Community Planning Department
Burlington Urban Design Advisory Panel (BUD)

MINUTES

August 19, 3:30 pm
Virtual (Online) Meeting

Members of BUD

	present	absent / regrets
Ken Coit (Chair)	✓	
Jana Kelemen (Vice Chair)		regrets
Alexandru Taranu		regrets
Jackie VanderVelde	✓	
Jessica Hawes	✓	
LeAnn Seely	✓	
Matt Reid	✓	
Michael Barker		regrets
Nigel Tai		regrets

Item #1: 2020 Lakeshore Road

Design Review:	First Review
Application:	Official Plan Amendment and Rezoning
Presentations:	
City Staff:	Thomas Douglas, Community Planning
Design Team:	David Falletta, Bousfields Inc.; Anh Le Quang, Lilia Koleva Neuf Architectes LLP; Mario Patitucci, Adesso 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 integration of the proposed development with its surroundings including: streetscaping on Lakeshore Road and Elizabeth Street and interface with Spencer Smith Park to the west and south.

2. **Public Realm – Access & Connectivity to the Public Park & Lake**
   Please comment on the proposed atrium at the foot of John Street, with consideration for bird-friendly design, the preservation of public views from John Street to Lake Ontario, and the objective of maintaining and enhancing public access to the waterfront.

3. **Architectural Design and Design Excellence**
   Please comment on the design of the proposed buildings, with consideration for the landmark location of the site and the need to achieve compatibility with surrounding context, as well as the proposed arrangement of uses and location of building entrances.

4. **Location & Amount of Outdoor Amenity Spaces**
   Please comment on the proposed amenity areas (rooftop and at grade) with attention to opportunities for publicly accessible spaces.

Design Team Presentation

The Design Team provided an overview of the history and context of the site. It was noted that the site is a premier site at the foot of Brant Street, a core street in Downtown Burlington. A landmark vision that functions as a landmark destination for the city and downtown core is therefore proposed. The history of the site as an entertainment destination and its contribution to hotel enjoyment of the waterfront is intended to be reflected in this project.

The proposed building consists of a podium with ground floor commercial and hotel and office space above, and two towers with residential uses. The hotel will be located on one side of the podium, while office space will be on the other. A bridge connecting the two sides of the podium will contain amenities for the hotel and residential uses. All parking will be underground.

The project architect walked the Panel through various views of the proposal. It was noted that the site is intended to respect the existing landscape of the park and the steep topography between Lakeshore Road and the waterfront. The proposal is intended to provide visual and physical connections from the street to the lake.

With respect to building design, the design is meant to be iconic and reflect water waves. Terraces are used to create a gentle curve along the tower façade and provide residents with views of the city and lake. Complementary materials, textures and colours connect the tower and the podium.

A plaza and an atrium that the public can walk through or stay in to enjoy waterfront views is proposed. The connection from Lakeshore Road to the Waterfront Trail continues through to the

landscape with patio opportunities for coffee, restaurants and to create a gathering space for people to enjoy the location.

Panel Questions:

The Panel asked the following questions of clarification:

- Is the tower floor plate largest at the 6th floor, and smaller as they rise?
    - Yes. There are no bulges proposed in the towers.
- What are some of the environmental features of the building and site design?
    - Green roofs accessible to each use are proposed to reduce heat loss. Local materials will also be used to help with LEED certification. The new energy code will be adhered to. Glass in various opacities will be used to reduce heat loss. Bird friendly design will be used at the podium level with optional fretting throughout the tower above.
    - The lower area of the podium will have more solid materials (e.g. brick, stone).
- Are the towers predominately glass?
    - Yes.
- What are the setbacks on the east, south and west sides of the podium from the property lines?
    - North: 7 m; west (waterfront and Spencer Smith Park): 2 m; south (to property line): 4.9 m; and, east (Elizabeth Street): 2 m
- What is the intended programming for the atrium?
    - The atrium will be a covered space that the public can freely access and move through from the Lakeshore Road side of the building to the plaza and waterfront on the southside and vice versa. It is also intended to be a gathering place to get to other uses within the building (e.g. offices, hotel).

Panel Advice:

Question #1: Response to Context – *Please comment on the integration of the proposed development with its surroundings including: streetscaping on Lakeshore Road and Elizabeth Street and interface with Spencer Smith Park to the west and south.*

The Panel commented that taller heights and densities with a broad mix of uses are warranted at this site given its prominent location. However, the Panel felt that overall, the proposed building is too large for its context, and that the height, massing, proportions and scales of the podium and towers should be reevaluated in the context of their comments below. Additionally, more transparency overall in the ground floor plane, with more open semi-private spaces, should be provided.

Lakeshore Road & John Street

The Panel felt that the height and length of the podium is too large for this context. The podium height could be reduced in consideration of the surrounding context. For example, it was noted that existing buildings on the north side of Lakeshore Road range in height from 1- to 2½- storeys and include heritage buildings that should be considered. Although the large setback of the proposed building helps to mitigate this juxtaposition, a reduction in height would further help with integration. To break up the length of the podium, it is recommended that the atrium be replaced with an open-air area and that more articulation be incorporated.

