

Port Credit Local Advisory Panel

Minutes of Second Meeting

Tuesday, September 15, 2009 @ 7.00 p.m.

Port Credit Library, Texaco Room

Attendees: Twelve (12) members of the Panel were present. Two (2) Planning Staff attended in support of the Panel. There were four (4) guests.

Local Politicians: Councillor Carmen Corbasson; MPP Charles Sousa

Community Groups: Judy Smith, Leonard Walsh, Don McVie, Lori Ellis, Deb Greenfield, Dorothy Tomiuk; *Absent:* Mark Searle

Business: Marion Morewood, Robert Cutmore, Jonathan James, Frank Giannone

Planning Staff: Susan Tanabe, Paul Stewart

Guests: **Michael Spaziani**, Architect, MSAi
Sharon Mittmann, Urban Designer, City of Mississauga
Ben Phillips, Development Planner, City of Mississauga
Arthur Dias, Board Member, Heritage Mississauga

NOTE: Minutes of the May 25, 2009 meeting of the Advisory Panel were approved through e-mailed circulation to the Panel members, and are now available online.

1. Meeting materials

Updates for the Panel members' binders were distributed, including tab pages, aerial photos of Port Credit as requested at the May 25th meeting, and the Port Credit District Land Use Map.

Note from Secretary & Staff: The Port Credit District Land Use Map is located at the following link: <http://www6.mississauga.ca/onlinemaps/planbldg/missplan/portcred.pdf>

Official Plan information available on the City's website is for information purposes only. Staff should be consulted to confirm interpretation and whether there are recent revisions or other policies that have to be reviewed.

2. February 2010 meeting date re-scheduled

It was noted that the February 2010 meeting would now be held on February 23rd rather than the 16th. The February tab page is to be amended accordingly.

3. Criminal Record Search forms

Paul Stewart called for any completed Criminal Record Search forms to be handed in, or presented at the next meeting on October 20th, in the envelope provided.

4. Port Credit Post Office (31 Lakeshore Road East)

Councillor Carmen Corbasson provided brief background to the Panel on the potential sale of the Post Office by the federal government, now that the site is no longer required (a new postal facility in Lakeview is now being used). Most recently, a developer had a conditional offer on the Post Office property. While the mainstreet property is subject to 3-4 storey development under the existing District Policies and the Directions Report approved by Council in November 2008, the developer initially envisaged an 11- to 13-storey condominium use, later reduced to 9 storeys, which was the minimum height that they calculated could be profitable.

The developer utilized their conditional period to consult with local residents, and first met with representatives of the Town of Port Credit Association (TOPCA) in July 2009. There was a follow-up meeting which also included representatives of the Port Credit Village Residents' Association (PCVRA). On August 24th the developer let their offer lapse. TOPCA had then approached the Councillor to determine a means for attracting appropriate development to the site, and this meeting's agenda is in aid of this objective.

Sharon Mittmann stated that the Post Office was a complex site: a 4-sided building on a 4-sided site, with parking issues, a heritage component and 2 significant trees facing the River that the City would like to maintain. Any development here would be central to Port Credit; this is a key site.

What can happen here now? Sharon Mittmann indicated that the Lakeshore Road side required a 0-3M setback; the Stavebank Road side also had a 0-3M setback; the park side has a 4.5M setback. There is no opportunity for additional surface parking on the site; street parking would have to be utilized and payment to the Parking in Lieu (PIL) fund was an option/requirement for development to proceed.

The City's Heritage Planner Mark Warrack (who was unable to attend this meeting) has stated that ideally the entire Post Office building could be kept, although the original (Eastern) portion of the building may be the only portion of the building that can be justified for Heritage designation by the City. The existing trees reduce the possible footprint of any new development.

Sharon Mittmann continued that there is a 3-storey height limit in the existing District Policies. The Directions Report would allow 3-4 storeys. There is a minimum of a 2-storey height limit. The Panel was asked: Would we want to go higher than 3 storeys? In general, there appeared to be little support (if any) for development that differed significantly from the recommendations in the Directions Report of 3-4 storeys.

A panelist asked if underground parking is a viable option on this site? Sharon Mittmann's answer was "not really", not under a heritage building; a lot of engineering would be required, which would be expensive.

Michael Spaziani began his presentation to the Panel by stating that parking was a fundamental issue on the site, adding that the recent developer's plan would have resulted in facadism for retaining the historic part of the building, because to pay for parking, the plan needed height and density beyond what was allowable.

