



City of Hamilton

Design Review Panel

Meeting Summary – July 14, 2020

Meeting Summary

The Design Review Panel met virtually on **Thursday July 14th 2020** via webex.

Panel Members Present:

Vincent Colizza, Vincent Colizza Architects, *Chair*

Mario Patitucci, Adesso Design Inc.

Tim Smith, Urban Strategies Inc.

Jackie VanderVelde, Land Art Design Landscape Architects Inc.

Yasin Visram, Perkins + Will Canada

Staff Present:

Jason Thorne, General Manager of Planning and Economic Development

Stephen Robichaud, Director of Planning and Chief Planner

Christine Newbold, Manager of Community Planning & GIS

Alissa Mahood, Senior Project Manager, Community Planning & GIS

Jennifer Roth, Planner I, Community Planning & GIS

Shannon McKie, Senior Project Manager, Urban Team

Victoria Cox, Urban Designer, Urban Team

Applicant and Design Team Present:

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| Presentation #1 Pier 8 Block 16 Opportunity Study 65 Guise Street East | Calvin Brook , Brook McIlroy Victor Cheung , Brook McIlroy Zhongwei Shi , Brook McIlroy |
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Regrets:

Robert Freedman, Freedman Urban Solutions (Panel Member)

Ute Maya-Giambattista, Fotenn Planning + Design (Panel Member)

Declaration of Interest:

James Webb, Webb Planning Inc (Panel Member)

Colin Berman, Brook McIlroy (Panel Member)

Schedule:

| Start Time | Address | Type of Application | Applicant/ Agent | Planner |
|------------|--|---------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1:30 p.m. | Pier 8 Block 16 Opportunity Study 65 Guise Street East | N/A | Owner: City of Hamilton Agent and Presentation: BMY. 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.

1. Pier 8, Block 16 – 65 Guise Street East

Proposal Overview

The City of Hamilton is completing an Opportunity Study for the lands known as Block 16 on Pier 8, municipally known as 65 Guise Street East. The Opportunity Study is the result of an appeal on the Zoning By-law amendment application for Pier 8. Through mediation in July 2019, the parties reached an agreement to resolve the appellants' appeals which involved considering Block 16 (currently designated and zoned for institutional uses with a height range of 2 – 4 storeys) for either residential or mixed use in a mid-rise or high-rise built form. The City has retained Brook McIlroy to assist with the Opportunity Study and to develop an Addendum to the Piers 7 and 8 Urban Design Study (2016). The Addendum will be approved by Council.

Once the Addendum is complete, the Waterfront Office will apply for Official Plan amendment and Zoning By-law amendment applications prior to the land being sold to Waterfrontshores Consortium.

The proposal presented includes 3 scenarios that are being tested to assist with determining what is appropriate on the site. All three scenarios can be residential or mixed use.

Scenario 1 – 12 storey

Scenario 2 – 30 storey

Scenario 3 – 45 storey

Key Questions to the Panel from Planning Staff

1. Does the midblock connection between Blocks 1 and 16 (slide 10) create an appropriate interface or transition? Are there other transition techniques that should be considered?
2. Are there certain mechanisms (ie. Holding provision, DRP, control architect) to ensure that quality design / landmark building status can be secured?
3. Are there certain criteria (ie. sustainability, high quality and innovative urban design techniques, bird friendly design) to ensure that quality design / landmark building status can be secured?

Panel Comments and Recommendations

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

- The panel stated that any proposed changes to Block 16 would require the rest of Pier 8 to be re-evaluated as changes to Block 16 will have major implications for the entire Pier 8 lands. Staff noted that a comprehensive site analysis has not been undertaken and that Block 16 is being studied in isolation as the result of a LPAT decision. The panel is concerned that making this change to Block 16 in isolation, instead of a holistic look at the entire Pier 8 lands, will set a precedent for additional waterfront “beacons”, regardless of height and density limits in the Secondary Plan.
- The panel commented that there should be a greater focus on the impact of a tall building on the public realm and intended sense of place in Pier 8 that should include safe and walkable streets, mid-block connections, pedestrian mews, usable green spaces, etc. There should be a balance between the interior and exterior areas.
- Generally, the panel recommended lower building heights, likely a mid-rise condition (below 12 storeys) in keeping with the existing and planned context, at least until the Secondary Plan and Urban Design Plan have been comprehensively updated. There were concerns that the development of a tall building with a point tower does not fit the community character and will create an imbalance in the neighborhood and the city. The panel feels the City is taking a risk in introducing a tall building at this location, especially one that is 45 storeys. This is setting a dangerous precedent by going above the datum line of the escarpment as this does not conform to the City of Hamilton’s Tall Building Guidelines.
- The panel noted that if a tall building with point tower is being contemplated, the implications for how the remainder of the permitted density would be spread throughout the Pier 8 lands needs to be clearly understood. The panel questioned if three buildings would be considered to accommodate the 1645 units. Staff noted this has not been considered.

- The panel questioned why the City would depart from the original mid-rise vision and noted a number of items that should be considered when making changes, including:
 - What is the impact on Pier 8 itself, particularly as a destination area that the City is trying to create?
 - What is the anticipated experience for those visiting Pier 8 and for those who live there?
 - How can the City ensure that family-size units will be affordable to families with young children?
 - How might more height variation, including multiple tall buildings, contribute to an interesting skyline that does not compete with downtown?
- The majority of the panel questioned if a 45 storey tower is something that should be terminating the view of James Street, when the harbor and the public uses on the waterfront are what should draw people. Most panel members did not feel a condo building is a view terminus.
- The panel noted that updates to the Urban Design Study and the Secondary Plan should happen concurrently.

b) Built Form and Character (Questions 1, 3)

- Some panel members accept the idea that one single point tower with excellent architectural qualities could work on Block 16, but do not see the need for an exceptionally tall building at the corner of the waterfront.
- The panel focused on understanding the view corridors within the neighborhood and the impact a taller building would have. The panel suggested that the views should be carefully analyzed.
- Some panel members noted that a more slender tower does contribute to a landmark building and the panel appreciated the proposed slim massing and smaller floor plate.

c) Site Layout and Circulation (Questions 1, 3)

- The proposal prompted a number of questions among panel members regarding the parking strategy for the site and Pier 8 as a whole, with the panel suggesting that parking is another issue that should be reviewed comprehensively. The panel has concerns parking will end up in large parking structures or parking podiums.

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

- The panel focused on creating a positive pedestrian experience, including providing wide sidewalks.
- The panel commented that a tall building would accommodate a lot of density and therefore could increase the amount of landscaped open space on Pier 8.
- The panel was concerned with parking ending up all over the site which limits the opportunity to plant trees.

Summary

The Design Review Panel was concerned with the proposed changes to Block 16 being made in isolation from the rest of Pier 8, even though this process is occurring as a result of a LPAT decision. Particularly, the panel was concerned with the impacts of the change in density for the remainder of the blocks and the associated impacts on built form, open space and parking. The panel recommends a holistic analysis of the change in height and density, and the opportunity to provide additional information to avoid setting a negative precedent. The panel would like to see an evenness of architectural quality across all of Pier 8 and not just focused on one point tower.

With respect to the design of a landmark tower on Pier 8, should the City ultimately go in that direction, the panel noted that it is difficult to control architecture through design policies and guidelines, recommending an international design competition to achieve a signature “beacon” of the highest design quality. One panel member recommended a detailed Terms of Reference with specific objectives and a strong jury made up of renowned design professionals.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.