation of the pedestrian right-of-way (ROW) at the site's perimeter and weakens its immediate adjacent uses such as the North Urban Park to the south and school site to the west.
- Panel urged the applicant to not shy away from incorporating vehicular movement into the site through a pedestrian-friendly woonerf, or flex street. Panel highlighted that in precedent examples of superblocks, circulation is often not strictly pedestrian allowing for servicing and local traffic access into the block. Panel felt that the introduction of vehicular accesses would reinforce the activation of the block and add to the bustling urban life environment that is characteristic of successful dense urban centres, while providing much needed access and servicing without detracting from the larger objective of a pedestrian-centric design.

Panel encouraged to further push the envelope design to create a unique architectural façade that draws inspiration from European styles while responding to the site's microclimatic conditions. This would help the towers and podiums stand out within the dense development, create a sense of place, and provide a comfortable pedestrian scale at ground level.

## Site Plan, Organization and Ground Floor Uses

- Panel praised the well-minded and ambitious approach in creating a meaningful, accessible, pedestrian-centric experience within the block. However, it was commented that the existing site plan organization is too porous; stemming from an excessive number of circulation routes, entry points and cuts in the built-form which are diluting and weakening the overall strategy.
- Building on the previous comment, Panel felt that the multiple circulation routes are creating a sense of movement through the site with occasional seating that appear to be the product of accidental left-over spaces between the paths of travel. Panel encouraged creating a strong and clear hierarchy of open spaces that feel intentional that are closely tied to the built-form and ground floor programming of the building, have clearly defined roles, and create clear distinctions between main gathering spaces and through spaces.
- Panel noted that more rigor needs to be applied to the design and scale of the open spaces and interior courtyards. As such, Panel proposed increasing the dimension of the courtyards to the south, which benefits from increased sun penetration, and decreasing or eliminating those to the north that are bound in shadow. Primary sitting places should be located at areas of maximum sun penetration.
- The Panel encouraged thinking of the optimal location of the proposed buildings with respect to the open space strategy to take better advantage of the proposed east-west connection by exploring alternate designs and built-form that better relate to the sizes of the spaces. For example, the large offset between buildings creates very wide-open spaces which are inconsistent with the fine-grained European models that were discussed in the rhetoric.

Panel suggested to look at precedent examples of urban scales and massing equivalent to the spaces that the applicant would want to create. Some noted examples were those of St Catherine in Montreal and Yorkville in Toronto as good references for smaller-scaled pedestrian areas. The vast open spaces in the block compared dimensionally to the scale of University Avenue and the Esplanade which do not seem to align with the intended design approach for the block.

- Panel highlighted that in significant and successful European style open spaces there are often strong urban anchors that support public activation. The presence of the future north urban park to the south should encourage the creation of a stronger connection to this neighbouring amenity. This might work better by creating a wider, more substantial, north-south mews, rather than an east-west pedestrian connection that is hampered by shadow, competing with the urban park, and does not lead to a significant anchor point.

- Panel noted that the presentation focused primarily on graphics proposing activation of the block during the summer months. Panel encouraged the applicant to look at the exterior spaces through the lens of seasonality, with particular focus on off season winter months where the activation of the space will be challenged by low light levels and a significant decrease in the number of people, which might result in very large, empty spaces.
- Although the ambition around creating a pedestrian priority neighbourhood by moving parking and loading functions to the perimeter does, at first glance, seem to be beneficial in providing a larger internal open space for pedestrian and cyclist movement, Panel noted, that this vision will not be able to be realized due to the mismatch between the missing necessary fine-grain that's required for a successful activated public realm and the large-scale, underutilized open spaces that were created within the block.

Additionally, Panel remarked that pushing all the vehicular traffic to the periphery of the block resulted in the loss of the typical 'noise' and activations associated with traffic and diversity in urban life. Panel noted that not all courtyards or pedestrian spaces need to be equally glamorous suggesting that building a story that embraces the urban 'noise' of life would create a richer pedestrian experience in the block and would help account for the oversized, underutilized open spaces.

