

URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

DATE: July 11, 2018

TIME: 3:00 pm

PLACE: Town Hall Meeting Room, City Hall

PRESENT: MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:
Amela Brudar
Yinjin Wen
Muneesh Sharma
Colette Parsons
Marie-France Venneri
Jim Huffman
Derek Neale
Susan Orckwell
Leslie Shieh
Helen Besharat

REGRETS: David Jerke
Grant Newfield

**RECORDING
SECRETARY:** K. Cermeno

ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING

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| 1. | 1133 Melville Street |
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BUSINESS MEETING

Chair Amela Brudar, called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum.

1. Address: 1133 Melville Street
 Permit No. DP-2018-00399
 Description: To develop a 36-storey office building consisting of commercial at grade over five levels of underground parking accessed from the lane. The proposed floor area is 57,044 sq. m (614,014 sq. ft.), the floor space ratio (FSR) is 20.13 and the building height is 160.78 m (527 ft.).
 Zoning: CD-1
 Application Status: Complete Development Application
 Review: Third (First as DP)
 Architect: James KM Cheng Architects
 Owner: Carlo Timpano, Oxford Properties
 Delegation: Jim Cheng, Architect, James KM Cheng Architects
 Adeline Lau, Architect, James KM Cheng Architects
 Chris Phillips, Landscape Architect, PFS Studio
 Kevin Welsh, LEED Consultant, Integral Group
 Staff: Paul Cheng

EVALUATION: SUPPORT with Recommendations

- **Introduction:**

Development Planner Paul Cheng, introduced the project as a D application that has already gone through the rezoning process. The rezoning policy for this site was the Higher Building Policy that allowed buildings to reach up to 550 ft. in building height. In order to earn the building height, that is much higher than the current zoning allowed, there was a requirement that the architecture established a significant and recognizable new benchmark for architectural creativity and excellence. This is the last opportunity for the panel to review at a detailed and overall design level.

The site itself is occupied by an above grade garage, there is current urban repair happening. There use to be some curve cuts and driveways off of Melville that are being eliminated and turning into sidewalks for pedestrian use. There is a midblock pedestrian access which integrated with several open public spaces on private property to increase the porosity of this block.

There was also a requirement for the building at the rezoning level to be demonstrating excellence in a higher sustainability standard for the design of the building. The previous design by a different architecture and application was not supported at the Urban Design Panel because the architectural excellence was not going in the right direction and the sustainability strategy was not seen as holistically well resolved. Since then this particular application has passed through the rezoning.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

1. This project proposes "a significant penetration into the council-adopted Queen Elizabeth Viewcone. As such, a high standard of architectural excellence is expected.

Does the proposed building make "a significant contribution to the beauty and visual power of the City's skyline", when viewed from:

- a) The building's effect on the Queen Elizabeth viewcone;
- b) The building's effect on the skyline from various other viewpoints represented?

Also please consider the contribution to the skyline for both day and night views.

2. Please provide commentary on how well the proposal has responded to the following condition from the rezoning:

Design development to further visually distinguish the four major volumetric components of the tower composition, by:

- i) attributing an individuated texture and pattern for the surfaces of each volume; and
 - ii) for the Bute Street - and Lane-facing elevations, a reduction to the perceived bulk through further volumetric and/or material articulation to distinguish the top two stacked box volumes.
3. Please provide commentary on the proposal's response to the public realm, with respect to the outdoor patios, pedestrian linkages and the interface of these spaces with the building's ground floor.
 4. Please provide any other commentary on the proposal's architectural design.
 5. Taking into account the proposal's cited sustainability strategy, does this building "demonstrate leadership and advances in sustainable design and energy consumption"?
 6. Will this "sustainable design" be resilient to unexpected changes from design phase through its operating life?

The planning team then took questions from the panel.

- **Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

The original thinking was first it is an urban context response, started designing its form by looking at all of the surrounding buildings that are of different forms and height. We took the height of the different buildings as reference lines to create boxes.

The first tier of boxes is related to the pedestrian scale and entry. The next box has operable windows that are suitable for the IT culture. The next box has more conventional office work plates. Part of the sustainable social strategy is to have spaces between the boxes where people are able to congregate and meet. The top floor has common spaces indoor and outdoor space for informal gathering and seating with spectacular views.

The entrance of the building was not clear and strong enough; we have now lined it up with the elevator core.

Architecturally tried to make the geometry very clear and the facade is expressed so you can see how one geometry is working with the other.

Lighting strategy we have ground lighting, and also have lighting on every terrace. In terms of the skyline all of the viewcones and different viewpoints of this building is in all of them.

The pathway between the buildings, we wanted to celebrate a pocket park, and create connecting pocket parks for the level changes. Wanted to acknowledge the street that is on an angle, therefore some boxes were rotated slightly to acknowledge the juncture.

