

Urban Design Review Panel Comments with Applicant Response

Date	April 17, 2019	
Time	2:00	
Panel Members	Present Janice Liebe (Chair) Terry Klassen Colin Friesen Chris Hardwicke	Absent Chad Russill (Co-Chair) Gary Mundy Eric Toker Beverley Sandalack Ryan Agrey Jack Vanstone Ben Bailey Glen Pardoe Michael Sydenham
Advisor	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number	DP2018-5576	
Municipal address	1827 14 St SW	
Community	Bankview	
Project description	New: Multi-Residential Development, Retail and Consumer Service (1 building)	
Review	first	
File Manager	Desmond Bliet	
City Wide Urban Design	Xia Zhang	
Applicant	Casola Koppe	
Panel Position	Further Review Recommended	
Overall Ranking (1-5)	2	

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

This project relocates a heritage, two-storey Queen Anne Revival-style ranch house, within the same parcel, to make room for a contemporary mixed-use development under and around it. Currently, Nimmons House built in 1898, sits in the center of the site, facing 14th Street with pedestrian access off 19th Avenue due to the grade level changes along 14th. There is a lawn and a sloped unstructured landscape toward 19th, retained by a low stone wall that follows the north-sloping profile of 14th Street.

Heritage is embodied in the built structure, the presiding site and associated landscape elements. Moving a heritage structure compromises its cultural value, so when this is attempted, careful consideration must be made of the adjusted context and relational design response.

While the Panel notes that there have been several directives applied to the moving of the building and the design of the 14th Street interface outside of the control of the Applicant, it is the opinion of the Panel that these directives are contributing to an undesirable result. This is an

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important building in the historic landscape of Calgary and warrants special consideration, to include the following:

- Maintain key elements of the spatial qualities and landscape form along 14th Street (e.g. the embanked landscape /stone wall)
- Review the appropriateness of the road widening setback on 14th Street
- Establish a defined and protected view along 14th Street to the circular veranda, and to the city from the veranda
- Reconsider the requirement for commercial units along 14th Street as part of the project
- Consider alternative design responses to the 14th Street public realm that recognize that the sidewalk is not and cannot be made barrier free
- Give consideration to increased height on the new project if greater setbacks are required for a better relationship and design response between the heritage structure and the new built form
- Consider a design response that celebrates the heritage value of the project that may infringe on standard rules governing development in this area.

Further, the relationship of the new built form to the heritage structure should inform the design response. Considerations should include:

- Massing relationship of the new structure be informed and influenced by the heritage building – key eave or roof lines be reflected in the new massing with setbacks or other massing responses
- Mass of the new structure to preserve key view lines to and from the heritage structure as noted above
- Because the complexity of the proposed facades is competing with the heritage structure, consider simplifying the design language to allow the existing and new building to coexist in a more harmonious manner.

Comments from the Heritage Representative on the Panel – not available at the meeting:

- The basement / foundations of the house are equally important – if they are sandstone foundations for example those original traces could appear in the new construction; or be re-assembled as part of the landscape design. And the house footprint could equally occur in the parkade – instead of the clean slate they propose.
- Limiting distance could be an issue and the new construction should be modified to avoid the need to change any of the historic elevations

Urban Design Element		Rating 1-5
Creativity <i>Encourage innovation; model best practices</i>		1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall project approach as it relates to original ideas or innovation 		
UDRP Commentary	While the moving of a cultural asset is not consistent with best practice, retaining it in some manner and giving it new life is important. Allowing for greater density and other uses on an inner-city site is desirable. The simple act of maintaining the structure is, however, not enough to achieve a good urban design complementary to historic context. The UDRP commentary for this project focusses on the issues that should be considered in the context of preserving not only the structure, but its contextual urban design responses.	
Applicant Response	Moving the house to the front corner of the parcel is consistent with the ARP amendment and the intent of the land	

