Community Planning Department
Burlington Urban Design Advisory Panel (BUD)

MINUTES

August 19, 2021, 2:00 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: 1860-1900 Appleby Line

Design Review: First Review

Application: Official Plan Amendment and Rezoning

Presentations:

City Staff: Melissa Morgan, Community Planning

Design Team: Mike Crough, IBI Group; Roland Rom Colthoff, RAW Design



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 proposed form of development, including scale, height, mass and setbacks and whether the proposed development is appropriate for the existing context of the site and the surrounding area.

2. **Public Realm**
   Please comment on whether the development provides an attractive pedestrian environment and whether appropriate pedestrian connections are provided between the site and the surrounding area.

3. **Location and Amount of Outdoor Amenity Spaces**
   Please comment on whether the site is appropriate with respect to outdoor amenity spaces.

Design Team Presentation

The Design Team walked the Panel through the existing and planned site context. It was noted that the proposal is intended to reflect the new Official Plan designation. Opposite the site, across Appleby Line, are 8- and 16-storey buildings currently designated Uptown Commercial and Uptown Residential; the proposed amendment would be similar to this designation.

The Project Architect provided an overview of the proposed site and building design. The southern boundary of the site aligns with existing parking spaces to allow the existing buildings to the south to function uninterrupted. Vehicular access is proposed via Ironstone Drive. Surface parking is proposed at the back of building for the convenience of the proposed medical offices. Residential lobby accesses for Phases 1 and 2 will be from side-streets; for Phase 3 it will be from Appleby Line.

A privately-owned publicly accessible space (POPS) is proposed across the middle of the site to focus and orient the development. The POPS will serve as a green spine to Appleby Line and provide pedestrian organization to the site. It will contain a central walkway connecting to Appleby Line with cross connections with existing commercial uses. It is possible that the remainder of the existing plaza to the south of the three phases will redevelop in the future. In the meantime, the POPS is intended for future buildings to look out onto and for the use of residents. The space will be crossed by one or two vehicular accesses.

A tower podium design is proposed. The podium of the first phase will contain office and retail space fronting Ironstone Drive. The 2-storey podium is designed with a playful or colorful façade and its roof will be sculpted to provide terraces with landscaping. The ground floor will be entirely transparent, and setback from Ironstone to allow for landscaping that is appropriate for retail and office uses. The tower has a small setback on an upper floor and is intended to meet the City’s tower floorplate guidelines (maximum 750 sm).

Panel Questions:

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

- What is the plan for pedestrian connectivity? Where will sidewalks be located relative to parking on the proposed north-south streets?
    - A continuous north-south walkway is proposed on the east side of the building to connect Ironstone to the POPS. Generally across all three phases, the thinking is to create permeability north to south linking Ironstone to the POPS. However, this is still being designed.
- Is a POPS proposed as part of the Phase 1 development?
    - The long-term plan may be to retain Phase 1 as parking until Phases 2 and 3 proceed given the coordination issues with respect to parking supply. Once the subsequent phases are complete, it will be converted to a POPS.
- Is the POPS intended to serve only the residents of this development? Is it intended to function as amenity space for the new residents?
    - Further discussion is needed with City staff to determine the purpose of this area. It may be open to the general public with some restrictions. It is proposed in addition to the private amenity space within the buildings. Currently it is envisioned to function as a park, an extension of the public domain on Appleby Line.
- What is the intent behind the order of phasing? Why start at the back?
    - Phase 1 lands are currently vacant, which makes it the logical place to start and easiest phase to redevelop. The main corner of the redevelopment will be at Ironstone and Appleby Line (i.e. Phase 3).
- If the subsequent phases do not end up proceeding, what will happen to the POPS?
    - When and how the POPS will be delivered will be resolved through the application process. The development has been designed to be standalone should plans about subsequent phases change in the future (e.g. parking and loading).
- What are the dimensions of the POPS?
    - The minimum width is intended to be between 15-18 m in order to provide for a programmable park space.
- Is there parking proposed under the POPS?
    - Yes.
- Will the POPS be delivered per phase?
    - It is assumed that it will.
- What is the width of the walkway to the residential lobby in Phase 1 (3 metres)?
    - 3 m (at least 2.1 m).
- Where are bike racks located?
    - Some adjacent to Ironstone Drive, and there may some in the parking area at back of building.
- Where will the parking garage extend to?
- What is the anticipated timeline for full build out (5-6 years)?
    - The developer's intent is to move forward on all phases as quickly as possible. It is estimated to take 6-10 years to complete all phases.
- Will the lands stay under one ownership?
    - The intent is to create three separate condominium corporations. Mutual agreements would be needed since surface and underground parking will be shared across all three phases.

