

Oct. 11, 2023

Attn: Planning and Environment Committee
City of London
300 Dufferin Avenue
London, ON, N6A 4L9

Re: PEC 4.1: Urban Design Peer Review Panel

Dear Members of the City of London Planning and Environment Committee:

On behalf of architects Tillmann Ruth Robinson, we would like to express our objection and concern over the proposed motion put forward by Councillor Lewis and Councillor Lehman regarding the dissolution of the Urban Design Peer Review Panel.

We are in support of the letter put forward by the current Urban Design Peer Review Panel, dated October 5th, 2023, expressing their concerns.

The Urban Design Peer Review Panel, since its inception, has served to raise the caliber of design within the City of London. Through its volunteer expert panel, it has successfully been able to work with City staff to bolster the design of Applicants submissions. This collaboration has improved the built environment within our city and raised the level of sustainable design across all applications.

With the London Plan in full effect, the Urban Design Review Panel can now work with City Staff to better realize its vision through a shared framework. The built environment directly addresses issues such as the housing crisis, climate change, and growing a livable City, and the Urban Design Peer Review Panel, now more than ever, can have a positive impact by continuing to raise the bar of design excellence within our city.

The Urban Design Peer Review Panel represents one step in a complex application process and we do not believe that its removal will accelerate the timeline for submissions. The Panel continues to provide timely comments to Applicants within the timeframe put forward by the City. Only when an application does not meet the design standards set by the City will a delay occur, and this will still be the case if the Panel is dissolved. The Urban Design Peer Review Panel is designed to make applications stronger – not delay them. Many cities within the province continue to successfully integrate an Urban Design Peer Review Panel into their application process, for the betterment of their citizens, such as: Ottawa; Toronto; Hamilton; and Burlington. The dissolution of the Urban Design Peer Review Panel will represent a step backwards for the City of London with regards to standards set to achieve design excellence in Ontario and Canada.

We believe in making London better – and the Urban Design Peer Review Panel can help do this.

Sincerely,



McMichael Ruth, B. Arch, OAA, MRAIC, LEED AP BD+C
Principal

cc: Tom Tillmann
Scott Robinson
Scott Townsend