

Town of Aurora Design Review Panel

Meeting Notes

Meeting #9: Monday, October 4, 2021 (1:00 p.m. to 4:40 p.m.)

Design Review Panel Members

Present

Frank Ameryoun, Heritage Contractor

David Eqbal, Senior Architect, Pro Vision Architecture

✓

Chris Tyrrell, Vice President, Planning, Landscape Architecture & Urban Design, WSP

✓

Wai Ying DiGiorgio, Principal, Urban Design and Landscape Architecture, The Planning Partnership

✓

Julia van der Laan de Vries, Urban Designer, Region of Niagara

✓

Eldon Theodore, Partner and Urban Designer, MHBC

✓

Town of Aurora Staff

Sean Lapenna, Planner

✓

Matthew Peverini, Planner

✓

Brashanthe Manoharan, Planner

✓

Anna Henriques, Manager, Development Planning

✓

Representatives for Owner/Applicant

Item 1:

David Eqbal, 74 Centre Street

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Item 2:

James Janzer, BKNC Architecture + Urban Design ✓

Steven McIntyre, MGP ✓

Joan MacIntyre, MGP ✓

Item 3:

Donald Schmitt Diamond Schmitt Architects ✓

Paula Bustard Smart Centres REIT ✓

Lilly Wu Smart Centres REIT ✓

The Design Review Panel Chair (Wai Ying DiGiorgio) commenced the meeting with a review of the agenda.

The following applications were presented and discussed:

1. 74 Centre Street

Mr. Hassan Faraji

Proposed Triplex Dwelling

Application: HPA-2020-04 and MV-2021-18

Panel Member, David Eqbal, represented this application on behalf of the property owner and declared a conflict of interest on this matter.

Town Presentation – Brashanthe Manoharan

Town Planning staff outlined the proposal, area context, planning framework and preliminary comments on the proposal.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL GENERAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Design Review Panel deliberated to provide the following comments and recommendations:

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Parking Location and Design

- Recommend reducing parking spaces to minimum required by the zoning by-law (i.e .3 spaces,)
- The panel had mixed opinions on whether required parking should be sited within the front or rear yard, however, did agree that wherever it is located it should be designed with sensitivity, with recommendations as follows:
 - Use landscaping techniques and trees to reduce headlights glaring on other properties if parking located in the Rear
 - If parking remains in front yard, there's an opportunity to use the existing driveway, and then place 2 additional parking spaces along the west side of the property. This would allow for landscaping and tree planting in between. The parking spaces could be an upgraded material such as unit pavers. This will make it appear like a forecourt to the dwelling (rather than an expansive asphalt paved parking area)

Entrances and Walkways + Amenity Space

- Ensure that there is adequate access from unit entrances to the sidewalk and walkways for all proposed units (3)
- Walkways are important to the rear units
- It is recommended that outdoor amenity area is designed to provide separation and privacy from any proposed parking in the rear.
- Ensure that garbage storage does not obstruct walkways

Trees on Property

- The trees add to the neighbourhood character, and as such should be protected. The driveway should be designed to mitigate impact on the existing trees on the subject property
- Tree preservation hoarding should be based upon the canopy size and should extend beyond the canopy an appropriate distance (based upon best practices) and should be confirmed with the submission of any required arborist reports or tree impact studies at a future site plan stage

Side Layout and Design

- Building setbacks should be like those on either side of the property. These adjacent buildings should be shown on the site plan.
- Recommend providing porch steps in centre of porch with a pathway connection to the sidewalk

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2. 271 Holladay Drive

Shimvest Investments Limited

Applications: OPA 2021-04 & ZBA 2021-05, SP-2021-10

Town Presentation – Matthew Peverini

Town Planning staff outlined the proposal, area context, planning framework and preliminary comments on the proposal.

Applicant Presentation

The applicant provided further details on the proposal.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL GENERAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Design Review Panel deliberated to provide the following comments and recommendations:

Passenger Pickup and Drop Off & Deliveries Location

- Panel inquired why a specific location wasn't reserved for passenger pickup and drop off (aside from the front entrance) to accommodate traffic flow. Thus, it is recommended that other options are explored and considered.

Leslie/Holladay Intersection

- A stronger architectural expression for this intersection is recommended, as this intersection is very important and in a key area. Expression of the public realm that relates to this intersection is recommended.
- Panel finds it odd that there are no entrances onto either of the streets and that additional entrances should be implemented within the design.
- It is recommended that additional street trees be provided along Holladay Dr towards Leslie St

Circulation and Traffic

- Badgerow Way does not provide for a public sidewalk on the north side of the street – this building is very long and should have more consideration for the movement of pedestrians

