

March 1, 2021

City of Calgary, Municipal Building
800 Macleod Trail SE
Calgary, AB T2P 2M5

Dear Jennifer Maximattis-White,

Re: DP2020-8227 Response to UDRP Comments

Please find below our responses to the Urban Design Review Panel comments, these responses were included with our December 18th Submission, but have been adjusted to be resubmitted with the DTR 01 response package.

URBAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Summary

This proposed redevelopment, The Hive in Sunnyside, is a mid-rise residential building for lots #219-231 (inclusive) on 9A Street NW. The site location interfaces directly with the CTrain and the to be developed Bow to Bluff public realm improvement strategy. The Panel views the proposed building design as generally positive with an appropriate height and scale for the area. Many quality characteristics have been developed, including a stepped floor plate that responds well to context, and the project shows potential for further improvement to the Sunnyside area vibrancy. Massing, as well as the landscaping approach and public realm interface are identified as aspects for additional analysis by the applicant.

Though reviewed in the pre-application format, the following primary elements are put forward for greater consideration as the project develops and support the rated urban design elements to follow:

- The building mass is not articulated or delineated vertically on the primary building facades and represents a continuous floor plate from grade to the upper floor. The mass does not consider a podium or break the scale of the façade in a meaningful manner.

Applicant Response:

As discussed at the February 9 & 17th meetings with CPAG members, there is no provision for setbacks in the approved land-use. Additionally, the height and depth of any theoretical setbacks are not stipulated in the ARP. The building as proposed is setback from all property lines and is stepped significantly on the east & west faces. We have provided additional comparison diagrams for City review showing the proposed massing with a theoretical mass built to the property line.

A lot of thought and consideration went into the development of the building massing along 9A street and the lane. In order to articulate the east façade along 9A street and move with the cadence of the street, the building steps back five times. This opens up the opportunity for generous landscaping between the at-grade patios and the sidewalk, and also leads to a generous at-grade plaza in front of the crosswalk. Because Pixel has a podium that abuts the property line along 9A, there is a perceived vertical step back. Our proposed tower is aligned with the stepped back Pixel tower along 9A, but instead of providing a podium, we have provided a landscaped and plaza area. With regards to vertical stepping, the building steps down towards the south, providing a rooftop amenity space on L9.



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Additional consideration has been given to the north and south elevations including the addition of additional windows and variety in cladding treatments.

- Street oriented units, complete with unit plans that respond accordingly, for the main floor units facing 9A Street are highly recommended. The Panel appreciates that in certain instances, these entries are not fully utilized, but would submit these precedents are not designed adequately. The applicant outlined a focus on bicycle and pedestrian clientele, with less dependency on the automobile and therefore reduced importance on the parkade connection. Individual at-grade entries would reinforce this concept with enhanced connection to the public realm, and If designed correctly, the solution would also likely help address the massing and scale at-grade.

Applicant Response: The site plan has been modified to include at-grade access to the residential units along 9A street. As discussed with the CPAG team during a meeting on February 17, 2021 the building is to be considered “street-oriented development” with this change implemented.

- Landscaping along 9A Street NW is shown as pollinator gardens, tying back to the Bow-to-Bluff strategy. The Panel appreciates the intent to convey the same design language onto a private development across the street, however the current landscape proposal is viewed as a potential on-going maintenance concern. It is the Panel's opinion that this area is not likely to achieve a desirable landscaping outcome through the current design.

Applicant Response: This building's ownership is to be retained by the developer as the units are rental units. On-site maintenance personnel will perform necessary maintenance. It is the intent for the area to function as a self-stabilizing meadow. The perennial garden is made up of two distinct layers of ground cover and seasonal interest plants. Low maintenance grass species form the ground cover layer and have been selected for their capability to create 'mats' of planting and eliminate bare soil where weeds typically thrive. This approach is suitable for this development as it will provide consistent coverage and not require any seasonal deadheading. The seasonal interest layer is made up of a handful of flowering plants to provide height and texture variation. All perennials proposed are within a consistent palette of white and red. This will create a consistent ground cover with pops of colour. Perennial gardens are a widely used urban realm program that provide valuable pollinator habitat as well as being a vibrant addition to the urban realm. As a rental property, the owner is committed to providing long term irrigation and maintenance that will ensure the garden remains beautiful all year long. These activities include Biannual cleanups of the garden in spring and fall and season-long weeding and maintenance. Any successful planting in this area will require maintenance, regardless if it is shrubs or perennials and given the context across the street, suitable plant selection and commitment to maintenance, we feel perennial planting is suitable for this project.

