

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Date	February 5, 2020	
Time	1:00	
Panel Members	Present Chris Hardwicke (Co-Chair) Ryan Agrey Michael Sydenham	Distribution Chad Russill (Chair) Terry Klassen Ben Bailey Colin Friesen Beverly Sandalack Glen Pardoe Jack Vanstone Gary Mundy
Advisor	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number	PE2020-00130	
Municipal address	221 14 St NW	
Community	Hillhurst	
Project description	Commercial Development	
Review	first	
File Manager	Matt Rockley	
City Wide Urban Design	Lothar Wiwjorra	
Applicant	Riddell Kurczaba Architecture	

Summary

After presentation and review of this application, the Panel finds the design of this project to be in general alignment with the community and City's urban design principles. The Panel understands this is a preliminary design and appreciates the effort undertaken to respond to the site restrictions and community reaction. It was identified that the Area Redevelopment Plan is under revision and the Panel recommends that the applicant continues coordination efforts with the community and City to best understand and align with these concurrent changes.

The Panel is generally supportive of the project application as the size and mixed-use will provide a positive precedent for future development. The street side offers positive urban design elements with a wide sidewalk and enhanced landscaping that continues across the adjacent property and wraps the 2nd Avenue corner. With below-grade parking, the project prioritizes the walkable realm and the Panel supports this approach. The quality of the laneway and how it interfaces with the at-grade residential units is of primary concern and further development is recommended to ensure a safe and comfortable environment for the residents.

The panel supports the proposed encroachments within the 5.182m bylawed setback on 14th Street, as it enhances the public realm, achieving the vision of the Urban Boulevard classification, while still enabling below-grade parking and an at grade floor height, allowing for greater accessibility into the retail units.

Applicant Response

2/7/2020

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Urban Design Element	
<p>Creativity <i>Encourage innovation; model best practices</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall project approach as it relates to original ideas or innovation 	
UDRP Commentary	In general, the project directly responds to the site restrictions with a few unique features including a rooftop amenity space and laneway residential units. The panel recommends further refinement of the massing and these unique features to ensure they are contextually successful.
Applicant Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The material color at residences on the lane uses a brick red panel expression to emphasize the distinctive nature of these unit from other uses. The street side is mostly glass but is accented with semi-gloss white porcelain and white marble to create a contemporary clean look Lane residential units have defined entries with individual lighting
<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 	
UDRP Commentary	In general, the massing responds well with the context stepping back and setting an acceptable height. The horizontal 'box' across the top appears out of place with the vernacular of Kensington, further refinement is recommended. Shade studies were not presented and should be developed for further reviews.
Applicant Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The horizontal box on the 7th floor was punctuated with a depression mid-way Shadow studies were updated to reflect actual design
<p>Human Scale <i>Defines street edges, ensures height and mass respect context; pay attention to scale</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Massing contribution to public realm at grade 	
UDRP Commentary	The widened sidewalk and stepped massing present a street-friendly façade and sets a positive precedent for 14 th Street. A double-storey 'townhouse' was recommended for the rear residential units to better separate them from the lane.
Applicant Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rear units have greater ceiling height of 4.5 meters but this cannot achieve two floors or a mezzanine due to the 26 meter height constraint
<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 	
UDRP Commentary	Setting the precedent for a residential 'mews' in the laneway is an interesting idea but the Panel is uncomfortable with the current design. Further development of the residential units at grade and how they interface with the laneway is required to address the safety and comfort concerns.
Applicant Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lane way units added courtyards with a planter in each. The courtyard wall is solid to 5ft height to provide visual and functional privacy.
<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 	
UDRP Commentary	The panel notes that the street landscaping in front of the building will make a positive contribution to the street. It is recommended to continue the tree line and landscaping to the north site with a consistent quality wrapping the corner down 2 nd Ave. Accessible approaches are recommended including tactile and visual cues. The primary concern is with the laneway residential units and how residents connect through the building on the ground floor. Further refinement is recommended to provide clear and safe connections.
Applicant Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An additional tree was added north of the site as part of offsite improvements as well as 5 trees on 2nd avenue. The door of residents on the main floor was removed at the interior corridor to avoid conflict with the retail usage of this corridor per bylaw requirements. The applicant has asked for flexibility to do both as needed to allow the residents to connect to internal amenities.
<p>Animation <i>Incorporate active uses; pay attention to details; add colour, wit and fun</i></p>	

