



Toronto Community Housing Design Review Panel
Minutes of Meeting
October 12, 2017

The DRP met on Thursday October 12, 180 Sackville Road, Ground Floor
Amenity Space 12:00pm

Present:	Regrets:
<p>Andre D'Elia, Superkul Ken Greenberg, Greenberg Consulting Sybil Wa, Diamond Schmitt Architects Paul Bailey, RIVIVE Anne McIlroy, Brook McIlroy (Chair) Roland Rom Colthoff, RAW Design Ali Elchanti, Regent Park Resident David Leinster, The Planning Partnership Samuel Abebe, Lawrence Heights Resident Labib Chowdhury, Alexandra Park Resident</p>	<p>Antoine Belaieff, Metrolinx (Vice Chair) Gunta Mackars, Stantec David Anselmi, Canada Lands Company Shirley Blumberg, KPMB Architects*</p>
TCHC Staff	City of Toronto Staff:
<p>Vincent Tong Kelly Skeith Andrew Goodyear Abigail Moriah Joyce Ho Jed Kilbourn Ilidio Coito</p>	<p>Ran Chen Seana Kerr Helen Iardas</p>
Recording Secretary: Anna Procopio	

Opening Remarks

Vincent Tong (TCHC) stated that he hopes to have TCHC's new CEO Kathy Milsom come to the DRP eventually and introduced the new TCHC resident members of the panel: Ali Echanti from Regent Park; Samuel Abebe from Lawrence Heights; and Labibe Chowdhury from Alexandra Park. There are three permanent members and three alternates, with the goal of having resident representation from each of the three major revitalization communities.

Anne McIlroy (Chair) stated that the resident members had been briefed.

Project Reviews

The following projects were reviewed by the TCHC Design Review Panel on October 12, 2017:

- **Allenbury – Buildings C & D + Townhouses (2nd review)**
- **Alexandra Park Phase 2 Master Plan (2nd Review)**
- **Regent Park – Dixon Hall (3rd Review)**

1.0 Project Review – Allenbury Buildings C & D (2nd Review)



1.1 Project Information

Project type: Site Plan Approval

Design Review: Second review

Design Team: CORE Architects, V + A Architects, Baker Turner Inc.

Presenters: Earl Mark (CORE) & Terence Van Elslander (V + A Architects) & Deanne Christie (Baker Turner Inc)

Conflict of Interest: None

Vote: Redesign –
Refine –
Fully Support – 10

1.2 Introduction

Staff from TCHC introduced the project. The neighbourhood context was presented and a project overview was given. The first phase of the revitalization is near completion. TCHC residents have moved back to the Phase 1 townhomes and the Soul market condo units are now occupied as well. The remainder of Phase 1 will be complete in early 2018. There will be a few minor changes to the design and function of the townhouses for Phase 2 but largely they will remain the same.

The previous plan that was last presented to the DRP panel was shown and it was stated that there are changes to the block layout and central courtyard. One of the requests from the DRP at the last session was to

present all the plans together (i.e. market buildings, TCHC buildings and landscape), providing a rationale for the presentation today.

1.3 Panel Commentary

The panel commended the team on the design development in response to the Panel's previous comments. In general, the panel members received the proposal positively and were particularly impressed by the revised block layout.

Integration with Surrounding Neighbourhoods

City of Toronto staff asked the panel to comment on how the new site configuration and building massing integrates with the surrounding neighbourhoods, both to the north and south of the site. With respect to the massing for Building E, there is a strategy to step down the building toward the existing residential fabric to the north. Part of the overall design directive is to maintain the 45 degree angular plane. Some panel members felt that the combination of two wings of development with a central courtyard and a park has created a great natural crossroads for Allenbury and nearby residents for gathering. The concept of "third places", that is, places where different groups can come together and share space was offered by the panel. The Paintbox in Regent Park was offered as an example of a successful 'third space'. The panel suggested that there could be an opportunity to include this kind of space, such as a small café or shared amenity that would serve everyone in the neighbourhood, at the corner of Building C by the park.

