

RAISE THE HAMMER

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DOWNTOWN BUREAU

Planning Staff Recommend Denying Television City Proposal

The project is consistent with provincial planning directives and the city's own Official Plan, but staff argue the design is incompatible with its surroundings.

By [Ryan McGreal](#)

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Developer Brad Lamb has applied for amendments to the Urban Hamilton Official Plan and the Zoning By-Law to build two towers at 163 Jackson Street West, an L-shaped property at Jackson and Caroline. The two proposed towers are 125 metres (40 storeys) and 94.3 metres (30 storeys) tall, with 618 units in 474,080 square feet of residential space. Another 11,344 square feet will be dedicated to retail, office and restaurant space at street level.



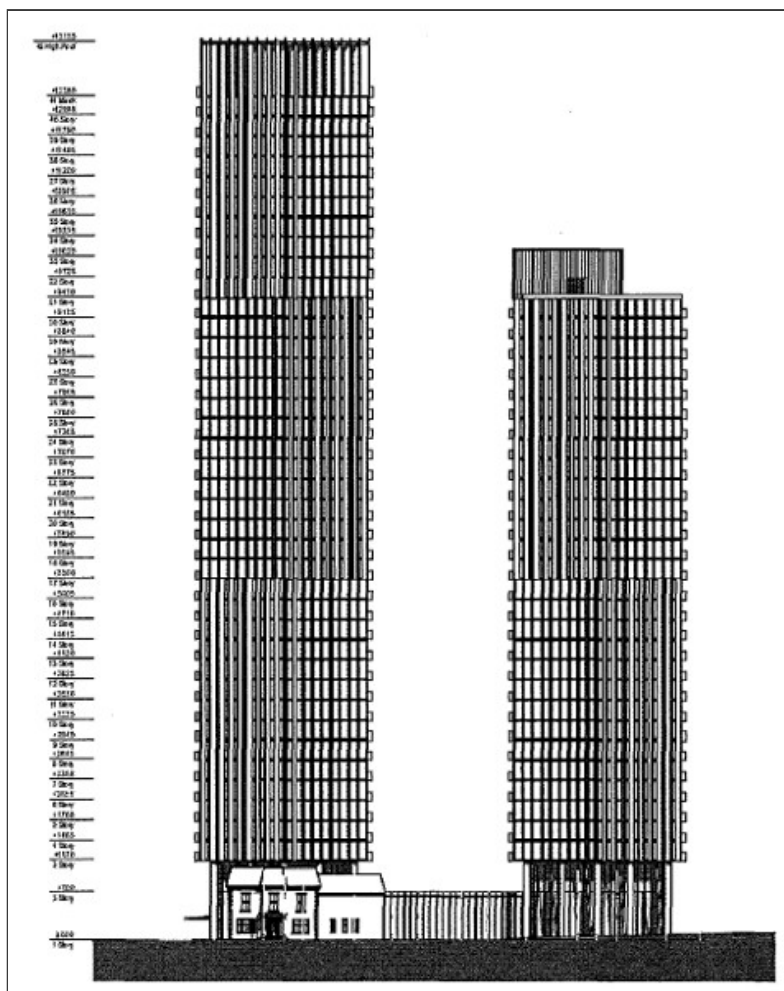
Rendering of proposed development (Image Credit: Lamb Development Corp.)



Rendering of proposed development at street level (Image Credit: Lamb Development Corp.)

The 618 units will be a mix of studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units, with prices starting in the \$220,000 range.

The rezoning application seeks to add retail, office and restaurant to the permitted uses for the site, increase the building height limit to 125 metres, reduce the mandatory minimum parking requirement to 397 spots in a six-level underground garage, establish a minimum bicycle parking requirement of 500 bike parking spaces, and adjust the setback requirements.



Proposed towers, north elevation

The Planning Committee will review the application at [tomorrow's committee meeting](#) (it's item 6.4 on the agenda). Planning staff have reviewed the application and [recommend denying it](#).

According to the staff report, "It is a form of high density, mixed use development that would be incompatible with the established character of the area."