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	<p>use. Resituating the cultural asset to the southeastern portion of the site and surrounding the asset in a contemporary space allows the house to remain a visible landmark to the city, in contrast to where the house currently sits recessed deep into the parcel.</p> <p>Many design decisions have been made with the primary focus on spotlighting the historical asset. The building materiality facing Nimmons House is intended to act as a “gallery wall” with the historic asset acting as the subject. This is achieved by using a neutral colour palette (white with black and grey accents) and maintaining the first two stories as brick to relate to the existing materiality of the house without copying or distracting from it.</p> <p>The wall along 14th Street is brick with “warehouse” style windows allude to the type of industrial architecture that coincides with the Queen Anne era and references the brick industry to which the Nimmons’ operated.</p> <p>Signage and an information plaque on the planters along the 14 Street building provide historical acknowledgment and context for passers by, also reducing the impact of the parkade wall and to calling attention to the historic house.</p>	
	<p>Context <i>Optimize built form with respect to mass and spacing of buildings, placement on site, response to adjacent uses, heights and densities</i></p> <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 	1
<p>UDRP Commentary</p>	<p>Shade impact: Condition is acceptable.</p> <p>Massing relationship to context: Refer to comments under “Connectivity” below. The relationship of the heritage structure should set the tone for the response of the new building form and mass. The scale of the heritage structure should be reflected in some manner in the new – particularly in the directly relatable facades. Setback lines related to the roof or eave lines of the Nimmons House should be considered in the new form. Pulling the east face of the new project back to allow for better view lines to the Nimmons House should be considered. The height of the new structure could be increased along the west to compensate.</p> <p>Orientation to Street Edges: Moving the Nimmons House south and east changes its relationship to the street. Some reference to the original landscape buffer should be maintained with a terraced landscape to the height of the existing landscape wall along 14th Street, thereby reducing the abrupt nature of the proposed tall retaining wall. This of course requires a relaxation on the setback along 14th Street.</p>	
<p>Applicant Response</p>	<p>Building massing and material has been revised based on URDP comments. Shadow plans provided to illustrate minimal impact on surrounding context.</p> <p>East corner of the proposed building massing cuts back to provide a greater view to the Nimmons house. Façade treatment facing the historic asset responds to elements of</p>	

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	<p>the Nimmons House where the first two stories are clad in white brick to relate to the existing Historic House’s materiality, though now painted white to act as a backdrop for the historic house at a pedestrian level. This materiality evokes the height of the eave line on the existing house. Above this level the building transitions from a traditional treatment to a contemporary one. While windows on the first two stories are ordered in a linear arrangement which relate to the traditional façade, those above break from this rhythm. The upper stories are intended as a neutral (white) backdrop, akin to the gallery wall below, where the house remains a spectacle. Window placement is staggered, though evidently still orderly, introducing a contemporary explorative flair of wit and fun.</p>	
<p>Human Scale Defines street edges, ensures height and mass respect context; pay attention to scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massing contribution to public realm at grade 		2
<p>UDRP Commentary</p>	<p>Refer to comments under “Integration” and “Connectivity”.</p>	
<p>Applicant Response</p>	<p>The east elevation of the proposed building has been altered to allow for a greater visual connection to Nimmons House from the north. The proposed building’s floorplate, staggered at the southeastern corner of the 14 St building face, softens the interface between the historic veranda and the proposed building, creating a stronger buffer and reducing visual noise between the veranda and the street when approaching from the north.</p> <p>The scale of the project varies based on the contextual relationship. The units on 19th ave are street oriented/set close to the property line and the massing is at 3m, similar to the 2.5 storey Nimmons house along here and relates to the lower density neighborhood. The primary mass is on the North side of the property which has a relationship to the higher density Beltline.</p> <p>The grade change on 14th street is the greatest challenge, where currently there is a retaining wall and a significant slope, the nature of the grading is such that the parkade wall becomes exposed forming a retaining wall at this edge. We have payed close attention this interface to reduced the “weight” of the parkade wall’s height by integrating planters, signage, climbing vegetation (Virginia Creeper) along metal mesh trellis systems and screening with Swedish Columnar Aspens and Emerald Spire Crabapples. Sections between each mesh system will be clad in brick used by the proposed building with frosted windows into the parkade.</p>	

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<p>Integration <i>The conjunction of land-use, built form, landscaping and public realm design</i></p> <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 		3
UDRP Commentary	<p>The Parking entrance is dealt with in a satisfactory manner and is in an appropriate location off the lane. Parking is all below grade and concealed. The ranking of this element largely relates to the parking solution.</p> <p>Generally, the landscaping on the north, west and south sides of the Nimmons House are appropriate. See comments below regarding landscaping on the 14th Street edge. Full landscape plans from a Landscape Architect are required. Ranking of the landscaping design alone would be lower than a 3.</p>	
Applicant Response	<p>Landcape plans have been drastically revised since they have been provided by a Landscape architect. The landscape plans indicate a comprehensive treatment which considers the historic qualities of the cultural asset on site through planting choice and arrangement, while introducing landscape design decisions that diffuse the transition from the historic to the proposed contemporary building. The landscape and public realm design integrate stepped planters with planting that screen and ease the condition of the parkade wall on 14 Street. This is in response to the City’s mandated road widening right-of-way setback. An interesting mix of low maintenance perennials are proposed in the ROW. We are also proposing to widen the existing sidewalk.</p> <p>Entry into the parkade has been amended to break up the parkade wall facing 14 Street. This allows the wall to address the street at a pedestrian scale by integrating an entrance (featuring a canopy, bench, glazing and change in material) which shelters egress from the stairwell servicing both levels of the parkade and all levels of the residential building above.</p>	
<p>Connectivity <i>Achieve visual and functional connections between buildings and places; ensure connection to existing and future networks.</i></p> <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 		2
UDRP Commentary	<p>Pathways through site / Pedestrian first design:</p> <p>The stairway on the north east corner is narrow and concealed and does not follow CPTED principles. The Panel is not convinced that this stair is necessary to the function of the design and indeed creates more problems than it solves. The Panel recommends it be deleted from the project.</p> <p>The environment on the 14th Street sidewalk is worrisome – caused in large-part by the setback requirements that cut into the slope of the site resulting in a high, unsightly and utilitarian concrete retaining wall. This is not an improvement over the existing condition from an urban design or public realm point of</p>	