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

	<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	The design animates the street with a stepped façade, residential and retail at-grade and enhanced streetscape solutions. Understanding that the design is in the preliminary stages, the Panel is hopeful that further refinement of the materials and massing aligns with other exemplary Kensington buildings.
Applicant Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design incorporates significant push and pull of the façade with varying solutions to balconies and the expressive roof top amenity will complete the expression resulting in a strong positive presence on 14th street and adding to the redevelopment character of the area.
<p>Accessibility <i>Ensure clear and simple access for all types of users</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier free design • Entry definition, legibility, and natural wayfinding 	
UDRP Commentary	The widened sidewalk and at-grade units provides opportunity for accessible solutions. Visual and tactile cues are recommended. The landscaped strips in front of the retail units may impede walkability and not recommended. Further entry definition is recommended for the at-grade retail and residential units applying canopy and lighting solutions.
Applicant Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At grade retail entries were depressed to emphasize rhythm at the pedestrian interface. • Soft landscaping was reduced as suggested to enhance pedestrian flow while still defining space for seating areas as needed by the retail tenants. • Varying textures and colors of cement paving are used to enhance the tactile expression • Downward strip lighting has been added to the bulkhead above the retail store windows to wash the sidewalk and interior displays with light.
<p>Diversity <i>Promote designs accommodating a broad range of users and uses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail street variety, at-grade areas, transparency into spaces • Corner treatments and project porosity 	
UDRP Commentary	The mixed-use nature of the project and opportunities for smaller retail units is appreciated. The mix of residential units appear to be limited to 1 and 2-bedrooms. The panel recommends live-work units at-grade from the lane to provide further possibilities for destination-type workspaces.
Applicant Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant agrees that live work should be endorsed as acceptable and desirable for these units, so that the path to approval for individual applicants is straightforward as they seek to maximize the use of this location.
<p>Flexibility <i>Develop planning and building concepts which allow adaptation to future uses, new technologies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project approach relating to market and/or context changes 	
UDRP Commentary	The panel appreciates the smaller ground floor retail units with individual entrances to promote future space flexibility. Further thought is recommended in regard to the laneway residential units to ensure they are resilient to market and contextual changes. See comment above about potential live-work units.
Applicant Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements have been made in this design is to formalize the entry to the units from the lane. This will activate the lane space.
<p>Safety <i>Achieve a sense of comfort and create places that provide security at all times</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and security • Night time design 	
UDRP Commentary	The panel identified several safety issues regarding the laneway residential units. It was recommended to push the rear north entrance to the building edge to prevent hidden exterior space. The exterior lighting design in the alley will be critical to provide a safe and comfortable environment for the laneway residential units. Fencing and landscape solutions need to be improved to provide a comfortable buffer between the at-grade residential units and laneway.
Applicant Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two entries to the retail from the lane have been adjusted to minimize hidden alcoves while providing overhead protection. They are connected directly to the lane with dedicated pedestrian areas. • The retail entries at the lane will be well lit with direction down lighting that does not spill over to residents across the lane. The activation of the lane by multiple types of users will mitigate loitering challenges.

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

<p>Orientation <i>Provide clear and consistent directional clues for urban navigation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance natural views and vistas 	
UDRP Commentary	The rooftop amenity space will provide excellent views for the residents. The panel recommends a consistent landscape approach wrapping the block to provide direction clues towards the laneway.
Applicant Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A primary objective of the offsite improvements is to enhance the sidewalk frontage north of the site. The rear entries provide public access to retail from the 10 guest / retail parking stalls in the lane
<p>Sustainability <i>Be aware of lifecycle costs; incorporate sustainable practices and materials</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site/solar orientation and passive heating/cooling Material selection and sustainable products 	
UDRP Commentary	The Panel anticipates the project to develop a sustainable approach through further design development
Applicant Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project will meet current stringent energy codes that require full energy modeling and rationalizing a high performance envelop. Each unit will have it's own ERV promoting as needed usage of energy with independent fresh air to respond to covid concerns. Alexa integrated building wide systems will save 25% - 30% in energy savings by each units systems to respond intelligently to daily occupancy cycles.
<p>Durability <i>Incorporate long-lasting materials and details that will provide a legacy rather than a liability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of low maintenance materials and/or sustainable products Project detailed to avoid maintenance issues 	
UDRP Commentary	The Panel understands this is a preliminary application and anticipates the project to incorporate durable materials and maintenance solutions through further design development
Applicant Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Durable materials are integrated at the buildingbase. Windowsills are raised with precast concrete base board separating the glass, porcelain and marble above from abuse from snow removal etc Architectural panels, above grade will have a long-life finish. The application identifies 3 colors of cement board or other equivalent panel system. The commitment is to provide a panel system with long life expectation that achieves a clean contemporary expression