Central Courtyard

The panel appreciated the further elaboration of the paver design in the courtyard and between the two buildings. They also appreciated the seating planned for the courtyard, however a number of panel members noted that they feel the space should be further programmed, perhaps with a children's play area, dog off-leash area, or other features that will facilitate use of the space by different people and allow them to get together and engage. The panel noted that the detailing of the space will be important (ex. fences, wall details, planting, etc).

Buildings

One panel member commented that it is unfortunate there is no mandate to create accessible townhouses and suggested the team look for opportunities to improve accessibility in the design of the townhouses where possible. One panel member suggested that the team should explore ways to create opportunities for the potential conversion of at grade residential units into commercial uses in the long term, such as the inclusion of two-storey units at grade. One panel member appreciated the re-design of the Building C entrance, noting that it is positive that it has led to a larger amenity space for TCHC tenants.

It was also noted that the corner condition of each of the buildings is very similar and additional shaping / refinement of the building designs will help to ensure an appropriate fit with the context.

Block Layout

Overall, the panel was impressed by the re-orientation of the blocks, particularly the re-articulation of Block T5, commenting that it achieves better flow. The panel felt the opening up of the townhouse blocks is a successful move and has started to push the outdoor spaces toward a more satisfying scale. The panel commented that Block T7 could more strongly connect to the outdoor space surrounding it.

Circulation

The panel appreciated the stronger east-west connection to the park, as well as the stronger north south connection. The changes to the shared loading and circulation area were also received positively, however overall the panel felt site circulation could be improved, noting that the coordination of pathways between the new development and the central park has yet to be fully resolved. It was noted by panel members that loading would be better located inside the building, however the panel understood that this is a challenge. A shared paver pattern that links the whole project together would improve place-making on site.

1.4 Chair's Summary

The panel chair commended the team on their efforts in improving the townhouse blocks, pedestrian zones and overall site layout. The panel offered the following suggestions to help further refine the scheme:

- The loading dock would be better if fully inside, but the panel appreciates that this is a significant challenge
- The north-south connection could be further improved – currently it feels somewhat encumbered
- Uses in the central courtyard should be further developed and different activities and furnishings should be explored so that the space is not just passive
- Explore the idea of 'third places' and opportunities to include one on site – if this isn't possible, explore the potential for a pop-up element in the park
- Further develop place-making details, such as paver geometry and ensure seamless connections between spaces
- Explore opportunities where grade level spaces could eventually transition into commercial spaces sometime in the future
- Improve accessibility by removing steps where they are not necessary

2.0 Alexandra Park Phase 2 Master Plan

2.1 Project Information

Project type: Pre OPA & ZBA Submission

Design Review: First Review

Design Team: Urban Strategies & Architects Alliance

Presenters: Joyce Ho (TCHC),
Michel Trocme (Urban Strategies) &
Cyndi Rottenberg-Walker
(Urban Strategies)

Conflict of Interest: None

Vote: No vote



2.2 Introduction

TCHC introduced the project and explained the extensive consultation process with residents that has informed all aspects of this project from the very beginning. The Guiding Principles that were developed with residents at the start of the project have carried through to Phase 2. Phase 1a is now complete and occupied and Phase 1b construction is underway and will be completed by fall of 2018. The refurbishment of 20 Vanauley Street was completed in 2016. Phase 2 will see the replacement of 122 townhouses; residents expressed concerns about townhouse forms, specifically that there were too many integrated units in an earlier version of the Plan. Previously residents asked that all stacked townhouses be removed from the Plan.

2.3 Panel Commentary

The panel offered the following feedback for the revised master plan of Alexandra Park Phase 2:

Public Realm

The panel expressed some concern about how the POPs will be designed and how they will remain accessible to the public. Several members recommended that the design team develop a public realm strategy that considers the hierarchy of all open spaces and how they relate to one another as well as a strategy of how to revive Cameron and also address building edges that front onto open spaces. As the project moves forward, the team should develop place-making strategies and create a program for the open spaces.

