

Toronto Community
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Development Division
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Toronto Community Housing Design Review Panel
Minutes of Meeting
August 11, 2016

Present: Vincent Tong, TCHC (chair for LH only) Jason Chen, TCHC (sat out LH) Alan Waterhouse, University of Toronto Roland Rom Colthoff, RAW Design Gunta Mackars, Stantec Antoine Belaieff, Metrolinx David Leinster, The Planning Partnership Paul Bailey, York University (came after 1 st review) Shirley Blumberg, KPMB Architects (left after 2 nd review) Sybil Wa, Diamond Schmitt Architects (left after 3 rd review) Anne McIlroy, Brook McIlroy (sat out RP 16S, left after 3 rd review)	Regrets: Andre D'Elia, Superkul Ken Greenberg, Greenberg Consulting David Anselmi, Canada Lands Company Leslie Gash, TCHC
City of Toronto Staff: Ren Chen Thomas Rees Jennifer Renaud Seanna Kerr	Recording Secretary: Joanna Kolakowska

Project Reviews

The following projects were reviewed by the TCHC Design Review Panel on August 11, 2016:

- **Regent Park Phase Blk 30 SPA (2nd Review)**
- **Regent Park Phase Blk 16S SPA (1st Review)**
- **Lawrence Heights Blk 1E Townhomes (1st review)**
- **Allenbury Gardens Bldg D and Landscape (1st review)**

1.0 Project Review - Regent Park Phase Blk 30 SPA

1.1 Briefing Package

A briefing package with the following was provided to panel members one week prior to the meeting:

Regent Park Phase 3 Blk 30 SPA (Aug 2, 2016)

1.2 Project Information

Project type: Site Plan Application
Design Team: IBI Group Architects & NAK Design Strategies
Presenters: Jeff Cogliati, Johannes Schneider (IBI), Robert Ng (NAK Design Strategies)
Review: Second Review
Conflict of Interest: None Declared

1.3 Matters for Consideration

Summary of Presentation

The project was introduced by Remo Agostino from Daniels; this was the second presentation to the Design Review Panel. Block 30 is located on the south east corner of Regent Park and is bounded by River Street to the east, Shuter Street to the south, Nicholas Avenue to the west and Wyatt Avenue to the north. It is comprised of two distinct components - a 25 storey private rental building with a 7 storey podium (a partnership between Daniels and Sunlife) and a series of 24 three storey back to back market townhouses.

Jeff Cogliati and Johannes Schneider from IBI presented the main concepts for the design and the changes that were requested from the first DRP review.

Architecturally, the project is conceived as a series of stacked and intersecting linear elements. The tower is positioned to form a visual terminus from St. David Street, while also acts as a gateway to Regent Park from the South. Its architectural expression is comprised of two parallel bars with a reveal between them. The tower sits on two 7 storey “bars” that represent the podium expression. These bars in turn sit on a single storey block that grounds the entire tower development. An east west mid block connection separates the rental tower and the townhouses while connecting Nicholas and River street and accommodates major service functions including garbage, loading and parking. The back to back townhouses are arranged as two north south bars facing River Street and Nicholas Avenue with a pedestrian mews in between.

The tower’s materiality consists of a gridded white pattern that wraps around the clear western bar with a dark gridded pattern for podium component. A slotted glazed inset defines the amenity space at the top of the tower.

The main revisions from its first DRP review included showing Block 30’s surrounding context with the Queen-River Secondary Plan, the addition of balconies to the podium, further articulation of the rental office, parkette, and mews, a revised strategy for townhouse garbage collection, relocation of the amenity space to the top floor of the tower and the re-orientation of the townhouses to face Wyatt Street.

Ren Chen from the City of Toronto expressed that minor adjustments to articulation of the scheme are being sought but overall the City is happy with the design.

1.4 Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects for Consideration

The design team was commended for a clear presentation that addressed the panel's previous concerns. Overall, the panel felt that the scheme has made some positive improvements since the last review. The following design decisions were praised: the porosity of the plan, the introduction of balconies, as well as the addition of ground floor units in lieu of amenity space. The panel expressed some concern over the small unit sizes and advised that a careful design of the layouts will be necessary to ensure they are functional and provide a good quality of life for the residents.

