



City of Hamilton
Design Review Panel
Meeting Summary – September 11th, 2025
1694 Upper James Street & 18 Alderson Drive,
Hamilton

Meeting Summary

The Design Review Panel met virtually on **Thursday September 11th, 2025**, via WebEx.

Panel Members Present:

Sharron Mittmann, Vice-Chair

Olga Pushkar

Eric Lucic

Tyler Walker

Shadi Adab

Dennis Lago

Staff Present:

Ken Coit, Director of Heritage & Urban Design

Michael Votruba, Program Lead Urban Design

Edward Winter, Planner I-Urban Design

Jennifer Catarino, Area Planning Manager, West Team

Others Present

Presentation #2	Sarah Knoll , GSP Group Wayne Harrison , KNYMH Fred Mirabelli , KNYMH Mario Patitucci , Adesso Design Victoria Damone , Adesso Design John Hunter , Adesso Design	Alex Arbab , Royal Living Development Ugo , Giammarco, Royal Living Development Kyle , Royal Living Development
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Regrets: Jennifer Mallard, Chair, Jennifer Sisson, Graham Taylor

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 1694 Upper James Street & 18 Alderson Drive, Hamilton	Zoning By-law Amendment	Owner: Royal Living Developments Agent and Presentation: GSP Group	Jennifer Catarino , Area Planning Manager

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.

1694 Upper James Street & 18 Alderson Drive

Development Proposal Overview

The proposed development includes a 12-storey mixed-use residential building on an assembled parcel of land at 1694 Upper James and 18 Alderson Drive. The proposal will consist of a total of 325 residential units, including 24 units in stacked townhouses. 315 parking spaces are proposed on grade and in 2 levels of the podium, with 49 visitor parking spaces. 543 m² of dedicated retail space is proposed facing Upper James.

Key Discussion topics suggested to the Panel from Planning Staff:

- *Height and transition of the proposed development within the community node area to the surrounding properties & community,*
- *Sun/Shadow and Wind impacts on the pedestrian realm both along the Upper James Street frontage, as well as on Malton Drive and Alderson Drive,*
- *Circulation through the site –pedestrian and vehicular circulation within the ground floor parking area for both residential and commercial uses,*
- *The interface between the streetscape and building face to promote active uses.*

Panel Comments and Recommendations

a) Overview and Response to Context

- Panel members noted the proposed development was ambitious for the southern extent of the community node and offered support for the first of early developments in the area – while also providing some commentary on how the proposal could be more successful and find a better fit within the existing community.
- Panel members appreciated the commitment to have commercial units fronting Upper James Street, but saw the large daylight triangles as missed opportunities for additional retail units that would add crucial corner frontages – which are presently proposed as amenity spaces, and would not contribute back to the community in the same meaningful way as corner retail would.

b) Built Form and Character

- Panel members commented the development proposal appears well considered when viewing from Upper James Street, but felt the building was less successful in how it addressed the side-street conditions of Alderson and Malton Drives.
- Several Panel members noted the arrangement of the townhomes was counter-intuitive and did not provide a strong transition or link to the existing community, with the side of the townhome facing the street and the town home entrances facing the adjacent side yard condition.
- Panel members thought there was a potential solution in deleting the proposed stacked townhouse and replace those units with a lower extension to the south wing of the proposed building on Upper James, giving additional presence on the side street, and opportunity to express the buildings lower floors in a way that related to smaller residential / school environment on the side street.

- Panel members remarked that the west elevation was quite harsh with the three open-levels of parking across the center of the building creating a large blank façade.

c) Site Layout and Circulation

- The panel noted the location of the garbage staging and hydro transformer did not work with the townhomes and saw space for these to be relocated elsewhere on the property either inside the built form or where it wouldn't detract from the daily lives of the residents.
- Panel members saw the open garage leading to the shared commercial residential at-grade parking area as confusing, and additionally noted the pedestrian pathways to the entrances were not accommodated in the current layout.
- Panel members felt the building should be set-back from the street more – appropriate for the suburban location, and this would give more space for wider sidewalk spaces and street trees. Panel members were also interested in what road improvements would be sought by the transportation department, and the panel further noted the applicant team would need this information to coordinate landscaping and streetscape improvements.
- Panel members advocated for reduced daylighting triangles (or their removal) to permit squared-off corners to the building – for the purpose of creating spaces that were conducive to retail spaces.

d) Streetscape, The Pedestrian Realm & Landscape Strategy

- The panel supported the retail units fronting Upper James Street, but requested additional landscaping and wider sidewalks to support this pedestrian-focus area.
- The panel had some concern with the number of perimeter trees being impacted by the proposed development and supported efforts to push-back the underground parking to give unencumbered soil for tree planting.
- Panel members commented positively regarding the level three roof terrace amenity space – and advocated for this element to be used in a stronger fashion to shape the overall building and perhaps how it is viewed from the west and south.
- Panel members felt the commercial frontage was along Upper James, and the two residential entrances should be relocated from the corners onto the side elevations fronting Alderson Drive and Malton Drive. This should also be coordinated with improved landscaping and pedestrianization along the building facing these streets.

Summary

The panel thanked the applicant team for a presentation and offered support for development at the site and expressed appreciation for being one of the first developments in an area of transition at the edge of the community node, while also providing some comments and suggestions that could improve the proposed development in terms of design, function and fit within the existing community.

- The frontage along Upper James Street should be appropriately set-back, including no encroachments, to support the pedestrian nature sought for the community node,
- Replace the stacked townhouse with a low-rise extension of the south wing of the proposed building on Upper James Street,
- Provision of a wider sidewalk, setting the groundwork for the future pedestrian street,

- Reduction of the site/day-lighting triangles to permit more rational square corners,
- Retail units should extend to both corners – made more practical with removed/reduced daylighting triangles.
- Continue to develop the good amenity space on the roof terrace so that there is more impact on the south and west elevations,
- Reconsider how to develop the west elevation, which is currently quite harsh and uninviting, how the open parking area is read as a building component, and how the ground level parking area is experienced as pedestrian from parked car to entrance (commercial and residential).
- Look for opportunity to relocate the garbage staging and electrical transformer away from the townhome entrances.
- Consider how increasing the podium height, and including different tower cladding at upper levels could improve the visual proportions of the building (which is currently viewed as top-heavy).
- Work to retain existing trees on boundaries and look for additional tree planting potential on-site.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.