



Meeting Summary

The Design Review Panel met virtually on **Thursday October 12th, 2023** via WebEx.

Panel Members Present:

David Clusiau, Chair

Dayna Edwards
Jennifer Sisson

Jennifer Mallard

Joey Giaimo
Ted Watson

Staff Present:

Jana Kelemen, Manager of Heritage and Urban Design
Michael Vortuba, SPM Heritage and Design

Edward Winter, Planner 1-Urban Design
Jennifer Catarino, Area Planning Manager

Others Present

Presentation #2	Adrienne Lee , Kirkor Architects Clifford. Korman , Kirkor Architects Franz Kloibhofer , A.J. Clarke Ryan Ferrari , A.J. Clarke	AJ Vance , LJM Developments Liaquat Mian , LJM Developments
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Regrets:

Eldon Theodore

Declaration of Interest:

PANEL MEMBERS ONLY - NONE

Schedule:

Start Time	Address	Type of Application	Applicant/ Agent	City Staff Planner
2:45pm	Residential Development 1600 Upper James Street, Hamilton	Official Plan & Zoning By-Law Amendments	Owner: LJM Developments Agent and Presentation: AJ Clarke & Associates	Jennifer Catarino

Summary of Comments:

Note: The Design Review Panel is strictly an advisory body and makes recommendations to Planning Division staff. These comments should be reviewed in conjunction with all comments received by commenting agencies and should be discussed with Planning Division staff prior to resubmission.

1600 Upper James Street

Development Proposal Overview

The applicant is proposing to develop a 21-storey (66 metre) tall multiple dwelling containing 248 residential units (127 units less than 50 m² and 121 units greater than 50 m²), approximately 150 m² of commercial space along Upper James Street and approximately 552 m² of indoor and outdoor amenity space. Parking is proposed to be provided in six levels of underground parking, providing 159 on site parking spaces.

Key Questions to the Panel from Planning Staff

- Does the proposed design provide a strong pedestrian focus to support the surrounding commercial uses and planned rapid transit corridors?
- Does the proposal create a comfortable, vibrant and stimulating pedestrian-oriented street?
- Does the stand-alone residential building support the broader intention of the Community Node?
- Does the proposal represent compatible integration with the surrounding area in terms of use, scale, form and character?
- Does the proposal provide for a mix of unit sizes to accommodate a range of household sizes and income levels?
- Does the proposal contain sufficient floor area to accommodate successful retail and/or service commercial uses at grade?
- Does the proposal satisfy the criteria to achieve a 12-storey height?

Panel Comments and Recommendations

a) Overview and Response to Context

The panel noted the importance of the corner location and encourage retail at grade with strong connections to the sidewalk to establish an active streetfront.

The panel noted the importance of the design of these ground-level spaces to provide for flexibility in use as demands and market change and evolve, further noting the proposed design does not offer this flexibility and does not place the retail unit in the prominent corner location. The panel further noted an amount of approximately 50% of the ground floor space should be designed as commercial space to appropriately fit the location.

b) Built Form and Character

Text The panel questioned the decision to surpass the community node height and density targets and opined that reducing the height may relieve some stress of providing a more-active streetscape along Upper James St. and Rymal Rd.?

The panel encouraged a review of scale and massing along the street to benefit the public realm and strengthen the pedestrian focus street design.

The panel noted the design of the tower was elegant in its simplicity, but the material selections become important as the renderings appear somewhat cold and unwelcoming on a pedestrian-focus street.

The panel noted a concern for the amount of glazed window-wall/spandrel and encourage a high-quality building envelope. The panel also noted that the proposed sustainable design elements presented were more appropriate as a base or starting-point as opposed to a first-class building at a prominent location.

c) Site Layout and Circulation

The panel noted the small size of the subject site could be limiting to the success of the ground floor design – noting the amount of space that is required for “services & utilities” leaves very little for the street-facing elements that are needed to serve this prominent corner location and how the public realm needs to be supported.

d) Streetscape, The Pedestrian Realm & Landscape Strategy

The panel noted the existence of transit (existing and future improvements) being provided at this site’s corner and this signals the importance of the corner to the community and function of the street corner – noting the building design of the first floor and podium should reinforce these functions and support the active street fronts on both the east and south elevations.

The panel note the wind study and the importance of providing safe and pleasant spaces both on and around the proposed development. Both public spaces such as bus stops and the public sidewalk (pedestrian focus / commercial uses) need to be respected with the wind impacts / design mitigation to support a successful public realm and streetscape. The exterior amenity spaces provided for residents and guests should also be protected to provide year-round amenity options.

Summary

Overall the panel observe generally a solid tower design that is severely constrained by the proposed property dimensions. The panel notes that the design proposal could be developed so the tower works better with the base and ground-level demands – both street-side and inward.

The panel encourages consolidation of property to provide additional space to alleviate the pressure on the ground floor design so it can appropriately provide for commercial spaces requisite to the location.

The panel questioned the need for the proposed height, but saw as the primary concern for this proposal the need to re-design how the ground floor is able to support the pedestrian-focus activities appropriate at this corner location: once the ground floor is solved, then the design can be evaluated for additional concerns related to height & density.

The panel noted the proposed sustainable design elements were not what would be expected for a building at a prominent location. The panel strongly encourages a robust sustainable design strategy be adopted as early as possible to be most effective and cost efficient in design and construction.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.