The panel offered the following feedback and recommendations for consideration by the design team. Unless otherwise noted, the following is the consensus opinion of the panel.

Massing – Several panel members felt that there are some issues with the monumentality of the project massing but noted that this was not brought up at the last review. Factors that contributed to the building's monumentality included the location on axis with St. David Street, the scale of the middle tower compared to the framing of the two symmetrical podium elements when viewed from the park, and the proportions of the project from the park which read more like a wall rather than a gateway. A suggestion was made to consider lowering one section of the podium element to reduce the symmetrical reading. Further, the articulation of the top of the tower was read quite heavily and further exploration was encouraged to lighten the overall expression.

Townhome Typology – The decision of designing back to back townhomes instead of stacked townhome units was questioned as the three storey blocks read as a very low density in context with its surrounding developments. The panel challenged if the site is being underdeveloped.

Materiality – Members of the panel felt that the west façade materiality was the most successful with its simple and calm detailing. They pointed out that it is in stark contrast to the remainder of the scheme, which is too busy. It was noted that materials will need to be carefully considered as precast will not be as dark as the current rendering representations of the design. If the design team pursues metal cladding at the podium, it is recommended that brick is used for the townhouse facades to compliment the podium.

Several panel members also commented on the ground floor condition. There was a concern raised that Regent Park lacks a sense of small scale retail and careful selection of fenestration detail would assist to create this neighbourhood feel. Furthermore, the panel felt that the entrance to tower building is too obscure.

For the townhomes, the panel expressed that the Nicholas Street façade feels heavy and that it should strive to match the other frontages that feel lighter by incorporating elements such as wood slats.

Townhome Garbage Collection – The panel recognized that the introduction of a centralized garbage area was a direct response to the previous DRP comments. However, the general consensus was that the issue has not been successfully resolved. The current scheme felt to be intrusive, bunker-like and posed potential security issues. Its location was also not necessarily practical for units that were located furthest away. The panel made several suggestions that included:

- Relocation to the adjacent tower building with a shared use agreement for the townhouses
- Redesign as a more open pavilion, flipping the garbage and mail programmes and relocating the door to allow easy access for street pick up)

In addition to the problematic centralized garbage area, the panel also felt that the garbage enclosures along the street frontages were too high.

South Parkette – The panel felt that the mixed use landscape area at the south end of the development needs more refinement as it is an urban edge condition. They advised that some of the diagonal

hardscaped paths should be removed to allow for larger open green space. This space should not have maintenance intensive landscaping as it may have the potential to be neglected.

In addition to the South parkette, the panel felt that more “green” landscape should be introduced, both at the centre court and facing the streets.

The Design of the Mews – The panel strongly felt that the design of the Mews space needs more consideration with closer detailing of planters, benches, etc. The space was highlighted as an ideal location for kids to play and its currently not maximizing its potential. It was noted that further animation of the space should be considered.

The amenity space in the building was also highlighted as being too adult oriented and that more consideration could be given to families and amenities for kids.

Bike Parking – Several panel members commended the team on the forethought for allowing space for a future bike sharing station to go in, but it was felt that visitor bike parking is not apparent and needs to be developed in further detail. It was recommended that sheds for bikes could be incorporated into the mews, making it more convenient for the occupants. Alternatively, access from the mews into the grade related bike room should be considered.

Street Trees – One panel member noted that the design of street trees needs further consideration. It was expressed that consistency along the streets is desired.

Rental Office – Although it was acknowledged that the rental office location is an owner’s request to the design team, the panel strongly felt that this programme is situated in an area that is too prominent for the overall scheme. They encouraged a consideration of the space to allow for more flexibility should the rental office program no longer be necessary in the future. Also, the panel suggested that a café be considered as part of the space.