Note from Secretary & Staff: According to Wikipedia, facadism entails the demolishing of a building but leaving its facade intact for the purposes of building new structures in it or around it. "The practice of facadism is often seen as a compromise between property developers who need to develop properties for modern uses and standards and preservationists who wish to preserve buildings of historical interest."

Michael outlined how he had been approached by Deb Greenfield, co-president of TOPCA, subsequent to the developer's refusal of the site in August 2009. TOPCA wanted to know if it was possible to design a use for the Post Office site that would result in an income stream, an exciting building design and positive community response.

Every side of the P.O. building is very important. On the park and marina side, the design needs to be open and inviting to draw people in from the public realm. There is a need to retain the 2 trees in the plan, which results in a pinch point. On the Stavebank side, a pedestrian link is required to the riverfront. Stavebank Road needs an urban-designed edge with mainstreet retail - a parking lot here doesn't match this desirable objective.

Michael recommended retaining the entire P.O. building. There should be no underground parking, but rather an aggressive plan to accommodate this need in other ways. Off-site public parking could be provided at the present Library lot across the road. A partially underground, multi-level lot could be constructed there to achieve extra levels of parking; the top deck could be even with Lakeshore Road.

Note from Planning Staff: Off-site parking may be a possible solution to some of the Post Office's problems; however, it can become complicated given various City policies. It is recommended that any proponent that wishes to base a development on the provision of off-site parking meet with staff to discuss City policies (e.g. provision of cash payment-in-lieu of all or part of the parking requirements, demonstration that parking supply in area is sufficient, signed agreements between property owners for shared parking, etc.).

We need to retain the "heritage gems" that are here in Port Credit - and we need a parking strategy that will enable us to do so. This approach will also be needed for the potential Marina lands development (the James' properties). Flexibility and creativity regarding parking is the only way to save the buildings in Port Credit.

Michael then showed the Panel photographs of heritage images from Port Credit, including nautical images. There is an opportunity to take inspiration from these images for a community component in the redeveloped building, which will tie in with the Harbour setting.

The Panel was then shown adaptive reuse images showing how other communities have added additions to heritage buildings. We can use this kind of thinking for any built form on a site. Sensitive yet modern interventions can yield exciting results. Michael has done this for the Post Office site and depicted all the areas and uses on a draft site plan.

The draft rendering showed sizeable retail on the ground floor, for vital, important retail units. Ranging from 1,800 - 2,700 sq ft, these units could be grouped if required. The storefronts were matched to the existing crooked sidewalk, which would create a very interesting effect. The intention of the design is to use all of the footprint of the existing building.



Lakeshore Road Elevation as shown to the Panel by Michael Spaziani. Available online (see Note at end).

A new atrium structure was proposed for the back (south side) of the site. While this atrium feature might be considered an intrusion into the building (coming out on Lakeshore Road through the middle of the existing building), in fact it has the effect of exposing the original windows on the west side of the heritage portion of the building. The atrium would provide 3,900 sq ft for community use, possibly a museum (at least to begin with). The height of the atrium could take a stone hooker exhibit, for instance. The atrium would have 3 entrances to connect the ends, and could serve as a winter garden. Life in winter is rare in the village.

Michael remarked that the sail-like design of the glass atrium at the Lakeshore Road elevation reinforced the nautical theme in a modern way, and was somewhat reminiscent of the Burj Al Arab hotel in Dubai, although on a much smaller scale! The retention of the coat of arms on the same elevation reinforced the heritage theme.

The storefronts could be designed as more original pieces or as heritage pieces: both would work.

The basement is over 10,000 sq ft and is useable quality space that could open onto the marina side and be used as community space, e.g. theatre or a satellite gallery. There is great potential for this lower level to be truly accorded "highest and best use", with a walkout basement condition to green space, expanding on the "pinch point". A green courtyard would appeal to tourists at the marina level. A panelist noted that there is also a basement under the historical component of the building.

The draft design includes 2 more storeys (office space) on top of the existing 1-storey structural additions to the building, which should be possible to execute with some engineering. The atrium separates yet joins the heritage portion to the heightened additions with a 3-storey skylight, which is set back a bit to respect the heritage component on the street front. There is also an opportunity for bridging offices across the atrium on the second floor (to connect to offices on the existing second floor of the heritage component).

There could be terraces for some of the offices, and a roof-top terrace on top of the possible restaurant facing the Harbour.

There is no parking provided in the design. At this point Councillor Corbasson asked Staff about the Port Credit parking study, and the reply was that a consultant will be doing a parking study for Port Credit as a whole as well as for Lakeshore Road. The consultant will be hired in Fall 2009, and the study will be conducted in conjunction with formulation of the revised District Policies.