- In line with the previous comment, Panel noted that there is too much public space to be effectively programmed. Rethinking the delineation between public and private spaces will help with organizing and activating the open space. Panel proposed either identifying some specific courtyards as private, shifting amenities to the rooftop to serve as private amenity spaces, or creating functional spaces such as daycare outdoor spaces that would relief the site from the pressures of public activation in every available space.
- Panel noted that the delineation between the public and private outdoor spaces associated with the townhouse units and the interior ground floor amenity spaces, is poorly defined and would need to be refined to clearly separate uses and 'ownership.'
- Panel commended the large number of retail opportunities proposed within the block, as the retail can act as both an anchor and traffic generator within the site. To that effect the Panel felt that the grocery store might be better integrated within the northwest block as this would allow the placing of servicing and loading in a way that would eliminate a blank wall façade facing the podiums and open spaces to the south where the biggest potential for civic life activation might occur.

- Building on the previous comment, Panel encourages exploring and optimizing the relationship between at grade retail floor plate sizes and number of retail entrances. Since the activation of the public realm is often directly related to the number of units and entrances, and the flow of people through them, there is a concern that the small number of potential entrances due to large retail floor plates may hinder the activation of the public realm. Panel proposed to explore opportunities to encourage the activation of the public realm through a combination of different size retail opportunities and single CRUs with multiple entry points.
- The Panel mentioned that the north-south mews appears to be very narrow, a condition that is exacerbated by cantilevering tall buildings which are creating a cavernous sense of enclosure around the space. A section through the mews would help to ascertaining the best scale, setbacks and step backs necessary to achieve a pedestrian space that is more desirable and fits within the scale of the site.
- Panel noted that it is unclear how the existing block design and interior circulation relates to the future school site to the west and cautioned about issues of misalignment with the school site due to the northward shift of the east-west pedestrian connection on approach to Edgeley Boulevard. Panel asked to rethink the necessity of the jog and its future connection to the site to the west.
- Panel noted that the total amount of proposed bike parking is very low as compared to the expected occupancy of the block and anticipated visitors to the site. Panel recommended increasing grade level parking for residents and guests consistent with the pedestrian-cyclist design narrative.
- Panel noted that the very important fire truck access, within the site interior, remains to be resolved.
- In looking at precedents, Panel strongly encouraged not only referencing European examples but also looking at heavily urbanized spaces in North America, comparing spaces that are of a similar scale and massing.

Panel suggest utilizing the 3D model as well as other tools at the team's disposal to animate the open spaces created at different times of the day and different seasons to better understand the impacts of sunlight on the site, as well as its scale and proportion. Built-form modeling and section analysis can help compare the existing space to different precedents and help guide and inspire the creation of the desired spaces.

## Pedestrian Bridge

- Panel noted that a bridge design concept seems forced at the existing location due to the relative flatness of the site. Panel felt that the successful examples of pedestrian bridge precedents that were discussed have typically been associated with significant civic spaces and prominent attractions crossing much larger spans and infrastructure. The Panel questioned whether a school site is a sufficiently strong anchor to draw people through the bridge crossing to justify the added effort in distance and elevation that would need to be traversed. Panel also noted that crossing the bridge in wintertime can be a challenge, necessitating pedestrians to maneuver through potentially slippery slopes while being exposed to the winds.
- Panel cautioned that building up the elevation would also sacrifice valuable land on both sides of the road and an at-grade crossing would be a much better and efficient solution to a pedestrian bridge which would work to promote vehicular infrastructure by prioritizing vehicular movement and higher speeds across Edgeley boulevard at the expense of pedestrians. Panel proposed to strengthen the pedestrian and cyclist connection at grade by designing a generous, signalized crossing which would prioritize the pedestrian and better support the overall narrative and vision of the VMC.

### **Avenue 7 Development Ltd. – 2267 Highway 7 & 7700 Keele Street**

Architect: Quadrangle Architects Limited

Urban Planning: KLM Planning Partners Inc. / Acronym Urban Design & Planning

Landscape Architecture: Ferris + Associates Inc.

