

Notes from Q&A session following development proposal presentation

Address: 217 Adelaide St W

Date: May 4, 2015

Presenting: Kirkor Architects for Humboldt Properties

Status: no development application had been submitted to the City at the time of this meeting

NB: All answers are from the developer team unless otherwise noted

Q: Is there going to be any commercial or retail space?

A: No.

Q: Above grade parking does not look very attractive in other buildings – just a big wall of concrete. Can't you keep all the parking below grade?

A: There are four levels of parking below grade in the current plan. But putting all eight levels below grade doesn't work on a property of this small size. The height of the podium is related to the size of the building to the east.

Q: How much space is between the buildings? Why not partner with neighbours to work together?

A: We will be working together with the City and Councillor and other land owners to do a block plan. We did this once before on the TIFF block, to locate and design those towers.

Q: How much space is there between this proposed building and the other buildings?

A: The Westbank-Allied application (19 Duncan Street) is not in yet but based on the earlier community meeting it appears to be midblock. We'll need to consider the location of the Mirvish-Gehry towers too. We need to hammer all this out through the block plan.

A: (City Planning) The City's Tall Buildings Guidelines recommend 12.5 metres from a tower to the side lot lines to ensure there is enough space between towers. We want 25 metres between towers to protect sky view, breathing space, and sunlight. In the current configuration the distance from this proposed tower to the lot line is less than 2 metres, which is not supportable, but we can look at the placement of towers as part of a larger block plan.

Q: What is the size of the 3-bedroom units?

A: The largest unit is 1,100 square feet. Most of the three bedrooms proposed are in the 900s. We are trying to build true three-bedroom units for families. In addition, the two-bedroom-plus-den units can be amalgamated or changed around. Each bedroom itself is 9x10 or 11x10 feet.

A: (Joe Cressy) I see the 10% requirement for three-bedroom units as a floor, not a ceiling. An additional mixture of twos- and two-pluses is positive, as are knock-down panels for flexibility.

Q: There are a lot of issues with how close together this towers are. You are going to have to look at wind studies between the towers. If there is only 20 metres between the buildings, you will notice considerable wind higher up.

Q: I can see potential for conflict with the neighbour to the west and there's a warehouse I'd like to see retained on the block as well. The block plan is obviously going to be necessary. If we are totally supporting the idea of family-sized units in the area, we aren't seeing the community amenities to support those families. Nobody is making new parks. These are key to making intensification human and livable. What facilities do families have?

A: We have done a wind study already but we need to find out where the other towers will be to understand the interaction. We can do a full analysis with the block plan. Having working in the area, we feel there is a need for the City to develop a community hub for the neighbourhood rather than small pockets.

A: (Joe Cressy) In the Entertainment District (the East Precinct of King-Spadina), the residential population was only 230 people in 2001. Then it was 3,610 in 2011. If all the proposed and approved new developments are built, there will be 18,000 people living here. And in that time the City hasn't built a community centre or neighbourhood park. In a vertical neighbourhood like this, parks are your back yard and community centres are your living room. The City has fallen behind. We are looking at new park sites today and work very hard on those. There is a new parkette at Widmer and Adelaide that we are working to build with the Ireland Park Foundation. And we are expanding Saint Andrew's Playground into the existing parking lot. And we are looking for opportunities to secure additional parkland in the neighbourhood. A comprehensive study of downtown, "TO Core," is looking to answer two questions: how much development can we handle, and how much infrastructure do we need to handle it? This includes both hard infrastructure, like sewers, and soft infrastructure like libraries and daycare. A master plan for parks and other community services is coming. I wish the City had done it 10 years ago so we are working as quickly as we can.

Q: How does the height compare to Theatre Park?

A: This proposal is 57 storeys, or roughly 165 metres excluding the mechanical penthouse. Theatre Park was 45 storeys and 157 metres.

Q: Is the rest of the block to the west under one development proposal?

A: There are a number of different properties on the block. There is one ownership to the east. Westbank-Allied control the block to the north-west. Two or three smaller parcels are to the south-west. We need to look at all of the ownerships together through the block plan.

Q: Will we have an idea of how the block plan will work before this is approved?

A: The block plan process will happen before any building here is approved.

A: (Joe Cressy) An application has not been submitted here yet. The applicants agreed to participate in a pre-application meeting, which we're here for tonight. This neighbourhood is under intense development pressure so City Planning and I will not support proposals that do not meet the guidelines for tower separation distances. On its own, this proposal does not meet those distances. The question is, can everyone on the block agree on a plan that maintains adequate separation distances? Not everyone gets a tower on their property.

Q: Who will lead the block plan? Might want to consider having a citizen on the group.

A: (Joe Cressy) We encourage the developer and owners to work together. City staff and my office will be proactive and be a part of it, but it is not up to the City to make the block plan happen.

A: We had a good experience on the block plan at Cinema Tower. The landowners got together and organized, but City staff facilitated the meeting. In that case, the result in the form of staff reports dealing with each development application came back to public meetings and Community Council.

Q: At what point is there an impact study done on the excess traffic and the strain on our sewer system from these new developments?

A: We are required to do a study of transportation and all servicing including sewers. We have to take into account all the applications that have come before so we understand the cumulative impact. Then these studies are reviewed by the relevant City departments. The one challenge is that these are not very forward looking because it is application-based. Nobody sat down and thought about 2015 back in 2007 when a lot of the condo growth got started.

A: (Joe Cressy) When an application come in it goes through all departments. Toronto Hydro reviews applications as well. We're doing the TO Core study that I referred to, which is looking at our downtown infrastructure requirements. That's everything between Bathurst and the Don River, Dupont to the waterfront – home to 200,000 residents today. We are also working on updating the secondary plan for the King-Spadina East Precinct, which will take into account the early answers to these questions.

Q: Will TO Core or anything coming out of that process be affecting this block?

A: (City Planning) TO Core will not be finished in time for this application. It is still a couple years until TO Core finishes up. The usual review process applies here.

Q: Do I see glazing on the west side? How does this work with the Allied-Westbank plan?

A: Yes, there is glazing on the west side, but it is set back 2.5 metres. Each unit needs windows.

A: (City Planning) The Allied-Westbank proposal has not been officially submitted to the City, so we need to work through the block plan process. We don't have precise details about them yet. And we'll need to look at all properties on the block, not just these two.

Q: If this were to go ahead, where is the main point of construction access?

A: That will depend on the side we start with first. We would probably like to work primarily on Pearl Street.

Q: You need to look at the water and sewage situations from a block plan perspective.

A: (Joe Cressy) Toronto Hydro and Toronto Water have looked at the King-Spadina East Precinct in depth. I just met with them last week to discuss these issues.

A: (City Planning) We will always consult with Toronto Hydro and Toronto Water through the application review process.