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	<p>view. The Panel questions the need for the setback. The public good might be better served by retaining the existing shorter wall and the sloped landscaping as a more appropriate foreground as the view transitions from the street to the heritage building – preserving the view from the sidewalk and street. The setback could be maintained on the eastern edge of the new building allowing for a “bulb” of green space in front of the Nimmons House protruding toward 14th street, further marking its importance in the city.</p> <p>Visual Connection to the Nimmons House, the circular veranda on the north east side is key – requiring the mass of the new building be cut back on the eastern end, perhaps by one residential unit width. Additional height on the new building should be considered to replace the density lost on the eastern side. The two commercial units on 14th street is significantly compromised by the setback and grade conditions. The panel is not convinced that this use is adding much to the project or to the street activity given the “slot” of access that results from the grade conditions. The applicant is encouraged to consider removing them altogether or combining them into one CRU with a singular entry on the down-grade at the north east corner.</p> <p>With the revisions above, access to the Nimmons House could be maintained from 19th Avenue, consistent with the historic condition. Landscape elements more sympathetic to the Nimmons House could be used to safeguard pedestrians from the slope vs the currently proposed metal guardrail.</p> <p><i>(There are no regional pathways, cycle tracks, LRT stations in proximity or vehicular access points across the site – no resulting Panel comment)</i></p>	
<p>Applicant Response</p>	<p>The stairway on the northeast corner has been removed and we have opted to preserve the principal stair entry to the Nimmons House and simply extend and turn that stairway down to meet 19 Avenue. This proposed extension follows CPTED principles by providing a well-lit, prominent, exposed, and easily maintained area.</p> <p>The connection from 14th Street & the building has been achieved by moving this stairway connection internal to the parkade/ building and connecting to 14th street.</p> <p>We have repositioned entry into the Nimmons House at 19 Avenue, remaining consistent with the historic condition. The metal guardrail has been replaced with a balustrade with a similar assembly and appearance to the existing Nimmons House Balustrade, helping to situate the house in its relocated siting.</p>	
<p>Animation Incorporate active uses; pay attention to details; add colour, wit and fun</p> <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 		<p>2</p>

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UDRP Commentary	Refer to comments under “Connectivity” above. Given the current residential nature of the street to the north and south along 14th, and the profile /gradient conditions, providing retail on this project may not be the most successful. It is the opinion of the Panel that improving the proposed streetscape elements, inclusive of measures to reduce the barrier of the proposed retaining wall will improve the walking experience along 14th Street.	
Applicant Response	We have reconsidered the pedestrian experience along 14 Street and have drastically redesigned the interface. Having removed the stair and the CRUs, we have opted for landscape elements and a widened sidewalk to better the walking experience. Windows, masonry and lush landscaping has been introduced.	
Accessibility <i>Ensure clear and simple access for all types of users</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier free design • Entry definition, legibility, and natural wayfinding 		3
UDRP Commentary	The grade on 14th Street is steeper than permissible for wheelchair access. There is not much that can be done about this condition other than providing at grade entry points at the north west corner, which has been done, and to the residential units on 19th Avenue – which is also provided.	
Applicant Response	We have integrated barrier-free access at the principal entrance to the proposed building. This access is from 19 Avenue and incorporates a barrier-free ramp along the west face of Nimmons House. Access at this location is the most logical for residents and visitors alike. This barrier-free entrance is coupled with bicycle parking (U-racks) and a series of stepped levels. Building downlighting (lanterns on proposed building face) and up-lighting (directed in accent toward Nimmons House) ensures the entrance will remain well-lit day and night, along with implying an entry/gateway through focused lighting.	
Diversity <i>Promote designs accommodating a broad range of users and uses</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail street variety, at-grade areas, transparency into spaces • Corner treatments and project porosity 		3
UDRP Commentary	Refer to comments under “Accessibility”, Animation and “Connectivity” above.	
Applicant Response	<p>-Retail at street has been removed because of accessibility limitations. A wide variety of uses can be accommodated within the Nimmons house. Current application considers this space for office or retail. The main floor units of the proposed development are designed with a future flexibility for “live/work”.</p> <p>-Frosted glazing has been introduced along 14th street into the parkade to create the affect of porosity without creating a view of vehicles.</p> <p>-Patios are utilized along corner conditions to enrich building porosity. Maximized corner glazing has been integrated to ensure the proposed building is both intriguing and transparent from the street level. The extension of the existing</p>	

