



City of Hamilton Design Review Panel Meeting Summary – September 12th, 2024 25 Rymal Road West, Hamilton

Meeting Summary

The Design Review Panel met virtually on **Thursday September 12th, 2024**, via WebEx.

Panel Members Present:

Jennifer Mallard, *Acting Chair*

Dayna Edwards

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

Spencer Skidmore, Area Planning Manager

Others Present

Presentation #2	Jonathan Hann , MHBC Robyn McIntyre , MHBC Kyle Reinders , Reinders + Law	
------------------------	--	--

Regrets:

David Clusiau, **Jennifer Sisson**, **Eldon Theodore**

Declaration of Interest:

PANEL MEMBERS ONLY - NONE

Schedule:

Start Time	Address	Type of Application	Applicant/ Agent	City Staff Planner
1:30 pm	Multiple Residence Development 25 Rymal Rd West	Zoning By-law Amendment	Owner: St. Michael Place (c/o Mike Bozzo) Agent and Presentation: MHBC	Spencer Skidmore

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.

25 Rymal Rd West

Development Proposal Overview

The proposed development is for a 12-storey mixed-use multiple residence apartment building with 88 residential units and 129 m² commercial space. Parking for 120 vehicles were proposed.

Key Questions to the Panel from Planning Staff

1. *Does the proposal represent compatible integration with the surrounding area in terms of use, scale, form and character noting the potential conflicts with the existing commercial uses on the lands and the transition to the existing residential uses to the south?*
2. *In terms of the relationship with existing residential to the south (E.4.6.8 d), B.2.4.2.2):*
 - a. *The applicant has correctly identified the angular plane contained within the “C5” Zone on the submitted Elevation Plans, which is a “modified” angular plane. Staff note that a significant portion of the building encroaches into the required angular plan. As proposed, are privacy and overlook impacts on the lands to the south being appropriately mitigated?*
 - b. *Has the applicant sufficiently implemented additional measures to mitigate privacy and overlook impacts such as landscaping, mature tree retention along the southerly lot line, and inaccessible portions to proposed terraces?*
3. *Does the proposal appropriately address the street by ensuring building entrances are visible from the street, incorporating stepbacks from the street, creating a continuous animated street edge, and incorporating streetscape improvements to create a vibrant pedestrian environment? [B.3.3.2.5 c), B.3.3.2.4 e), E.4.6.8 e), B.3.3.2.10]?*
4. *Does the proposal encourage energy efficiency through design and incorporate sustainable building and design principles? [B.3.3.2.8 f), E.4.6.8 b)]*
5. *Does the proposal provide for a mix of unit sizes to accommodate a range of household sizes and income levels? [E.4.6.8 a)]*

Panel Comments and Recommendations

a) Overview and Response to Context

- In general, the panel felt the site was appropriate for development, however some concerns were raised with the proposal appearing to prioritize design, access and circulation by vehicles at the expense of the pedestrian experience. The panel noted the project would be one of the first intensification developments in the area, and there would be pressure to support the pedestrian realm and streetscape in an appropriate way, with the accompanying task of being a transitional element to the suburban/low-rise context to the south.

b) Built Form and Character

- The panel noted the dialogue of the presentation was well-received, however the panel was not convinced the building massing fully represented the goals set-out in the presentation with respect to the design of the ground floor plan, the provisions for streetscape elements and engagement of the pedestrian realm.
- A panel member noted the street-facing elevation height was rather imposing and did not offer much in support of the pedestrian realm sought for with intensification. There was also concern for the potential for negative wind impacts that would need to be mitigated – potentially by a podium or building base or other architectural design features.
- The panel noted that the very limited amount of building at grade leaves the impression that is building is a parkade with a building on top of it and disconnected from the street and character
- The panel was receptive to the dialogue on sustainable principles but would like to see more development in the drawings at earlier stages to make the most of the sustainable design efforts.
- The panel noted the 2nd level parking fronting the street further disconnected the building from the street and the panel suggested revisions to locate units facing the street and being supported with architectural massing detailing builds upward from the ground floor level with the commercial unit and relocated lobby.

c) Site Layout and Circulation

- The panel noted the residential lobby being set back so far into the site was particularly disappointing as the primary entrance was buried behind the commercial unit and (the lobby) really needs to be given a presence on the street façade – beside the commercial unit.
- A panel member noted the site having three driveway entrances was excessive and pointed to a need for revisions, and the proposed development was further complicated with the existing (to remain) commercial parking and Drive-thru cueing lane conflicting with the proposed development.
- A panel member noted there appeared to be some problems with grading through the site - noting Barrier Free parking was disconnected from the lobby by stairs.

d) Streetscape, The Pedestrian Realm & Landscape Strategy

- The panel were unanimous in their call for revisions to support the pedestrian realm and improve the streetscape area: additional building width, stronger massing in form of podium or base addressing the street condition, landscaping / street furniture to support pedestrian functions along street.
- The panel noted the need to carefully manage the vehicle and pedestrian circulations on site.
- The panel noted the residential Lobby should be relocated to have a meaningful connection to the street.
- The panel noted the location of the site at the edge of the suburban area needs to have more soft landscaping, noting that a lot of space is proposed as surface parking and there should be a better balance of hard surface and soft surfaces.
- A panel member noted there is a need for a dedicated common amenity space – either at grade or on a roof terrace.

Summary

The panel was supportive of an intensification development on the site in general, and noted the location has great potential – however, the panel was ultimately left looking for more from the development proposal in how it addresses the challenges of balancing the suburban and urban development characteristics on an admittedly tight site.

The panel requested improvements to the massing and location of the lobby at the north elevation to better support the pedestrian realm and activate the streetscape.

The panel felt the building needed to engage the ground level, whereas it really starts at the 3rd storey as proposed – looking for a better balance of building designed for pedestrians/people rather than focusing the design around the vehicle and parking at grade.

Lastly the panel saw a need to increase the soft landscaping for the overall site so that the proposed development included some of the lushness of the surrounding area.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.