



Meeting Summary

The Design Review Panel met virtually on **Wednesday October 7th 2020** via Webex.

Panel Members Present:

Colin Berman, Brook McIlroy

Vincent Colizza, Vincent Colizza Architects, *Chair*

Ute Maya-Giambattista, Fotenn Planning + Design

Tim Smith, Urban Strategies Inc.

Jackie VanderVelde, Land Art Design Landscape Architects Inc.

Yasin Visram, Perkins + Will Canada

James Webb, Webb Planning Inc.

Staff Present:

Jason Thorne, General Manager of Planning and Economic Development

Steve Robichaud, Director and Chief Planner

Anita Fabac, Manager of Development Planning, Heritage and Design

Shannon McKie, Senior Project Manager, Urban Team

Andrea Dear, Senior Planner, Urban Team

Others Present

Presentation #1 Residential Development 71 Rebecca Street	David Butterworth , Kirkor Architects Dickson So , Kirkor Architects Franz Klobinhofer , A. J. Clarke and Associates Ltd. Alireza Khosrowshahi , Melrose Investments Inc. Kirill Blotskii , Melrose Investments Inc.
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Regrets:

Robert Freedman, Freedman Urban Solutions (Panel member)

Declaration of Interest:

Mario Patitucci, Adesso Design Inc. (Panel member)

Schedule:

Start Time	Address	Type of Application	Applicant/ Agent	Development Planner
2:00 p.m.	71 Rebecca Street Mixed Use Development	Pre-consultation for Site Plan Application	Owner: Hi-Rose (Rebecca) Inc. Agent and Presentation: Kirkor Architects	Andrea Dear, Senior Planner

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.

71 Rebecca Street

Development Proposal Overview

The applicant is proposing to develop the lands with a 30 storey (97 m, excluding mechanical penthouse) mixed use development with 730 sq.m. of commercial space on the ground floor and 437 residential units above. The commercial space will be oriented towards Rebecca Street, flanking both John Street North and Catherine Street North. The 30 storey tower is proposed to be integrated into a 12 storey mid-rise podium, which is further stepped-back from the five storey building base. An additional step-back at the 8th storey along Rebecca Street is also proposed. A total of 2,343 sq.m. of amenity space is also proposed. On-site parking is proposed at a rate of 0.57 spaces per unit, for a total of 250 parking spaces within an above-ground parking structure. In addition, 232 long-term bicycle parking spaces are proposed. Rebecca Street is being designed as a woonerf (“living street”) between Catherine Street North and John Street North. The primary vehicular access is proposed off Catherine Street North and the main pedestrian access for the residential use is being proposed off Rebecca Street.

The subject site is a registered non-designated cultural heritage site. The subject site is currently bounded by John Street North to the west, Rebecca Street to the south, and Catharine Street North to the east. The subject site is adjacent to commercial surface parking lots to the north and west. The property on the south side of Rebecca Street is the newly constructed John and Rebecca Park. There are also 3 residential dwellings located on the southwest corner of Wilson Street and Catharine Street North (north of the subject site), which are also registered non-

designated cultural heritage properties. The property to the east is being developed for Hamilton Police Services Investigative Services. The subject property is located approximately 250 metres away from the potential future LRT line and station to be located at King and Mary Street. John Street North is a minor arterial road.

Key Questions to the Panel from Planning Staff

1. Is the proposal compatible with adjacent land uses including matters such as shadowing, overlook, noise, lighting, traffic and other nuisance effects?
2. Does the proposal contribute to the character and ambiance of the community through appropriate design of streetscapes and amenity areas?
3. Does the proposal minimize impact on neighbouring buildings and public spaces by:
 - Creating transitions in scale to neighbouring buildings;
 - Ensuring adequate privacy and sunlight to neighbouring properties; and,
 - Minimizing the impacts of shadows and wind conditions.

