



Toronto Community Housing Design Review Panel
Minutes of Meeting
Tuesday, February 6, 2018

The Design Review Panel met on Tuesday, February 6, 2018 at
246 Sackville Road, Ground Floor Amenity Space 2:00pm

Present:	Regrets:
Anne McIlroy, Brook McIlroy (Chair) Antoine Belaieff, Metrolinx (Vice Chair) David Anselmi, Canada Lands Company Ken Greenberg, Greenberg Consulting Roland Rom Colthoff, RAW Design * Sybil Wa, Diamond Schmitt Architects Samuel Abebe, Lawrence Heights William Shane, Alexandra Park Ali Elchanti, Regent Park	Shirley Blumberg, KPMB Architects Andre D'Elia, Superkul Gunta Mackars, Metrolinx Paul Bailey, REVIVE Labib Chowdhury, Alexandra Park Rubesha Zia, Regent Park David Leinster, The Planning Partnership*
* sat out Block 16N presentation due to Conflict of Interest	* present as presenter for St. James' Towns MP
TCHC Staff	City of Toronto Staff:
Vincent Tong Andrew Goodyear Kelly Skeith Jason Chen Jed Kilbourn Kristy Wung Mirej Vasic Frozan Shaikhamiri	Allison Meistrich Jason Brander Lara Tarlo Kelly Sather
Recording Secretary: Joanna Kolakowska	

Opening Remarks

Anne McIlroy opened the meeting with the announcement of Ken Greenberg's retirement from the DRP. Vincent Tong thanked Ken Greenberg for his long term service on the DRP on behalf of TCHC.

Project Reviews

The following projects were reviewed by the TCHC Design Review Panel on February 6, 2018:

- **St. James' Town – Master Plan Schematic Design (First Review)**
- **Regent Park – Block 16N (Third Review)**

1.0 Project Review – St. James' Town Master Plan Schematic Design (First Review)

1.1 Project Information

Project type: Schematic Design

Design Review: First review

Design Team: The Planning Partnership

Presenters: David Leinster,
The Planning Partnership

Conflict of Interest: David Leinster

Vote: N/A



1.2 Introduction

Kristy Wung from TCHC introduced the St. James' Public Realm Improvement project with a quick overview of the goals of the initiative and the context of the neighbourhood. Following Kristy, Allison Meistrich from City of Toronto gave a contextual presentation outlining the history of the St. James Town Community Improvement Plan, describing the community engagement to date, identifying the key stakeholders, and highlighting the area study results.

David Leinster presented the St. James Public Realm proposal along St. James Avenue and the adjacent TCHC owned open space. The project aims to improve the public realm by creating a series of differently scaled spaces for bringing community together. He described how the design drivers for the scheme include flexibility, longevity, variety, and open sight lines and outlined the current condition as well as the proposed responses through the use of various design features.

1.3 Panel Commentary

The panel felt that the general approach of the design scheme was well thought out and appreciated the geometry and how the various types of uses are laid out on the site. The following feedback was offered for further consideration:

Stewardship Plan:

The panel felt that although the proposal is strong from a design perspective, the City of Toronto and TCHC need to have a long term stewardship plan for the maintenance and operations of this public realm in order to ensure that the space is successful. One member expressed the concern that without such a plan in place, the capital investment will be wasted as the space falls into a state of disrepair. The panel encouraged the involvement of community groups and the consideration of providing on site staff in a caretaking role and possibly a small facility to support this role. It was suggested that this function should be filled by someone from the community as a means of community economic development.

Project Edges:

A couple of concerns were raised with regards to the treatment of the edge conditions bordering the site. Mainly, there were concerns that the ground floor program of the adjacent buildings is not being considered. There was a recognition that any alterations to the adjacent buildings are outside the scope of this project, however, it was suggested that an exploration of future changes that would strengthen the public realm be undertaken. Possible interventions mentioned were creating greater transparency between exterior and interior and embedding support infrastructure such as hose bib, storage, sinks, etc.

In addition to considering ground floor adjacencies, a member suggested that the possibility of a continuous of pathways to the east to move through from Bleeker St. to Parliament St. should be investigated to connect the space to adjacencies and promote more pedestrian traffic.

Garbage/Service Area:

The panel supported the concept of combining garbage collection in a single area, but felt the scheme could be refined further to include both adjacent towers in one location. A further consideration of how the various waste streams are treated with this area was suggested. Also, the panel felt that the views from the adjacent buildings overlooking this area should be considered.

Market:

The market concept and design was received very positively by the panel with lot of support for the container model. The market platforms layout of wares was noted as likely to be effective but a suggestion was made to consider adding a lockable element which potentially could also help with vertical layout of wares for the vendors.

Street Furniture:

As the project moves forward, the panel requested to see a cohesive strategy around placement of street furniture including bike racks, wasted receptacles, community billboards, etc. There was also a comment to express concern over protecting the seating wall areas from skateboarders.

