

Planning & Development Report to
Calgary Planning Commission
2020 March 19

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
CPC2020-0275

Development Permit in Downtown (Ward 8) at 614 – 6 Avenue SW, DP2019-5502

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This development permit application was submitted on 2019 October 23 by NORR Architects Engineers Planners on behalf of Triple One Properties Management. The proposed development is located in the Downtown Business District on the north side of 6 Avenue SW, between 5 Street SW and 6 Street SW. The application proposes a new hotel development that includes:

- A 16-storey (55 metre) high-rise building;
- 151 hotel guest rooms;
- Retail and consumer service and hotel lobby at-grade;
- Arcaded porte cochere access off of 6 Avenue SW for hotel guests; and
- Valet serviced underground parking with automated car lift for stacked parking.

While challenging in terms of parcel size (605 square metres), this proposal is a positive addition to the Downtown Business District and the city on the whole in providing guest services and accommodations for visitors to Calgary's City Centre.

The proposal was found to align with Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 and applicable policies of the *Municipal Development Plan* and *Centre City Plan*, subject to the conditions of approval (Attachment 2)

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

That Calgary Planning Commission Approve the proposed Development Permit application, DP2019-5502 for a New: Hotel, Retail and Consumer Service at 614 – 6 Avenue SW (Plan A1, Block 29, Lots 27 and 28) with conditions (Attachment 2).

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

None.

BACKGROUND

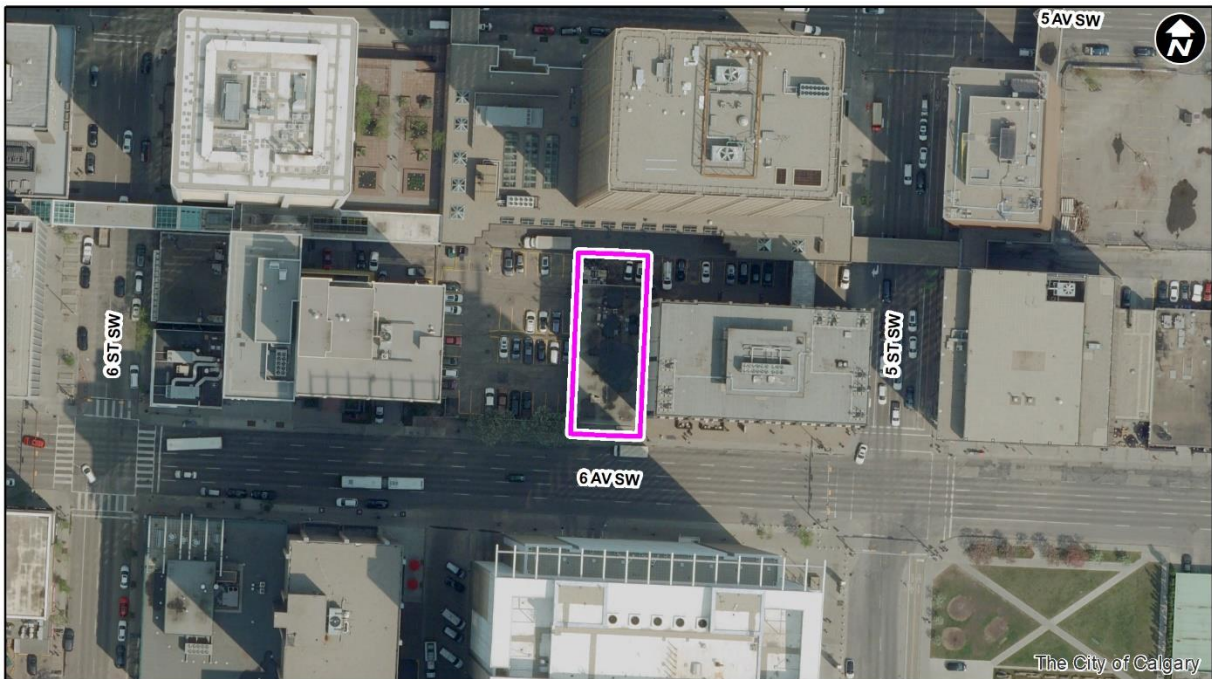
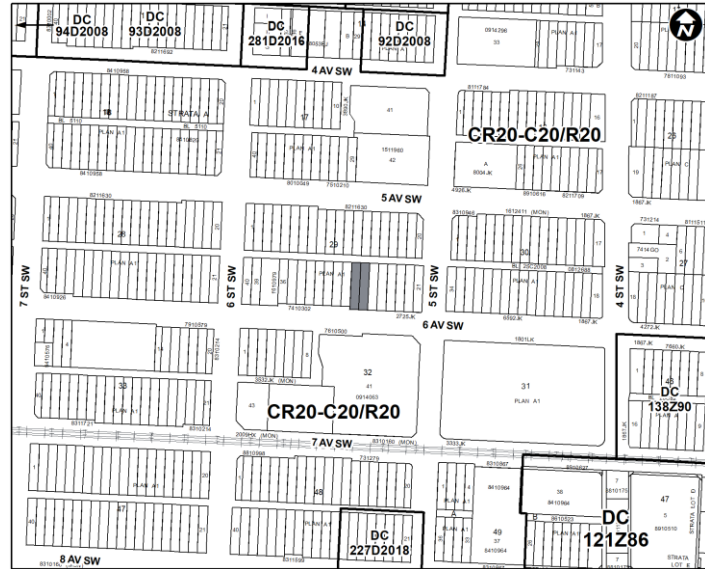
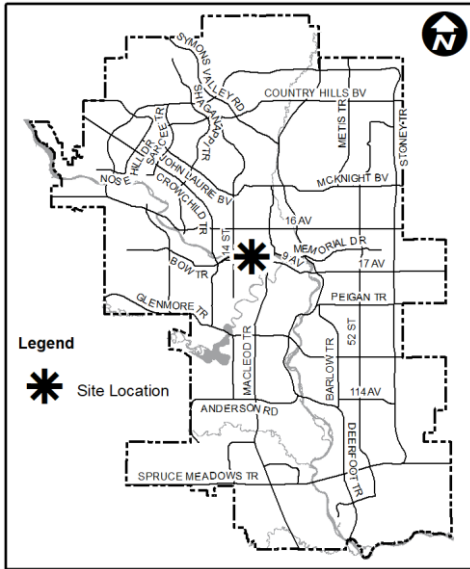
Substantial preliminary consultation took place ahead of the 2019 October 23 application submittal by NORR Architects Engineers Planners and Triple One Properties Management. At the pre-application stage, the proposal was taken to the Urban Design Review Panel who offered their unanimous support in solving the challenges of inner city development on a small parcel. The specific opportunities identified by the UDRP were integrated into the final design.

