

Toronto Community Housing Design Review Panel
Minutes of Meeting
December 18, 2017

The Design Review Panel met on Monday, December 18, 2017 at
180 Sackville Road, Ground Floor Amenity Space 2:00pm

Present:
David Anselmi, Canada Lands Company Paul Bailey, REVIVE Antoine Beliaeff, Metrolinx (Vice Chair) Shirley Blumberg, KPMB Architects Labib Chowdhury, Alexandra Park Resident Andre D'Elia, Superkul Ken Greenberg, Greenberg Consulting David Leinster, The Planning Partnership Roland Rom Colthoff, RAW Design Rubesha Zia, Regent Park Resident
Present (Not Commenting):
Anne McIlroy, Brook McIlroy (Chair) – Conflict of Interest William Shane, Alexandra Park Resident Berhane Abraha, Lawrence Heights Resident
Regrets:
Sybil Wa, Diamond Schmitt Architects Gunta Mackars, Metrolinx Samuel Abebe, Lawrence Heights Resident
City of Toronto Staff:
Ran Chen

TCHC Staff:
Vincent Tong Jed Kilbourn Jason Chen Frozan Shaikhamiri Racquel Nelson

Opening Remarks

Vincent Tong of TCHC started the meeting by thanking the panel for their contributions throughout 2017 and reminding everyone that there is currently a call for new members to the DRP. Interested candidates should refer to the posting on either the Toronto Community Housing or Ontario Association of Landscape Architects websites. The deadline for submissions is January 5th, 2018.

Antoine Belaieff welcomed Rubesha Zia to the panel as this was her first meeting since becoming a member of the panel.

Project Reviews

The following projects were reviewed by the TCHC Design Review Panel on December 18, 2017:

- **Regent Park – Block 17S (First Review)**

1.0 Project Review – Regent Park – Block 17S (First Review)

1.1 Project Information

Project Type:	Pre Site Plan Approval
Design Review:	First review
Design Team:	Quadrangle Architects & Brook McIlroy
Presenters:	Less Klein, Quadrangle Colin Berman, Brook McIlroy
Conflict of Interest:	Anne McIlroy
Vote:	N/A



1.2 Introduction

The project context was given by Jed Kilbourn of TCHC who reviewed the Regent Park Master Plan and how this project fits into the greater context. He highlighted nearby properties currently under construction and yet to be built and outlined the existing amenities (RP Aquatic Centre, RP Athletic Grounds, and Regent Park) as well as future amenities (Dixon Hall Youth Centre, the Living Lane)

Following Jed, Allison Platt from Daniels Corp. spoke to the general vision for the project as the gateway to Regent Park and the city along the Eastern edge of the community. She then introduced the design team and specifically the presenters – Less Klein of Quadrangle and Colin Berman of Brook McIlroy.

Less Klein of Quadrangle gave an overview of the architectural design strategy behind the current iteration of Block 17S and Colin Berman outlined the landscape strategies for the project, including a further development of the Living Lane project.

1.3 Panel Commentary

The panel commended the presentation team as well as TCHC staff on the improved presentation format and clarity and expressed their appreciation on the emphasis on sustainability. In general, the panel members were positive about the proposed design, particularly the Living Lane component, but offered the following feedback for further refinement:

Building Massing

Several members of the panel expressed that the massing of the building needs further consideration. They felt that the revised scheme reads fractured and busy, with too many disparate elements. In particular they worried that the experience from the street was too fragmented along the four facades. They suggested working on the three key elements (the tower, the mid-rise and the podium) to bring them into a more harmonious relationship. It was also pointed out that the weaving concept that was referred to as the genesis of the design scheme was not reading very strongly in the current design iteration. One member pointed out that the original scheme shown in the presentation did this more successfully.

A couple of members of the panel suggested that the using the curtain wall strip to visually split the tower into thinner vertical elements is somewhat problematic. First, it contradicts the overall strategy of using punched windows, and second it may not be as successful at dividing the volume when built as compared to how it is shown in the rendering.