A panelist noted that we need to look at the Lakeshore-Stavebank intersection development (adjacent to the Post Office) and how it will impact parking in the area. According to the plan, Stavebank Road being re-routed more to the east will result in a new wide pedestrian boulevard on the east side of the historic portion of the Post Office. As such, there is likely no real opportunity to provide additional parking as a result of the realignment.

The panel discussed the potential of constructing a parking structure adjacent to the Port Credit library as a possible solution for dealing with the need to provide additional parking spaces for any re-use of the Post Office. A panelist asked how pedestrians would cross from the proposed public parking at the Library site to the redeveloped P.O. building, suggesting possibly a causeway over Lakeshore Road from the top deck of the parking structure over to the building.

Councillor Corbasson noted that the vista into Memorial Park from Lakeshore Road is important to the community. The panelist stated that the Lakeshore frontage of the parking structure could be compatible with main street development.

A panelist commented that not digging for parking is cheaper, but that the Parking in Lieu (PIL) fund still doesn't provide for replacement parking. It takes \$20K to build a parking spot; meanwhile the City only receives \$8K of this from PIL contributions.

A panelist asked if parking at the Port Credit Arena site had been considered? It was pointed out that this is far from the mainstreet in terms of walking, and that an addition is planned for the Arena, with parking not slated to expand.

A panelist expressed concern for businesses in the area. The existing parking (Snug Harbour lot) for transient marina and restaurant visitors doesn't currently meet the requirements. Even walking across the street for parking is a challenge for some. How will the businesses manage without immediate parking?

Another panelist noted that in more urban centres, people realize they have to walk a little more. With the Lakeshore-Stavebank intersection fixed, it will be easier to cross the street to parking. We need a new parking strategy to be implemented at the same time as the new development, since the retail and restaurant businesses will need it with their high customer use.

Michael then reviewed the economics of his preliminary Post Office adaptive reuse proposal, distributing a draft *pro forma* balance sheet to the panelists. A number of preliminary assumptions were made regarding rental rates, capitalization rate, construction costs, the addition of third and fourth floor office space, and the amount of community space incorporated into the building.

The preliminary analysis indicated that a development which retained the existing post office and included the addition of third and fourth floor office space could generate revenues which exceeded construction costs. The remaining money could then be used for development profit and land purchase. However, remediation costs are currently unknown and at this point have not been included in the financial analysis. The financial balance sheet would be strengthened if government funding were available (e.g. paying rent for arts and culture component within the site), the development was operated as a non-profit, and the cost of land acquisition was reduced.

Note from Planning Staff: In addition to remediation costs, the financial analysis of any future development should consider costs associated with provision of off-site parking (e.g. contribution to payment-in-lieu of parking). Any person interesting in acquiring the Post Office site should undertake their own financial due diligence.

A panelist noted that they had originally tried (and then declined) to purchase this property. Based on their research the building is constructed on fill that could have contamination issues and any reuse of the site that they were contemplating would likely require Ministry of the Environment approval.

Given this, another panelist asked if the federal government would give the site away, possibly if it went to the municipality? The panelist offered that he thought that the federal government should either clean it, or lower the price.

A panelist asked if it would be possible to create a "Citizens' RFP" (Request for Proposals) for the Post Office site? Councillor Corbasson asked how we can direct this vision for the site under the current policy and planning structure?

Staff replied that the existing Official Plan and zoning sets it up now for the existing planning framework. Michael Spaziani's draft proposal meets the requirements of the existing District Policies.

It was noted that there is pressure on the community to accept inappropriate development if the developer pays too much for a property. In this instance costs are compounded because of lack of options for parking and loading docks. Councillor Corbasson stated that Council and Staff have to get to an understanding on this issue.

There is \$1.5M in the PIL fund now, just for Port Credit. The cost of spots at the existing Library parking lot would be \$20-25K per spot, which is affordable.

A panelist noted that parking affects values, but that the seller (federal government) won't care if the planned use includes community space (and thereby lower the price). It would be a good idea to look at what we'd be prepared to accept – that will help to keep the price realistic. Otherwise, a developer can go to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) and get what they want in order to still make their profit if they overpay.

Another panelist noted that Canada Lands Company (CLC) has been known to hold property if it can't get its price. In view of the possible remediation issue with this site, would the City consider taking it on? A community-based RFP would have to look at the economics, and include parking and work it out that way, as the federal government will get about what the property is worth.

