

## Department of City Building

### Burlington Urban Design Advisory Panel (BUD)




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#### MINUTES

April 17, 2018, 3:15pm  
414 Locust Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor boardroom.

#### Members of BUD

	present	absent / regrets
Ken Coit (Chair)	✓	
Jana Kelemen (Vice Chair)	✓	
Naama Blonder	x	regrets
Wai Ying Di Giorgio	✓	
Jessica Hawes	✓	
Matt Reid	✓	
Brad Smith	x	regrets
Nigel Tai	x	regrets
Alexandru Taranu	✓	

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#### Item #2: 53 & 71 Plains Road East and 1025 Cooke Boulevard

Design Review:	First Review
Applications:	Official Plan Amendment and Rezoning
Presentations:	
City Staff:	Jamie Tellier
Design Team:	Vrancor Group




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#### Disclosure of conflict-of-interest

None

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#### City Staff Overview

City staff outlined the project context and planning framework.

Staff are seeking the Panel's advice on the following:

1. **Site Layout:** Please comment on site access, treatment of the mid-block connection, site servicing, site access, site parking, open space and the relationship to the anticipated park, building placement, building entrances and tower separation.

2. **Podium:** Please comment on the overall design of the podiums including materiality, location of building entrances, step backs above podium to tower and relationship to both street corners.
3. **Tower:** Any comment on the materiality of the two towers and their form. Does the proposal appropriately transition from the mid-rise to existing low-rise and anticipated park?

### **Applicant / Design Consultant Presentation**

The planner provided an overview of the site, existing context, and current and proposed planning policy frameworks. The architect provided an overview of the development proposal and some of the design features of the building such as: building placement and their relationship to Plains Road and Cooke Boulevard, location of uses and outdoor amenity areas, podium design, shadow impacts, and a description of the provided parking configuration.

### **Panel Questions:**

The panel asked questions on the following topics:

- Application of the Niagara Escarpment Commission regulations
- The at-grade uses
- The applicant's plan to address the anticipated park to the north
- Access to the proposed at-grade towns interior to the site
- Distances between proposed buildings and property line / adjacent uses
- Heights of buildings
- Surface parking
- Connections to transportation networks (incl. GO station, bus routes / stops, bike lanes)
- Adjacent utilities

### **Panel Advice:**

**Question#1: Site Layout:** Please comment on site access, treatment of the mid-block connection, site servicing, site access, site parking, open space and the relationship to the anticipated park, building placement, building entrances and tower separation.

The Panel agreed that the buildings are too bulky and overall the development is too big for the site. There should be a reduction in surface parking, and consideration for reducing the size of the buildings.

The frontages on Plains Road and Cooke Boulevard have different programming but read the same. Residential units that front onto street need a more robust transition between public and private spaces. This can be achieved through stepbacks, wall treatments or landscaping.

The Panel agreed that the edge treatment along Plains Road needs to be more urban by incorporating more hardscape and less softscape. This is not meant to suggest the elimination of street trees.

The Panel suggested recessing the building along Plains Road to maximize opportunities for an improved streetscape and larger buffers for mature street tree growth.

Provide a wider mid-block connection by eliminating the 1-storey podium. At-grade commercial use could wrap into this connection to activate it. Commercial uses here could have open windows. Consider providing a pedestrian connection from this location to the anticipated park to the north. This could also improve pedestrian routes to the rear of the buildings.

Provide at least a 3.5 m wide buffer along the ground level townhomes to rationalize their entrances at the back location. This could be done with a knee wall that would provide some privacy and delineate boundaries.

There is not enough amenity area at grade. Consider the opportunity to combine outdoor amenity space with the anticipated park, potential as a Private-Owned Publicly Accessible Space (POPS).

**Question#2: Podium:** Please comment on the overall design of the podiums including materiality, location of building entrances, step backs above podium to tower and relationship to both street corners.

The Panel acknowledged the use of a larger first floor height. Rethink the corners; they should be spectacular, particularly at the intersection of Plains Road and Cooke Boulevard. Identify the entrances more clearly – these should be well thought out. Add emphasis at the corners and ends to add visual interest and spill out space.

At-grade, the Panel suggests bumping out the commercial retail uses and pushing back the residential. Additionally, a signage band should be established as part of the facade treatment to announce the ground floor commercial retail uses.

The Panel agreed that the ground floor should read more like the design shown in the submission materials (refer to the images set out in section 6.4 Alternative Concepts). The Panel suggested removing the fins in the podium and make the podium read and look like a 3-story base.

Eliminate the 1-storey podium in favour of open space (i.e. plaza – potential POPS).

The back of building should be rationalized to make more pedestrian friendly. Servicing and loading seems to have most prominence.

The Panel advised to keep the choice of materials simple. They preferred the contemporary treatment and referenced the sketches shown in the submission materials (refer to the images set out in section 6.4 Alternative Concepts). It is suggested that these materials be incorporated into the tower elements.

**Question#3: Tower:** Any comment on the materiality of the two towers and their form. Does the proposal appropriately transition from the mid-rise to existing low-rise and anticipated park?

Building too bulky; less is more; less parking; work with transition of units.

The Panel agreed that the buildings are really bulky, maybe too large for site. They commented that the proposed buildings are much bigger and taller than anything else in the area. Consideration must be given to reducing the overall mass of the buildings. The Panel suggested breaking up the buildings into smaller elements; at least visually to achieve less massing. The Panel offered the idea of pushing and pulling the elevations to militate against its heaviness. Consider the design of the building top in different way. The dark materials emphasis the bulk of the building – use lighter materials and colours. The eastern side should provide more terracing (keep with 45° angular plane) and even a reduction in building length.

Consider terracing the building down to Plains Road to provide views and take advantage of smaller heights to the south. Consider separation of towers to frame view of the escarpment.

As with the podium, the Panel agreed that a contemporary style looks better throughout the tower as shown in the Alternative Concepts.

### **Meeting Adjourned**