One panel member felt that a reconsideration of the mid-rise orientation would be a good design exercise. He felt that although positioning the mid-rise building east-west along Dundas Street could have some negative impact on shadowing outdoor amenities, it would help provide a frame on Dundas Street.

There was a concern expressed regarding the new height being proposed for this area as the intersection of Dundas St. and Tubman Ave. it is not a key intersection to necessarily warrant this height, which may be too imposing at street level. A suggestion was made to consider redistributing the height of the tower to the mid-rise.

Finally, the brick frames shown on top of the podium were felt to be unnecessary from a climactic perspective and could pose a potential maintenance issue in the future.

Ground Floor Planning & Retail

The panel felt that the inclusion of live/work units along the lane is a very positive contribution to the project and that this should be pushed even further, by either adding extra live/work space or planning around the possibility of small scale local retail at the ground floor.

The panel also expressed that refinements were needed to a few ground floor conditions:

1 – At the corner of Dundas St. and River St., the retail and residential lobby should be flipped as the retail would ideally take the prominent corner condition. There was a recognition that this would result in some servicing issues, but the panel members felt these could be resolved.

2 – At the corner of the Living Lane, the panel felt that there is a potential conflict between the servicing vehicles entering the building and the bike shop at the corner. This should be further examined.

3 – The strategy for creating set-backs in the building envelope should be rationalized using program at ground level. It might logically occur at entrances and lobbies, however, there are a number of set-backs in the building envelope along all streets that appear to need justification.

4 – The panel felt that the one stair access for the bike storage may be an issue and suggested that it would be worthwhile to do a forecasting study on the volume and traffic anticipated to be going in and out of the bike storage space.

Living Lane

The panel commended the team on the further development of the Living Lane, specifically indicating that the animation along the walls has been

developed well. They offered the following suggestions for further refinement of the design:

1 – The team should pursue the issue of extending the paving treatment beyond the curb and into the adjacent streets with Transportation Services.

2 – More consideration for climatic conditions should be given to further develop the design. Considering that the lane is shadow most of the day, the design should look for opportunities at the corners where people could take advantage of the sun. Also, the design should explore the addition of street furniture that allows for use in rainy conditions (canopies, etc).

3 – The landscape treatment on the east side that is more service oriented reads as too monolithic. The team should look for ways to break this up. In general, the team should continue to examine strategies to be more delightful and quirky along the lane; the panel suggested strategies such as adding ivy on blank walls or adding translucent glazing to bike elements as possible considerations.

4 – The design should consider the addition of cameras in areas where bike storage is located to promote security and reduce chance of theft.

5 – Explore opportunities to add cues/features for people with visual impairments to make the space more inclusive (guideway, etc)

Street Treatment

Members of the panel expressed some concern due to the lack of context as to how the landscape treatment along the street, in particular on Tubman avenue relates to the surrounding neighbourhood and to what is installed across the street in terms of trees, paving and street furniture. They expressed that this relationship should be presented at the next review.

1.4 Chair's Summary

The chair commended the team again on the clear and complete presentation format as well as the design development of the Living Lane. Suggestions for further development given by the panel were summarized as follows:

- For the tower massing, further development is needed to bring about a cohesiveness to the scheme (blending the podium, mid-rise, and tower elements) and in general some tidying up of the design details. There was one radical proposal to re-orient mid-rise, which could be explored in combination with reshuffling of density from the tower.
- The program should continue to look for further opportunities to bring in individual retail and/or entrepreneurs. At the ground floor, the positioning of program needs a bit more careful consideration (especially in the context of future transportation planning for Dundas St.)
- For the Living Lane, ensure enjoyable and safe environments for both people and property (ex. bicycles). This includes looking at CPTED principles; adding elements of whimsy and quirkiness to the facades; considering both shady and rainy conditions; and adding accessible features. There should also be a further effort to carry the laneway across the street.

The Chair brought up two additional issues for TCHC and/or the design team to follow up on with City Staff:

- The team should explore with the City whether the Living Laneway could be re-classified as a POPS space. The City should advise if there is a mechanism to change its designation and what the ramifications of such a change would be.
- For all revitalization proposals moving forward, TCHC should discuss with the City if there is an opportunity to reduce parking requirement for new buildings.