The Lakeshore Road streetscape was noted as being well done with the triple row of trees, extensive setback and opportunities for patios. However, the Panel was concerned that the atrium would cast shadows onto Lakeshore Road and obstruct views from John Street. Although glass material is proposed for the atrium, glass does not always appear transparent. Replacing the atrium with an open-air corridor was recommended.

Lastly, it was noted that proportion and scale of the towers appear inconsistent between drawings in the submission package, causing the Panel to caution the overall tower massing and orientation. It was noted that a proportional balance needs to be struck between the narrow and broader sides of the towers, and that appropriate tower placements should be provided to mitigate their built form impacts such as shadowing on Brant Street.

Transitions to Spencer Smith Park and Waterfront Trail

The Panel highlighted that appropriate transitions to Spencer Smith Park and the Waterfront Trail are currently lacking. The existing path along the west side of the property, as well as Brant Street and the Waterfront Trail were noted as being busy pedestrian corridors. There is an opportunity for the west side of the site to provide a stronger connection to these areas.

Specifically, the Panel recommended that the building setback adjacent to this west interface be increased, the façade treatment better articulated, and open space landscaped to create more of a public realm and transition to the existing open space. Also, instead of a podium-tower condition on this side, the tower could be brought all the way down to the ground plane as an iconic vertical element (no podium) to provide interest and the podium could be replaced with landscaping.

It was noted that the west tower appears to have significant shadow impacts on Brant Street, and that the view down Brant appears to terminate at the towers. Relocating the west tower can also help address these issues.

There is also an opportunity to provide 180-degree views from the central area (between the podium) by extending it south of the podium.

Lastly, underground parking should be designed to protect the context of the park by allowing for mature trees.

Transitions to Elizabeth Street

On the Elizabeth Street side, the Panel noted that Elizabeth Street is a prominent frontage for the Bridgewater development to the west of the site. The Panel flagged that the height, location and orientation of towers should be carefully reviewed for their shadow impacts on Elizabeth Street.

The Panel agreed that locating back of house activities for the subject site off Elizabeth makes sense but cautioned that it should be carefully treated to support what is being achieved at Bridgewater. Elizabeth Street itself could be specially treated to signal to vehicles that it is a pedestrian area.

Question #2: Public Realm Access & Connectivity to the Public Park & Lake – *Please comment on the proposed atrium at the foot of John Street, with consideration for bird-friendly design, the preservation of public views from John Street to Lake Ontario, and the objective of maintaining and enhancing public access to the waterfront.*

The atrium is appreciated but does not provide a true visual corridor between John Street and the waterfront because of its glass reflections and pinched width. Furthermore, for this connection to succeed as a physical public connection, it is important that it feels like a public space. It currently does not feel that way because the size of the podium and atrium is the same as the front elevation. An open-air connection is recommended instead.

Since there is value to having cooler, covered spaces, if an atrium is desired, it could be designed to provide more vertical articulation in the podium and give the podium an appearance of two separate buildings.

The Panel appreciates the detailed submission package, as well as the proposed streetscape design along Lakeshore Road and setback of underground parking to allow for the preservation and growth of mature street trees.

Question #3: Architectural Design and Design Excellence – *Please comment on the design of the proposed buildings, with consideration for the landmark location of the site and the need to achieve compatibility with surrounding context, as well as the proposed arrangement of uses and location of building entrances.*

The Panel commented that the buildings are beautifully designed and achieves the goal for an iconic design. It works well with the shape and curve of the pier. However, the massing of the building should be reviewed from multiple angles. The towers appear bulky from certain angles.

The Panel was also concerned about the sustainability of the building. Considering climate change, buildings made of mostly glass are no longer a sustainable option. Impacts of the building over its lifespan in terms of carbon neutrality and sustainability should be closely reviewed. Also, with the site being close to the water, having sustainable stormwater management features is important.

Lastly, there is an opportunity to take advantage of the location of the site being within the cultural centre of Burlington by incorporating public art, designed with public input. Ideas include unique vertical elements such as colorful large-scale windows or a mural up one side of the building and an object at scale at the foot of John Street that brings a connection back to the lake and history of the site.

Question #4: Location & Amount of Outdoor Amenity Spaces – *Please comment on the proposed amenity areas (rooftop and at grade) with attention to opportunities for publicly accessible spaces.*

The Panel commented that much of the outdoor space between the podium is devoted to access ramps and stairs down to the park. Consider increasing the upper/lower plaza space and provide an elevator down to park level instead. The proposal introduces a lot

of new residential units, which will need to be balanced with a lot of amenity space and different uses.

The Panel also recommended providing a porous interface with the park, rather than having a harsh boundary between public and private space, through measures such as incorporating some semi-private spaces and a variety of outdoor amenity spaces. More accesses through podium to the park should also be considered.

The Panel reiterated that focus should be placed on the edges of the building and the public realm to ensure that the design reflects its unique and special location. Also, the Panel reiterated that while a tall landmark building is warranted at this location, the proposed podium and towers are too tall and should be reduced to ensure that the building is compatible and fits in with its surroundings, including both the existing and planned context.

End...Item #2

Meeting Adjourned