Community Centre and North-South Connection

The panel felt that the community centre should be a stand-alone building to allow it to function as autonomously as possible; it should have a stronger relationship to the park than to the adjacent buildings.

The North–South connection was said to be generally handled well but recommended that there be some more refinement to the Alexandra Park Plaza on the north end to make it more open and prominent and to provide for more opportunities for east-west porosity. It was also recommended that there be some prominence given to the entranceway where the community centre meets the public park.

The panel also pointed out that there is a need to think about governance of this connection, including operational issues such as who will pay for maintenance, etc if the connection remains private and the responsibility of the Co-op. The panel suggested looking at the Regent Park Living Lane design as a precedent when exploring opportunities for the north-south connection.

Dundas Frontage

Further refinement of the Dundas Street frontage was recommended. The panel pointed out that the relationship to both Kensington Market and

Ryerson Community School needs to be explored and reflected in the building massing. Two areas of concern regarding the massing were: the massing and shadow impact of the 19 storey building on Alexandra Park plaza and on the sidewalk to the north; and, the relationship of the building furthest to the west to Ryerson Community School.

The panel felt that the massing needs further development to ensure that interesting building design is ultimately achieved and recommended using different architects for each of the buildings.

Social Development and Planning

A member of the panel commended the design for the inclusion of a Social Economic Development space but suggested that a social development plan is required to work in tandem with the space provided in order to realize a continuity of opportunities and build on the success of what's already in the community and/or nearby neighbourhoods.

2.4 Chair's Summary

The panel chair commended the team on the presentation, expressed support of this plan and noted the improvements in terms of overall layout. The following suggestions were made for further improvement and refinement of the plan:

- Further develop the programming of the central green and define its role as well as the role of the other open spaces in terms of the overall public realm.
- Consider how the new Vanauley Walk will terminate at the Alexandra Park Plaza: Will there be a pavilion? Will it be tucked under a building or part of the open space? etc.
- Further develop the thinking around the Dundas Street frontage, including greater consideration of the relationship to Kensington Market and Ryerson Community School, and ensure that separation distances and scale are carefully examined.
- Develop a green space strategy that takes into consideration all public green spaces and parks (including POPs and rooftop spaces)

with respect to permeability, publicness, and porosity to the spine in particular.

- Consider how public place-making strategies can bolster economic and community development strategies.

3.0 Regent Park – Dixon Hall (Third Review)

3.1 Project Information

Project type: Pre OPA & ZBA Submission
Design Review: Third Review
Design Team: Urban Strategies & Architects Alliance
Presenters: Kelly Skeith (TCHC),
Neil Hetherington (Dixon Hall)
Conflict of Interest: None
Vote: No vote



3.2 Introduction

The project was introduced by Kelly Skeith who explained that Dixon Hall had previously been presented for its second DRP review in April 2017 and received support for the design. However, as significant changes to the building façade have occurred, these changes are again being presented to the panel. This project is part of Regent Park Phase 3 and is located just north of the Regent Park athletic grounds.

3.3 Commentary

Overall, the panel received the changes to the façade of Dixon Hall positively. Several members commended the team on their engagement with youth in the community, and how that engagement has influenced the building design and inspired programming. Additionally, the following feedback was provided:

Façade Colours

Although the panel liked the progress of the design and supported the fact that the façade was drawing on inspiration from the engagement sessions with local youth, they felt that further refinement of the colour palette would strengthen the design. They suggested re-examining the choice of hues and/or re-editing the colour choices to ensure that the building feels contextual and connected to the rest of the community. A further development of the detailing and how it relates to the colour choices could also prove useful in this regard.

3.4 Chair Summary

The panel Chair expressed support for the project, especially its overall form and use of white space. The Chair re-iterated the panel's appreciation of the community engagement process and pointed out that this will be a unique building within Regent Park. A single comment was given for the further development of the scheme:

- Further examine the use of colour and its associations.