1.5 Panel’s Directions

Consideration for the following key issues should be contemplated:

1. Reconsider the design of the garbage collection system for the townhouses, especially the central enclosure in the Mews. If an alternate solution is not pursued, investigate how to make it less intrusive and re-consider its orientation.
2. Work towards a simplification of the south landscaping. Rethink the use of extensive hardscape and provide more green space.
3. Further develop the massing of the scheme to try to break up the heaviness and monumentality of the tower.
4. Townhome street front garbage enclosures need to be lowered.
5. Further develop the design of the rental office space to allow for more flexibility of the space to add other programmes.
6. Develop the design of the Mews to allow for more play and social space.
7. Consider using glazing for the pop up space from the garage to make pavilion feel lighter.

2.0 Project Review - Regent Park Phase Blk 16S SPA

2.1 Briefing Package

A briefing package with the following was provided to panel members one week prior to the meeting:

- **Regent Park Phase 3 Blk 16S SPA (Aug 2, 2016)**

2.2 Project Information

Project type: Site Plan Application
Design Team: Core Architects & Brooke McIlroy
Presenters: Babak Eslahjou (Core Architects) and Colin Berman (Brooke McIlroy)
Review: First Review
Conflict of Interest: Anne McIlroy (sat out from panel)

2.3 Matters for Consideration

Summary of Presentation

The project was introduced by Remo Agostino from Daniels. Bounded by the streets, Dundas Street East to the south, Sumach Street to the west, Tubman Street to the east and the Living Lane to the north, the proposed design consists of a 29 storey point tower and a 13 storey slab building on top of a 2 storey street related podium. The podium features retail at grade, facing Dundas Street East and office/commercial space on the second level. Grade related townhouses face Sumach and Tubman Streets.

Babak Eslahjou from Core Architects and Colin Berman from Brooke McIlroy presented the design for Block 16S identifying key features of the proposed project. The massing of the project consists of two volumes sitting on top of a 2 storey podium – point tower and slab tower. The massing of the point tower was created by pushing and pulling vertical lines in and out along the facades, to create an appearance of many smaller tower shapes to mitigate the visual impact of a tall tower. Conversely, the slab tower is articulated with horizontal window and balcony treatment.

Block 16S occupies the south west quadrant adjacent to the Living Lane project, previously introduced in June's DRP. In support of the Living Lane as a community space focused on bicycle culture, Block 16S includes bicycle locker rooms, a tool/maintenance room, and live/work units that are active design uses to provide "eyes-on-the-street."

A key design move features a plaza on the south west corner of the block, created by notching into the podium northward. The widened sidewalk and an alignment with the south façade of the adjacent Aquatic Centre, creates an open public space at the corner of the site that visually connects with the adjacent parkland while also allows for a designed and flexible programming area for pedestrians along Dundas Street East. The south façade of the podium that frames this plaza is articulated with large glass panels to give retail units maximum visibility and a colonnade of tall slender columns.

The landscape presentation highlighted various design elements for the Dundas St. plaza and the building's amenity spaces that included proposed programming, outdoor furniture, paving patterns, and planting.

2.4 Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects for Consideration

The panel expressed appreciation of the team's clear presentation and thoughtful development of the design scheme, especially with respect the building program layout and the creation of the public plaza at the South West corner.

The panel offered the following feedback and recommendations for consideration by the design team. Unless otherwise noted, the following is the consensus opinion of the panel.

South West Plaza - The panel felt that the plaza at the SW corner was well thought out, anticipating the seasonal and programmatic changes of use. However, the design is currently emphasizing the commercial components over the residential and it would be good to see more green space and texture to soften the scheme. There were differing opinions on the particular style of colonnade; some panel members felt the slender nature of the columns allowed light along the retail frontage and ensured the façade did not feel obscure and dark, while others expressed that this particular solution is too simplistic and that there was an opportunity for something greater. Further suggestions included giving more consideration to the tree colonnade and extending it toward the plaza, as well as more thought into how to deal with overflow traffic from the Aquatic Centre across the street.

