



City of Hamilton
Design Review Panel
Meeting Summary – December 14th, 2023
1809-1843 Rymal Rd East

Meeting Summary

The Design Review Panel met virtually on **Thursday December 14th, 2023** via WebEx.

Panel Members Present:

David Clusiau, *Chair*

Dayna Edwards
Jennifer Sisson

Jennifer Mallard

Joey Giaimo
Ted Watson

Staff Present:

Jana Kelemen, Manager of Heritage and Urban Design
Michael Vortuba, SPM Heritage and Design

Edward Winter, Planner 1-Urban Design
James Van Rooi, Senior Planner

Others Present

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Presentation #3 | Stephanie Mirtitsh , MHBC Planning J. Hann , MHBC Planning | J. McGinn , Chamberlain Architects C. Costa , Chamberlain Architects |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Regrets:

Eldon Theodore

Declaration of Interest:

PANEL MEMBERS ONLY - NONE

Schedule:

| Start Time | Address | Type of Application | Applicant/ Agent | City Staff Planner |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1:30 pm | Mixed-Use Multi-Residential 1809-1843 Rymal Rd East | Zoning By-Law & Official Plan Amendments | Owner: 2324780 Ontario Inc Agent and Presentation: MHBC Planning | James Van Rooi |

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.

1809-1843 Rymal Rd East

Development Proposal Overview

The applicant is proposing to develop four mixed-use buildings containing a mix of residential and retail uses and two blocks of two storey residential townhouse units. A total of 812 units are proposed (800 apartment units; 12 block townhouse units), Retail units are proposed on a portion of the ground floor of each building, with the exception of the townhouse blocks, for a total retail floor area of 2,674 square metres. Two vehicular accesses are proposed from Rymal Road East and parking is provided at surface and within two (2) levels of underground. An overall total of 1078 parking spaces are proposed (1020 residential spaces; 58 retail spaces). The surrounding land uses include residential to the north, east and west, and institutional and commercial to the south.

Key Questions to the Panel from Planning Staff

- Does the proposal represent compatible integration with the surrounding area in terms of use, scale, form and character noting the different uses to the south of Rymal Rd and north of the subject site?
- Does the proposal organize space in a logical manner through the design, placement and construction of new buildings, streets, structures, and landscaping?
- Does the proposal connect buildings and spaces through an efficient, intuitive, and safe network of streets, roads, alleys, lanes, sidewalks, and pathways? Does the proposal provide for an active and pleasant streetscape / pedestrian realm along Rymal Rd.
- Does the proposal provide for a mix of unit sizes to accommodate a range of household sizes and income levels?
- Does the proposal satisfy the criteria to achieve a 12-storey height?

Panel Comments and Recommendations

a) Overview and Response to Context

The panel was supportive of intensification and density on the site in general, but there are concerns with the massing and the design of the streetscape along Rymal Rd. The panel had questions regarding the amount of parking provided and the amount of surface area given to parking and vehicular circulation.

b) Built Form and Character

The panel appreciates the building fronting the street, but felt the four buildings in a row did not have enough variation in design and setback from the street. The panel felt the individual building masses at 12-storeys were too large, and that the composition on the site would be improved with some variation in height amongst the buildings.

The panel would have liked to see a stronger sustainable design strategy at this stage of design – and pointed to the high amount of glazing proposed as an area for potential design revisions that could have impact on energy strategy informing design.

The panel wondered if the bridges connecting the 12-storey buildings are positive additions, and whether the four 12-storey buildings would be better without the connecting massing which would give better ability to break-up the length of massing along the street frontage of Rymal Rd.

c) Site Layout and Circulation

The panel noted an opportunity to reduce the area devoted to surface asphalt – serving relatively small amounts of surface parking, by revising the location of the garage ramps to be much closer to the entrance(s) from Rymal Rd. and simplifying the layby-drop-off areas for the 12-storey buildings – giving back space that could be used to re-arrange the massing of the proposed buildings and address other challenges.

The panel also noted the mirrored ramps to the underground parking could be problematic in use

The panel also looked for a pedestrian connection from the recently finished development to the north – seeing an opportunity to support the existing community with a direct pedestrian connection.

d) Streetscape, The Pedestrian Realm & Landscape Strategy

The panel appreciated the provision of commercial units along Rymal Rd. but felt that the proposed design alignment of the buildings along the street were too uniform and did not provide a welcoming or unique sense of place.

The panel also noted there was concern for wind impact along the street frontage and the importance of achieving a safe and welcoming streetscape to support the commercial units and benefit of the residents.

The panel appreciated the inclusion of landscape berms for noise control and privacy but cautioned that care should be taken to preserve safe sightlines through the site.

Summary

The panel was encouraged to see a mixed-use development proposal for this location, and noted various strengths of design in the proposal – however, there were also strong concerns with certain design decisions that the panel did not feel would benefit the proposal and liveability of the proposed building.

The panel would like to see less paved surface areas by rearranging the lay-bys at the building entrances, reducing the amount of surface parking, and relocating the garage ramps to be closer to the entrances.

The panel felt these site revisions would give opportunity to revise the siting and massing of the 12-storey buildings so they are not so uniform in height and façade facing the street – adding space for landscaping and trees along Rymal Rd. With these revisions and added site space, the panel felt there would be opportunity to reduce some of the buildings height in more meaningful ways to provide better transition to the surrounding lower-height and density community.

The panel would have liked to hear more sustainable building design strategy and see this reflected in the modelling of the design. The panel strongly encourages the design team to include sustainable design strategy at early stages of design to achieve the most benefit and best results.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.