Tree Planting & Community Gardens:

A member of the panel pointed out that although the tree planting is working well for creating enclosure around the various spaces, the tree planting strategy could be used more effectively to help emphasize the linearity of movement paths and highlight the pedestrian dynamism of the site.

Programming:

The variety of permanently programmed uses was well received; however, there was one suggesting of potentially looking at adding skateboarding program as it tends to be a family oriented activity and deters skateboarders from using adjacent landscape features for the purpose.

One member felt that the community garden program should look at connecting with the Toronto Foundation in order to ensure use and education in terms of city food production.

The panel expressed a few ideas around considering what the future programming of the central event space would be. If larger events such as festivals were envisioned there was some concern that there is insufficient surrounding space for temporary infrastructure to provide adequate support. The panel urged to look at strategies that combine the possibility of maintaining green usable space in non-event mode.

Finally, one panel member suggested that the possibility of providing free WiFi be explored as a means of attracting people to the space.

1.4 Chair's Summary

The chair commended the team on a clear presentation and a well thought out design scheme. She summarized the feedback provided as follows:

- TCHC & the City of Toronto are strongly encouraged to develop a stewardship and phasing plan for the project to ensure ongoing maintenance and successful use by the community. There should be a consideration of a maintenance facility for a park this scale.

- The team should further engage with the project edge conditions to help activate the open space through both residential and retail program. The team was urged to push the boundaries of the scope of the project.
- The design should consider the views from above given the density of units in the surrounding tower.
- The market layout is well developed but the design should now focus on the design details of the infrastructure provided.
- Further development of street furnishing, including bike storage is necessary to ensure a coherent scheme.
- The current scheme should be used as a benchmark for the future design development of the greater contextual area of St. James. The plan should be superimposed on the larger context plan and treated as Phase 1 of the longer term strategy for the neighbourhood.

2.0 Project Review – Regent Park – Block 16N (Third Review)

2.1 Project Information

Project type: Site Plan Approval

Design Review: Third review

Design Team: RAW Design & thinc design

Presenters: Carsten Liesenberg,
RAW Design
Audrey Fung, thinc design



Conflict of Interest: Roland Rom Colthoff

Vote: N/A

2.2 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). He also explained that it is necessary that a Satellite District Energy Plant be housed on this site in order to meet the increased density of Regent Park, which is the driving force behind having a third review at the DRP.

The project team of Carsten Liesenberg of RAW Design and Audrey Fung of thinc design presented the current design scheme, highlighting the key changes of the current design from the one previously presented.

After the design presentation, Jason Brander from the City of Toronto Planning expressed his support of the current iteration of the design. He asked the team to submit the following as part of the next submission to the city: details on screening of services/utilities/exhaust grilles, etc., further clarification of bike facilities and details on the balcony projections.

2.3 Panel Commentary

The panel expressed their appreciation of the high caliber of the design submission and the clarity of the presentation format. The scheme was positively received with one member commending the design team and TCHC on following the direction of the DRP to date and providing family friendly amenity facilities as well as developing the laneway into a vibrant public space. He suggested that the model for both should be applied throughout the city.

The following feedback was offered for further consideration:

Building Materiality

Overall, the panel felt that this was a handsome proposal with skillful articulation and appreciated the reversal of the light and dark material palette as well as the removal of the concrete frame. However, several members did express concern over the more extensive use of spandrel panel and glass balconies as it was felt that neither would age well in time. They felt the previous materiality was more fitting to the project.

A panel member suggested that the roof plane should be treated as part of the aesthetic building skin and the team should further consider programming for the unoccupied green roofs such as bee or other nature programs, public art or the inclusion of aesthetic interventions.

The treatment of the corner at the Living Lane and Tubman Ave presented as Option 2 was felt to be too closely resembling hoarding and therefore potentially prone to graffiti and vandalism.

Satellite District Energy Plant

Two approaches were given for better dealing with the rooftop equipment (chillers) associated with the SDEP. At a minimum, it was suggested that the chillers be screened as not to be seen from the public realm down the street. However, the preferable approach would be to find a way to express the presence of the SDEP, creating a feature.

Public Art Component

The panel felt that the provision of a public art piece at the corner of the Living Lane and Tubman Ave would be very welcome but advised getting the commitment early in order to allow for efficient integration with the building design.

Soil Volume

The panel commended the team on the design changes made throughout the public realm but cautioned that some of the street tree plantings should be examined for soil volume to ensure that the minimum City of Toronto requirement is being met.

Eight Floor Amenity

The panel felt the re-location of the outdoor amenity space was a positive move; however, they suggested considering the incorporation of higher guards in order to shelter the space from wind.

Non-Residential Program

Although there was some recognition that non-residential program may be challenging to support; the panel felt that TCHC and their development partners should continue to push for the inclusion of small scale retail, social enterprise space, and live work units within each development as these are key to animating the adjacent public realm.

2.4 Chair's Summary

Given the succinct nature of the feedback provided the Chair did not summarize the comments.

Following the project reviews, Antoine Baleieff requested that TCHC Development present to the DRP their approach to sustainability and the possibility of adapting a PassivHous standard.