

UDRP Comments and Applicant Response

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Date	December 12, 2019	
Time	2:00	
Panel Members	Present Janice Liebe (Chair) Robert Leblond Terry Klassen Chris Hardwicke	Absent Chad Russill (Co-Chair) Gary Mundy Amelia Hollingshurst Yogeshwar Navagrah Jack Vanstone Ben Bailey Bruce Nelligan Glen Pardoe (recused) Eric Toker
Advisor	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number	PE2018-01104	
Municipal address	8610 Horton Rd SW	
Community	Haysboro	
Project description	Pre-Application for a Proposed Development	
Review	first	
File Manager	Ezra Wasser	
City Wide Urban Design	Lothar Wiwjorra	
Applicant	NORR Architects, Engineers, Planners	
Panel Position	Endorse / Further Review Recommended	

Note: Overall ranking is not an average of the 13 *Urban Design Elements*, but a qualitative project rating of the application in its context.

5=Excellent (exceeds expectations, clear intent to achieve high quality outcome)

4=Good (somewhat exceeds expectations, high probability of success)

3=Average (meets expectations, likely to achieve basic standard of quality outcome)

2=Fair (somewhat meets expectations, multiple weaknesses or deficiencies)

1=Poor (does not meet expectations, demonstrates some lack of understanding of requirements)

Summary

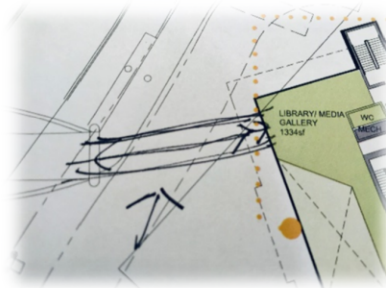
The proposal to redevelop a difficult site near the Heritage LRT Station will offer an array of senior care options. Site challenges include establishing an active street-presence on a site below the significantly-sloped Hull Avenue SW and connection to the existing pedestrian bridge that crosses the busy Horton Road SW, the freight rail and the LRT lines to the Station.

The main areas of priority are outlined below and support the rated urban design elements –

- 1) Create direct connections for active seniors to streets and Station bridge that are accessible, safe, and convenient.
 - a) The discussion between Panel, Applicant and City revealed new information about a potential shared-use-public-access from Hull Ave to an elevator/stairwell in the neighbouring London Tower.

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- b) The Panel recommends functional design assessment of the bridge extending directly into what is currently shown as the Library/Media Gallery on the Level 02 Amenity Floor (see sketch notation below.)



- 2) Without changing architectural massing, consider colour and explore options to break up the white masses as well as tying together the lower and upper masses (positive precedent image examples shown in the Applicant's UDRP submission).
- 3) Further design exploration should give consideration of the blank-south-facing-stepped-back-11-storey-wall facing the neighbouring London Tower, during day and dark.

The Panel supports the positive impact and demographic diversity the 383-unit density will contribute to the area.

Applicant Response

1 a) An existing elevator on the southern London Towers site provides a potential opportunity for controlled access for residents of our proposed site. A convenient and safe passageway from our site to the elevator will be explored if an applicable access agreement can be reached. This is currently being pursued by our team.

An at-grade connection was also discussed as an option east of the proposed building up to Hull Avenue. In a concurrent meeting held by the Owner and the City of Calgary's legal department, the City had advised that this connection would be required to be temporary in nature and advised to be removable on City order within a 30 day notification period. Due to grading changes and requests for temporary/removable structures on City-owned land, this is not viewed as an efficient means of negotiating the slope up to Hull Ave for access to transit or Macleod Trail.

We will continue to explore the possible use of the adjacent site's elevator.

1 b)- The request made for connection to the Pedestrian Bridge on City-owned land is not a recommended solution for the site from a programmatic or security perspective. The Pedestrian Bridge is located outside of the property line and connects for a larger number of public users to cross over Horton Road and the train line. From a security standpoint, this interface is not coordinated to the main building entrance and program, and safety is of utmost concern for the resident demographic.

Concerns also lie with the bridge's existing foundations and structure in addition to maintenance of the existing structure and repairs.

To summarize, our team is of the position there is adequate connection to the public realm along Horton Road to satisfy pedestrian connectivity for this permit application; sidewalk upgrades along Horton/Hull Ave may be required to emphasize this connection, to be further discussed with the City during the review period.

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2- Further studies on the design of the tower will look to utilize material screening on the building's balconies to integrate with the exterior design features on the podium. This will formulate a more seamless design, and further reflect the concept of the building as a connected, vertical neighbourhood.

