



City of Hamilton

Design Review Panel

VIRTUAL WebEx

Meeting Summary – March 10, 2022

Meeting Summary

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday March 10, 2022 via Webex Events.

Panel Members Present:

- Jennifer Mallard, OAA, MRAIC, AIA (Chair)
- Ted Watson, OAA ARCHITECT AIBC AAA SAA NSAA Int'l. Assoc. AIA FRAIC LEED AP Partner (Vice-Chair)
- Calvin Brook, FRAIC, MCIP, OAA, MAA, SAA, RPP, AICP, LEED AP
- David Clusiau, OAA, AIBC, NCARB, FRAIC, LEED AP
- Tony Cupido, Ph.D., P.Eng.
- Petra Matar, OAA, MRAIC, CPHD
- Richard Witt, B.E.S., B.Arch., OAA, AAA, AIBC, MAA, SAA, NSAA, AANB, FRAIC, NCARB, LEED AP
- Paula Hamilton, BES, OAA

Panel Member Regrets:

- Eldon Theodore, BES, MUDS, MLAI, MCIP, RPP

City of Hamilton Staff Present:

- Steve Robichaud, Director of Planning and Chief Planner
- Ken Coit, Manager, Heritage and Urban Design
- Christine Newbold, Manager, Sustainable Communities
- Mark Kehler, Senior Planner, Development Planning
- Jennifer Roth, Planner I, Sustainable Communities
- Chris Phillips, Manager, Municipal Land Development Office
- Andrea Smith, Senior Consultant – West Harbour Redevelopment, Municipal Land Development Office

Applicant and Design Team Present:

- Bruce Kuwabara, KPMB Architects
- Luka Matutinovic, Purpose Building Inc.

Declaration of Interests:

None

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.

Proposal Overview

Waterfront Shores Partners is the developer of Pier 8, municipally known as 65 Guise Street East. The architect and sustainability expert from the Waterfront Shores Partners development team presented three conceptual 45 storey tower designs. Bruce Kuwabara indicated that the point tower would become a landmark similar to the McQuesten High Level bridge entry markers designed by John Lyle. Vertical windows in all options allow for views both up and down.

The three tower options include:

1. Cylinder
 - This tower option is a response to the geometry of the site and has an aerodynamic form.
2. Waves
 - The scalloped edges of this option allow a wider view from each individual unit. This is a variation of the basic form.
3. Lily
 - The floorplan shape of this option is a reference to the lilies at Cootes Paradise, and brings this reference of the natural environment to the working waterfront.

Key Questions to the Panel

- 1) To what extent do each of the proposed options implement the Pier 8 Block 16 Urban Design Guidelines?

- 2) To what extent do each of the tower design options capture the standards and design criteria required to create a unique building with high quality design and exceptionalism?
- 3) To what extent do each of the tower design options portray innovation in sustainability and quality of life for occupants?
- 4) To what extent do each of the proposed options serve as a visual anchor and regional/metropolitan scale landmark?
- 5) Are there design considerations that have not been contemplated that would contribute to design excellence, innovation in sustainability and quality of life for occupants?
- 6) What are the key features related to design excellence, quality of life for its occupants and/or sustainability that are integral and should be carried forward to the final proposed development concept for the official plan and zoning by-law amendment and site plan application?

Panel Comments and Recommendations

Overall Compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines and Implementation Process

- The Panel sought clarification on the podium height. Confirmation was provided that all three tower concepts have a two-storey condition which is not reflective of the guidelines requirement for a three storey podium.
- The Panel clarified that the building envelope of the three tower design options is within the envelope stipulated by the urban design guidelines.
- The Panel stated that this building should be an exemplar for all tall buildings to live up to and that it should be an inspiration for the City of Hamilton.
- Several Panel members suggested that there could be an opportunity to soften the transition between the two floor plate sizes (850 and 650 square metres). The Panel requests additional exploration of alternatives (ie. gradual transition/stepbacks) to the design concepts that illustrate two distinct floor plates.
- The Panel noted that they expected three very distinct tower concepts including variations in application of sustainability and quality of life measures. The three tower concepts presented have been viewed by the Panel as minor variations on the same core design, with no significant distinction in sustainability or quality of life initiatives. The Panel proffered that without three distinct tower concepts, the implementation process outlined in the urban design guidelines may not be adequately implemented.

Site Context

- The Panel understands that should the 45 storey height be permitted, Blocks 7 and 8 on Pier 8, which are two blocks adjacent to two storey homes on Guise Street East, would have their building heights reduced to improve the transition into the existing residential neighbourhood. The Panel requested further detail on the changes to Blocks 7 and 8.

Design Excellence

- The Panel notes that they are confident in the architectural team's ability to design a building that will be beautiful regardless of which design is selected.
- Several of the Panel Members appreciated the natural design shape of the Lily design concept. The Panel valued the story of this design iteration, where it represents a transition between the industrial working waterfront and the natural heritage lands in Cootes Paradise. The Panel also appreciated how the Lily design concept changes as you move around the harbour, giving it subtly different readings. The softer curves of the Lily design gives the appearance of a more slender form and is representative of the residential nature of the building.
- The Cylinder design concept is an iconic form, however the Panel expressed that there are some challenges that come with that purity of the cylinder form including a very corporate and downtown expression.
- The Panel suggested that there could be a more significant expression on the top of the building and expressed concern that the mechanical penthouse would dominate the massing.
- The Panel noted that the three design concepts have been designed to be iconic from many miles away, however they have requested that further detail be provided to understand how the buildings have been designed to address the human scale along the mews space, greenway and the public realm.