Review: 1<sup>st</sup> Review

### **Introduction**

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- How successful is the proposed road network, open space system, massing, and scale?
- Please comment on the proposed interfaces and the compatibility of the adjacent uses.
- How effective is the proposed phasing plan considering the interim conditions?

## Overview

- **Phasing** – Panel commented on the phasing strategy for the proposed park and suggested prioritizing it in phase one. Consideration needs to be given towards attracting people into the site, given the industrial context that surrounds it. Therefore, the park plays an important role in drawing people into this community and implementing the park in phase one would allow this site to be more attractive in the early stage and help to ensure the development is successful.

Further to the above, the proposed grocery store is a great asset to the community for both internal development and the neighbouring community. Panel suggested having the grocery store built as part of the first phase as it will help generate a pedestrian flow and anchor to the context.

Panel also encouraged arranging the office component in the early phase instead of leaving it until the end. The office would also help bring people into this community and contribute to the success and animation of this development.

- **Frontages** - Panel recommended that the applicant future proof the southern and western frontages that interface with industrial and warehouse buildings. Consideration needs to be given to ensure that these frontages can work from the start and can evolve over a longer period to be responsive to the changing conditions.

Panel acknowledged that the creation of a continuous and consistent frontage along Highway 7 is challenging due to the Provincial ownership of a sliver of land on the northwest corner. The applicant will need to determine a way to create a consistent frontage along Highway 7 and lessen the impact of the opaque frontage along the west end of the site.

Panel commented on the entrances to the buildings and suggested that they should consider weather protection and micro-climate, in order to create an opportunity and place for people to linger.

- **Community** – Panel noted that the success of the proposed large community space, grocery store, and park required as much on-site at-grade pedestrian traffic as possible to animate these spaces. Panel suggested not burying them underground with the limited access to the elevators within the grocery store, but instead, creating a way to lead people to the grade level first, so that people could have more opportunities to engage with the park and community space.

Panel suggested the applicant consider how to accommodate the real and messy part of life, particularly around the drop-off area. There would be a large volume of people using this space, and that the applicant will need to study how to design this space appropriately responding to these conditions.

Further, the setbacks around the perimeter of the property are correct given the lack of uncertainty in the context, and Panel encouraged taking advantage of more space to create a landscape buffer for better protection and screening.

Considering this development site is in the fabric of an industrial context, this circumstance demands a high-quality design of the architecture and landscape in order to ensure this site is attractive and draws people from the surrounding community. Panel highly complimented the applicant on the commitment to creating high-quality architecture and landscape design. In the meantime, Panel strongly suggested using all kinds of ways to ensure this ambition could continually extend through all the phases of the projects.

## Comments

### General Comments

- Panel appreciated the overall comprehensive and thoughtful presentation, and complimented the clarity of the proposal, especially the little sketch diagrams that demonstrated the design rationale and clearly presented the proposal.
- From a general layout perspective, Panel suggested the applicant avoid using the 34" x 11" format which caused difficulty in reviewing the package as it requires more time to zoom in and out.
- Panel acknowledged the challenges of this development as the site is an isolated block surrounded by the context of other uses. Panel also addressed concerns that this development proposed a height that is taller than the VMC area which would require a significantly large amount of transit infrastructure to service.
- Panel highly complimented the architectural and landscape design of this proposal. However, expressed concern that such high-quality design might be altered after 10 years when the entire project is built or by a future developer. It was noted that the applicant should find a way to guarantee this quality throughout the entire development.

### Phasing Strategy

- Panel suggested including the park in the first phase of the development because there is no other close outdoor recreation space. Further, using it as the pedestrian flow generator to draw people into the community would greatly help the development be more successful.
- Panel agreed with the general park location as it considered sunlight exposure and shadow impact. In addition, Panel asked the question if the orientation of the park could be rotated to the east and west for a better transition to the southern neighbours and to create a larger buffer.
- It was noted that the grocery store would be a great asset to this community as it plays an important role as an anchor to the area. Panel encouraged developing the grocery store early because it would benefit the community as it accelerates the process of drawing people to the site.
- Panel expressed concern that if the office was left until the last phase that would add uncertainty and make it hard to ensure the office can be developed as per the original plan. Considering the office would also help bring more people into



the community, Panel suggested pushing the development of the office to the early phase.

