

Urban Design Review Panel (DP2020-7038)

comments

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Date	January 20, 2021	
Time	3:00	
Panel Members	Present Chad Russill (Chair) Anna Lawrence Jeff Lyness Katherine Robinson Michael Sydenham	Distribution Chris Hardwicke (Co-Chair) Ben Bailey Gary Mundy Glen Pardoe Beverly Sandalack Jack Vanstone Noorullah Hussain Zada
Advisor	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number	DP2020-7038	
Municipal address	1302 34 St SE	
Community	Albert Park	
Project description	New: Multi-Residential Development (2 buildings), Accessory Residential Building (storage building)	
Review	first	
File Manager	Christine Leung	
City Wide Urban Design	Jihad Bitar	
Applicant	Formed Alliance Architecture Studio	

*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 application consists of two residential building forms: four storeys fronting 12th Avenue and three storeys fronting 34th Street. Collectively this represents 16 units total (8 units above grade + 8 micro units below grade). The design suitably challenges expectations of traditional design layouts through an increased density and unique configuration. The Panel views this proposed application to be attractive and it appropriately addresses most areas relating to the elements of urban design.

Project characteristics of the greatest concern, which are reinforced by the detailed comments that follow, include:

- A rhetorical base question: How much density can be achieved from the parcel before it sacrifices too much of the living quality? Panel consensus suggests that the proposed application will fit well into the market and is anticipated to provide great diversity for future residents.
- Maximizing the ability for natural light to be brought into the basement units should be further pursued.
- The waste and recycling strategy requires further clarification and resolution with the City of Calgary. Innovative methods, such as Molok, appear to show good potential with this endeavour. This aspect is more critical for the subject application than usual, due to the proposed site density and constraints, and any lack of resolution will have detrimental effects.

Applicant Response

See comments in the table below provided by the applicant on February 1, 2021.

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 application was reviewed as a creative and unique solution that increases density within a contextually appropriate building form. This density (akin to M-C1) proposes unique floor plans and access, with limited but appropriate amenity areas to support the design.
Applicant Response	<i>Thank you for the supportive input.</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	<p>The Panel supports the site design placing significant massing along 12th Avenue and orientation to street edges. The additional setback along 12th Street is an appropriate and well-tuned gesture to the adjacent property.</p> <p>No shading concerns are present with the proposed design.</p> <p>The waste and recycling strategy requires further clarification and resolution with the City of Calgary. Innovative methods, such as the presented Molok, appear to show good potential with this endeavour as they reduce the amount of site area required to be dedicated to waste and recycling compared with more traditional means. This aspect is more critical for the subject application than usual, due to the proposed site density and constraints, and any lack of resolution will have detrimental effects.</p>
Applicant Response	<i>We are arranging a meeting with waste and recycling experts to work through this aspect of the design. We are confident that we will reach a resolution that respects the layout of the site and addresses waste and recycling requirements in the development.</i>
Animation <i>Incorporate active uses; pay attention to details; add colour, wit and fun</i> <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>The proposed design generally meets expectations. This site will significantly activate the pedestrian realm.</p> <p>Further consideration should be given to the East elevation of Building A. While the Panel appreciates the purity of design in terms of the architectural form, the result of this elevation is dark and less inspiring than the rest of the project. Applicant to review this elevation for greater interest and enhancement to the streetscape.</p> <p>The mews has been described by the applicant as an element similar to an internal street – consider how the ground floor unit layouts might be modified to support activation of this internal street.</p>
Applicant Response	<i>The east elevation of building A will be re-considered to reflect a more animated façade design as per the above comments. Additional efforts will also be made to activate the mews/internal street area through the centre of the proposed development.</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	Though the project proposes an increased mass regarding the context, it is deemed appropriate by the Panel. Additional considerations should be given to the unit addressing, lighting approach, and details on the at-grade units as the project design advances.
Applicant Response	<i>Further consideration will be given to addressing, lighting and at-grade unit entries in an effort to emphasize human scale inhabitation and navigation of the site.</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	Surface parking off the lane is concealed by the micro unit storage units in an effective manner. This strategy also creates an effective backdrop for the outdoor amenity and BBQ area.