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- Being more considerate of pedestrian and transit connections - a pedestrian walkway on private lands would improve pedestrian connectivity and safety.
- The driveway on Badgerow Way is located on a curve, which is not the best location. Suggestion is that it be relocated to the east portion of the site where the road is not curved to avoid any visual conflicts with the principle vehicle access.
- There appears to be conflicts with visitor parking, u/g parking entrance and passenger pick up/drop off and loading/garbage areas. Greater consideration should be made within this area of the site.
- The indoor and connecting outdoor amenity spaces could be re-located to the intersection of Holladay Dr & Badgerow way
- Recommend that bike circulation and outdoor bike parking (for visitors) is examined more closely. Additionally, it is recommended that secure indoor bike parking is provided on the ground floor (for residents)

Interface between Ground Floor Residential Units and Public Roads

- Panel recommends increasing setbacks of the building to address interface concerns. This addresses the CPTED issue of public space (sidewalk), semi-private space (front yard of development) and private space (patio)
- Panel recommends providing soft landscaping between the patio units (where the side fences are located). This will break down the amount of hard surface, provide additional privacy, beautification and SWM opportunities

Building Massing and Site Design

- There should be greater consideration of the surrounding context and area, through the selection colour, materials, and length of the building
- To address this, the Panel recommends breaking up the massing to create an aesthetic of multiple buildings by avoiding large monolithic building faces. Also incorporate lighter brick colours and materials along façade and the two upper storeys to reduce visual bulk of building
- Also, to have consideration of the design of the balcony railings which contrast with the building design (they are light white and translucent)
- Discourage placing passenger drop-off, taxi/ride-sharing service pick up and short-term delivery on public streets. This should be incorporated on-site and near the lobby entrance (or secondary lobby entrance)
- Step-back design - should be based upon 45 degree angular plane

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Mitigation Measures

- Written analysis in PJR = no impacts to adjacent properties. However, this study should also address impacts to the public realm, and on-site amenity spaces (both shared and private)
- Also, for the Sun-Shadow Study, only March and September were submitted, which are typically similar in shadow impacts. The panel recommends submitting winter and summer shadow studies.

Outdoor Space/Green Area

- Panel agrees that the outdoor space is an excellent addition to the site and creates opportunity for more green space, landscape design, and space for residents to enjoy

3. 14700, 14720, 14740 and 14760 Yonge Street Smart Centres REIT Applications: ZBA 2021-04, SP-2021-09

Panel members Eldon Theodore and Chris Tyrell declared a conflict of interest relative to this matter and therefore did not participate in the discussion of this item.

Town Presentation – Sean Lapenna

Town Planning staff outlined the proposal, area context, planning framework and preliminary comments on the proposal.

Applicant Presentation – Smart Centres REIT

The applicant provided further details on the proposal.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL GENERAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Design Review Panel deliberated in closed session and invited the applicant back into the meeting to provide the following comments and recommendations:

General Comments

- Panel wants to explore opportunities to articulate the massing with some variations
- Panel was pleased with the presentation and the buildings overall

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Relationship with Public Realm

- Key terminus site treatment was addressed well by siting of East-West linear park
- Panel agrees that there are opportunities for public art incorporations within the site, as per the Secondary Plan guidelines
- Opportunity for POPS - Will the linear park be private lands or a POPS as a community benefit?
- Internal streets should be designed as public streets, with appropriate ROW widths and a hierarchy of character
- Pedestrian protection along buildings, particularly along Yonge Street where the commercial uses are located should be considered

Site and Elevations

- Consider increasing the road cross-section widths to accommodate enhanced streetscaping for the internal streets. For example, trees along both sides, wide sidewalks, areas for seating. This would help to enhance the quality of life for the residents within this community
- In conjunction with the street design, on-site lay by parking would benefit from additional bump-outs to reduce overall width of asphalt paving and create more opportunities for landscape and SWM opportunities

Elevation Design

- Can more variety be provided amongst the mid-rise buildings? Creating variations on a theme, instead of repeating the design
- The 4 mid-rise buildings are quite massive and similar in scale. Is it possible to reduce the height and bulk of the buildings that are adjacent to the proposed towns? For example, can you create a finer grain-built form to create a more pedestrian scale community?
- Agreed that commercial/office uses should front onto Yonge Street and include a 4.5m commercial floor height
- Related to the massing, there is opportunity for more variation in the massing across the site; in particular focus height at the corners along Yonge (more height beyond 7 storeys would be appropriate for the character / scale of the street)

Building Materials, Transition, and Design

- For the building façade, it is recommended that a variety of colours are used to differentiate the buildings from one another

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- Transition and Compatibility to lower density developments to the west: Can the proposed townhouse blocks be further broken down into smaller blocks (i.e. less than 8 units per block) to create more porosity and opportunities for landscaping?
- There is an opportunity to integrate at-grade residential units within the base of a larger building mass that fronts onto / emphasizes the linear park (instead of the west internal road). This could involve rethinking the orientation of the massing and removing the townhouse block forms altogether.

Relationship with Aurora War Memorial Peace Park

- No concerns, unless there are shadow impacts

The meeting conclude at approximately 4:40 pm.

The next Design Review Panel meeting is tentatively scheduled for **Monday, December 13, at 1:00 p.m.**