

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Applicant's Response in Blue

Date	August 19, 2020	
Time	1:00	
Panel Members	Present Chris Hardwicke (Co-Chair) Michael Sydenham Beverly Sandalack Ryan Agrey	Distribution Chad Russill (Chair) Terry Klassen Ben Bailey Colin Friesen Glen Pardoe Jeff Lyness Gary Mundy Jack Vanstone Noorullah Hussain Zada
Advisor	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number	DP2020-4025	
Municipal address	924 Na'a Dr SW	
Community	Medicine Hill	
Project description	Mixed use Cell H	
Review	first	
File Manager	Brian Smith	
City Wide Urban Design	Lothar Wiwjorra	
Applicant	B+A Planning Group	

*Based on the applicant's response to the Panel's comments, the Chief Urban Designer will determine if further review will include the Panel or be completed internally only by City Wide Urban Design.

Summary

The proposed project is located on an important section of Na'a Drive which will be the future heart of Medicine Hill. Overall, the panel felt that this is a positive project that will contribute to the site with an appropriate building form and use. The proposal includes active retail frontage along Na'a Drive with housing above. The panel felt the significant aspects of the application that could be improved include:

- The proposed building is basically a copy of the approved project across the street. The panel felt that this project could keep the same spirit but introduce new materials and simplify the architectural expression. [In order to address the comment, subtle changes have been made to material locations and colours to provide individuality to the buildings without compromising the overall look and feel of the project.](#)
- The plaza is located as a terminus to the staircase but doesn't provide flexible space for future programming. Much of the plaza is taken up by raised planters and private café spaces. [The plaza has been amended removing some and relocating other raised planters to make the space more flexible for future programming.](#)
- Although the project has a strong active frontage along the street the massing of the building is formidable. The panel felt that the mass could be pulled back above the first storey or set back at upper levels to help create a human-scaled street. [The developer does not want to lose GLA/GFA nor cantilever the building towards the north and compromise additional land area. The need to setback upper floors was not an issue when Block I was approved. The look and feel of the streetscape would look out of place if one side has flush buildings and the other has step backs. Typically, buildings step back after a street wall of about 16-20m which is close to the total height of our development. If we were proposing additional storey, a setback would be incorporated.](#)

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	Although the project represents best practice in urban design by defining a strong street edge with active frontage, the panel felt that the design was a mirror image of the building across the street. A creative solution would push the design farther and create a conversation across the street rather than a copy.
Applicant Response	Subtle changes have been made to material locations and colours to provide more individuality to the buildings while maintaining the desired streetscape feel.
<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	The project defines a strong street edge, but the height is imposing on the public sidewalks. The panel recommends stepping back the front façade at upper levels to minimize the effect of the overbearing façade.
Applicant Response	There is sufficient sidewalk width, combined with the inclusion of canopies negate the need for a setback of upper floors. The main floor ceiling height will be less than that found on the south side of Na'a Drive making the main floor retail façade less intimidating. Main floor heights on the south side of the street were raised in order to accommodate two levels of parkade. This is not a requirement on the north side. Furthermore, the developer does not want to lose GLA/GFA nor cantilever the building towards the north and compromise additional land area. The look and feel of the streetscape would look out of place if one side has flush buildings and the other has step backs. Typically, buildings step back after a street wall of about 16-20m which is close to the total height of our development.
<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	Again, the project presents a strong street edge. It is important to include canopies along the front façade and if possible, add street trees to the boulevard.
Applicant Response	Street trees and canopies are proposed.
<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	The sidewalk although generously wide lacks street trees. The paving pattern is decorative rather than designed to assist in wayfinding. The panel felt that the pattern did not have to extend the treatment that is across the street, particularly in the plaza area. The plaza paving is overly complicated. For example, the bike racks following the cross pattern in the paving. The raised planters provide a separation from the café spaces but limit flexibility in programming.
Applicant Response	Street trees and their line assignments were allocated by the City during the tentative plan stage. Slight modifications to tree locations have been made to open view lines to residential lobbies. Additional shrubs and plantings will be present along patio seating areas as well as within the central plaza. Tree planting is also limited by the location of the required future bus shelter that will be located near the plaza between both buildings.
<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	Connections beyond the site were not described in the package. It is important to provide connections to regional pathway.
Applicant Response	Despite being located outside of our development area, we provided a plan on page 6 of the UDRP submission package that show pedestrian and trail circulation in and around the site.

<p>Animation <i>Incorporate active uses; pay attention to details; add colour, wit and fun</i></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 	
UDRP Commentary	The main entrances to the building are not expressed through architectural means or landscape patterns. The entrances should be emphasized through colour, material, canopies and or paving treatments. Overall, the panel felt that the project was overly complicated architecturally and could be edited and refreshed with a simpler material palette and elevations. It is important that the project does not look like a copy of the one across the street but has its own identity and expression.
Applicant Response	The entrance will have a canopy and a higher quality material to make the entrance more distinct.
<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	Please ensure that the rear plaza is accessible. It was not obvious in the drawing package.
Applicant Response	Although it may have not come through well with the drawing package, the intent is for customers to be funneled through to the retail shops along Na'a Drive via the plaza and accessible to all.
<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 project includes some diversity with retail at grade and some variety of unit sizes.
Applicant Response	Agreed.
<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 project is typical of a mixed-use midrise building from a flexibility point of view.
Applicant Response	Agreed.
<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	There should be a pedestrian cross walk on SE side of the project.
Applicant Response	At the right-in driveway access there is a sidewalk that crosses the drive aisle for pedestrian use.
<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	See main entrance comment above. The visual appearance of the project from the TransCanada Highway is important. Landscaping and fencing should be carefully considered.
Applicant Response	Care has been taken to ensure that the north elevation facing the Trans-Canada Highway, including the rear of the retail units, have been finished and articulated to create a positive impression for passing motorists and potential clients. Perspectives using geodetic grades have been provided showing the view from various points along the highway. Based on these views, we do not feel that fencing or trees are required. The trees would ultimately be blocked from view by future development on the balance of the parcel.
<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	Insufficient information was provided to inform comments.
Applicant Response	Durable, long lasting and locally sourced materials have been chosen to illustrate the high quality of development.
<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 felt that there were too many materials that could compromise the building when replaced over time. A limited pallet would simplify repairs.

Applicant Response	Duly noted. The elevations are being simplified but number of materials is the same as previous submission. There are slightly fewer materials than on the buildings across the street.
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