Project Conforms With Planning Directives

The staff report itself acknowledges that this project conforms with provincial planning directives. With respect to the [Provincial Policy Statement](#) (PPS) on land-use planning:

The proposed mixed use building, consisting of 618 dwelling units and four commercial units at grade would contribute to the mix of land uses in Downtown Hamilton that would efficiently use land and existing infrastructure, and represents a form of intensification. The application seeks a reduction in the amount of required vehicular parking spaces, provides 500 bicycle parking spaces and the subject lands are located in close proximity to the Hunter GO Station. As such, the proposed conforms with the aforementioned provisions of the Growth Plan.

Likewise, the project "will have no negative impacts on heritage resources on or adjacent to the subject property. Indeed, it will preserve and adaptively reuse the Pinehurst Residence, a designated heritage building constructed in 1850 that sits currently on the site fronting onto Jackson Street.



1850 heritage building will be preserved as part of this development (RTH file photo)

Similarly, the development conforms with the [Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe](#) (Places to Grow) due to its central location and proximity to local transit, regional transit and the future LRT line and the fact that it will "contribute to the density target for this identified urban growth centre".

Even the city's own [Urban Hamilton Official Plan](#) supports the project. As staff note, the proposal "is consistent with Policy E.2.3.1.9 to encourage the City's highest densities in the Downtown to make this area more vibrant and livable by providing for a significant housing development in the core, and supporting planned transportation infrastructure investments as per Policy E.2.3.1.8."

Likewise, the plan "supports transit, walking and cycling in the Downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods by proposing a reduced parking requirement, and 500 long-term bicycle parking spaces, which is generally encouraged in the Downtown."

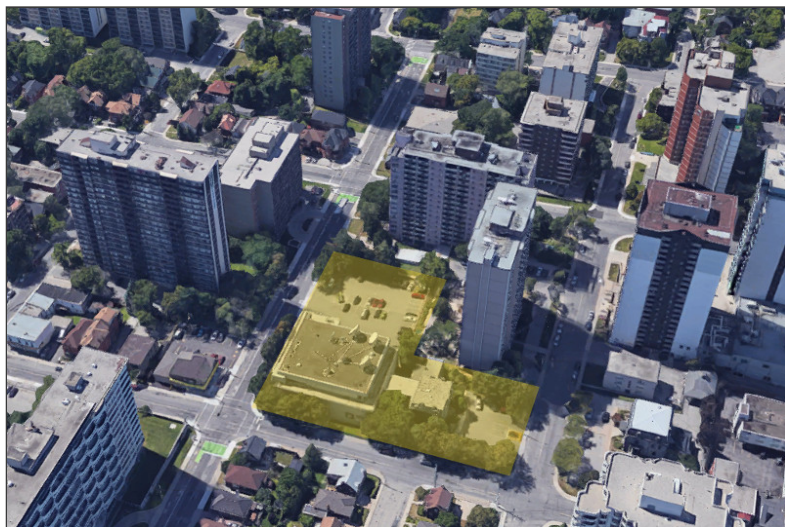
And the addition of commercial space along Caroline and Hunter will "add to the function and vibrancy of the Downtown" and "increase the number of people who reside and work in the Downtown, which will enhance the daytime and nighttime activity levels of the core".

Surrounding Context

Yet despite all of this, staff are "concerned with the appropriateness of the density proposed on this property given the site's contextual constraints." In rejecting the proposal, staff argue that the development and intensification goals "should be achieved through a form and density of development that more appropriately considers the existing character and pattern of development in the area."

Amazingly, staff argue that the decision to preserve the Pinehurst Residence results in "an over-intensification of the subject lands" in the two tower proposal, which "incorporates little design consideration and compatible integration relative to its surrounding context."

This is just bizarre reasoning. The surrounding local context is that of a mixed urban neighbourhood that already has a lot of tall buildings.



Television City location (highlighted in yellow) in local context (Image Credit: Google Maps)

Lamb has already indicated that he will appeal this decision to the Ontario Municipal Board if Council rejects it. Based on how well it conforms to Places to Grow and the PPS, he is very likely to win that appeal.

Ryan McGreal, the editor of Raise the Hammer, lives in Hamilton with his family and works as a programmer, writer and consultant. Ryan volunteers with [Hamilton Light Rail](#), a citizen group dedicated to bringing light rail

transit to Hamilton. Ryan writes a city affairs column in [Hamilton Magazine](#), and several of his articles have been published in the [Hamilton Spectator](#). He also maintains a [personal website](#) and has been known to post passing thoughts on Twitter [@RyanMcGreal](#). Recently, he took the plunge and finally joined [Facebook](#).