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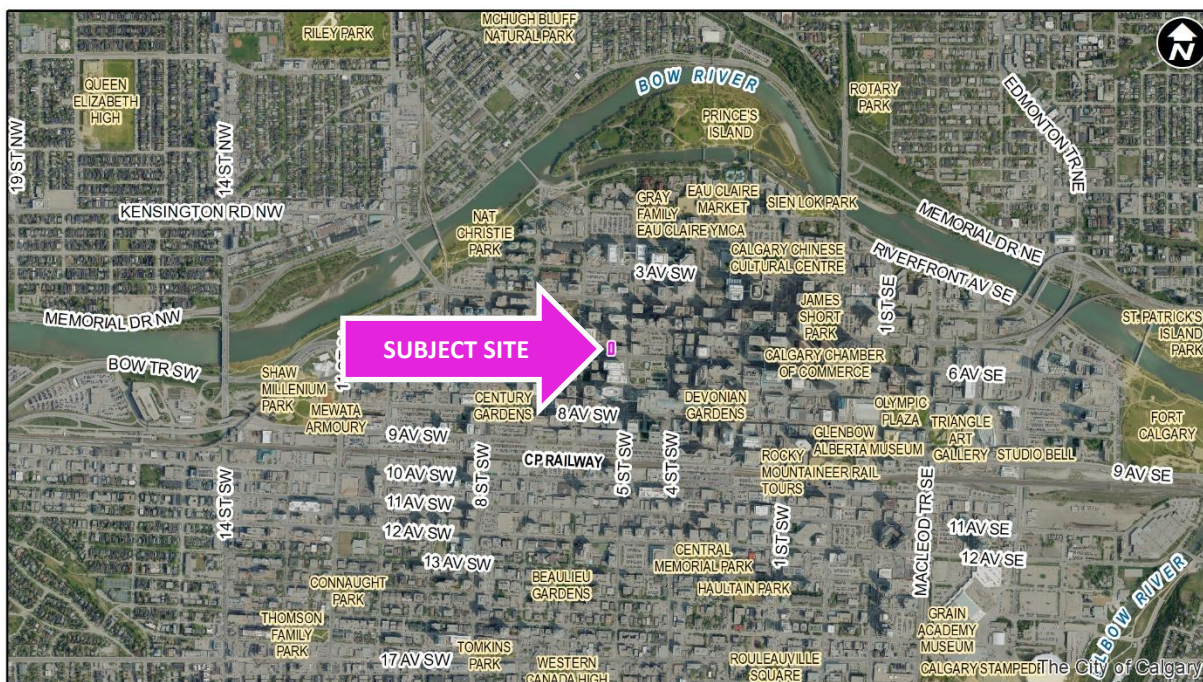
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Location Maps