Most important addition since the initial rezoning is to introduce the acceptance of bicycle access, car drop offs and car share. Bikes can now ride in at lane level. There is shelter drop off for future transportation, such as Uber.

Have been working with landscape and public art consultants, we wanted the public art to be part of the experience of the pocket park. The pocket park chosen is on a axis with the lobby but also visible from the street. The art piece is in the back to act as a back drop to the lobby.

Importance of the public realm is resolving the ground plain. What is unique are the many unusual public spaces, before it was just a pass through and very narrow. There are fracture stone walkways, the detail is very important.

There is now a deeper sidewalk with the building pulled back. The top floor, has trees taken from the site and put into planters. There is small channel that goes around the edge part of the sustainable initiative.

In regards to the sustainability the project presents a marriage between previous city expectations and Leed gold. The initial goal was how to achieve the requirement of a Leed gold certification. Working with the City's sustainability department and looking at the future meaning of sustainability, as a pilot program realized going as far as LEED was not doing the job therefore the focus is going carbon neutral zero carbon pilot, an initiative that is unfound in the city.

We are looking for a mechanical and electrical solution to be below the City's expected numbers. The choice to go triple glazing, 0.3 percent of the total's building energy, addresses the solar gains quite effectively. The building is heavily associated with a Rain water management system. In general this is a building that seeks to look for improved alternative methods.

The applicant team then took questions from the panel.

- **Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

Having reviewed the project it was moved by Ms. Avini-Besharat and seconded by Mr. Sharma and was the decision of the Urban Design Panel:

THAT the Panel **SUPPORT** the project with the following recommendations to be reviewed by City Staff:

- Further design development to the lane frontage;
- Further improvement to the interface of the pocket park and lobby;
- Further design development to enhance and introduce opportunities for social interaction in the lobby
- That consideration of up to 40% landscaping is provided at the occupancy of the building, for the outdoor private terraces. Provision of permanent landscaping on upper terraces will have an important visual impact on the skyline.

- **Related Commentary:**

There was strong support for the project. The panel members noted the building is well resolved and well presented. The parti of the building was very strong at the rezoning and enhanced at the present stage. The sculpting and top of the building was also well received.

The majority had no issues with the view cones and found it balances the city skyline. Volumes are differentiated enough that they are subtle and understood without being recognized. The first volume creating the street wall is especially well resolved providing a good and a balanced relationship.

The impact of the tower and its projection into the view cone the panel felt by the building going higher will balance the skyline. The significance of the skyline appears to be fitting the gap and

loneliness of the Trump and Shangri la tower. Taller building will improve the skyline and this is the contribution.

The slope glass is elegant and a nice way of introducing light, maybe this can be the element that wraps around. Going with the triple glazing is a great improvement. The success of this project will be based on more detailing of glazed modules of the windows.

The 5 volumes are nice and subtle with the light and fenestration differences. Suggest making the glass all the same color, the subtleties are elegant as they are.

The lane side seems a little forgotten and many panel members felt the lane treatment could benefit from further design development at the lane interface. A panel member noted if the lane could relate to the rest of the building on a more human scale.

A panel member noted the vision in the booklet appeared to be better than what was presented in the model, and if the applicants could stick with the vision in the booklet.

The lighting design shows great strategy. A panelist commended the team for looking at the lighting strategy from day one rather than rushing through at the later stage.

Additional panel comments in regards to the design included certain sides of the boxes need more solar control than others. Would Rather see a clever design than a decorative design. Would have preferred to see more rotation on the boxes, could have been a more unique design decision. Be cautious with the overhang over the pocket park, lovely space right now with great light, don't want to see overhang to appear to pronounced. Consider an entire concrete wall, could use a public art piece to slide along the wall. For the penthouse, all the layers seem to be very well considered.

The panel felt the public realm dealt with the ground plain well. The pocket park and gardens were well received, the panel liked the playfulness and shape of the path, appears usable. A panelist noted to be careful not to overshadow the park. The bike connection was also well received.

There was discussion about other outdoor amenities, they are intentionally left blank for tenant design, however the panel felt at least create a baseline for tenants to build on. The rooftop amenities are great and accessible.

The interface of the pocket park and lobby itself could be improved for better transition. The idea of the art wall was well received.

The panel suggested further review of the social activation spaces; use the elements that are already there.

A panelist noted the park is a wonderful element, but felt that the base of the building is a missed opportunity and having the park really integrated at the base of the building, will add visual power.

For sustainability, meeting its target, the time when it was originally conceived it was exceeding expectations but things changed over the years. Regardless the panel felt the project is exceeding current expectations. The envelope piece looking at the different boxes and solar shades is well resolved.

- **Applicant's Response:** The applicant team thanked the panel for their comments.