

16 Aug 2006 Notre Dame 2880 Venables Street

DE: 410128

Use: Residential, retail, live/work, restaurant
Zoning: RS-1
Application Status: Complete
Architect: Killick Metz Bowen Rose Architects
Owner: Notre Dame Secondary
Review: Second (April 12, 2006)
Delegation: Christina Marghetti, Lynne Varhol, Patricia Campbell
Staff: Dale Morgan/Scott Barker

EVALUATION: SUPPORT (9-0) (emphasis added by Notre Dame Neighbours)

Introduction: Dale Morgan, Development Planner introduced this complete application to replace the existing Notre Dame Secondary School located on the site bounded by Renfrew, Venables, Kaslo and Parker Streets. The school is increasing the student capacity from 665 to 800, retaining the existing gymnasium and auditorium and providing onsite parking. The site is 4.5 acres in size. This application was viewed by the Urban Design Panel on April 12, 2006 and received unanimous non support.

At that time the Panel's consensus on key aspects needing improvement were:

- simplify and improve the consistency of the architectural expression, with design development recommended to the building massing and the material selection;
- increase the number and size of windows in circulation and classroom spaces;
- provide more outdoor gathering spaces for students;
- improve building entry definition;
- provide more landscaping and screening of the surface parking lot adjacent to the neighbours;
- design development to the exterior handicap ramp to better integrate it with the landscape;
- there was a comment about the removal of the Lombardy poplar trees provided they are replaced. **Following discussion with the neighbours it was decided to keep the trees in place.**

In the Related Commentary in the previous review, the Panel thought the over all site plan was fairly well resolved and appropriate given the proposed phasing program. Concern was expressed about the Renfrew elevation and recommended more strongly expressed chapel elements with consideration for entry along the primary street. The location of the meditation garden was questioned. Greater simplification was recommended in the material expression and to consider new material to the existing structures to improve overall cohesiveness. Budget restrains were acknowledged, however the proposed materials seem basic and a somewhat harsh. More glass and greater transparency would provide options for more sustainable building strategies.

The building sitting and functional layout will remain the same. More consistent materials have been sought using predominately colored smooth faced concrete for much of the lower massing. Existing split faced block has been retained partially on the existing auditorium and

gymnasium walls. Double height columns either in concrete or concrete block are being used as a repeating motif. The Parker Street entry has been improved and the formal entry on Venables remains and has an expanded canopy. More glass has been added enlarging the classroom windows. Metal screening is proposed for roof top mechanical equipment. The meditation garden has been made more secluded and screened from the south. More outdoor gathering places have been provided and a patio area access off the lower north-south concourse and a student gathering space off the activity room. On grade parking has been reconfigured. The disability ramp has been integrated with the landscaping and the changing grade. The popular trees are to remain. ***The applicant has agreed to enter into a Good Neighbour Agreement with the community.***

Area in which the advice of the Panel is sought include:

- relating the architectural material expression;
- window treatments;
- outdoor gathering spaces;
- landscaping.

Applicant's Introductory Comments: Christina Marghetti, Architect reviewed the project and described how it has evolved since the last Urban Design Panel meeting. Patricia Campbell, Landscape Architect reviewed the landscape plan and the changes made to meditation garden and the parking lot.

Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects:

- The panel complimented the applicant on the improvement of the design;
- There is significant improvement in the architectural expression of the building;
- There was a suggestion that the Chapel be more prominently expressed in the building massing;
- On the Renfrew and Parker Street corner it was suggested to reduce the retaining walls and open up the patio. The panel strongly support going back to the original design for the corner landscaping;
- Regarding the large wall at the Parker Street entrance some opening should be should be introduced to open up the entry.

Related Commentary:

The Panel unanimously supported this submission. They appreciated the refinement that had been done with the color and palate and stated that it was a vast improvement from the previous submission. The panel also liked the fact the school has had more involvement with the community.

With respect to the chapel it was felt that since it was not open to the public there doesn't need to be an entrance on Renfrew Street but felt that as it is an important marker and the applicant may want to identify the chapel by making it taller.

The panel felt that the entrance on Parker Street was rather subtle and blended into the flat roof. Consideration should be given to enlarge the entrance as it will be used more due to its proximity to the parking lot. It was also felt that the bike wall could be improved. Also the panel recommends that the location of the garbage area be changed as it is the first thing you see when driving into the parking lot.

There were still concerns about the design of the handicap ramp and it was suggested that it could be softened as well as landscaped to retain more of the existing trees.

The panel would like to see some of the retaining walls reduced or find a way to more gradually grading around the corner of the building. The students will tend to congregate on the west side of the property and it was felt that benches would work to open the area to the street.

It was suggested that the applicant should look at doing green roofs although the panel is aware of the costs this could incur. More glazing in the gymnasium was also suggested, perhaps using skylights .

In general the panel found an overall improvement to the design and the architectural development of the building and that a lot more thought has gone into the outdoor spaces.

Applicant's Response: Christina Marghetti, Architect agreed with all the comments and thanked the panel for their suggestions.