



## Meeting Summary

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The Design Review Panel met virtually on **Thursday July 15<sup>th</sup> 2020** via Webex.

### Panel Members Present:

**Colin Berman**, Brook McIlroy

**Vincent Colizza**, Vincent Colizza Architects, *Chair*

**Ute Maya-Giambattista**, Fotenn Planning + Design

**Mario Patitucci**, Adesso Design Inc.

**Tim Smith**, Urban Strategies Inc.

**Yasin Visram**, Perkins + Will Canada

**James Webb**, Webb Planning Inc.

### Staff Present:

**Jason Thorne**, General Manager of Planning and Economic Development

**Stephen Robichaud**, Director of Planning and Chief Planner

**Shannon McKie**, Senior Project Manager, Urban Team

**Victoria Cox**, Urban Designer, Urban Team

**Mark Kehler**, Planner I, Urban Team

### Applicant and Design Team Present:

<b>Presentation #1</b> <b>Mixed Use Development</b> 77 James Street North, Hamilton	<b>Marc Villemaire</b> , SRM Architects Inc. <b>David Falletta</b> , Bousfields Inc. <b>Carla Parslow</b> , Parslow Heritage Consultancy Inc.
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### Regrets:

**Robert Freedman**, Freedman Urban Solutions (Panel Member)

**Jackie VanderVelde**, Land Art Design Landscape Architects Inc. (Panel Member)

**Declaration of Interest:** N/A

## Schedule:

Start Time	Address	Type of Application	Applicant/ Agent	Development Planner
1:30 p.m.	<b>Mixed Use Development</b> 77 James Street North	Site Plan Control File No. DA-20-077	Owner: 77 James Hamilton Inc. Agent and Presentation: SRM Architects	Mark Kehler, Planner I

## 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.**

### 1. 77 James Street North

#### Development Proposal Overview

The applicant is proposing to construct a mixed use development consisting of three 30 storey towers and one 24 storey tower on top of a nine storey base building. A total of 2,068 dwelling units, 3,067 square metres of commercial space and 972 parking spaces are proposed. The subject property is located at the southwest corner of James Street North and York Boulevard in Downtown Hamilton. Surrounding land uses include a municipal parking garage to the north, Jackson Square Mall to the south and the Hamilton Farmers Market and Central Branch of the Hamilton Public Library to the west. A mix of retail, commercial and residential uses exist along James Street North to the east and north. The subject lands are located within a Design Priority Area (Downtown Urban Growth Centre) and review by the Design Review Panel is required to inform the submitted site plan control application.

#### Key Questions to the Panel from Planning Staff

1. Does the proposal promote intensification that makes appropriate and innovative use of buildings and sites and is compatible in form and function to the character of existing communities and neighbourhoods?
2. Does the proposal organize space in a logical manner through the design, placement and construction of new buildings, streets, structures and landscaping?
3. Does the proposal demonstrate sensitivity toward community identity through an understanding of the character of a place, context and setting?

## Panel Comments and Recommendations

### a) Overview and Response to Context (Questions 1, 2 & 3)

- The panel acknowledged that the redevelopment of the site represents an important opportunity for urban renewal and repair in the Downtown core. The existing block surrounding the Jackson Square Complex lacks permeability and fails to animate the pedestrian realm. The redevelopment of the Hamilton City Centre will have a “ripple effect” on the future redevelopment of the block that functions as the commercial and civic heart of Downtown.
- Overall, the panel felt that the proposed development does not appropriately respond to the existing context and the urban design opportunity, in terms of massing, architecture and streetscape character. The scale represents an overdevelopment of the site. The development fails to improve site permeability and does not complement the existing streetscapes along James Street North and York Boulevard. The panel recommended redesigning the proposal beginning with a comprehensive urban design study that focuses on streets, public spaces and the public realm while considering the impact of the proposal on the future redevelopment of the larger block.

### b) Built Form and Character (Questions 2 & 3)

- The panel is of the opinion that the scale of the proposed development is not appropriate for the site and recommends the applicant have more regard for the Downtown Hamilton Tall Buildings Guidelines.
- The multiple bulky towers on a single mega-podium creates a “fortress” resulting in a walled courtyard in the interior of the site that would be unpleasant for residents and would not be accessible from the public realm.
- The tower massing as viewed from York Boulevard appears as one solid mass with no views through the site or between the towers. The panel noted that the proposed tower floorplates exceed the recommended floor plate size from the Downtown Hamilton Tall Building Guidelines and suggested that more slender towers would improve views through the site and shadow impacts.

### c) Site Layout and Circulation (Questions 2)

- The panel recommended looking at opportunities to introduce physical breaks along the James Street North façade and potentially the York Boulevard façade with pedestrian and / or street connections. One panel member suggested that the podium massing and tower locations should be oriented towards the existing external streets and new internal streets, noting that pedestrian permeability will be a key to the regeneration of the block.

- One panel member suggested that the development should be treated as multiple sites with multiple buildings and a variety of architectural styles, anticipating multiple phases of construction over many years.

**d) Streetscape, The Pedestrian Realm & Landscape Strategy (Questions 1, 2 & 3)**

- The panel recommended examining opportunities to complement the heritage character of James Street North, including building heights and the fine grain articulation of facades. The development is an opportunity to reintroduce the historic development pattern that was lost when the block was redeveloped as a mall. Opportunities to integrate the heritage features of the existing building should be further examined.
- The design team should ensure adequate soil volumes are achieved to accommodate street trees.
- One panel member suggested examining opportunities to connect the pedestrian extension of King William Street to an outdoor amenity space.

**Summary**

The panel commends the design team for a thorough presentation and recognizes the importance of this development for the future of Downtown Hamilton. The panel recommends redesigning the proposal in the context of an urban design study focused on the public realm and the integration of the site with existing and future developments on the larger Jackson Square block. An urban design master planning exercise is required in collaboration with the City to identify design priorities and opportunities. The applicant should look at regional examples of larger site redevelopment including Mirvish Village and The Well in Toronto, and the Reimagining the Mall Study from Mississauga. The panel stresses the importance of the site as a key component to the redevelopment of the block surrounding Jackson Square.

**Meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.**