



Toronto Community Housing Design Review Panel
Minutes of Meeting

The Design Review Panel met on Friday, November 20, 2020 at 3:00pm on WebEx

Present:	Regrets:
Antoine Belaieff (Chair) Sybil Wa, Diamond Schmitt Architects (Vice Chair) David Anselmi, Canada Lands Company Roland Rom Colthoff, RAW Design Andre D'Elia, Superkul David Leinster, The Planning Partnership Gunta Mackars, Metrolinx Carol Phillips, Moriyama & Teshima Architects Graeme Stewart, ERA Architects Margaret Zeidler, 401 Richmond Limited Yiwon Zhu, Urban Strategies	Samuel Abebe, Lawrence Heights Resident Berhane Abraha, Lawrence Heights Resident Paul Bailey, REVIVE Ali Elchanti, Regent Park Resident William Shane, Alexandra Park Resident Rubesha Zia, Regent Park Resident
TCHC Staff:	City of Toronto Staff:
Tyler Baker Michael Lam Anna Procopio Kelly Skeith Vincent Tong Peter Zimmerman	Ran Chen, Urban Designer Megan Rolph, City Planning
Recording Secretary: Derek Brunelle, Associate Development Manager, Development	

Opening Remarks

TCHC Senior Development Director Peter Zimmerman introduced new panel Chairs and Vice-Chairs Antoine Belaieff and Sybil Wa. An overview of the meeting agenda was also provided.

Project Review

The following project was reviewed by the TCHC Design Review Panel on November 20, 2020:

- **Alexandra Park Revitalization Sites 3 and 16**

Alexandra Park Introduction

Tyler Baker from TCHC introduced the Alexandra Park Master Plan with an overview of the guiding principles for revitalization. He explained that the project is now moving into Phase 2A of a total of four phases. The areas for each of these Phases have been rezoned and the master plan has been approved. Phase 2A consists of a market condominium, a TCHC rental building and two blocks of townhouses. The condo and TCHC rental building were previously approved by the DRP and today's review is the second review for the townhouses. The townhouse blocks are located at the corners of Denison Avenue and Grange Avenue (Site 3) and Augusta Avenue and Grange Avenue (Site 16).

1.0 Alexandra Park Revitalization Sites 3 and 16

1.1 Project Information

Project type: Schematic Design
Design Review: Second Review
Design Team: Diamond Schmitt Architects Inc. (DSAI), Janet Rosenberg Studio (JRS)
Presenters: David Dow and Arne Suraga, DSAI
Greg Warren, Janet Rosenberg Studio



Alexandra Park Revitalization: Site 3

Conflict of Interest: Sybil Wa

Vote: Support with Conditions (Unanimous)
No further review required

Arne Suraga and David Dow of DSAI presented the Alexandra Park Phase 2 Passive House pilot project, located on Sites 3 and 16. The units are targeting Tier 4 of the Toronto Green Standard and pursuing the standards of 'Passive House,' a thorough sustainability program monitored by the European-based PHI Institute and the US-based PHIUS institute. Site 3 contains five townhouse units, each with front and backyard conditions. The units each have four and five bedrooms and include basements. The units front onto Grange Ave. and have rear yard conditions that relate to the POPS of the new Sites 1 and 3. Site 16 involves 16 back-to-back townhouse units – 14 of which are 3-bedroom and two of which are 4-bedroom.

This project underwent review at the TCH Design Review Panel in May, 2020. The design team discussed how comments from the previous review were addressed, including: more attention to outdoor spaces, material shift for townhouse façades, canopy and entrance treatments, reducing visibility of garbage receptacles, clarity around POPS to backyard relationship, and

unit ventilation. The architects also focused on the ways in which the side yards of both sites were animated, and the reduction of materiality and cladding.

In addition to addressing these items, the presenters explained the redistribution of soft landscaping around units, further consideration of bicycle parking, and a new, brick-focused façade for both blocks.



Alexandra Park Revitalization: Site 16

1.2 Panel Commentary

Overall, the Panel was impressed with the ambitiousness of the project and satisfied with changes made since the first review. The following key themes emerged from questions and comments:

Environmental Considerations

The Panel was again supportive of the Passive House and Tier 4 TGS approaches of both sets of townhouses. The Panel reiterated the importance of setting an environmentally-focused example for future revitalization buildings.

More questions emerged with regards to water filtration. The Panel commended the introduction of a rain garden bioretention area for Site 3 and a below-grade water retention system for Site 16. The Panel indicated that these changes represented a sustainable and forward-thinking strategy for addressing stormwater on site.

One Panel member commented on internal building materials, particularly insulation. It was suggested that mineral insulation should be considered as opposed to foam wherever possible. The use of mineral insulation helps to reduce a building's carbon impact.

Building Design

One of the major changes to this review involved a new, brick-focused façade. The introduction of this material – and the curved exteriors – was well-received. Some comments reflected the need to focus on fine-grain details such as brick shading to avoid a ‘grey/institutional’ feel – a focus on subtle colour (such as gold/yellow hues) wherever possible. Overall, the all-brick approach was well received. Panel members also suggested the use of bricks from the previous development as a way to explore heritage and highlight the legacy of this community through past architectural styles.

The presenters introduced a new rectangular popup on Site 16. Panel members agreed that this change helps to limit visibility of the roof-top access structure from the street, also allowing improved programming for the terraces. Ultimately, the footprint has been reduced significantly in this design – now smaller and hidden from street view. The new bicycle storage next to stairwell entrances was also well received.

Public Realm

Regarding both blocks, Panel members were satisfied with the greater attention to detail in side yard conditions. In particular, the Panel appreciated the rotation of the entrance of Site 3 to Denison, further activating that area with planter beds and seating.

Still, Panel members considered the need for greater attention to the relationship between the rear yards and the POPS space adjacent to Site 3. Fence materiality and access needs to be further explored. Members suggested that the POPS relationship to Denison requires more attention to create a more inviting entranceway.

Panel members appreciated entrance canopies throughout, though suggested moving toward a more seamless design.

1.3 Chair’s Summary:

At the conclusion of the discussion, Chair Antoine Beliaeff provided the following comments and recommendations:

- Overall, there was support from the Panel for the proposed building designs;
- Façade treatment was supported but several members indicated the need for further definition, which appears to be ongoing. The panel’s preference would be for the current design scheme to continue forward;
- Ensure that the capping of garbage enclosure can accommodate taller bins or can be moved;
- Consider removing the hard planter boxes in private yards;
- Options for fencing (Site 3) should be further explored to create a more ‘urban’ appearance – less suburban, more defined;
- Site should continue to work towards achieving a ‘showcase status’ of communicating sustainability;
- Lots of appreciation for the rain garden and other water filtration proposals – perhaps consider making this water cycle visible.