Community Planning Department
Burlington Urban Design Advisory Panel

Meeting Minutes:
Aug. 21, 2025 (1:30pm - 2:30pm)
Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

Item #1:
198-200 & 206 Plains Rd. E.

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

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

		present	absent
Members of the Burlington Urban Design Advisory Panel			
Matt Reid (Chair)	BUD Member	✓	
Jackie VanderVelde (Vice Chair)	BUD Member		✓
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			
Elyse Meneray	Planner, Development	✓	
Chloe Richer	Senior Planner, Heritage	✓	
Kyle Poole	Planner, Urban Design	✓	
Todd Evershed	Supervisor, Special Projects	✓	
Proponent & Design Team			
Hy Nguyen	Landwise	✓	
Shannon McKie	Landwise	✓	
Alaa Gaber	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 Bylaw. 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 sites, heritage properties 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.)?

Proponent Presentation Overview:
The Proponent & 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:

- the current proposal is for a six-storey mixed use building, with 66 dwelling units and two commercial units.
- the project is designed to meet the City's vision for transit-oriented growth.
- the subject lands are located on the south side of Plains Road East between Shadeland Avenue and Waterdown Road (LaSalle Park Road), just outside of the Aldershot GO Major Transit Station Area.
- the subject lands have a total site of approximately 2,890 square metres and a total frontage of 54 metres along Plains Road East.
- the subject lands are currently used for residential purposes; 198-200 Plains Rd. E. currently contains four dwelling units while 206 Plains Rd. E. currently contains three dwelling units.
- the Aldershot area contains primarily low to midrise residential uses, with a mixture of commercial and residential uses along Plains Road corridor.
- a particular site to note within proximity of the subject lands is the commercial property at 192 Plains Rd. E. known as the Scheer-Read Farmhouse, an inventoried, non-designated heritage property currently being used as a dentist office.
- the subject lands are designated Medium Density Residential in the 1997 Official Plan.
- to facilitate the development proposal, an Official Plan Amendment is required to redesignate the property from Medium Density Residential to Mixed Use Corridor General with site specific provisions relating to the maximum floor area ratio.
- the 2020 Official Plan partially in effect designates the lands as Urban Corridor, permitting buildings up to six storeys and a floor area ratio of 2:1 as of right.
- the subject lands are currently zoned Residential Medium Density, each with a site-specific exception.
- the proposed development is intended to be a common element condominium with indoor amenity areas consisting of a wellness center and a multipurpose amenity room.
- a total of 94 vehicular parking spaces are provided with 19 parking spaces provided at grade and the remainder are within two levels of underground parking.
- the modern architectural expression of the building with flat roofs, rectangular forms, recessed balconies and street canopies.

BUD Panel Contextual Questions:

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

Q1: With respect to the wellness center portion of the indoor amenity area, can you provide any further details on the space and/or further describe its purpose/character?

- The indoor wellness center is intended to provide physical activity for the residents, to promote residents' health and wellbeing.
- The layout of this interior space has not progressed to detailed design at this stage in the project.

Q2: With respect to the vehicular entrance to the site, have discussions with traffic engineers occurred to comment on if this is an appropriate location? Plains Road East at this location is four lanes plus a turning lane so therefore aligning the entrance with the cross street may not be relevant.

- Originally the vehicular access was not proposed at the current location aligning with the cross street. Within pre-consultation discussions, the City's Transportation Department asked for the vehicular access to the site to be aligned with the cross street.
- Formal comments from the City of Burlington Transportation comments have not been provided as this is something that will occur through the formal application process.

Q3: Is there any significant grade difference across the site?

- Yes, there is a grade difference across the property going towards Plains Road East.
- It is approximately (in the range of) 30 centimetres but nothing that is significant.

Q4: How does your design reflect Burlington? Are there any elements of your design that speak to local character or identity?

- Understanding this is the second or third project designed on Plains Roads East, we are responding to the need for commercial use on the ground floor and a modern style of architecture.
- Many of the new developments along the Plains Road corridor are reflective of modern architecture and rich materials finishing.

Q5: What are the Project Teams thoughts to building sustainability or site sustainability?

- Sustainability is a consideration of the proposal. This is still under development and will be considered for the final drawing set.

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 sites, heritage properties and the broader neighbourhood? What improvements could assist in integrating the proposal into the surrounding urban fabric?

- It is understood there is a potential traffic conflict should the proposed vehicular site entrance be located further to the west. However, there is perceived benefit in relocating the proposed vehicular site entrance further west to allow for the combination of the two podium halves into one. This in turn would alleviate the design conflict between onsite pedestrians and vehicles.
- Should the vehicular site entrance not be relocated and remain centered, it is strongly encouraged that design choices for the passageway be considered to provide a safe and appropriate pedestrian-

vehicular interface. Some options to be considered include appropriate lighting and variations in materials to delineate and prioritize the pedestrian path of travel.