### Frontage

- Panel acknowledged the site challenges concerning the industrial context and encouraged the applicant to consider future proofing for this site. It was noted that it would be difficult to make the site pleasant for the first couple of generations, and that using greens walls to surround the site as a buffer resulted in the community looking inward and ignoring the context. The frontages need to work with the immediate context on day one and should be able to evolve as the context changes in the future.
- Panel recommended using a hybrid urban approach which allows for a larger setback with more breathing room around the perimeter. Considering the surrounding context, different uses, and compatibility issues, and responding with a larger setback and breathing room could effectively mitigate the noise and negative impact on the at-grade uses.
- Panel commented that the proposed frontage along Highway 7 is a wasted opportunity as it proposed a service lane and blank walls. Panel suggested the applicant not sacrifice all the major frontages for the below-grade loading area, but instead explore the entire frontage of Highway 7 and create more engaging frontages. In the meantime, Panel pointed out that the retail uses might not necessarily work along Highway 7 because there is not enough pedestrian flow to support it.
- Further to the above, there is a sliver of land to the northwest corner of the site that is owned by the province, and which caused a missed opportunity in terms of the continuity of the streetscape along Highway 7. Panel encouraged the applicant to coordinate with the province to acquire the land so that it could be integrated with this project and provide the opportunity for a continuous streetscape along Highway 7.
- Panel recommended flipping the land use in Block 1 as there is a commitment to having the retail facing the park to create an engaging community. Accordingly, it would be more appropriate for the townhouse units, and the lobby to face the west side.

### Road Network

- Panel encouraged the applicant to consider how the proposed public street could support the adjacent southern and western development in the next 10 to 30 years. They suggested that the applicant could introduce this at the beginning of the presentation.
- Panel questioned the decision to put the office in the last phase and why it was accessed from the west. Considering the proposed public streets A and B are owned by the municipality and should be developed in the beginning.
- Panel suggested creating easier and stronger access from Highway 7 to the grocery store, whether it could be a woonerf which given the idea of an expansion to the centre green space.

- Panel commented that there are too many unnecessary roads around the open space and suggested removing some of them and leaving a cul-de-sac to simplify the road network. This would create better access to the rectangular centre open space without the ring road around it, which would also help with the open space system layout.
- Panel addressed concerns that due to the number of lay-by parking spaces on the private street, it would result in an excessive of asphalt visually. They recommended reducing the visual impact by using a different type of paving to change the appearance of the road, such as permeable treatment that matches the paving of the boulevard, or a treatment that allows for a continuous approach of bike lanes.

### Community Life

- The proposal renderings depicted the best picture of the community life, however, this does not reflect reality as there is a messy side to it, such as the drop-off and delivery. All of those were accommodated in a small cul-de-sac area despite the generosity of the large green space. Panel was concerned that the little drop-off area could not handle the need of the entire community.
- Panel commented that the building entrances should have micro-climate consideration. The current design illustrates a picture of people using them on a beautiful summer day but does not consider cold and rainy weather. Implementing weather protection strategies would provide a better space for people to linger before entering the building.
- There are two elements that could be considered great assets to the community. One is the large community space, the other one is the grocery store. Panel suggested considering them as anchors and pedestrian flow generators which could make this development more attractive and even benefit the larger context.
- Panel commented that the pedestrian circulation failed to take advantage of the great assets mentioned above because most of the traffic is accommodated underground. Although the full commitment to underground servicing is a great idea, it would directly lead people to their destinations through elevators quickly. However, there is a lack of connection between those elevators and the public spaces.
- Further to the above, Panel asked the applicant to come up with an alternative location or shape variation for the ground floor uses that could make them better integrated with the public open spaces, and it will help trigger more pedestrian flows between this site and the surrounding community.