Amenity Space – The panel appreciated the variety of programming elements in the amenity spaces for the residents, however, several problematic design challenges were identified. Due to its location and lack of access to natural light, the sunbathing area and vegetable garden are unlikely to be successful. Many suggested that further sun and shadow studies should be done to examine the viability of this programme element. Second, the placement of the meditation area above the loading docks should be reconsidered due to potential noise. And lastly, the amenity spaces will very likely be active causing noise disturbance to the adjacent units that back onto it. It was suggested that a barrier will alleviate some of this but may feel too solid and thus further studies should be carried out. One panel member proposed to investigate the possibility of shifting the amenity space vertically by half a storey.

Façade Considerations – The panel felt that the overall expression of the tower is working well with some key areas identified that needs further development:

- The North façade requires more articulation. There should be more emphasis on the bike program and the overall animation of space. The expression of the live work units should read as separate should entities. Pulling back volumes along the north façade would allow more sunlight to the Living Lane.
- The elevation of grade-related units along Tubman Street feels opaque and needs further consideration.
- The entrance to the residential tower feels tucked away. More presence on street should be further considered.
- Overhangs were recommended over the entrances of grade-related units.
- The second floor office space is a potential problem for the façade along the South as various tenant fit outs could impact the edge of the façade. The panel suggested investigating if there are means to prevent this from occurring.

Unit Layouts – A member of the panel expressed concern over the small unit sizes. They suggested that the design team look into unit layouts could allow for flexibility to be combined together so that larger

units could be made. The grade related 3 bedroom units were identified as a particularly challenging layout. The location of bedrooms along the street is linked with the inherent problem of privacy and security issues. The challenge of providing sufficient sunlight to the living spaces also requires further consideration.

2.5 Panel's Directions

Consideration for the following key issues should be contemplated:

1. Further develop the outdoor amenity space to ensure that program is aligned with on site conditions.
2. Reconsider some of the finer design decisions within the plaza space including extending street trees further South and adding more green space.
3. Further develop façade treatment along the North façade, especially in relation to the Live-Work units. Look for opportunities to animate the exterior more.
4. At grade unit layouts should be more carefully considered. Be mindful in the unit layout's relationship to the public realm to ensure privacy is maintained and sufficient daylight is received. Consider designing overhead canopies at grade related entrances.

3.0 Project Review – Lawrence Heights Blk 1E Townhomes

3.1 Briefing Package

A briefing package with the following was provided to panel members one week prior to the meeting:

- **Lawrence Heights Blk 1E Townhomes (Aug 2, 2016)**

3.2 Project Information

Project type: Site Plan Approval
Design Team: Tact Architecture & MBTW
Presenters: Prishram Jain (Tact Architecture), Christine Abe (MBTW)
Review: First Review
Conflict of Interest: Jason Chen (sat out)

3.3 Matters for Consideration

Summary of Presentation

The project was presented by Prishram Jain of Tact Architecture and Christine Abe from MBTW. The presentation was focused on the planning and site design of the project as it is in the early stages of design and it was noted that architectural expression is to come further into the design process.

The project is part of Phase 1 of the Lawrence Heights development, which straddles both sides of the Allen expressway. Blocks 1a and 1b had been presented previously to the panel and this presentation was for Block 1E, which is comprised of 44 TCHC back to back townhome units, 18 market back to back townhome units, 39 freehold townhome units.

The back to back units are positioned along the southwest corner with access from Varna Drive and two mews spaces. The freehold townhomes run along the North and East streets, with central block being back to back market units between the laneway and the mews.

In the name of consistency of the scheme the intended materiality is to match between TCHC rental units and market units. This consistency is further emphasized by implementing similar height and setbacks.

The common infrastructure includes a lane access used as circulation and servicing as well as a dedicated garbage room for TCHC residents with a maximum walking distance of 69m from the furthest unit. The lane incorporates laybys to facilitate drop off and pick up.

The landscape was envisioned as a hierarchy of streetscape. Varna St. was identified and designed as a more urban condition and uses elements that filter pedestrians onto the proposed future crosswalk. Street F has the most suburban treatment in the scheme, with the N – E streets having intermediate treatment. The scheme also has two mews running between units that vary between 10.5m and 19m in width and are intended to integrate the TCHC rental and market units. The landscape treatment of the unit frontages is similar between units as well, maintaining a continuous palette. The inclusion of weaving pathways is meant to create pockets of soft scape and landscape program, including small elements for play. Trees are used for shading and framing throughout the scheme.

