Community Planning Department
Burlington Urban Design Advisory Panel

Meeting Minutes:
July 24, 2025 (1:30pm - 2:30pm)
Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

Item #1:
1022 Gallagher Rd. & 235 Plains Rd. E.

Design Review:
First Review at Burlington Urban Design Advisory Panel (BUD)

Application Type:
Pre-consultation for Official Plan Amendment & Zoning By-law Amendment

		present	absent
Members of the Burlington Urban Design Advisory Panel			
Matt Reid (Chair)	BUD Member		✓
Jackie VanderVelde (Vice Chair)	Acting BUD Chair	✓	
David deGroot	BUD Member	✓	
Jessica Hawes	BUD Member	✓	
Mike Flint	BUD Member		✓
Nigel Tai	BUD Member	✓	
Alexandru Taranu	BUD Member		✓
Christopher Moise	BUD Member	✓	
Timmithea Chan	BUD Member	✓	
City Staff			
Benjamin Kissner	Senior Planner, Development	✓	
Chloe Richer	Senior Planner, Heritage	✓	
Kyle Poole	Planner, Urban Design	✓	
Applicant & Design Team			
Duncan Russell	Weston Consulting	✓	
Martin Quarcoopome	Weston Consulting	✓	
Fernando Lima	Lima Architects	✓	
Bryan Decunha	Ownership Group	✓	

Disclosure of Conflict-of-Interest:
None.

City Staff Presentation Overview:
City Staff presented an overview of the development proposal, which was submitted through a pre-consultation for proposed amendments to the City's Official Plan and Zoning By-law. City Staff's presentation provided a brief overview of the proposed development along with the existing and upcoming context of the surrounding neighbourhood.

City Staff asked the BUD Panel members for design advice in the following three areas:

1. Context & Public Realm
   How does the proposal respond to the surrounding context and public realm, including adjacent waterfront and the broader neighbourhood? What improvements could assist in integrating the proposal into the surrounding urban fabric?

2. Built Form & Site Design
   Is the proposed site layout, circulation strategy, and massing appropriate given the site's context? How could the site design better assist in ensuring an activated and engaging public realm?

3. Open Space & Sustainability
   How effectively does the proposal integrate meaningful public open space into the site and surrounding neighbourhood context? How could the proposal better contribute to long-term sustainability objectives (e.g., climate resilience, floodplain considerations, tree canopy, access to green infrastructure, etc.)?

Applicant Presentation Overview:
The Applicant & Design Team presented the site and area context, including key planning framework considerations with a focus on the proposed development and its design. Key ideas expressed in the presentation included:

- their past attendance at the BUD Panel approximately four years ago. At that time the development application was for a six-storey building which received positive feedback from the BUD Panel.
- the current proposal is for an eleven-storey building, a development overview and site statistics.
- that due to the site's location along the Plains Road corridor, the minimum parking requirements for the residential component of the development were effectively zero – the Design Team will be working with the Applicant and City Staff to determine the most appropriate number of parking spaces within the development.
- images of the current single detached dwellings on site.
- the Official Plans designation of Mixed Use Corridor – General (1997) and Urban Corridor (2020). This Official Plan designation permits a height restriction of six stories, facilitating the need for an Official Plan Amendment to permit the eleven-storey building.
- the intent for pedestrian access off Plains Road East while vehicular access to underground parking and loading is proposed off Gallagher Road.
- the step backs at the rear of the building intended to breakup the mass of the minimalist building style.

BUD Panel Contextual Questions:

BUD Panel members asked the Applicant's Design Team the following clarifying questions. Answers below were provided by the Applicant's Design Team.

Q1: Regarding the character, programming and intention of the side yards, can you please describe these areas in more detail?

- The Design Team noted:
  - the significant side yard setback on both the east and west sides,
  - that they envisioned the ground floor entrances for residential units to be inclusive of private patios or terraces accompanied by integrated landscape areas, and

- clarified the design intent is not for ground floor residential units to have private access from the adjacent walkway to their units via the private terrace. Further detailing and design development is anticipated as the development process moves forward.

Q2: Can you clarify where the masonry is intended to be on the building as referenced in the angular plane study?

- The proposed masonry is located on the first and second floors of the podium.
- The intent is to have similar colour of masonry as the upper-level panels to create a sense of seamless integration. The panel material is still being determined but may include cement panels or aluminum panels.

Q3: Can you confirm if there is any common outdoor amenity space contemplated and if so, explain in detail? Also, can you comment on how the ground floor is programmed in the context of the developments to the east and west?

- Most of the amenity area will be indoor and rooftop with most of the non-buildable area being landscaped. A dog reliving area is anticipated to be provided at grade at the south-east corner of the site.
- Approximately half of the main floor of the building is intending to be amenities.
- The existing heritage property to the east and the existing townhouse complex to the west are respected with generous setbacks to accommodate preservation of the exiting trees while offering opportunities for additional landscape plantings.

Q4: Is the underground limited to the footprint of the building? If the underground is extended to the edge of the site, how will adequate soil volumes for trees be provided?

- The extent of the underground parking generally fits most of the property. This comment came up in the pre-consultation meeting with City Staff and is intended to be part of the revisions that are made to the site design keeping in mind there is effectively no predetermined parking rate.