**2951-2957 Highway 7 and 180 Maplecrete Road, 1834371 Ontario Inc. –  
Vaughan Metropolitan Centre**

Architect: Arcadis / IBI Group  
Landscape Architect: Land Art Design

## **Introduction**

City Staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

- How successful is the proposed ground floor land use, public realm and open space network strategy in contributing to the vision of the VMC Secondary Plan, the VMC Streetscape and Open Space Plan and the VMC Urban Design Guidelines to create a complete and diverse downtown that is active, accessible, pedestrian friendly, diverse, vibrant, green and beautiful?
- How could the proposed architectural massing and overall design be better sculpted and detailed to address the VMC Urban Design Guidelines vision of providing more diversity in built-form typology, and richness in expression?

## **Overview**

- **Presentation** – Panel thanked the applicant for a comprehensive presentation package and noted the complexities that such a large project can entail.
- **Architectural Massing and Articulation** – Panel recommended reorganizing the distribution of built form massing on site and introducing built-form diversity to create an appropriate comfortable pedestrian scale that improves site porosity and views while maximizing sun penetration into the site. Additionally, the introduction of a more diverse palette of materials and textures would further improve the pedestrian experience at grade by softening the imposing and monotonous scale and massing of the proposed built-form and podiums.

Panel also noted the importance of integrating sustainable design measured in the design of the architectural façades and balconies to ensure the development contributes to sustainable design and design excellence.

**Site Plan Design and Placemaking** – Panel voiced concerns about the exceedingly vehicular-centric, suburban approach that has been applied to the block and urged the applicant to revisit the site plan design with an emphasis on creating a more pedestrian and cyclist-oriented public realm.

Panel added that increased porosity to transit opportunities, reorientation of building entrances towards transit facilities and improved bicycle parking provision would benefit the development and demonstrate its commitment to transit oriented design.

**Loading and Dropoff** – Panel noted that consolidating loading and services is a critical component for making the project work. A reduction in the at-grade square footage that's currently being allocated to vehicular movement will allow for stronger relationships to be developed between non-service-related indoor and outdoor uses at grade while contributing to the healthy activation of the public realm.

Similarly, the removal of the drop off loops within the north-south and east-west roads will improve the quality of the public realm by stitching together the gaps created by these elements within the public right-of-way (ROW) while reallocating these function to the parking lanes along the local public roads.

- **Adjacencies and context** – Panel questioned how the proposed development relates to the parcel to the west and the future Black Creek natural open space system. Panel emphasized the importance of ensuring the development responds appropriately to its adjacencies, as its built-form and open spaces will serve as the model that sets the design strategy for future adjacent developments.

## Comments

### Site Plan, Organization and Ground Floor Uses

- Panel acknowledged the complexity of the site design which must balance interior local roads, block sizes, peripheral edges and utilitarian/service-related uses while creating a wholesome pedestrian public realm.
- Panel noted a disconnect between the vision for a transit-oriented, pedestrian and cyclist focused, mixed-use development, typical of the station precinct and the proposed site plan organization. Currently, the site plan organization is geared towards a vehicular oriented design, more typical of a suburban development. Panel drew attention to issues of drop-off loops cutting through the pedestrian right-of-way, sidewalk narrowing at building entrances to accommodate vehicular movement, and lobby entrances that are oriented towards parking rather than transit. Panel identified a significant reduction in the number of on-site bicycle parking facilities and short-term bicycle racks. Panel suggested revisiting the design and providing changes complementary to the ambition of a transit-oriented development where pedestrians and cyclists are the primary users.
- The drop-off loop along the new east-west and north-south roads are very disruptive to the public realm. Panel proposed eliminating these vehicular accesses while allowing for the pedestrian right-of-way to continue uninterrupted. Pickup and drop off function can be allocated in front of the lobbies, along the parking lanes of the interior local roads.
- Panel voiced concern about the functionality of the POPS and the quality of the pedestrian realm experience created by isolating the open space from the development by means of roads and driveways along its boundaries. Panel encouraged prioritizing the creation of a functional, meaningful, and interesting

public realm that has strong, uninterrupted, pedestrian connections between the interior uses and the exterior open spaces thus better serving both residents and visitors to the block.