Panel Advice:

Question #1: Response to Context – *Please comment on the proposed form of development, including scale, height, mass and setbacks and whether the proposed development is appropriate for the existing context of the site and the surrounding area.*

The Panel commented that overall, the massing of the proposed Phase 1 building appears to be consistent with the new Official Plan. However, it is removed from surrounding built up residential areas. It is recommended that the corner of Appleby Line and Ironstone be developed first, in case the other phases do not develop or develop slowly. Also, the Panel agreed that from a design perspective it is more appropriate to have the most height and density at the corner of Appleby and Ironstone and less density and a stepping down of height as development moves westerly away from the corner.

The Panel also commented that Phase 1 on its own, and all three phases together, do not fit in with the surrounding context because they are surrounded by parking lot. More consideration should be given to how the three buildings work together and connect to Ironstone Drive, Appleby Line and the POPS. Providing ground level connections to amenity areas for future residents of the development and surrounding area should be considered. In terms of setbacks, the Panel noted that upper level units will have unattractive views that overlook surface parking.

Concerns were also raised about interim pedestrian connectivity and greenspace conditions while the rest of the site develops. If subsequent phases do not proceed, Phase 1 would be lacking in greenspace.

The Panel recommended that a detailed block plan, or a commitment to a block plan, be undertaken to identify appropriate phasing, transitions and pedestrian connections to Ironstone Drive and Appleby Line across all three buildings and in the interim. If Phase 1 as currently proposed is to proceed first then an interim site plan showing how the northeast façade (east elevation) of the Phase 1 building connects to Appleby Line and the rest of the site would also be beneficial, as it will be the main entrance for residents.

Question #2: Public Realm – *Please comment on whether the development provides an attractive pedestrian environment and whether appropriate pedestrian connections are provided between the site and the surrounding area.*

The Panel commented that safe and attractive pedestrian connections between the proposed buildings, POPS, and surrounding area are missing. The POPS is isolated and separated from proposed buildings by surface parking and underground parking ramps that pedestrians will need to cross. The proposed walkways do not reflect the path that pedestrians will likely take to access the POPS. It was also noted that the current phasing plan for the POPS would result in a pocket of green space in Phase 2 that is disconnected from its surroundings.

The Panel recommended reorienting the buildings and internal building layouts to front and address the POPS, for example through patios, secondary entrances, pathways, amenity spaces. Unless buildings are reoriented to front the POPS, it will be difficult to appropriately design the POPS so that it does not feel like a traffic island. There is

currently a lot of surface parking proposed that would be better used as amenity space on the ground floor. While there are office parking requirements, there is still the ability to reclaim more of the ground plane for greenspace.

If building orientation is to stay the same, the Panel suggested making Ironstone Drive the primary pedestrian connection to the surrounding area. The Panel felt that the interface between Phase 1 and Ironstone Drive is the most urban among the three phases and should be echoed in Phases 2 and 3.

Lastly, the Panel commented that the lobby area lacks a sense of arrival for pedestrians. Opportunities to highlight the pedestrian lobbies, such as planters and benches, should be explored. Layby parking for temporary parking and pickup and drop-off should also be provided.

Question #3: Location and Amount of Outdoor Amenity Space – *Please comment on whether the site is appropriate with respect to outdoor amenity spaces.*

The Panel commented that residents in Phase 1 would be underserved by outdoor amenity space based on the current POPS phasing plan. Ground level outdoor amenity space for residents and their pets is important for liveability and should be provided in addition to the proposed rooftop amenity. A linear POPS on this site is an interesting concept, as there are other linear corridors in the vicinity. However, appropriate connections to the POPS is critical to its success.

The Panel reiterated and emphasized the importance of delivering a block plan to provide a framework to ensure future development works and the appropriate connections are made between Phase 1 and Appleby Line. Also, focusing east-west connections on the public street frontage of Ironstone Drive instead of both Ironstone and the POPS should be considered. Larger setbacks along Ironstone Drive could be provided to make room for public squares, rather than intermingling back of house activities with the public realm.

End...Item #1