Meeting Summary

The Design Review Panel met on **Thursday, March 12th, 2020** in Meeting Room 264, 1st Floor, City Hall, 71 Main Street West, Hamilton, Ontario.

**Panel Members Present:**

Ute Maya-Giambattista, Fotenn Planning + Design  
Mario Patitucci, Adesso Design Inc.  
**Tim Smith**, Urban Strategies Inc., **Chair**  
Yasin Visram, Perkins + Will Canada  
James Webb, Webb Planning Inc.

**Staff Present:**

Steve Robichaud, Director and Chief Planner  
Anita Fabac, Manager of Development Planning, Heritage and Design  
Shannon McKie, Senior Project Manager, Urban Team  
Victoria Cox, Urban Designer, Urban Team  
Andrea Dear, Senior Planner, Urban Team  
Jennifer Allen, Planning Technician, Urban Team

**Others Present**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation #1</th>
<th>415 Main Street West</th>
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| **Mixed Use Development** | **Martin Quarcoopome**, Weston Consulting  
**Hamid Bahrami**, HB Developments  
**Max Voss**, HB Developments  
**Steven Kirshenblatt**, KIRKOR Architects and Planners |

**Regrets:**

Colin Berman, Brook Mclroy (Panel Member)  
Vincent Colizza, Vincent Colizza Architects (Panel Member)  
Robert Freedman, Freedman Urban Solutions (Panel Member)  
Jackie VanderVelde, Land Art Design Landscape Architects Inc. (Panel Member – Declared Conflict)

**Confirmation of Minutes:** Minutes were confirmed.
Schedule:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Type of Application</th>
<th>Applicant/ Agent</th>
<th>Development Planner</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:35 p.m.</td>
<td>Mixed Use Development</td>
<td>Pre-consultation</td>
<td>Owner: 415 Main Inc.</td>
<td>Andrea Dear, Senior Planner</td>
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<td></td>
<td>415 Main Street West</td>
<td>FC 19-137</td>
<td>Agent and Presentation: Weston Consulting</td>
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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. **415 Main Street West**

Development Proposal Overview

The applicant is proposing a seven storey mixed use building with commercial and amenity space at grade, 112 residential units above and one level of underground parking.

The proposed building is on the site of an old Dairy Queen restaurant that had surface parking and a drive through.

The surrounding land uses include vacant land and two storey residential dwellings to the north. There are one storey commercial buildings to the east, two storey residential dwellings to the south, and one and two storey commercial buildings to the west.

Key Questions to the Panel from Planning Staff

1. Does the proposal promote quality design consistent with the locale and surrounding environment?
2. Does the proposal encourage a harmonious and compatible approach to infilling by minimizing the impacts of shadowing and maximizing light to adjacent properties and the public realm?
3. Does the proposal encourage innovative design of built forms and public spaces?
Panel Comments and Recommendations

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

- While the panel acknowledges that the site is a good candidate for redevelopment, there are concerns with the building height, massing and inadequate transition to the neighbours at the rear of the site. The proposal is imposing to the neighbors to the rear, there will be a loss of privacy and access to light issues. The height should be reduced and/or the massing should step down at the rear, guided by the 45-degree angular plane shown in the submitted cross-section, to reduce adverse impacts and achieve a better interface to the neighbourhood.
- The site’s reduced depth of less than 30 metres limits the massing and overall scale of the potential development. This limitation should be considered in the exploration of future design solutions.
- The panel notes that renderings were not provided to illustrate the building in the existing neighbourhood context, and this would be helpful in assessing the proposal. Including the proposed landscaping and street trees would help to deemphasize the building mass and show the public realm improvements.

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

- The panel notes that seven storeys is appropriate along Main Street provided the lot depth is such that the building can adequately transition to the adjacent residential uses.
- The proposed building should generally respect the 45-degree angular plane at the rear of the site; the panel recommends adding a generous step-back above the fifth storey and reworking the top two storeys. The upper storeys should also have a larger setback from the side lot lines to let some light into the side units, in anticipation of new neighbouring buildings in the future. One panel member noted that the building takes a conventional approach and the addition of a step-back at the rear could result in an opportunity to rework the unit mix to allow for more unique floor plans.
- The ground floor is distinct from the upper floors and it appears to be compressed by the building above along the front elevation. The building’s base, middle and top should be more clearly defined.
- The panel recommends extending the use of brick from the ground floor and continuing it all the way up the building through vertical elements to segment the building and reflect the historic character of Main Street.
• The front elevation should be refined and simplified. There is a tension between the horizontal and vertical elements, and with the building exceeding 60 metres in length, the panel recommends emphasizing the vertical elements. The strong band of white along the bottom portion of the front elevation accentuates the length, this could be broken up. The panel noted that these stark white framing elements are not necessarily enhancing the design.

• The rear elevation appears to have a simple but effective design with the strong horizontal balcony running the entire length of the building; however, it is too dramatic for a rear elevation and this design would be more appropriate at the front of the building. The rear elevation should be broken down into finer scaled elements to respect the neighbours.

• The panel notes that the commercial component may be challenging due to the busy one-way street. It would help if the commercial component was prominent and differentiated itself from the rest of the building. It should visually ‘pop’ so that it is highly visible to those travelling along Main Street.

• As noted above, the panel has concerns with the windows on the side elevations and proximity to the property lines, since future buildings on either side of the proposal could block the windows.

c) Site Layout and Circulation (Questions 2 & 3)

• The panel recommends widening the landscape strip along the rear property line to provide a larger buffer to the rear neighbours.

• The walkways along the sides of the building are quite narrow and may be unsafe for pedestrians. Gates will likely be required at the street and should be considered for the design.

• The panel suggests making better use of the central drop-off plaza area for pedestrian access to the site and integrating it into the overall ground floor plan. Lighting should be added.

• As there is less vehicular parking proposed than required by the by-law, and considering the site’s proximity to McMaster University, additional secure bike parking at the ground level should be provided.

• The panel suggests re-examining the first floor layout to ensure the spaces occupied by blind nooks, left over green squares (that will permanently be in shade) and dark narrow walkways are reconfigured and put to better use.
d) Streetscape, the Pedestrian Realm & Landscape Strategy (Question 3)

- The panel appreciates the detailed landscape strategy and varied components. The raised beds along the rear property line help to create a buffer between the site and neighbours; the panel recommends adding vegetative screening.
- The panel is pleased to see community gardens included in the plan; however, consider moving some of them onto the roof or a shared terrace, if possible, to free up space at grade for other outdoor amenities.
- The new sidewalk location and public realm improvements would create a safer environment for pedestrians; however, the ends transition too abruptly and should be smoothed out.
- The panel encourages the City to do an assessment of Main Street and create a streetscape master plan to ensure all new developments take a unified approach.

Summary

The Design Review Panel has concerns with the massing and negative impact to the existing neighbourhood to the rear of the site. The massing needs to be modified to better respect the 45-degree angular plane, by adding a generous step-back above the fifth storey. The design of the front elevation should be refined to emphasize vertical elements and incorporate more brick, and the rear elevation should be toned down and broken into smaller elements so that it is less overwhelming to the neighbours.

The panel recognizes the challenged posed by the site’s shallow depth but does not feel this is an excuse to depart from urban design principles. It will be a precedent setting development; it should be respectful of the neighbourhood context and be designed to blend into a broader vision of how this segment of Main Street is intended to evolve over time. The panel noted that they would be interested in reviewing a revised proposal.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.