- It was emphasized that existing ground floor uses are in conflict with the exterior public spaces. Currently, both the POPS and park spaces partially front onto servicing and loading, parking ramps, driving aisles, garbage areas and well as retail parking, all of which detract from the quality of the public realm. Panel recommended fronting the public spaces with compatible uses at grade that will be complimentary to the public realm and aid in its activation.
- To eliminate the necessity of unnecessary driveways within the northeast block that significantly diminish the pedestrian experience and quality of the public realm, panel proposed to consolidate loading and parking access and relocate loading and other services below grade. This would eliminate the need for cars and truck to go around the POPS and free up more open space for other, more desirable, pedestrian-related opportunities.

The reduction of the interior driveway would also improve the condition along the frontage of the interior amenity space, in the northeast block, allowing opportunities for creating a stronger amenity presence and an improved relationship between the indoor and outdoor amenities.

- Some Panel members questioned the effectiveness and functionality of retail frontages along the Highway 7 corridor and suggested studying the possibility of maintaining the retail at the corners of Highway 7 and the north-south road while relocating the remaining retail to the south, facing the POPS. This would improve the activation of the POPS while creating a more desirable and compatible open space frontage.
- Panel noted that the interior of both the park and POPS space are heavily hardscaped, providing little relief in an already highly hardscaped development, dominated by roads and driveways. The addition of softscaping will create an area of relief for residents and create a stronger visual and functional connection between the POPS, park and ultimately the Black Creek to the west.
- Panel noted that the driveway condition along the north boundary of the park can be significantly improved. Currently, the vehicular mews appears very utilitarian and further diminished by the servicing and parking ramp that dominate its frontage. Consolidating these functions and allocating more compatible uses to the south frontage of the northwest block while enhancing the vehicular mews design will enhance the pedestrian connection to the park and create a more desirable public realm befitting a park frontage.
- Panel was intrigued by the story of the revitalization of the Black Creek corridor and felt that there was a missed opportunity to integrate the landscape and park design into that narrative. Panel proposed incorporating components of functional landscape design to supports the narrative of environmental improvement and revitalization within the site.
- Additionally, panel expressed a deficit in information outlining how the project relates to the development to the west and how it fits within the broader context of the Black Creek Revitalization. With respect to the location of the future park,

in the southwest corner of the development, panel questioned whether the park would become an outlier or whether it is designed to play a more central role as the surrounding context develops. Panel emphasized that this development has the potential to set out the vision for how its neighbouring blocks will be developed in the VMC. It is therefore important to ensure this development responds appropriately to its adjacencies and provides the best groundwork for moving towards the creation of a successful public realm.

### Architectural Design, Massing and Transitions

- Panel emphasized that that the architectural scale and massing used to frame the open space is overwhelming, resulting from large walls framing, what is by comparison, a very small public space. Panel recommends a further study and analysis of the relationship between the public realm and the surrounding massing. Focus must be given to the scale of massing as compared to the experience at grade with particular emphasis on increasing texture and materiality on the podium facades as well as site porosity, improving views from the public spaces into the surrounding context and increasing sunlight penetration, which is sorely lacking within the public spaces, particularly in the shoulder months.
- It was noted that the development can benefit from an increase in the diversity of built form typologies, which currently consists of 5 towers on podiums. Increased variation of the built form would improve diversity and interest within the development and improve both ground levels views and the overall quality of the development
- A disconnect between the narrative of sustainable architectural design and the proposed 3D architectural views was noted by Panel. Panel advised rethinking the architecture and balcony design to include sustainable design practices and increase material quality with particular emphasis on pedestrian friendly, human-scaled materials and textures. Further study on how the architecture can contribute to sustainable design and support the animation of the public realm would improve the pedestrian realm experience and allow the development to fit into the milieu of high-quality design excellence that is cultivated within the VMC.
- A comment was made regarding the perceived disconnect between the alignment of the podium massing along the Highway 7 frontage and the proposed orientation of the building which could be reoriented to allow for a wider pedestrian realm along the north face of the building.

**END OF MINUTES**