3- Transparency and adjustment to material finish will help break up this building face and reduce monotony. Elevations will demonstrate design of this interface with the London Towers to the south.

Urban Design Element		
Creativity <i>Encourage innovation; model best practices</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall project approach as it relates to original ideas or innovation 		
UDRP Commentary	The Applicant's presentation was thorough and responsive to its innovative vertical urban neighbourhood vision.	
Applicant Response	<i>The team will continue this approach and concept moving forward into detailed design.</i>	
Context <i>Optimize built form with respect to mass and spacing of buildings, placement on site, response to adjacent uses, heights and densities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Massing relationship to context, distribution on site, and orientation to street edges Shade impact on public realm and adjacent sites 		
UDRP Commentary	The massing relationships to context is positive. The articulation of the massing and optimization of access to sunlight is strategic with main entrance activation.	
Applicant Response	<i>Site lighting and solar access will be pursued alongside accessibility and safety for residents in the drop-off zone. To address comments regarding shading of the main floor feature canopy, the design of the canopy will be reviewed further with an emphasis on light optimization, providing adequate shading in summer months.</i>	
Human Scale <i>Defines street edges, ensures height and mass respect context; pay attention to scale</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Massing contribution to public realm at grade 		
UDRP Commentary	Architecturally the Applicant has effectively achieved an architectural outcome that is more permeable at grade.	
Applicant Response	<i>See note above regarding context. Aim is to provide strategic 'coverage' at grade to minimize the feeling of exposure by residents enjoying outdoor spaces at grade. This will be done with select feature canopies and localized planting to create comfortable amenity spaces appropriate to the human scale.</i>	
Integration <i>The conjunction of land-use, built form, landscaping and public realm design</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking entrances and at-grade parking areas are concealed Weather protection at entrances and solar exposure for outdoor public areas Winter city response 		
UDRP Commentary	Parking access has been designed with pedestrian-first principle. Applicant is positioning main entrance public realm in area with most sun access. Winter city low angle sun will create a significant shaded public realm – Applicant proposing heated surface, so mitigate the predominance of icy surfaces. The applicant is encouraged to relook at the location and orientation of the structures over the parking entrance. They appear to be more central to the landscape plan that would be desirable and block views to and from the lobby areas. If they could be turned and placed parallel to the southern boundary it might improve the conditions.	
Applicant Response	<i>Restriction due to site access limits the ability to place the parking ramp in a different location, and rotation of the ramp would greatly remove any underground efficiencies for parkade. This in turn would require on-grade parking. Our team feels this would deter from the integrity of the project and public realm. Reduction of the overall mass of the parkade ramp structure will help create more visual connection of pedestrians to the internal site and main entry. Signage and landscape features will address pedestrian and vehicular access to the site.</i>	

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Connectivity Achieve visual and functional connections between buildings and places; ensure connection to existing and future networks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian first design, walkability, pathways through site • Connections to LRT stations, regional pathways and cycle paths • Pedestrian pathway materials extend across driveways and lanes 		
UDRP Commentary	<p>Pedestrian first design, walkability and pathways through the site will be further enhanced with discussion of shared-use public access along the London Tower's north walkway to elevator/stairwell.</p> <p>Connections to LRT needs to be direct, convenient, secure, safe for active seniors walking and cycling to west of Haysboro (see sketch notation in summary). The Panel feels that a direct access to the LRT from the "front" face of the building would be more desirable than having to proceed further along the path to the back of the project – hence the suggested location.</p> <p>Pedestrian pathway materials that extend across driveways need to be dimensionally and structurally vehicle-rated.</p>	
Applicant Response	<p><i>Challenges associated with providing a direct access to the LRT from the building "front" is previously outlined in the response summary. The proposed access towards the adjacent site elevator acts as an accessible connection to Macleod Trail and the LRT. Additional transportation for the Chartwell community bus, is provided by the Owner's program which also promotes a safer means of navigation for this demographic.</i></p>	
Animation Incorporate active uses; pay attention to details; add colour, wit and fun <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building form contributes to an active pedestrian realm • Residential units provided at-grade • Elevations are interesting and enhance the streetscape 		
UDRP Commentary	<p>Optimizing animation extended on different levels, maximizing the outdoor potential on the site should also connect to the neighbouring mixed use environment of the London Towers and to the existing bridge connecting beyond the project site to the LRT and the community within which it will reside.</p>	
Applicant Response	<p><i>Addressed above. – Residential units provided at grade does not provide the level of security required for this targeted demographic. Activated areas paralleling the street frontage such as amenity spaces, outdoor program and bistro/lounge areas, over the main and second floors promote a semi public interface with increased visibility over the changing pedestrian elevation.</i></p>	
Accessibility Ensure clear and simple access for all types of users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier free design • Entry definition, legibility, and natural wayfinding 		
UDRP Commentary	<p>Barrier-free, clarity and legibility in approach and entry design in this application demonstrates natural wayfinding. The missing pieces, as noted in the summary, are the off-site connections at the north and south ends of the project site (and a direct link that requires no stairs to the LRT bridge.)</p>	
Applicant Response	<p><i>Addressed above. In addition, this proposed design aims to utilize the public elevator noted within the Panel discussion, provides additional modes of community transport and enlivens the street frontage without compromising the security of the residence.</i></p>	
Diversity Promote designs accommodating a broad range of users and uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail street variety, at-grade areas, transparency into spaces • Corner treatments and project porosity 		
UDRP Commentary	<p>The diversity in the broad range of care options will draw a diversity of seniors and caregivers to the area – people walking, cycling, driving and for residents a diversity of lifestyle options that will activate inside and outside areas.</p>	
Applicant Response	<p><i>In developing this current site from its current use as a car sales lot, it will bring an increased resident presence to the area, with provision of increased amenity, services and care options to the wider Community for aging in place. This will also boost the population of local consumers to the adjacent commercial areas and improve the local area business.</i></p>	
Flexibility Develop planning and building concepts which allow adaptation to future uses, new technologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project approach relating to market and/or context changes 		