	It was noted that a landscape plan was not supplied and information available was limited at time of review. Applicant to consider greater involvement to maximize the usability and visual impact of the outdoor spaces and promote long term success of this area. Applicant is encouraged to engage a Professional Landscape Architect to help provide programming and consistency for the outdoor spaces and to create a street front.
Applicant Response	<i>We will coordinate with various consultants to create a useable and creative space in the common amenity area through landscaping.</i>
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	Additional materials including building floor plans were supplied to the Panel during the meeting, that assisted in project understanding of Connectivity elements. The reviewed connections are well designed and thoughtful. The shared outdoor space is anticipated to be highly utilized. A landscape design responsive to this characteristic should be proposed, as planting information was limited at time of review.
Applicant Response	<i>As per the above response, we will coordinate with consultants to create a comprehensive landscape plan.</i>
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	While this building typology, with a considerable number of stairs, is not exceptional at meeting barrier free design, a limited number of units do have the ability to allow for access should residents require it. Further entry definition related to addressing and unit legibility should be pursued to improve natural wayfinding.
Applicant Response	<i>Efforts will be made to emphasize addressing elements to improve natural wayfinding for all types of users.</i>
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	The broad range of unit mixes and design exceeds Diversity expectations. Within the single residential use (appropriate to the context) the project will support a diverse user group and supports a variety of dwelling types.
Applicant Response	<i>Thank you for the supportive input.</i>
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 	
UDRP Commentary	This Urban Design Element is not considered to be applicable, most notably to the effective Diversity aspects noted above.
Applicant Response	<i>Thank you for the input.</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	Applicant to review the muse (area between Building A and B). This area is anticipated to be somewhat dark. Lighting strategy within the muse, in order to overcome the darker materials in this area, will be important to the built product.
Applicant Response	<i>Extra care will be given to the lighting strategy, particularly between Building A and B to increase safety and circulation in the area.</i>
Orientation Provide clear and consistent directional clues for urban navigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance natural views and vistas 	
UDRP Commentary	The Panel strongly supports the proposed orientation aspects of the project. Directional cues for urban navigation are clear and intentional.
Applicant Response	<i>Thank you for the supportive input.</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	<p>The proposed density, all within proximity to public transportation is inherently an appropriate response for sustainability.</p> <p>Applicant to pursue maximizing the ability for natural light to be brought into the basement (micro) units.</p> <p>While the Panel supports the applicant's attempt to maintaining the large existing trees along 34th, it does question their ability to survive the root disturbance by the development. The applicant should make every effort to ensure the trees survive. The applicant should engage Urban Forestry at the City of Calgary for a full assessment of the trees, provide a tree protection plan. It would benefit the applicant to employ a tree arborist for an independent assessment of the trees and provide a long-term impact assessment of the development on the roots of the trees.</p>
Applicant Response	<p><i>We will explore ways to maximize natural light in the basement units, although this may be challenging given the orientation of the site and the placement of the buildings on the parcel. We will also take appropriate measures to preserve the existing trees on the west edge of the site, including a tree protection plan.</i></p>
<p>Durability Incorporate long-lasting materials and details that will provide a legacy rather than a liability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of low maintenance materials and/or sustainable products • Project detailed to avoid maintenance issues 	
UDRP Commentary	<p>The proposed materials are durable and meet expectations. Applicant to pay close attention to the detailing of the Hardie Panel product and advocates for innovation to improve fine grain details throughout the project.</p>
Applicant Response	<p><i>We recognize the challenges associated with Hardie Panel product and will carefully address the detailing. We have several other projects that area also utilizing Hardie Panel, so we will have experience when it comes time to complete that stage of the proposed development.</i></p>