



City of Hamilton
Design Review Panel
Meeting Summary – March 13th, 2025
166-186 Ferguson Ave N & 203 Robert St, Hamilton

Meeting Summary

The Design Review Panel met virtually on **Thursday March 13th, 2025**, via WebEx.

Panel Members Present:

Jennifer Mallard, *Chair*
Sharron Mittman, *Vice-Chair*
Olga Pushkar
Eric Lucic
Jennifer Sisson

Tyler Walker
Shadi Adab
Dennis Lago
Graham Taylor

Staff Present:

Ken Coit, Director of Heritage & Urban Design
Jana Kelemen, Manager of Heritage and Urban Design
Michael Vortuba, SPM Heritage and Design

Edward Winter, Planner I-Urban Design
Yomna Serag Eldin, Planner II – Site Plan
Jennifer Catarino, Area Planning Manager

Others Present

Presentation #2	Tim OBrien , Arcadis Carmen Jandu , Arcadis Marco VanderMaas , Arcadis Wu Hanqing , RWDI	Alexis David , Arcadis Mike Crough , Arcadis Martin Hotz , owner team Ron Wojcicki , owner team
------------------------	---	--

Regrets: (none)

Declaration of Interest:

PANEL MEMBERS ONLY - NONE

Schedule:

Start Time	Address	Type of Application	Applicant/ Agent	City Staff Planner
1:30pm	Mixed-Use Multiple Residence Proposed Development 166-186 Ferguson Ave N & 203 Robert St, Hamilton	Official Plan & Zoning By-law Amendment	Owner: B&F Investments (Nova Scotia) Company and 201 Robert Street Company c/o Martin Hotz Agent and Presentation: Arcadis	Yomna Serag Eldin , Senior Planner, West Team

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.

166-186 Ferguson Ave North & 203 Robert Street

Development Proposal Overview

The proposed development includes seven towers (both residential and mixed-use) ranging in height from 26 to 30 storeys in height, and totalling 2,186 units, with 14 townhouse units and a community space, 4,407 sm of exterior amenity space located in the center-east portion of the subject site. There is 1,883 sm commercial space proposed, and provisions for 1,642 vehicle parking and 1,796 bicycle parking spaces.

Key Discussion topics suggested to the Panel from Planning Staff

- *Transition in height to the surrounding properties / community.*
- *Overall massing & height of the development, and establishment of the individual building podiums.*
- *Presence & Activation of Barton Street – location of towers and entrances.*
- *Sun/Shadow and Wind impacts on the pedestrian realm both on Barton Street / Fergusons Avenue and in the adjacent residential on Cathcart and Wellington Streets.*
- *The impact on the public views and vistas toward the escarpment along Ferguson Ave North – from north of Barton Street, as well as sky views from within the adjacent Cathcart / Wellington Street areas.*
- *Managing circulation through the site – both of pedestrian and vehicles*

Panel Comments and Recommendations

a) Overview and Response to Context

- Panel members applauded the re-development of a surface parking lot but felt there was a need to manage the relationship with the hospital – as the current users of the land, but also for what could be a beneficial relationship after the redevelopment.
- Panel members felt the site plan was weighted to the exterior leaving the interior of the site less resolved. Panel members felt the connection to Cathcart Street was missing – noting the pedestrian stair and ramp component compressed the change in elevation which could have been worked into the depth of the site to resolve more gently.
- The panel felt there would be support for additional retail uses at grade – especially in connection with the amenity space.
- Panel members felt the industrial heritage of the subject site could be leveraged to find some purpose across the site and include a variety of commercial and/or maker-space units.
- Panel members did note there appeared to be a deficiency of parking spaces, and that while on a transit line, the subject site was outside the downtown planning area.

b) Built Form and Character

- The panel saw the proposed massing as too uniform in height across the site with not enough transition in height to the lower density community that surrounds the site. The panel felt a mid-rise height would be more appropriate on the east side of the subject site.
- Panel members also saw an opportunity to improve the podium massing by making them relate to the (suggested reduced heights of certain buildings – further defining the individual buildings across the subject site.
- Panel members noted concern for the wind study results with 9 areas exceeding safety criteria – potentially indicating the height & massing of the towers need revisions to reduce impacts.
- Panel members agreed the massing over the site was too dense, forming almost a wall along Ferguson Avenue North, and boxing-in next to the adjacent neighbourhood to the east. Panel members requested for additional transition in height.
- Panel expressed a need to include a good mix of 2 & 3 bedroom units to ensure a range of residents and families could be served.

c) Site Layout and Circulation

- Panel members felt the exterior amenity space located in the centre of the site was lacking in connection to the community, and appeared as leftover space. The panel encouraged revision of the amenity space to have a stronger connection to one of the perimeter streets for both pedestrian connection, safety, and opening the development up to the community in an effort to integrate into the community.
- Panel member noted the interior streets want to be (larger) public right-of-ways in order to handle the pedestrian and vehicle circulation in a comfortable / relatable fashion.
- Panel members thought the community centre was too hidden or internal to the site and would make more sense on the periphery.
- Panel members noted a need for additional buffering between the proposed development and the existing residential to the east.

d) Streetscape, The Pedestrian Realm & Landscape Strategy

- Panel members felt there was a missed opportunity for pedestrian connections through the site, and taking advantage of the heritage components to open them up to the community.
- Panel members noted the landscaping / site plan layout along Ferguson Avenue felt suburban and odd in combination with the more urban / dense proposed development.
- Panel members felt the phasing for the project should prioritize the park in earlier stages.
- Panel members appreciated the woonerf and thought there would be value to increasing the woonerf for a connection to Barton Street.
- Panel members felt the amenity space had been made back-of-house, when it deserves to have a greater presence in the overall site plan (and community).

Summary

The panel thanked the applicant for a well-presented and thorough submission and welcomed development at the site while also noting a number of items of concern that should be addressed as the development plans are progressed:

- The height of the towers should have more variation across the site, and more transition (reduction in height) to the lower density neighbouring community, especially on the east side.
- The massing of the building-wall along Ferguson Ave North needs to be separated and improved to reduce the wall-effect along the street.
- The amenity space needs to have direct street access and not be buried behind a wall of residential buildings. This could be a POPS (Privately-owned Public space), and could make reference to the industrial heritage of the subject site.
- Additional commercial units are seen as vital to supporting the proposed units and the existing community, and could be located in relationship to the relocated amenity/parkette space.
- The overall density of the proposal appears to overwhelm the community and needs to be evaluated for what is needed and what can be supported by the site and community.
- The street connections through the site need to be developed and increased in size to be able to handle the vehicle and pedestrian circulations in an appropriate manner, and foster a healthy and active pedestrian realm.
- Development of variety within the podium or building base heights should follow, along with expansion of the materials palette as well for individual buildings. There may be some common elements through the site for cohesiveness in the design, but there also needs to be some variety from building to building or the wall-effect is difficult to overcome with such density on the site.
- Wind study impacts need to be addressed to eliminate unsafe conditions, and ensure appropriate wind conditions across all areas and in the surrounding area.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.