Community Planning Department
Burlington Urban Design Advisory Panel (BUD)

MINUTES

May 30, 2024
2:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

Members of BUD

	present	absent / regrets
Jessica Hawes (Chair)	✓	
Matt Reid (Vice Chair)	✓	
David deGroot	✓	
Mike Flint	✓	
Nigel Tai	✓	
Alexandru Taranu	✓	
Jackie VanderVelde	✓	
Christopher Moise	✓	
Timmithea Chan	✓	

Item #2: 35 Plains Road East

Design Review: First Review

Application: Pre-Consultation for OPA & ZBA

Presentations:

City Staff: Alicia West, Community Planning

Design Team: Kregg Fordyce, KFA Architects
Luca Chandler, KFA Architects
Nick Sampogna – KFA Architects
Diego Canneri – KFA Architects
Matt Madigan – Adesso Design



Disclosure of conflict-of-interest

None.

City Staff Overview

City staff provided an overview of the pending application's status, as it came through a Pre-consultation request for proposed applications for an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) and a Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA). In the presentation, staff provided a brief overview of the proposed development, project details, the surrounding context, Aldershot MTSA vision, amenities, transportation, and mobility, as well as future development context.

Staff are seeking the Panel's advice on the following key issues:

1. **Built Form**
   Please comment on the overall building massing, height of the podium and scale, and tower design (incl. balconies, building setbacks and tower step-backs). How does the proposed building setbacks, particularly to the north impact future development and context? Does the proposal address the corner of Plains Road and Cooke Boulevard successfully?
2. **Site Circulation and Entrance**
   Please comment on the proposed site circulation, particularly with respect to pedestrian circulation along Cooke Blvd and Waterdown road, the proposed pathway towards the western property line of the site and proposed access to the residential lobby.
3. **Public Realm and Shadows**
   Please comment on the overall shadow impacts on the public realm as it relates to the Sun Access Factor at 0.26 and pedestrian comfort.

Design Team Presentation

The design team provided a brief history of the project stating that the developer has been before the panel with a previous application. The property was put on the market over the past year and a half, but a re-evaluation of the project became necessary due to a lack of market response to the original plan, which included several large units. Additionally, there were a number of changes that took place such as the development of the MTSA that prompted the reassessment of the project. The team also gave a brief explanation of the surrounding neighbourhood context by showing images of the northwest and southwest views as well as views along Plains Road.

The team provided a summary of the proposed development and emphasised the change in height from the original proposal of 9 storeys to the proposed 12 storeys, which the team believe is consistent with the MTSA context. The team acknowledged that the proposal is higher by one storey than that indicated as the maximum envisioned height of the MTSA at 11 storeys and stated that it is a fairly reasonable ask in terms of the context of mid-rise in the GTA. The overall proposed height is now at 42.5 metres and the Floor Space Index (FSI) has increased to 6.7. The total number of units has also increased to yield a total of 161 units which consists of a mix of studios, 1 bedroom, 2 bedrooms, and three bedrooms. The proposal also includes 2

levels of underground parking with 110 residential spaces and 109 bicycle parking spaces. Amenity space is also provided at 9.0 square metres per unit. In terms of setbacks, the team stated that majority of the grade conditions and setbacks have remained consistent with the original application. Majority of the changes that were made are in relation to the building massing rather than the site plan.

The team then walked the Panel through the conceptual site plan and explained that the drawings provided are not as progressive as they could have been and highlighted the boxes drawn on the site plan as representative of planters that are proposed although they are not shown on the landscape plan. The team also noted that the soft scaping that was proposed in the original scheme has now also been change to hardscape. Entrances to the retail spaces are proposed along Plains Road, with planters proposed between the entrances. There are also retail entrances proposed along the Cooke Boulevard frontage. The residential entrance is proposed along Cook Boulevard, in between the two retail entrances. Vehicular access is also provided from Cooke Boulevard. At grade parking is provided at the rear of the site towards the northern property line. The garbage and loading area are located central to the site.

In terms of green roofs, the proposed ramp to the underground parking is covered by a green roof. Amenity space is also planned on the roof top, with a green roof that is not accessible. This is similar to what was presented in the original plan. The aim is to work towards integrating a storm water management system. The development includes an indoor amenity area, which provides access to an adjacent patio space with barbecues. This space extends along the Cooke Blvd. frontage, featuring large planters and seating. Additionally, a screen has been installed behind the barbecues for privacy. The amenity areas are designed facing south to take advantage of the views to the Lake.