The City commented that the raised pedestrian crossing is still in design with transportation services and there are some outstanding concerns that need to be resolved prior to it moving forward.

3.4 Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects for Consideration

The panel expressed appreciation over the clarity of the presentation and for the opportunity to review the project early in the design process.

The following is the feedback and recommendations of the panel on the matters for consideration. Unless otherwise noted, the following is the consensus opinion of the panel.

Site Layout and Laneways – Several panel members commented on the overall ordering principles applied to the site. The panel recognized that during the review of the master plan there was a strong suggestion for not having dead end lanes and misalignments, which are now causing challenging idiosyncrasies. There was a suggestion to step back and think how the strange geometries can be used to create order within the development. At a minimum, the opening to the park should be much wider to create the connection.

On a finer level, the panel wants more thought put into the laneway layout on this particular site. Private lanes should be minimized. Or reconsidered to incorporate a pedestrian realm and if possible, trees should be introduced and the scale broken up to differentiate from a purely servicing space. Additionally, repetitive garages along lanes can have a bolder intervention to help achieve this goal.

One panel member noted that the fire route can be reconsidered and that the team should advocate for the TCHC townhomes to extend to the NW corner of the site; the market units on that corner would need to be shifted.

Bike Parking – The panel raised a few points around issues of bike parking in the current proposal. In general, it was noted that an offsite bike parking solution can be problematic and causes potential issues

of safety and security. One panel member felt that there is a huge opportunity in this location to shift emphasis from car culture to bike culture and having an underground parking 10 min away discourages cycling; it was stated that a thoughtful and considered bike storage solution needs to be added that is respectful of cyclists.

Landscape – The panel felt that the landscape plan is aesthetically developed but functional aspects need to be further considered. More thought should be given to providing soft space and play elements in the mews as this will likely be primarily used by kids and families. One panel member suggested the opportunity to create one meter zone adjacent to lane for landscaping to help break up the hard surface.

TCHC Townhomes – A few key issues were identified by the panel that require further development in regards to the townhome design. These were as follows:

- Insufficient storage for this type of townhomes is commonly an issue as things end up “spilling” into exterior shared spaces. Consideration should be given to how this can be designed for.
- The panel questioned the accessibility of these TCHC units and suggested that more consideration can be given to how the population of LH is going to inhabit these units.
- The panel felt that the scheme would benefit from the addition of a porch like element or forecourt, where people could sit and watch the outdoor activity without being in the shadow of the entrance.
- The current proposed solution for community garbage can be problematic due to its residential adjacency; could it be pulled out as a separate pavilion? Or made into something special/unique?

3.5 Panel’s Directions

Consideration for the following key issues should be contemplated:

1. The orientation of lanes where this block lies needs to be reconsidered and re-ordered.
2. The design of the lanes needs further development. These spaces can be narrowed, broken up aesthetically with landscaping to create a more pedestrian friendly environment
3. Further consider the bike parking needs of the residents. The bike parking should be located where the users are (not across the street).
4. Further develop opportunities in the mews to add porches, play areas and spaces to allow for informal gathering. The mews should be less ornamental and more passive landscaping.
5. Consider accessibility and storage requirements for TCH residents.

4.0 Project Review - Allenbury Gardens Bldg D and Landscape

4.1 Briefing Package

A briefing package with the following was provided to Panel members one week prior to the meeting:

- **Allenbury Gardens Bldg D and Landscape (Aug 2, 2016)**

4.2 Project Information

Project type: Pre Site Plan Approval
Design Team: Core Architects & Baker Turner Landscape Architects
Presenters: Babak Eslahjou (Core Architects) & Deanne Christie (Baker Turner Landscape Architects)
Review: First Review
Conflict of Interest: None Declared

4.3 Matters for Consideration

Summary of Presentation

The project was introduced by Bryan Sherwood of TCHC who gave a description of context. The site is located north of Fairview Mall and within 5 minutes of Don Mills subway. The adjacent south neighbourhoods are currently undergoing intensification, but the immediately adjacent neighbourhood is a low rise suburban typology reliant on automobile use. Fairview Mall is directly to the south of the site.