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Site Context

The subject site is a small mid-block parcel, 39 metres long by 15.2 metres wide, is located near the west end of the Downtown Business District surrounded largely by office and surface parking lot development (Calgary Courts, CDI College, Manulife and adjacent Pentex building). The 4 Street SW and 7 Street SW LRT platforms are located within 10 minutes walking distance, to the southeast and southwest respectively. The subject site is currently a modest, 2 storey commercial building constructed on the site in 1965.

The applicant made attempts to acquire and incorporate the property immediately west of the subject site, currently occupied by a parking lot. However, the neighbouring western parcel is approved as parking for the uses within the Bradie Building.

The subject parcel is adjacent to the +15 Sky Walk network running east/west along the lane and takes advantage of access to the greater system to the north, east and west via a lane link connection.

While situated on a small parcel, this hotel is designed for the smaller, boutique-style market in the west end of the Downtown Business District, which is served currently by only 2 hotels in the area (Sandman Hotel and Regency Suites Hotel).

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INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Application Review

In keeping with Administration's standard practices, the application was circulated to internal and external stakeholders and a large notice posting was placed on the site. Given the amount of pre-application consultation and pre-review conducted, the first Detailed Team Review, issued to the applicant on 2019 November 27, concentrated on technical details related to the valet method/protocol for automobile parking and waste and recycling configuration.

City Wide Urban Design

The proposal was reviewed by the City Wide Urban Design team throughout the CPAG review process. Having gone to the UDRP prior to development permit application submittal, the City Wide team supported the proposed retail at-grade on 6 Avenue SW, noting additional opportunities to add wayfinding to the +15 Sky Walk level and use of quality unit pavers for the internal driveway/porte cochere.

Urban Design Review Panel

Considerable communication and engagement took place between the applicant and Administration dating back to mid-2018 including a review by the Urban Design Review Panel (UDRP) as a pre-application referral in July 2019 (Attachment 4). The UDRP gave the proposal high regard and did not identify any missed opportunities in their recommendations. The recommendations of the UDRP and CPAG were communicated to the applicant and were embodied in the development permit application which was submitted on 2019 October 23. The proposal submitted to the Panel was effectively 90 per cent development permit level design. As such, the UDRP recognized the approach to designing a structure constrained by the small parcel area, building footprint and access to public roadways and overall endorsed the design with only minor comments regarding finishes and way-finding.

To the extent possible, these opportunities were rolled into the final design forming this recommendation. Calgary Roads Department is reluctant to accept special materials and finishes within the public right-of-way. However, this does not preclude installation of special materials within the site as repair and replacement are borne by the developer, not Calgary Roads.

Site and Building Design

The design of the hotel structure is directly related to the constraints of a parcel 15.2 metres wide by 39.6 metres deep, bounded on the east side by the Pentex office building built to zero property line, and a new right turn-in only ingress on 6 Avenue SW.