As for the proposed building materials, the base is cladded with commercial glazing and darker material, above which brick is being proposed for the remaining floors of the podium. Higher floors are proposed to be constructed using metal panel and glass window walls. The team is proposing dark materials such as stucco and metal screening for the top of the building around the mechanical penthouse. The entrance along Cooke Boulevard is proposed to be articulated with porcelain tiles. Short term bicycle parking is also provided near the entrance. Canopies above the residential entrance and along the retail frontage are also proposed to help create a more pedestrian friendly environment at grade. The design subtly enhances the corner of the building to emphasize its prominence.

As for the shadow study, the team demonstrated the shows for March 21st and explained that the shadow impacts are negligible as the property to the north bears majority of the impact, however it is a commercial property. The shadow impacts are reduced in June, with the sun being at a higher angle.

PANEL QUESTIONS:

The Panel asked the design team the following questions of clarification:

- Can you please provide clarification about the comments in the urban design brief that state that the city has requested that the planters and trees along Plains Road be removed?
    - In the first submission to the municipality in the previous application had a streetscape, but then we were asked to just show concrete because there's an overall design happening on Plains Road.
    - Bike lanes were recently installed on the south side of Plains Road as part of the overall master plan.
- Can you please elaborate on the use of large radius for the access? Have you considered using tighter curves?
    - Yes, this was included as part of the first submission, however, it was vetted by transportation and the changes made were accordingly.
- Is the on-grade parking provided to the north of the site meant for visitors?
    - Yes, that is correct.
- Can you please provide commentary on the building interface on the west side as it seems very tight? Are there any requirements to providing buffering? Are there any existing vegetations? Are there any grading issues?
    - There is a narrow landscape strip between the visitor parking spaces and the property line. At the back of the parking spaces there is a low retaining wall.
    - There is a difference in elevation between the site and the neighbor to the north.
- Is there a fence proposed to the north?
    - Yes, there is.
- Can you please elaborate on your use of sustainable measures and incorporation of sustainable design within this project?
    - Part of the client group is a mason; hence brick is proposed for the exterior cladding system, which is a more sustainable product than others in terms of embodied carbon.
    - Other sustainable elements include storm water management through the areas such as the green roofs on parking and species selection. Planting species have not been selected at this stage yet but will be at the SPA stage. It is envisioned that they would all be native, drought tolerant, and salt tolerant. Pollinator flowers may also be proposed.
    - There are currently no trees proposed but the aim is for the green roof to be a sustainable factor of the overall design to offset the heat and cooling needs of the building.
- To clarify, this project had an approval of 9 storeys and the only difference now is that there is an additional 3 storeys added on top?
    - Correct, however this is not the only difference. The aesthetic of the building has changed slightly through refinements and simplification of the building massing.
    - The original design was more sculpted at the 7th,8th and 9th storey, while this design is more diluted. This design is a fairly handsome resolution for the subtle height increase.
    - The materiality has relatively remained the same.
- Were the 9-storey building approved?
    - Yes, it is approved.

PANEL ADVICE:

1. Built Form

Please comment on the overall building massing, height of the podium and scale, and tower design (incl. balconies, building setbacks and tower step-backs). How does the proposed building setbacks, particularly to the north impact future development and context? Does the proposal address the corner of Plains Road and Cooke Boulevard successfully?

The Panel appreciated the team's presentation and commented that it would have been helpful to see a side-by-side comparison of the approved project at 9 storeys in contrast with the proposed 12 storey building to better understand the changes that are proposed. The following are areas that the Panel encouraged the team to consider:

Context: The Panel recommended that additional analysis be conducted to the specific context of the site with its surrounding properties to better understand the existing and planned context and how the site will impact the surrounding sites. The Panel noted that the scale of the podium expression might suit the scale of the building as a whole but it is currently shown in isolation. However, it needs to consider the future development of the block and whether a more appropriately scaled podium at 4th storeys, with an incorporated setback at a lower height, would be suitable. A Panel member noted that overall the proposed built form and height of the development feels comfortable. The Panel appreciated the team's efforts in the design of the proposal especially in the ground floor design, and the pedestrian experience through the retail fronting on all the streets.

Built Form: The Panel commended the team on their design of the L shaped building. A Panel member commented that the proposed development is an oversimplification of the built form in comparison to the previous submission. It has lost some of its character that made the original submission more unique particularly with the angulation and the pushes and pulls on the vertical elements of the upper portions of the building, and with some elements that were taller than others. The Panel member advised the team to consider bringing back some of these elements in the new proposal. The Panel also noted that this is a corner site and advised the team to work with the white frame and to consider the use of special treatments to help make the corner stand out. The Panel highlighted that this was one of the comments they had made previously about this building in the last meeting. The Panel commented that the simplicity of the built form

is considered a positive attribute and commended the team on their choice of brick for the podium and their choice of terraces as usable spaces. The Panel however commented on the proposed balconies at the tower level, noting that the projecting balconies diminish the separation of forms between the tower and the podium portion. The Panel recommended that the balconies be further stepped back to reduce its impact.