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UDRP Commentary	Urban retrofitting for Transit-Oriented-Development to achieve better multimodal public realm outcomes often dovetail with road dieting, rarely road widening. The context change of a road widening should emphasize generous tree-lined walkways, raised bike paths, and reduced speed driving lanes, to complement the aspirational merits of vibrant placemaking. The Applicant's proposed public plaza lends itself to flexibility in future uses and advancing technologies.	
Applicant Response	<i>Further discussions with the City regarding intended strategies in place for the existing road widening along Horton Rd will continue through the application process with City owned property. Continuous sidewalk access will be proposed in the public realm tying into existing infrastructure adjacent our property for the City's review and comment.</i>	
Safety Achieve a sense of comfort and create places that provide security at all times <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and security • Night time design 		
UDRP Commentary	Ensuring safe, freedom of movement is well stated in the application – the opportunities to safely access off-site connections at the north and south sides of the project site along with activating both east and west facades is fundamental to safe environments during daytime and during dark – as is, a careful positioning of the parking entry structures. The activation and resident eyes on the neighbourhood are important aspects of improving the livability and safety of the Transit-Oriented neighbourhood.	
Applicant Response	<i>The site will also be monitored by the Owner's security program, which provides additional presence and safety to the area. Increased site illumination utilizing CPTED principles, and out of hours activity programs also contribute to improving safety for the area, and surrounding neighbours. More physical presence with 'at-home' residents increases passive safety during daylight hours as well.</i>	
Orientation Provide clear and consistent directional clues for urban navigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance natural views and vistas 		
UDRP Commentary	Site context and creativity in the Applicant's submission narrates orientation in response to site constraints and opportunities. The vertical urban neighbourhood and its tiered outdoor spaces, and relief from the neighbor is generally positive, however, UDRP feels form, finish and overall articulation in a contemporary response should be applied to the south-facing-11-story-blank wall.	
Applicant Response	<i>Addressed above – The southern façade has also been advanced in our design development to articulate a more residential interface with Balconies and fenestration. This can be seen in the DP drawings.</i>	
Sustainability Be aware of lifecycle costs; incorporate sustainable practices and materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site/solar orientation and passive heating/cooling • Material selection and sustainable products 		
UDRP Commentary	Long term operation and sustainability aspiration expressed by the Applicant.	
Applicant Response	<i>This building will incorporate durable materials, high quality infrastructure systems and quality construction to ensure a sustainable operation for the life cycle of this building and to ensure that future changes in need can be accommodated within this design.</i>	
Durability Incorporate long-lasting materials and details that will provide a legacy rather than a liability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of low maintenance materials and/or sustainable products • Project detailed to avoid maintenance issues 		
UDRP Commentary	Robust, durable and long-lasting material details are generally expressed in the architectural response of the submission. Without changing architectural massing, consider colour and explore options to break up the white masses as well as tying together the lower and upper masses (positive precedent image examples shown in the Applicant's UDRP submission). Further design exploration should give consideration of the blank-south-facing-stepped-back-11-storey-wall facing the neighbouring London Tower, during day and dark.	
Applicant Response	<i>Addressed above.</i>	