



Meeting Summary

The Design Review Panel met virtually on **Thursday April 8th 2021** via WebEx.

Panel Members Present:

David Clusiau, *Chair*

Dayna Edwards

Joey Giaimo

Hoda Kameli

Jana Kelemen

Jennifer Sisson

Eldon Theodore

Staff Present:

Jason Thorne, General Manager of Planning and Economic Development

Anita Fabac, Manager of Development Planning, Heritage and Design

Christine Newbold, Manager of Community Planning & GIS

Shannon McKie, Senior Project Manager, Urban Team

Alissa Mahood, Senior Project Manager, Community Planning

Victoria Cox, Urban Designer, Urban Team

Jennifer Roth, Planner I, Urban Team

Others Present:

Presentation #1 Pier 8 Block 16 Urban Design Guidelines 65 Guise Street	Calvin Brook , Brook McIlroy
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Regrets:

Jennifer Mallard (Panel Member)

Ted Watson (Panel Member)

Declaration of Interest: None

Schedule:

Start Time	Address	Type of Application	Applicant/ Agent	Planner
2:00 p.m.	Urban Design Guidelines 65 Guise Street East – Pier 8 Block 16 Urban Design Guidelines	Urban Design Guidelines	Owner: City of Hamilton Agent and Presentation: Brook McIlroy, Calvin Brook	Jennifer Roth, 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.

65 Guise Street East - Pier 8 Block 16 Urban Design Guidelines

Development Proposal Overview

In 2017, City Council approved a zoning by-law amendment and draft plan of subdivision for the lands known as Pier 8 (65 Guise Street, Hamilton). Although the zoning by-law and draft plan of subdivision were guided by the principles and directions of the Pier 7 + 8 Urban Design Study (2016), the planning instruments were appealed to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal where an agreement was reached by way of settlement between the City and appellants.

The settlement agreement directed the City to bring forward, for Council's consideration, an amendment to the Setting Sail Secondary Plan and zoning by-law to re-designate and re-zone the existing institutional block (Block 16) on Pier 8, to permit either residential or mixed-use development in a mid-rise or high-rise form. Although the City agreed to bring forward the amendments for Council's consideration, there was no commitment to approve additional height on Block 16.

The settlement agreement provided direction that any increase in height would be directly correlated to a requirement to provide additional family units. Family units were defined as containing two or more bedrooms.

Building Height	Additional Family Units
No change	Zero
Four or fewer storeys	25
5 – 11 storeys	50
12 – 19 storeys	75
20 – 30 storeys	100
31 or more	150

To fulfil the settlement agreement, the City is carrying out a study to determine the opportunity and parameters required to accommodate a mid-rise or high-rise development on Block 16. This study applies the vision and guiding principles established in the Pier 7 + 8 Urban Design Study (2016) to test various mid-rise and high-rise built form scenarios for Block 16. Visual impact assessments and shadow studies have been carried out to establish appropriate building envelopes, urban design performance standards, and site design measures (contained in the urban design document) that shall inform future development applications for the site.

The intent of the Pier 8 Block 16 Urban Design Guidelines is to provide a design framework to promote the creation of a high-quality development of exceptional design on Block 16. Future development of this site should reflect the unique West Harbour context and create a landmark and visual anchor at Pier 8 that is emblematic of the Harbour's renewal.

The design guidelines and policy objectives contained within the urban design document will be used to prepare the official plan amendment, zoning by-law amendment and site plan conditions for any application for a mid-rise or high-rise development scenario on Block 16.

Although the urban design guidelines for Block 16 provide direction for both a mid-rise and high-rise building, the final approval of the height and form of development will be a decision of Hamilton City Council.

Key Questions to the Panel from Planning Staff

1. Any future development that proposes to increase height on Block 16 must be designed to standards of exceptional quality and design excellence. The property is flanked by publicly accessible open spaces and has always been considered a site of strategic importance within the overall Pier 8 development. Do the proposed guidelines capture the standards and design criteria to create a unique building with high quality design and exceptionalism?
2. Are there design considerations that have not been contemplated that would contribute to design excellence or exceptionalism?

3. Are there other qualitative aspects of the project beyond sustainability and good design that you think should be considered in the guidelines?
4. How can the City ensure that exceptional design/landmark building status be secured? (i.e. Holding Provision, DRP, architectural control, other)?

Panel Comments and Recommendations

a) Overview and Response to Context

- The panel stated that Pier 8 is its own identifiable community that will develop independently from the North End Neighbourhood as John Street North is the only road that extends directly into the site. As a result, the panel thought that a greater degree of change may occur on Pier 8 as it stands alone.
- The panel acknowledged that more housing is needed, in the GTA and Hamilton, and that there is an opportunity to incorporate a mix of mid and high-rise buildings on the Pier 8 lands. The panel suggested introducing more affordable housing units, or a variety of tenures, to address affordable housing.
- The panel considered an implementation strategy of establishing a minimum mid-rise building height and permissions for high-rise buildings would only be granted should certain criteria be met.
- The panel acknowledged that Block 16 could act as a visual anchor for the entire Pier 8 site and identified the Peninsula tower in Vancouver as an example. The Peninsula became the focal point as towers were developed around it.
- The panel stated that the guidelines are successful from a livability standpoint but suggested incorporating more family friendly units. They also suggested including more direction on storage requirements for families and other unique livability guidelines targeting families.
- The panel noted that there could be more of a focus on social uses as to not remove the historical institutional use from the block entirely.

b) Built Form and Character

- The panel stated that a successful building envelope was defined in the guidelines, but that consideration should be given to reducing setbacks (12.5 and 15 metres) as they may be too generous and limit architectural creativity.
- The panel recommended providing an upper storey viewing area accessible by the general public.
- The panel noted that while it would be a unique design element, the concept of a vertical greenway may be challenging to implement and maintain.

c) Site Layout and Circulation

- The panel noted that including a community area for social activities where the townhouses are proposed would enhance the design and provide a good amenity for the future residents.

d) Streetscape, The Pedestrian Realm & Landscape Strategy

- The design of public spaces needs more attention in the guideline document.
- Based on the location and status as a landmark building, the panel recommended adding a community use at grade (a library for example) to create a stronger relationship with the public realm.
- The panel recommended applying a consistent design language for street furniture and other landscape architecture elements within the guideline document.

e) Sustainability

- The panel supported the City and design team aiming for an environmental certification (like SITES or LEED).
- The panel noted that the sustainability focus is strong and that the guidelines should continue to aim high in this regard.

f) General

- The panel stated that the guideline document and architectural control will not be enough to ensure that a landmark building is created. The panel discussed that a building's unique, innovative and landmark quality is not tangible enough to be described and can only be achieved by excellent architects and design teams, which typically occurs through an international design competition.
- The panel questioned whether the guidelines should cover a wider scope to include all Pier 8 lands and consider all buildings.
- The panel recommended that certain guidelines could be more definitive (shall vs should).

Summary

The panel appreciated the detail provided in the draft urban design guidelines and the presentations provided by staff and the consultant. While the panel thought there were many successful elements in the guideline document, there were concerns that the guidelines themselves could not achieve a landmark building. The panel noted that a well-designed taller building on Block 16 could contribute to the unique character of Pier 8.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.