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Concept and Form

In response to the smaller and narrow site, 15.2 metres wide by 39.62 metres deep, the design takes a distinct approach to address massing, organization and exterior expression. A 16-storey vertical extrusion of the build-to-line (setbacks established by bylaw) frames the building. Pedestrian and vehicular access challenges are met through an arcaded porte cochere accessed via a right turn only driveway on 6 Avenue SW.

Framed on the east elevation by the existing Pentex office building set at its west property line, the east elevation has no unprotected or protected openings. As such, material clarity and expression focused on the east, west and north elevations of the building, allowing for unprotected openings on these 3 sides of the building. Attention is drawn to the west elevation of the building's porte cochere which provides protective cover for pedestrians and automobiles accessing the site.

With a gross floor area of 8,993 square metres, the proposal equates to a floor area ratio (FAR) of 16.67 through bonusing.

Public Realm

The uniqueness of the narrow lot frontage provides drives options for pedestrian accessibility. Set at the 2.34 metre pedestrian way setback, the opportunity for an extension in width of the public sidewalk on 6 Avenue SW was taken. The protected porte cochere is flush with the hotel pedestrian access and delineated through color contrasting surface paving.

The drop-off area for vehicles allows for vehicular cuing without sacrificing pedestrian flow to the hotel entrance and lobby. From the hotel lobby, visitors/guests have access to the +15 bridge connection and the +15 system via a feature stairway and public shuttle elevator.

Floor Plans

Parkade – Level 2

A 2 storey parkade, accessed from the lane on the north side of the building, is capable of parking 33 cars through a 3-high mechanized vehicle stacker. All ingress and egress to the parkade is by hotel valet service only.

Housekeeping/Mechanical – Level 1

Laundry services, HVAC and mechanical installations form the uses within this partial level of the sub-grade components.

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Ground Floor

The 6 Avenue SW frontage is framed by a modest commercial retail unit with direct access to the Avenue. The hotel lobby occupies the majority of the ground floor with twin elevator access to the guest rooms, a separate shuttle elevator accessing the +15 level as well as feature stairs. All back-of-house activity occupy the remainder of the ground floor accessed from the lane.

Second Floor - +15 Level

Administrative offices, food preparation and service (continental style), conference room, elevators, restrooms and stair/elevator access to the +15 connection form the uses on the second floor. In consideration of the challenges of a smaller site and the benefits to the public as well as guests, Administration supports variances to the standard stairwell width as well as +15 connection width to accommodate the proposal.

Typical Guest Room Floors – 3 through 14

These floors are arranged as queen and king size suites (3 and 9 respectively) with elevator core, stairwell, and storage forming the predominant uses along the east side of the building with no openings on this elevation.

Level 15

The last guest floor is arranged as executive office and conference space as well as 7 executive suites. As in floors 3 through 14, elevator core, stairwells and storage form the uses on the east side of the building with no opening on this elevation.

Level 16

The last storey of the building contains a gym, conference rooms and mechanical equipment.

Building Materiality

The ground floor and second floor provide amenities and street level retail that activates the façade of the building along 6 Avenue SW. The building face along the Avenue is designed with a faceted finish. The vertical facet element is intended to frame the upper floors of the building as well as the porte-cochere to reinforce the character of the pedestrian experience.

Sustainability and durability strategies were employed in choosing building envelope and finishing materials. Faceted glass store front materials frame the first 2 floors facing 6 Avenue and wrap around onto the porte cochere capped by a faceted metal soffit.

Insulated glass unit and metal panel spandrel are the dominant finish materials for the building envelope with metal clad rain-screen and metal screen outboard metal clad rainscreen. The building is capped off by a faceted metal soffit and flat roof, enclosing and concealing the mechanical units and finished in vision glass for the gym and conference facilities.

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Shadow Study

A Shadow Study accompanied the application and concludes that while the 16-storey building is modest in terms of surrounding development, it does receive generous access to sunlight, primarily to the south and west facing façade. Shadows cast by this proposal do not intrude on any public parks.

