Community Planning Department
Burlington Urban Design Advisory Panel (BUD)

MINUTES

April 21, 2022, 2:00 pm
Virtual (Online) Meeting

Members of BUD

	present	absent / regrets
Matt Reid (Acting Chair)	✓	
Mike Flint	✓	
Jessica Hawes		regrets
LeAnn Seely	✓	
Nigel Tai	✓	
Alexandru Taranu		regrets
Jackie VanderVelde	✓	

Item #1: 1989 Appleby Line

Design Review: First Review

Application: Official Plan Amendment and Rezoning

Presentations:
City Staff: Thomas Douglas, Community Planning

Design Team: Roland R. Colthoff, Raw Design Inc.



Disclosure of conflict-of-interest

None.

City Staff Overview

City staff outlined the project details, planning framework and existing and future context. Staff are seeking the Panel's advice on the following key issues:

1. **Response to Context**
   Please comment on the design of the proposed built form with attention to tower massing, impacts on neighbouring properties, and use of the podium for above-ground parking in close proximity to existing multi-unit buildings.

2. **Overall Design**
   Please comment on the proposed design in general, with consideration for the site's prominent location at the main intersection of the Uptown Core. Does the proposed development effectively integrate with the adjacent hydro corridor and on-site pipeline corridor, and engage with Upper Middle Road and the intersection of Upper Middle Road and Appleby Line?

3. **Public Ream & Streetscape**
   How can the development create a retail frontage that is inviting and supports the Uptown Centre's transition from a car-oriented, suburban node to an urban centre that is walkable and transit-supportive?

Design Team Presentation

The project architect provided a brief overview of the proposed development, mentioning the neighbouring pipeline easement as a constraint. They also told the Panel that the design team is thinking about relocating the entrance off Upper Middle Road – easterly – to align with the entrance to the on-site parking aisle while maintaining two points of access to the site. It was mentioned that the design team is also studying the nature of the walkways currently and investigating breaking up the parking areas with landscaped islands. It was noted that the design breaks up the street level façades with 4-5 different uses and shared loading bay with two towers. Generally, there is a 3 m setback from property lines to allow for mature tree plantings. It was acknowledged that public concerns heard at the pre-application community meeting are being considered prior to submission of a formal development application, and that the intent is to treat the street facing façades as proper public facing façades (building elevations) and look at opportunities for additional landscaping throughout the site. It was noted that parking is provided for with two below and two above grade parking facilities. Also, it was noted that the site could accommodate two towers and meet setbacks of 12.5 metres from property lines while roughly adhering to the maximum 750 square metre floorplate requirement and the towers are linked by common outdoor amenity space atop a connected podium.

The project architect said the proposal allows for a height transition down along Appleby Line to the existing context including the 16-storey tall building on Ironstone Drive, which they were the architect for, and the proposal picks up the articulation of the stone at the top of podium within that development. Similarly, the proposal provides a clear delineation between retail and residential above.

The height of retail is presented as a 2-storey colonnade with a reveal between the tower and podium, shared amenity space at the back. The roof deck would be common amenity and heavily landscaped. In terms of materials, masonry-based articulation at the base is utilized to bring down the scale – to a pedestrian scale. The design approach is to bring a simple and eloquent solution to the towers.

Panel Questions:

The Panel asked the Design Team the following questions of clarification:

- How have you addressed the comment about how the high school students currently use the site for seating?

    - The current plan precedes the comment, and the design team is entertaining the idea in the next round of iterations.
- Can the backside of the buildings look like the front side, is there a precedent?
    - The design team is looking at the backside to treat it architecturally as a proper public facing façade through the appropriate use of material and articulation using what's currently in the front at the back, other considerations include integrated ventilation and shielding from headlights.
- Have you considered the easement rules, could you have a dog park?
    - Parking below the easement is being investigated to reduce above grade and surface parking; what's ultimately within the easement is a legal issue. Hydro said there needs to be an agreement between the landowner and utilities, and an understanding of what's acceptable. We are waiting on a response from the gas utility.
- Is there pedestrian access from Upper Middle Road?
    - Subject to what utilities say but point well taken.
- Does the realignment of the access from Upper Middle Road align with the back-side of the building on Ironstone Drive and could it also provide for a pedestrian connection mid-block?
    - We will entertain it.