The project was presented before the panel ahead of seeking Site Plan approval in order to be able to incorporate feedback from the panel. The Master Plan has been approved by the City including zoning and urban design guidelines.

The design team presented the current scheme which aims to respond to the urbandesign guidelines, allowing for central vehicular access as well as enforcing the “eyes on the street” concept. The design of the tower and balconies was noted as under development, however, the layout is very similar to that of the towers presented for Phase 1, it will be differentiated through materiality. The podium is treated as much more open than that of the closed treatment of Towers A & B. At the ground plane, a series of portals marks the entrances.

In terms of site layout, the visual presence of the service court is to be minimized working with the landscape to integrate with adjacent lobbies and the street. On a finer level, decorative paving is to be used for continuity. The primary pedestrian connections are laid out along main thoroughfares, with secondary connections along green spaces that link to signaled crossings. The walkability of the site is important and will be further emphasized during design development through paving and secondary elements such as benches and bike racks and framing with planting.

There are allowances for several common green amenity spaces; the tower private patio areas are to be separated by a wall that provides continuity along the street; the tower private amenity terrace will front onto the central courtyard amenity space; and the shared amenity space is to incorporate different uses to bring residents together allowing for different gathering elements for various group sizes. Further development is required to address sculptural, play and lighting elements.

4.4 Panel’s Consensus on Key Aspects for Consideration

The panel commented that it was a well thought out, albeit early in the design stages and the vast amount of open space is a great opportunity for this project.

The following is the feedback and recommendations of the panel on the matters for consideration. Unless otherwise noted, the following is the consensus opinion of the panel.

Service Court – The panel felt that the prominence of the service court is problematic. It was acknowledged that the size is minimized according to requirements but a suggestion was made to consider further design options such as a potential strategy where the overall width is increased to allow for the introduction of a green island. Overall, there was consensus that the court should be designed with pedestrians in mind and vehicular movement should be considered secondary.

A member of the panel felt there is a conflict between what should be a central access through the outdoor amenity and the current location of the service court. An option to move the service court to the East side should be explored. If the service bay stays in its current location, the curb cut should be reduced.

Massing – The panel felt that the overall scheme was fitting for the site however, the relation to future building E needs to be explored and should be presented at the next review of this scheme. The ground floor currently feels a bit crushed by the bulk of the building and needs further consideration. It would be worthwhile to explore how the building meets the ground floor in relation to issues of privacy while allowing transparency adjacent to pedestrian walkways and the future Building E. There should be consideration for vertical separation between the ground floor units and the tower above. It was also noted that the front entrance design needs further refinement to make sure it has a strong presence.

Several members were in agreement that the pinwheeling of balconies is well done.

Central Courtyard – The great amount of open space at the centre of the proposed developments was seen as a great opportunity. The panel suggested that the team explore the resident profile further in order to help program the space. It was seen as important to allow for usability by multi-generational families.

East Side Path – The panel expressed concern that there is a lack of privacy between the path along the East side of the property and the adjacent private yards. There needs to be more consideration of the design solutions at this edge; if possible the path should be widened and at a minimum a screening element needs to be added.

Bike Parking – The panel felt that the scheme was missing careful consideration of accommodation for cyclists. They suggested that the design has to do more for bikes; ramps should be eliminated and a room on the ground floor or a separate “bike house” should be introduced to the scheme.

4.5 Panel’s Directions

Consideration for the following key issues should be contemplated:

1. The design of the service courtyard should be further explored; emphasis should be placed on pedestrian friendly design.
2. Further explore the potential of the central courtyard; ensure program elements are varied and provide play areas.

3. Re-consider the approach to bike storage; make it easier for cyclists to access and preferably locate the space at grade.
4. Develop the elevation of the ground floor townhomes.
5. Consider the relationship to property of Building E and how the walkway plays out between private and public realms.