Panel Comments and Recommendations

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

- The podium and tower façade articulation strategy departed from the submission materials circulated to the panel, rendering some of the panel members initial thoughts irrelevant. As a result, panel members focused their comments on the overarching guiding massing and design principles necessary to be adhered to as the design is revised, and alternative massing and façade articulation options are explored.
- Panel members acknowledged that this part of downtown will be transformed by future development, given the expanses of surface parking and limited historic fabric for new buildings to respond to. In this regard, the form and architecture of development on the subject property will set a precedent. One panel member commented that a contextual analysis should have been included in the submission to show how the building will fit into the existing and future context of the area.
- The panel members agreed that the proposal should adhere to the City's Tall Building Guidelines, specifically the podium height, floor plate size and building length. Some panel members felt that the building's overall scale, façade articulation and podium height would overwhelm the street and surrounding area. The panel encouraged the applicant to use a more modular design and visually break

the front façade into individual sections so that the building base appears to be three or four different buildings. This approach would reflect downtown's historic fabric and give the podium more verticality.

- The panel generally agreed that the podium was far too tall at 12 storeys, making it a slab, and should be brought down to six or seven storeys. The panel noted it had been designed and massed in order to accommodate parking to achieve a specific unit count.
- The panel agreed that the location of this site and its adjacency to the John Rebecca Park presents an opportunity to set a higher design standard; specifically, the podium articulation and overall massing in combination with the landscape treatment addressing the park and all street corners.
- Although the shadows will not impact John Rebecca Park, the panel recognized that there will be significant shadow impacts on the lands and streets to the north and that the tower floor plate should be reduced.

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

- Building on the need to further articulate the podium, one panel member suggested that the lower building and tower should be broken up into three different masses that step-up to the height of 30 storeys.
- Panel members spoke to the need to ensure the ground level is more legible and is not dwarfed by the overhanging canopy and sheer massing of the podium and tower above.
- A number of panel members suggested that the main floor retail component of the podium should be much more prominent and pronounced. Some recommended that the retail be extended to the second storey to animate the façade, be more visible from the public realm and to complement the adjacent John Rebecca Park.
- Several panel members suggested using a range of materials to ground the base of the building while lightening the middle and top components.
- A number of panel members suggested that more canopies and awnings should be introduced at the base.
- One panel member suggested that the narrow side of the tower offers interesting opportunities and could be designed in a similar nature to a flat iron building.
- The panel emphasized the importance of concealing the above-grade parking behind fenestrated building façades. The concept renderings had not addressed this convincingly.

c) Site Layout and Circulation (Question 2)

- The panel agreed that the integration of a woonerf allows for a pedestrian focused public realm. Members commented that it is important to incorporate the necessary traffic calming measures to ensure that the intent of the woonerf is achieved.

d) Streetscape, The Pedestrian Realm & Landscape Strategy (Question 2)

- The panel agreed that this is an important retail edge and suggested that the corners of the proposal be designed for retail and commercial uses. One panel member felt that it would be acceptable to locate indoor amenity space (fitness facilities) along the street, but in the middle near the lobby and not at either corner.
- When considering the size, location and programming of a shared outdoor amenity space, the applicant and design team should look at the larger area and how it will evolve over time. As the neighborhood grows there will be a lot of density and John Rebecca park could get quite busy. It is important to provide a shared outdoor amenity space for the future residents of this development on the site.
- One panel member suggested that the existing park design patterning should be carried over to the pedestrian level of the proposal.

Summary

The panel appreciated the presentation and the opportunity to comment at this early stage of the design exercise; they look forward to reviewing the refined design. The panel acknowledged that this location presents an opportunity to set a new standard for the area and that more work is needed to create a building that respects the current and future context of the area. The panel's key concerns were the length and height of the podium, the tower floor plate size and the shadow effects on the properties and streets to the north. It was suggested that the podium height be reduced, and its façade be broken up into a series of more vertical elements. The ground floor should be a prominent element, mostly lined with viable commercial space. The panel are supportive of the proposed woonerf between the proposal and John Rebecca Park.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.