Panel Advice:

Question #1: Response to Context – *Please comment on the design of the proposed built form with attention to tower massing, impacts on neighbouring properties, and use of the podium for above-ground parking in close proximity to existing multi-unit buildings*

The Panel commented that the proposed buildings are attractive and commended the proponent on separating the main vehicular access from the loading access as well as thinking about the connection from a massing and visual perspective to the adjacent buildings. Shared amenity space between the towers, address serve as a wonderful amenity as part of the private development…like connection to the existing Ironstone building particularly the detail in the podium and reveal.

The Panel agreed that the proposal could benefit from a differing of tower heights to emphasize the transitions and distinguish them from one another. Moreover, they agreed that the corner is a good candidate for this type of building form and as a key gateway into the Uptown Urban Centre it presents an opportunity to differentiate the tower heights to read more as a landmark feature. Again, rather than identical heights, the Panel felt it would be better if the south tower – closest to the intersection of Appleby Line and Upper Middle Road – is taller. In terms of the skyline and massing, this approach would complement the current gesture of responding to the existing condition.

The Panel also recommended increasing the separation between certain building elements. For example, the parking garage is so close to the building to northeast of the site, but it is difficult to comment on this further without the update plans mentioned in the Design Team's presentation. Notwithstanding, they emphasized the importance of a quality elevation design for this interface.

Question #2: Overall Design – *Please comment on the proposed design in general, with consideration for the site's prominent location at the main intersection of the Uptown Core. Does the proposed development effectively integrate with the adjacent hydro corridor and on-site*

pipeline corridor, and engage with Upper Middle Road and the intersection of Upper Middle Road and Appleby Line?

The Panel acknowledged that this question is related to #1 above, and their advice outlined above is applicable. Furthermore, the Panel shared their appreciation for the design of the balconies inset in podium and agreed that it is appropriate, with better privacy and projecting balconies above is sound design direction. They also liked the ideas of retail at grade, however, cautioned that the sidewalk design needs to be the right width, and questioned whether 3 metres is functional the right size for the proposal.

The Panel also encouraged the design team to think about the surface parking facing Upper Middle Road to serve multiple functions and not be designed as purely a parking. It was suggested that the east row be converted to outdoor patio spaces like in Toronto where there are examples. Also, it could be used as a basketball court during the weekdays, for example.

Like the above comment, the Panel challenged the proponent and design team to think about how to make use of the hydro corridor an asset to contribute to the community and the development.

The Panel also recommended that there be a stronger connection to Appleby Line for the retail space facing Upper Middle Road at grade. It was suggested that they look at the use of the existing plaza and maintain that connection to animate the north corner of the building away from the primary residents' entrance. The Panel agreed that the spill out condition of retail uses is more appropriate on Appleby Line rather than Upper Middle because it is much closer to the street.

Question #3: Public Realm and Streetscape – *How can the development create a retail frontage that is inviting and supports the Uptown Centre's transition from a car-oriented, suburban node to an urban centre that is walkable and transit-supportive?*

The Panel recommended that the streetscape frontage treatment along Appleby Line be extended from the southeast corner along the frontage to the north with seating being an intentional part of the design, which could culminate with an outdoor plaza area to enhance the streetscape. The Panel commented that they liked the continuity to the existing building to the south, but a little change is okay, and that the loading access separate and limited movements, good idea

The Panel also highlighted the opportunity for a pedestrian connection through the site down to Ironstone Drive. A path connecting to the existing sidewalks in the interest of permeability is recommended.

End...Item #1