- Alternative treatments for the large sections of blank wall on three sides of the building should be considered to provide additional interest to pedestrians, improve the public realm and offer healthier urban design. Design opportunities may include additional windows or access doors to make the pedestrian experience safer and more inviting.
- A design opportunity was thought to exist should the proposed porte cochere be relocated as far east as possible, and the underground parking ramp relocated as far west as possible, the underground parking ramp could be open on three sides while providing for a consolidated central building ground floor plan.
- The vehicular travel lane was thought to be better positioned as a continuation of the public realm with design opportunities for safety bollards and strategic changes in unit paving to delineate pedestrian priority.
- With respect to building typology and surrounding context, the size and scale of the building were thought to be appropriate. The Panel noted that this site and proposal was more so an integration with the emerging context than the existing context.
- The use of brick as a material choice was suggested to better fit with the surrounding context and recognition to the heritage context of surrounding properties. Traditional brick colours and finishes were thought to also permit opportunities for heritage integration.
- The building height, scale and form was thought to be appropriate for the emerging Plains Road corridor. Additional attention to detail by way of a gentler transition to the adjacent heritage building was suggested as the adjacent heritage property may not likely change in the emerging corridor character. Opportunities to open views to the heritage building at the corner or reinforce the heritage properties established setback should be considered. Similarly further sculpting of the upper floors of the building were suggested to provide for a greater transition to the adjacent heritage property.
- The siting of the building was suggested to be tight to the side yards. An additional setback on the east side yard was recommended as to protect for the separation distance of a future midrise building to the east.
- Panel members noted in the absence of floor plans for the upper floors of the building it was difficult to comment on the east and west facades. Additional articulation and an increase in glazing ratio were thought to be beneficial for consideration, but without the upper floor plans to determine the unit layout this was difficult to correlate.
- Wayfinding and the user experience for members of the public coming to the site to visit the commercial spaces was flagged for consideration; questions such as “how easy is it for them to navigate the site?” or “how easy is it for them to find the parking areas?” should be considered.

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?

- Panel members noted that further consideration should be given to the on-site pedestrian circulation and walkability. Visitors to the site arriving by vehicle would park at the rear and then must walk the perimeter of the site to access the front entrance. In addition, the accessibility route from the accessible parking spaces takes the longest possible route through the outdoor amenity area and up the eastern side of the building. Limited pedestrian connectivity from the rear of the building was noted with respect to the proposed sidewalk along the west side of the building.
- Along the street frontage, the separation of the ground floor commercial components by the proposed 1.5m planting strip was though to be better served by a direct connection immediately to the public sidewalk.
- Provision of a secondary access from the rear of the building should be strongly considered.

- Supporting the application for an Official Plan Amendment, Panel members suggested an analysis of the proposed buildings massing should be undertaken in correlation with the sites existing and potential context to fully understand the proposal and its place within the block.
- Strategies on how to maintain or propose a pedestrian scale along the Plains Road corridor were suggested as worthy of further investigation. For example, would a step back from the street above the low-rise form (i.e. the third or fourth storey) assist in this regard.
- Currently the largest portion of the rooftop amenity area faces north, separated by the rooftop mechanical units. It was suggested that the sun exposure of the south be optimized, whereby the volume of the rooftop mechanical is shifted north and a larger, consolidated south facing rooftop amenity area is provided.
- Panel members commended the fine grain character that was visible within the upper floors of the building, however the sides of the building and back of the building were noted as requiring further detailing. Moreso, extending the detailing displayed in the upper floors to the ground floor and lower floors was strongly encouraged to achieve design excellence.
- The mix of units within the building was noted as having potential for incorporation of three-bedroom units.

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.)?

- Opportunities to reallocate or remove a portion of the surface parking in favour of greenspace or other site features was noted. This would offer improvements to sustainability and site safety through “eyes on the space”.
- The artificial turf within the rear yard at grade amenity area was encouraged to be substituted for natural turf and/or enhanced landscaping through minor refinements to the site layout. These refinements were also believed to alleviate the need for the proposed soil cells within the rear yard amenity area given the spaces location outside the perimeter of the underground parking garage.
- Drought tolerant, native plant materials were encouraged to comprise the planting palette.
- Panel members noted it would be beneficial to reallocate a portion of the surface parking to prioritize a courtyard or enhanced, at grade amenity space. A more programmable, central rectangular amenity space with closer proximity to the building was suggested over the narrow edge space currently shown.

End of Item #1.