

Department of City Building

Burlington Urban Design Advisory Panel (BUD)



MINUTES

April 17, 2018, 2:00pm
414 Locust Street, 2nd 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	✓	

Item #1: 4880 Valera Road

Design Review:	First Review
Application:	Rezoning Application
Presentations:	
City Staff:	Jamie Tellier
Design Team:	Adi Development Group



Disclosure of conflict-of-interest

None

City Staff Overview

City staff outlined the project details, site context and planning framework.

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

1. **Site Layout:** Please comment on pedestrian connections, site access, building placement, and composition of public realm design including functional outdoor amenity space.

2. **Apartment Buildings:** Please comment on how the west 8-storey apartment buildings fit within the existing context. What considerations can be made to provide for an appropriate transition in scale down to the existing residential development to the south and west of Valera Road?
3. **Townhomes:** Any comment on the materiality of the townhomes; their edge treatments; corner and end unit treatments?

Applicant / Design Consultant Presentation

The architect provided an overview of the development proposal, how it is intended to fit within its surrounding context, and some of the design features of the building such as: at-grade residential units fronting on Thomas Alton Boulevard and wrapping around the base of the 8-storey building to front on Valera Road, which do not have access from the exterior but rather from the interior of the main building through the lobby, these units provide walled terraces along Thomas Alton and Appleby Line; commercial space is situated at the corner of Thomas Alton Boulevard and Appleby Line; the Appleby Line access is a right-in and right-out only; underground parking sits below the mid-rise buildings; all loading located away from the main street; each building has own loading area and elevator; the podium use of strong architectural language to pickup on nearby houses; massing took into account a 45° angle plane from Valera Road right-of-way; the exterior cladding of the townhouses is stucco and differentiated through 3 colour variations; the exterior cladding of the mid-rise building consists of mostly glazing and some articulation through the use of metal panels; and the scale and massing along Valera Road is meant to match the scale and massing of the existing houses; shadow impact study indicated no shadow impacts to the existing residential.

Panel Questions:

The panel asked questions on the following topics:

- First floor heights for commercial and residential components
- Commercial floor area
- Existing utilities at the northwest corner of the Appleby Line and Thomas Alton Boulevard
- Setbacks along Thomas Alton Boulevard and Appleby Line
- Location of site servicing (e.g. garbage drop-off)
- Building dimensions (e.g. length)
- Materials
- Sustainable design approaches
- How the exterior spaces are programmed and how will they be used? What is the character?
- Ground floor private amenity areas
- Continuation of Thomas Alton Village character
- Townhouse built form and parking
- Pedestrian connections to transit (i.e. bus stops) and recreation (trails)

Panel Advice:

Question #1: Site Layout: Please comment on pedestrian connections, site access, building placement, and composition of public realm design including functional outdoor amenity space.

The Panel agreed that there needs to be a continuity of pedestrian connections throughout the site. The plan has an odd geography of internal walkways. The current plan is car-centric, which leaves little space for pedestrian connections. The lobby between the mid-rise buildings provides an opportunity for a cut-through pedestrian connection to Thomas Alton Boulevard. Formalize the trail connection.

Green space should be consolidated with the intent of providing equal access to the green space for all residents within the development (i.e. townhouse and mid-rise users). Avoid encircling the green space with vehicle routes. Re-locate visitor parking to beside mid-rise to allow open space to be more central.

Reconfigure whole area of the townhouses; consider moving back-to-back townhouses to fronting on Valera Road, facing out to avoid a back condition internal to the site. This would eliminate the need for additional roads and provide more flexibility for internal design of the site.

Question #2: Apartment Buildings: Please comment on how the west 8-storey apartment buildings fit within the existing context. What considerations can be made to provide for an appropriate transition in scale down to the existing residential development to the south and west of Valera Road?

The Panel agreed that the transition between the 8-storey apartment building and low rise residential adjacent to Valera Road needs improvement. The building feels too large and its step down does not work as well as it should. Reducing its massing with another terrace or a larger terrace may help reduce its bulkiness.

The Panel also agreed that the building lengths are too long; creating a heavier more massive building that overwhelms the site. It was suggested that the mid-rise components need to read as two separate buildings. In this regard, consider either breaking up the buildings through architectural and design treatments (e.g. reducing the scale of the building, shorten the building lengths) and eliminating or redesigning the 3-storey podium at joint of buildings to create a focal point and create gateway to the Alton community. The lobby area can become more of an invitation to the site.

With respect to materials, the Panel expressed a need for masonry or other natural materials to better define the corner and bring warmth to the development. Wood was suggested. Use caution with darker metal panels due to fading.

Question #3: Townhomes: Any comment on the materiality of the townhomes; their edge treatments; corner and end unit treatments?

The Panel agreed that the townhouses need more variation in their facade treatments to minimize the presence of garages and driveways. There is a need to create a better front yard condition, perhaps with garages at the rear. Additionally, the Panel suggested that additional landscaping be provided in the front yards.

Entrances are heavy; lighten up through the use of warmer materials and colour.

The Panel agreed that there is too much stucco on the townhomes. Stucco does not age well. Other cladding materials in addition to stucco should be used. The Panel suggested incorporating some traditional materials such as masonry and wood to bring warmth and offset the contemporary architectural expression of the townhomes and help with the transition to the existing character of the Alton.

Meeting Adjourned