Wind Study

A Pedestrian Wind Assessment also accompanied the application and concentrated on pedestrian areas of interest including public sidewalks, building entrances and an outdoor terrace on level 16. Surrounded by larger tower development and designed with inset entrances on 6 Avenue SW and the arcaded porte cochere, the study concludes that no uncomfortable or unsafe winds are expected for users sitting or standing associated with this design.

Landscaping

Opportunities to provide landscaping or street tree(s) along the 6 Avenue frontage do not exist given the presence of utilities. The narrow parcel frontage along 6 Avenue is further diminished by the right-turn-only driveway entrance to the development. The lack of landscaping opportunities is off-set by the widened pedestrian realm along the Avenue frontage.

Moveable planters will be used along the west property line to screen the adjoining surface parking lot to the west and provide visual interest.

Utilities and Servicing

Public water, sanitary and storm sewer mains existing within the adjacent public rights-of-way for development servicing purposes.

Environmental

A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment was conducted as part of the application and revealed no evidence of actual environmental contamination associated with the site as a result of on-site or adjacent land uses.

Transportation

The subject site is well serviced by transit with both the 6 Street West and 3 Street W LRT platforms being within easy walking distance. Several bus routes traversing 6 Avenue SW, 5 Avenue SW and 5 Street SW are also available. Providing a lane connection to the existing +15 Skywalk System will enable pedestrian, accessible ingress and egress to the greater +15 system to the west and the downtown core.

In pursuit of a parking relaxation for the development, the applicant commissioned a Parking Study to support the proposal for a reduction in on-site parking accommodations. Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 requires 1 parking stall per 2.5 guest rooms (64 in this case). Given options

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including taxi, limousine, bus and shuttle bus service and the proposal valet parking solution, the 27 parking stall reduction was deemed acceptable.

In accordance with LUB 1P2007, hotels are not required to provide class 1 or class 2 bicycle parking.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

There was no applicant-led formal community outreach undertaken. During the preliminary review of the proposal, the applicant did approach the adjacent ownership regarding interest in acquiring additional property, however there was no interest. No public meetings were held by the applicant or attended by Administration.

In keeping with Administration's standard practices, this application was circulated to external stakeholders and notice posted on-site and advertised online.

Administration received a letter in support of the application from the Beltline Neighbourhoods Association citing the project's compliance with the Land Use Bylaw and policy expectations. Administration received no letters from the public in opposition or support to the application. The decision made by Calgary Planning Commission (CPC) will be advertised in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act* and is subject to appeal.

Strategic Alignment

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (2014)

The recommendation by Administration in this report has considered and is aligned with the policy direction of [South Saskatchewan Regional Plan](#) (SSRP), which directs population growth in the region to Cities and Towns and promotes efficient use of land.

Interim Growth Plan (2018)

The recommendation aligns with the policy direction of the [Interim Growth Plan](#). The proposed development builds on the principles of the *Interim Growth Plan* by means of promoting efficient use of land, regional infrastructure, and establishing strong, sustainable communities.

Municipal Development Plan (Statutory – 2009)

The subject site is located in the Activity Centres – Centre City and on one of the major downtown roadways. Administration's recommendation aligns with the [Municipal Development Plan](#) (MDP), specifically supporting the Centre City as the business and cultural heart of The City of Calgary.

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Centre City Plan (Non-statutory – 2007)

Administration’s recommendation aligns with the vision and policies of the [Centre City Plan](#). Specifically, the principle of ensuring the Centre City remains and grows in reputation as a location of choice for business. The Plan recognizes the Centre City is a business centre of national and global importance. The underlying strength of the Centre City is the intense concentration of the energy sector and the business and financial services that support it. Calgary’s importance is only expected to grow over time. In order to realize this potential, the Centre City must provide the necessary environment, services and amenities to ensure that the Centre City remains a location of choice for both small and big businesses operating on the local, national and international stage.