Summary of BUD Panel Advice:

BUD Panel members provided the following design comments for consideration with respect to the three guiding questions posed by City Staff. Answers below were provided by the BUD Panel members.

1. **CONTEXT & PUBLIC REALM**
   How does the proposal respond to the surrounding context and public realm, including adjacent waterfront and the broader neighbourhood? What improvements could assist in integrating the proposal into the surrounding urban fabric?

- If the future policy direction of Plains Road is intended to be mid-rise, the proposal does a good job to fit the mass into the future context.
- What more could this design do to accommodate the low-rise neighbourhood to the north? Could the design express more of a podium as opposed to a colour and materials change at the lower floors? The low-rise aspect of the proposal could be further reinforced by doing this while responding positively to the adjacent heritage property.
- The question of the height fitting within the existing context needs to be further examined as while the proposed building height fits within the midrise design guidelines, the shadow study indicates shadow on the adjacent residential neighbourhood and heritage property.
- Concerns if the building height were appropriate given the context. A more reasonable height was suggested in the range of six to nine stories with a slimmer footprint.
- BUD panel members also acknowledged given the proximity to the existing heritage property next door, the size, scale and massing should be refined to be more respectful of this transition.

- Moving forward the site plan should show the context and proximity of the proposed building relative to the existing heritage building and existing townhouse development. This will demonstrate the full extent of the relationship between the building and its surrounding.
- Provided the long-term context of this property to its surroundings is likely to remain unchanged on this side of the street, the height of the building in relation to its surroundings is a concern.

2. BUILT FORM & SITE DESIGN

Is the proposed site layout, circulation strategy, and massing appropriate given the site's context? How could the site design better assist in ensuring an activated and engaging public realm?

- Should the podium be further defined and extended to the north the entrance to the underground parking garage can be incorporated into the podium and provide for additional amenity space.
- Commendation to locating the vehicular parking towards the back of the site and proving several pedestrian connections throughout the site.
- The proposal needs to be considered in some respects as the only tall building in a block of existing low-rise buildings.
- The proposal demonstrates a great deal of care and attention from the perspective of the front elevation; however, it feels as if there is less care and thoughtful detaining on the side elevations. These side elevations are going to be incredibly visible and impactful as residents traverse the Plains Road corridor.
- There is appreciation for and value in the intent for simplicity and minimalism; however there feels as if there is a great deal of materials within the palette for a relatively small building.
- BUD members suggest utilizing simple materials to further detail the building podium, with specific attention to residential details as the surrounding context is very residential in nature.
- If the interior garbage room can be shifted or relocated further north, this would assist in enhancing the quality of the amenity space proposed for the north-east pathway and side yards.
- The opportunity for side yard entrances through the terraces for ground floor residential units was suggested as potentially a missed opportunity. Not having entrances lends itself to more chance of unused, sterile areas. Introduction of through entrances could provide for further activation of the site and create opportunities for spill-out areas to the edge of the walkway that could be intended for light use by adjacent ground floor residents.
- BUD members questioned the need for the pedestrian walkway along the north side of the building. Omitting the walkway on the north side of the site and having the walkway return to the side yard or private patios as noted was thought to be more appropriate. The walkway area removed along the north side of the building could then be utilized for landscape area which was thought to benefit the application.
- Having the bicycle parking storage immediately accessible on the ground floor and from the exterior walkway was appreciated, removing the need for residents to traverse the interior of the building or access underground parking for bicycle storage.
- It was recommended that the interior amenity area proposed on the west side of the ground floor be switched with the residential units on the east side of the ground floor adjacent the bicycle storage. Reallocating the use of space on the ground floor was also thought to offer opportunities to relocate less desirable spaces such as the garbage room or bicycle storage to the north-east corner, capitalizing on synergies with the vehicular access and loading area.
- A separate secondary lobby or access point to the building at the north-east corner from the vehicular access and loading was suggested as beneficial to delineate and assist with site programming or wayfinding for deliveries.
- The locker spaces proposed on each floor adjacent to the elevator were thought to be better used as residential gross floor area or better allocated to other space within each floor of the building. BUD members noted typically a consolidated locker room is provided on the ground floor or in the basement as opposed to one every floor of the building.

- It was noted that the projected balconies make the building form and massing appear even larger than perhaps intended. It is recommended that opportunities to redesign the protruding balconies be explored to reduce the building articulation and reduce the apparent building mass.

3. OPEN SPACE & SUSTAINABILITY

How effectively does the proposal integrate meaningful public open space into the site and surrounding neighbourhood context? How could the proposal better contribute to long-term sustainability objectives (e.g., climate resilience, floodplain considerations, tree canopy, access to green infrastructure, etc.)?

- BUD panel members felt the application could have greater focus on sustainability in terms of stormwater management and building materials. It was noted specifically that spandrel panels and window walls are not the most sustainable design choices.
- When detailing the podium of the building, consideration for additional landscaping should be considered.
- With respect to social sustainability, the programming of the amenity areas within the building was noted of importance. Programming of these spaces should encourage social inclusion, and interaction provided the multi-residential nature of the proposed building.
- Ensure adequate soil volumes are provided on site to allow for full canopy development.
- Opportunities for incorporation of green roofs were identified as worthy of consideration, assisting with both the total landscape area on site and making the feel of the building more residential in nature.

End of Item #1.