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	Nimmons House balustrade amounts to a level of transparency and public connectivity (visual and cultural) into an otherwise more private garden space.	
Flexibility <i>Develop planning and building concepts which allow adaptation to future uses, new technologies</i>		NA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project approach relating to market and/or context changes 		
UDRP Commentary		
Applicant Response	The Nimmons house and the main floor of this development are street oriented and could be utilized for whatever uses the market demands. The main floor units also have higher floor-to-ceiling heights which are more conducive to future potential live/work units or CRUs.	
Safety <i>Achieve a sense of comfort and create places that provide security at all times</i>		1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and security • Night time design 		
UDRP Commentary	Refer to comments above regarding the stair on the north west corner, and the scale of the retaining wall on 14th Street.	
Applicant Response	Building lighting focused both on the proposed development, Nimmons House and along 14th street which has been specified to highlight building accents and to ensure CPTED principles are followed for a comfortable and secure environment. Refer to lighting plan now included.	
Orientation <i>Provide clear and consistent directional clues for urban navigation</i>		2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance natural views and vistas 		
UDRP Commentary	Refer to comments provided under “Connectivity” above.	
Applicant Response	Both the proposed development and the Nimmons building are accessed off 19th Ave, which is the current/historic access for the Nimmons building. The access to the Nimmons House is at the corner of 14th Street and 19th Ave & highly visible from 14th street. Access to the proposed multiresidential building and parkade are also provided through an entrance off 14th Street which is highly legible through detail in design, including a canopy, bench and change in façade materials. We have opted to transform our initial building massing to ensure sight lines from 14 Street to the Nimmons House veranda and from the Nimmons House to downtown Calgary are untarnished.	
Sustainability <i>Be aware of lifecycle costs; incorporate sustainable practices and materials</i>		NA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site/solar orientation and passive heating/cooling • Material selection and sustainable products 		
UDRP Commentary		
Applicant Response		

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Durability <i>Incorporate long-lasting materials and details that will provide a legacy rather than a liability</i>		NA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of low maintenance materials and/or sustainable products • Project detailed to avoid maintenance issues 		
UDRP Commentary		
Applicant Response		
Overall Rating (1-5)		2.5

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Applicant Response

Tuesday, December 17, 2019

Urban Design Review Panel

Attn: David Down

RE: DP2018-5576

1827 14th Street SW – Nimmons Court

Dear Urban Design Review Panel Members,

Thank you for your comments on this file DP2018-5576 for “Nimmons Court”. We have revised our plans significantly since the review, taking into consideration all observations. Our response to each Urban Design Element is indicated in the attached pages. We hope you find that our responses, both in our revised drawings and written, acknowledge and resolve your concerns.

Dealing with the relocation of a heritage house and accommodating a contemporary mixed-use development which immensely increases the density of the site is a complex and sometimes controversial process for all parties involved and we appreciate the comments the UDRP has provided regarding all Urban Design Elements outlined. Casola Koppe Architects has strived to achieve a balance between the commentary provided by the UDRP and the guidelines indicated by the Land Use Redesignation of the site and are confident that providing the following design outcomes will prove to be appropriate and advantageous to all parties. We have also endeavored to include input from the Community Open House where constructive feedback was collected.

Regarding the comments from the Heritage Representative, we have ensured that the essence of the sandstone foundations of the house will remain present in the development and wish to note that the basement windows will be preserved in their entirety. The Nimmons House, though proposed to be resituated on site, will remain at virtually the same main floor datum. This allows the House to retain a crawlspace below the main floor and above Parkade Level 1 wherein the existing basement windows will be preserved. Limiting distance calculations have been made and the unprotected openings for the proposed development have been modified to avoid the need to change any of the historic elevations of the cultural asset. The building will be moved and preserved in accordance with the Guidelines and Standards for Historic Preservation.

We thank you kindly for your review and consideration of the enclosed revised drawings and response to the comments provided. We look forward to further review of this project and the support of the Urban Design Review Panel as we obtain development approval for the proposed development. Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned for any further comments or questions.

Regards,

Talicia Wagner

B.f.a, M.Arch, Intern Architect AAA

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