

Headline: Urban Design Committee Rejects Proposed Hotel at Parliament Oak Site

In a recent gathering of the Town of Niagara On The Lake's Urban Design Committee (UDC), the highly anticipated proposal for a hotel at the historic Parliament Oak site on King Street took center stage. During the meeting, held on June 28, 2023, the Committee took a decisive stand by unanimously rejecting the proposed development.

This decision carries significant weight as the UDC, an esteemed advisory committee, wields substantial influence in shaping the final Planning Report. The report, in turn, serves as a vital document presented to the Council for their ultimate decision on the project.

The UDC, primarily comprised of accomplished professionals from the design community, brings together individuals with proven expertise in various fields, such as architecture, landscape architecture, environmental management, urban and regional planning, among others. Their collective knowledge ensures a thorough evaluation of proposals that impact the town's aesthetic and environmental integrity.

Deliberating for nearly two hours, the UDC members engaged in an in-depth discussion of the proposed hotel. After careful consideration, they reached a consensus and formally approved a final motion, solidifying their rejection of the project.

The Committee's decision highlights the significance of preserving the historical and cultural heritage of the Parliament Oak site. It sends a clear message that any development on King Street must align with the town's vision for sustainable urban design and responsible growth.

As the proposal awaits further consideration by the Council, the UDC's resolute stance serves as a testament to their commitment to upholding the town's values and ensuring thoughtful, well-informed decisions are made for the benefit of the community.

At the end of the meeting for this proposal the following motion was put forward:

Moved by Peter Neame that:

1. The Urban Design Committee recommends that Staff and Council reject the proposed Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw amendments at this time.
2. The Urban Design Committee further recommends that Staff and Council carry out the required studies to define the need for and potential location of any new, designated commercial areas within NOTL Old Town, prior to asking for and/or considering specific development proposals for any particular site within such new, designated commercial areas.
3. Without prejudicing the results of any zoning or related planning studies which may address this particular site, the Urban Design Committee recommends that Staff take the following concerns into account when preparing their report to Council on this proposed development (a proposed hotel at 325 King Street):
 - a) The required market/impact study (as per Official Plan Section 10.4 Commercial Policies) has not been submitted.

b) The proposed development is not consistent with the Official Plan, which requires that developments should be compatible with

- 'existing and planned land uses...in the surrounding neighborhood'
- 'existing and/or planned densities in the surrounding neighborhood'
- 'existing and/or planned height and massing of buildings within the surrounding neighborhood'
- 'and have an effective transition in built form between areas of different densities and scale'

c) The massing of the proposed hotel is too large, and inappropriate for the location within the surrounding neighborhood and related hierarchy.

d) The height proposed is also inappropriate for the location, and much greater than current requirements.

e) No formal parking study has been done, and the proposed amount of parking appears to be quite inadequate given the number of guests, hotel staff and visitors for the associated facilities.

f) No formal landscaping plan has been prepared, and the limited information on the site plan is inadequate to properly assess what is planned.

4. The Urban design Committee further recommends that Council require Staff to ensure that development proposals are complete, with all required documentation, before being subject to the process of public consultation, advisory committee review and Staff review, prior to submission to Council for review and decision.

The motion was approved by all five members present of the UDC:

Allan Killin, Chrys Kaloudis, David Snelgrove, Peter Neame, Councillor Wendy Cheropita

The final vote and motion may be viewed at the following link at time: 2:11:00

<https://pub-notl.escribemeetings.com/Players/ISISStandAlonePlayer.aspx?Id=1314d2f1-0bfc-4673-ad41-2aa64b955537>

Alan Gordon