A panelist asked if a multi-storey parking structure were to be developed adjacent to the Port Credit Library, whether it could include retail uses on the top? In answer, a panelist stated that while this might destroy the view into the park, it would be a more urban solution. A "rooftop" café, for instance, would then be a little above grade on Lakeshore Road, which might be interesting.

Councillor Corbasson asked Staff if the parking consultant will present these kinds of options? The answer was Yes, and the parking plan will consider phasing options over the next 15 years.

Another panelist asked if the parking structure could be located by Snug Harbour restaurant (at the Harbour)? She added that there might be such opportunities along Port Street, and asked if there are other locations that would support a parking structure? In response a panelist mentioned that it is important not to jeopardize any future redevelopment potential for the Marina lands by inadvertently choosing the wrong location for a parking structure.

Councillor Corbasson also noted that the parking needed to be along Lakeshore Road where the mainstreet parking presently is because of the businesses.

A panelist stated that if the Lakeshore-Stevebank intersection is straightened through the present CIBC property, it will have an offset under the road that could be used for parking. Most of the utilities run along Lakeshore Road. This corner has a particular parking problem. Staff noted that parking is only one issue that the City has to

consider and that there are other issues that must be considered such as using the space to improve the public realm (e.g. increased sidewalk widths, new street furniture, etc.).

A panelist asked the Councillor if the City would consider purchasing the Post Office property? The reply was that only moving the Port Credit Library to this new location would make it economically viable; otherwise, the Mayor would not consider it.

A panelist predicted the Post Office will go through another purchase cycle and we'd be able to articulate what we want.

Another panelist asked if we could go the CLC and offer economics for a viable mixed-use development, and get them to change their price? Michael Spaziani has given us a reference point, a point of departure. We can take this from here and determine the consensus of the group.

Councillor Corbasson told the Panel that the City's new Strategic Plan includes the waterfront being accessible to the public.

Michael stated that he doesn't accept a residential condominium use for this location. The \$3-4M underground parking cost for that use had to be recovered above ground at a minimum of 9 storeys.

Both developers on the Panel agreed that the Post Office building has potential. The most westerly (2nd side addition) could have windows added to look out onto the Harbour. It is built using single span support without columns and has good ceiling height which provides a lot of possibilities for use of the space.

A panelist then asked, where does the Panel go from here with Michael's draft proposal? Staff indicated they would take it away with them and consider the information as part of their policy review (e.g. height and land use policies). The Minutes of this meeting will show would-be developers what we said in our discussions, and our comments not only apply to the Post Office. Individual residents' groups can still prepare statements of what they expect from this development.

Note from Planning Staff: At various points in the meeting, the concept of a Citizens' RFP for the Post Office site was mentioned. The Port Credit District Policies can address certain issues such as height and land use; however, the RFP idea likely goes beyond what a District Plan can accomplish.

A panelist reiterated that "we need to get off parking". We seem to obsess about parking. We are a waterfront community which creates special circumstances. People think nothing of walking through shopping mall parking lots; people walk on trails. Port Credit is the most pedestrianized area of the City already.

Staff again stated that the Port Credit parking strategy would look at Port Credit as a whole. Port Credit is an evolving community and recommendations regarding parking need to be compatible with the City's Official Plan.

A panelist cited the 'Briarwood' development and stated that citizens wanted this to be a 2-storey development to meet the requirements of mainstreet commercial zoning and intensification targets for "people + jobs", but the site would not support the present parking requirements to accomplish this. We need to foster active transportation in Port Credit to allow special concessions for less parking.

Staff asked if in general the Panel endorsed Michael Spaziani's draft scheme as something that could be shown to future developers? It was decided the Minutes of this meeting will show general endorsement by the Panel of Michael's concept.

Michael Spaziani agreed that his draft concept could be shown to developers, and posted on a website in order for the community to view it.

Note from Secretary: Subsequent to this meeting, Michael Spaziani provided to TOPCA electronic renderings of his "Adaptive Reuse Development Proposal" for the Post Office site. In addition, four (4) new three-dimensional images from various vantage points were supplied, to supplement what has been described in these Minutes. The site plan, elevations, images and *pro forma* documents are available at: http://www.topca.net/news/news.htm#Port_Credit_Post_Office

5. Next meeting(s)

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 20th in the Port Credit Library.

At a future meeting the parking strategy terms of reference and scope of work can be discussed. In addition the Panel will receive a presentation on the Lakeshore Road Transportation Study.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Submitted by: Dorothy Tomiuk, Secretary