Sustainability

- The Panel was concerned that the sustainability targets presented for the three tower design options were not reflective of the aspirations that have been outlined in the urban design guidelines.
- The Panel commented that a landmark building of this stature should be an inspiration for sustainable development within Hamilton and Ontario more broadly.

- The Panel stated landmark tall building in this location should seek aspirational sustainability certification levels to address the fact that the City of Hamilton has declared a Climate Emergency.
- The Panel cautioned that LEED Silver is not sufficient for a building of this landmark stature and location. The Panel suggested that LEED Platinum and Toronto Green Standard Version 4 should be the minimum standard sought for a building of this stature.
- The Panel was encouraged to hear that geothermal heat exchange is being explored. Further detail on the application of geothermal heat exchange was requested. The Panel requested that consideration should be given to how a geothermal system could be provided across the entirety of Pier 8.
- The Panel is supportive of partial electrification and heat pumps to reduce energy consumption within the tower form.
- The Panel was supportive of the passive design elements of the conceptual building designs that will assist in reducing the energy required for cooling in warmer months. The passive design elements include massing, recessed balconies and the ratio of vertical wall surface to enclosed floor area. The Panel recommended that further consideration be given to the window to wall ratio and the material selection to improve energy efficiency through passive design.
- The Panel sought further clarification and information on the methods that the proponent will use to reduce embodied carbon.
- The Panel sought further detail on the mechanical systems and how they could be enhanced for efficiency.
- The Panel considered if there were alternative financial sources to encourage a higher standard of sustainable development.
- The Panel requests a firm commitment to a sustainability target in the next iteration of the design.

Quality of Life

- The Panel inquired about the methodology of the wind study and suggested that a wind tunnel study be completed instead of just computer modelling. In addition to the wind mitigation methods presented (recessed lobby entrance, landscape elements and podium wind screen), the Panel wanted further detail about the range of options to mitigate wind on the north side of the building.
- The Panel suggested that community participation through public art could benefit the proposal.
- The Panel appreciated the large lobby space and the explanation of the indoor amenity spaces co-located with the outdoor spaces above the podium.

- The Panel requested that further detail be provided on how the WELL standard would enhance quality of life of the residents through community building programming.
- The Panel requested further detail on Family Friendly design.

Visual Anchor/Landmark and Public Access

- The Panel suggested consideration should be given to providing innovative ways for the site to benefit the broader public.
- The Panel suggested that Block 16 may have been viewed as publicly accessible based on the current Planning policy framework. The Panel recommended the building design should incorporate publicly accessible community programming within a three storey podium (ie. commercial uses or meeting rooms for rent) or alternatively, public access to the building could include access to the rooftop to appreciate the views.

Site Layout, Landscaping and Public Realm Interface

- The Panel expressed that there could be different design solutions to avoid approximately 100 metres of loading and parking areas adjacent to the public realm along the northern edge of the property.
- The Panel is concerned with the cantilevered base over planted areas. Further information and detail should be provided on the landscape plan.

Summary

The Design Review Panel was concerned that the implementation process outlined in the Pier 8 Block 16 Urban Design Guidelines has not been adequately followed. The Panel recommends that the future submission include more detail, specifically focused on sustainability targets and certification, quality of life measures and a refined design. City of Hamilton staff will consider the comment, review the process established in the Pier 8 Block 16 Urban Design Guidelines and evaluate timelines.

The Panel would like to see further detail on the design in the following areas:

- Further detail on the façade expression and alternatives to precast built forms.
- Consideration for additional stepbacks as the building rises to avoid the uniformity of the two floor plate elements and give the perception of a thinner profile.
- Further detail on the façade expression including materiality and fenestration (window to wall ratio)
- Detail on the programming approaches for the balconies and terraces.

- Further detail regarding the townhome units and how the design would change for live/work units.
- Further detail on the lighting strategy of the building exterior.
- Enhanced roof top/penthouse expression.
- Detail on the design of Pedestrian Mews including the public realm, landscaping and transitional strategy between the private units.

The Panel would like to see a firm commitment to a sustainability target in the next iteration of the design, including:

- Commitment to LEED Platinum, Net Zero Carbon and/or equivalence to TGS tier 4
- Understanding of how geothermal could work within the broader Pier 8 development.
- Exploration of the potential for rain water capture and greywater reuse.
- Commitment to a specified percentage of electric car charging stations and ability to expand the grid in an efficient way.

The Panel wants to better understand the quality of life measures included in the proposal, including:

- How the WELL standard is going enhance the quality of life (ie. urban agriculture, air quality, etc.?)
- How the building will be child and family friendly?
- How the townhouse units can be designed to be live/work?
- How the amenity spaces go above and beyond standard offerings in condominiums?
- Exploration of opportunities to have space open to the general public in the building.
- Detail on the innovation of the unit designs in the tower and the townhome units.