The Panel also noted that the proposed proportions of the base of the building massing need to be further considered as the proposed building design created awkward proportions and does not follow the typical base, middle and top typology. The Panel recommended that the team consider increasing the height of the building base to allow for better building proportions. The Panel also advised the team to review the design of the ground floor, specifically on the Plains Road frontage to see if additional details and fine-tuning could be added to ensure the building elegance is expressed at that level and that pedestrian experience is truly emphasized. The Panel advised the team to explore using signage, lighting and wood materials to further soften the look and feel of the lower levels, particularly the ground floor.

A Panel member also commented that the amount of parking provided should be considered, especially since the proposed parking may not accommodate every unit, particularly with the proposal including two or three bedrooms. The Panel also suggested that the parking ramp be moved closer to the back of the retail and swapping its location with the loading zone so that the residents can quickly get out of the site everyday without passing through the entire site.

Setbacks: The Panel raised concerns about southwest setback specifically with regards to the bachelor suite on the first six storeys that faces and relies exclusively on the side yard for light exposure. The Panel noted that if this condition was replicated to the neighbouring property it would result in uncomfortable conditions. The Panel recommended splitting the unit into two units that can have access to both the front and back side of the site as opposed to having the current unit squeezed in between.

Sustainability: The Panel highlighted that the development consists of extensive use of window walls, and glass, which is not a very sustainable solution to use. The Panel also noted that the use of dark materials will result in a lot of heat gain, which again is not sustainable and may contribute to higher energy consumption for cooling, ultimately having a negative impact on the climate. The Panel commented on the number of proposed balconies and recommended that the team consider reducing the number of balconies proposed at the tower level as traditional

cantilevered balconies are not particularly sustainable or environmentally friendly. The Panel also noted that the design of the building is repetitive and suggested that the team consider using mass timber for construction purposes, which is permitted by code up to 12 storeys in height. This form of construction is highly sustainable from an embodied carbon standpoint.

2. Site Circulation and Entrance

Please comment on the proposed site circulation, particularly with respect to pedestrian circulation along Cooke Blvd and Waterdown road, the proposed pathway towards the western property line of the site and proposed access to the residential lobby.

Similar to the commentary provided by the Panel on the original application, the Panel agreed that the proposed site circulation is positive with traffic being diverted from the main street (Plains Road) to the side street, as well as placement of building access points. The Panel however encouraged the team to consider the following:

Landscape Design: The Panel questioned the landscape's soft buffer along the retail line, particularly focusing on the one facing Cooke Blvd. Currently, it appears to severely limit flexibility for future retail endeavors, as it seems to accommodate only one retail entrance. The Panel suggested the team consider the flexibility of accommodating various retail setups such as having two retail shops rather than one. The Panel advised the team to consider the design and type of landscaping around the retail area, and recommended the use of landscaping that is short and can be combined with seating areas. Seating areas can be used by people waiting for friends and families while shopping, thus providing a practical and functional use to the area as well as animating the pedestrian realm.

The Panel also commented on the area fronting the proposed lobby and encouraged the team to explore the addition of seating areas and enlarging the space in front of the lobby as currently, the planters appear to be positioned very close to the entrance of that space.

Parking: With regards to the four parallel parking spaces provided along the Cooke Boulevard frontage, A Panel member questioned whether this was proposed by the City or the design team and encouraged the team to look at opportunities to replace these spaces with green space and trees, which if implemented would not require compensation through the use of sod in front of the retail area. A Panel member differed in opinion about the parking spaces stating that it is beneficial for visitors visiting the commercial use or the development in general.

However, the Panel agreed that an increase in the landscape buffer along Cooke Boulevard would be beneficial. Integrating the landscaping with the public realm would be the key to achieving consistency along the boulevard and achieving a good quality public realm.

Materials: The Panel acknowledged adjusting the turning radius to access the proposed building may be too late in the process. However, the Panel noted that there is a lot of asphalt being proposed on site, which counters the promotion of active transportation on site. The Panel recommended that if policies regarding this is not present within the MTSA policy, that a set of specific urban standards be developed. The Panel also recommended the team consider the use high quality paving materials for the surface parking and the loading area, to promote a more pedestrian priority area.

3. Public Realm and Shadows

Please comment on the overall shadow impacts on the public realm as it relates to the Sun Access Factor at 0.26 and pedestrian comfort.

The Panel noted that majority of the comments for this question have been covered during the previous comments. However, the Panel commended the team on their efforts on extending the retail along Cooke Boulevard as opposed the original submission that proposed a large garbage room along this frontage.

End...Item #2