Calgary Downtown Retail District Strategy (Non-Statutory – 2009)

Administration’s recommendation also aligns with the goal and objectives of the [Calgary Downtown Retail District Strategy](#). Downtown Calgary has a robust and varied audience. This includes residents of Downtown as well as the surrounding and greater Calgary area; Downtown and Beltline office workers; and tourists visiting from Alberta, other provinces, and abroad. Each group is attracted to Downtown for different reasons.

Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 (Statutory – 2007)

The subject parcel is designated Commercial Residential District (CR-20-C20/R20), appropriately suited for a hotel use. The proposed FAR for the development is 16.67 as identified in the review below.

Bylaw Relaxations		
Regulation	Standard	Provided
1310(a) maximum FAR is 3.0 allowed as of right		
8.0 On-Site Pedestrian Amenities	(a) at grade pedestrian circulation – public sidewalk setback area where: (i) the portion of a parcel adjacent to a street must be a hard surface landscaped area and: (B) where it is not part of an arcade, must not contain structural elements of a building between grade and the bottom of the storey above for a minimum depth of 2.2 metres;	Plans indicate a 2.134m (assumed) depth. It should be noted the upper portions of the building cantilever into the future ROW. No relaxation required above 9.0 metres
	(c) +15 Skywalk System provisions where: (i) +15 Skywalk System elements for potential connection to the +15 Skywalk System on the parcel and to adjoining parcels:	Plans indicate a 2.37m hall width. RELAXATION AGREED TO BY CALGARY ROADS AND PLANNING IN CONSIDERATION OF SMALL SITE DEVELOPMENT

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	(A) +15 Skywalk System walkway with an unobstructed width of 4.5 metres oriented in a manner that provides the greatest opportunity for connection to, and extension of, the +15 Skywalk System, as shown on a plan approved by the Development Authority;	Plans indicate a 3.5 width. RELAXATION SUPPORTED BY CALGARY ROADS AND PLANNING IN CONSIDERATION OF SMALL SITE DEVELOPMENT
	(C) vertical movement opportunities between grade and the second storey within a building, which must include: (II) either a pair of escalators or a staircase with a minimum unobstructed width of 2.0 metres; and	Plans indicate a 1.50m stair width. RELAXATION SUPPORTED BY CALGARY ROADS AND PLANNING IN CONSIDERATION OF SMALL SITE DEVELOPMENT
4.0 FAR achieved.		
8.22 Indoor Public Hotel Space	Conference facility ratio 1:18 Indoor public hotel space ratio 1:10	Conference facility on level 2 (220.9sq m at 1:18) Indoor public space on level 1 (140.7sq m) Public space on level 2 (74 sq m at 1:10)
8.0 FAR achieved		
8.23 +15 Skywalk System Bridge	Maximum 1.0 for each +15 bridge	
0.67 FAR achieved		
8.24 +Skywalk System Feature Access	(c) minimum tread widths of: (i) 0.8m for an escalator; or (ii) 2.0m for a stair;	Plans indicate a 1.50m stair width. RELAXATION SUPPORTED BY CALGARY ROADS AND PLANNING IN CONSIDERATION OF SMALL SITE DEVELOPMENT
	(d) a location directly visible and accessible from the public sidewalk;	Plans indicate an elevator that might not be visible from the public sidewalk. +15 signage on 6 Avenue for wayfinding required.
1.0 FAR achieved		
Plans indicate a 16.67 total FAR inclusive of relaxations.		

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Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

This proposed development will provide additional hotel room offerings in and guest services for visitors to the Downtown Business and Retail District, and the city at large.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget

There are no known impacts to the current and future operating budgets.

Current and Future Capital Budget

This proposal amendment does not trigger capital infrastructure investment.

Risk Assessment

There are no significant risks to the City of Calgary associated with this proposal.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

Administration finds the development will be a positive addition to The City's downtown supply of hotel guest services for business and pleasure travellers. As such, subject to the conditions of approval listed herein and considering the relaxations noted, Administration considers this application in alignment with relevant statutory and non-statutory planning policy contained in the *Municipal Development Plan, Centre City Plan, Calgary Downtown Retail Strategy* and Land Use Bylaw 1P2007.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Development Permit Plans
2. Conditions of Approval
3. Applicant's Submission
4. Urban Design Panel Review Comments