Creativity Encourage innovation; model best practices Overall project approach as it relates to original ideas or innovation	
UDRP Commentary	<p>The project exemplifies creativity in a few specific areas, such as the integration of public art and/or mural into the building design as well as some notable internal programmatic aspects. These include the activity-generating Hive Lounge concept and gear walls in individual units. While these are not applicable to the urban design, they were presented and signify creative thinking.</p> <p>Related to the above, an artistic mural is indicated on the west elevation, though the south elevation is generally uninspired. While the Panel appreciates this façade may be obscured from view after the future new build on the southern parcels is complete, in the meanwhile (an undetermined amount of time), this elevation is highly visible from downtown and should be further reviewed. It is possible that this façade is left exposed for a significant period of time.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>The design of the south and north elevations has been thoughtfully reconsidered to add more visual interest and introduce more glazing while remaining within building code limits. The south elevation benefits by stepping back the mass at the centre unit; allowing more glazing and also an opportunity to introduce the wood look siding used on other elevations. The east articulation is highly visible from the south and this further adds to the visual interest. In the renderings we have also identified a potential opportunity for an additional mural along the bike access walkway.</p>
Context Optimize built form with respect to mass and spacing of buildings, placement on site, response to adjacent uses, heights and densities	
<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 commends the quality achieved through the building steps in plan. This is a strong response to the alignment of 9A and adjacent property lines, as well as the Panel supported location of the front plaza.</p> <p>The building mass is not articulated or delineated vertically on the primary building facades and represents a continuous floor plate from grade to the upper floor. The most notable contextual influence is the building to the immediate north (Pixel), where a massing difference has been employed on the lower levels. It is also noted that while the Sunnyside Pantone scheme was developed by referencing existing single-family homes along 9A Street, these properties will inevitably be redeveloped. An analysis of colour (and material contrast and/or articulation through glazing arrangements) to Pixel may be a more valid approach regarding context.</p>

Applicant Response

The materials used in Pixel are fundamentally different from the ones proposed in the Hive development. Pixel is primarily made of glass, concrete and grey metal panels while our project proposes fibre-cement panels, brick and metal panel with a wood-like pattern. We want to bring a warmth to our material palette, which is more inspired by the warmth of the materials found in the built environment of the greater community. We also believe in the importance of diversity along the streetscape, and question whether two grey towers would make for an improved street.

Animation *Incorporate active uses; pay attention to details; add colour, wit and fun*

- Building form contributes to an active pedestrian realm
- Residential units provided at-grade
- Elevations are interesting and enhance the streetscape

UDRP Commentary

While units are provided at-grade, they are not connected to the street with individual at-grade entries. By virtue of the stepped plan, these entries could be highly desirable and well utilized. The applicant outlined a focus on bicycle and pedestrian clientele, with less dependency on the automobile and therefore reduced importance on the parkade connection. Individual at-grade entries would reinforce this concept with enhanced connection to the public realm, and if designed correctly, the solution would also likely help address the massing and scale at-grade.

The angled balconies are a compelling gesture to the downtown sightlines and assist in animating the elevations.

Applicant to review the lane condition and main floor units. While verbal discussion indicated a grade difference and an intentional separation for resident comfort, this was not understood through drawings alone.

Applicant Response

At grade access to the units fronting onto 9A Street has been added. And through discussions with the CPAG team on February 17th 2021, in order to provide privacy and safety to ground-level suites, direct access from the lane will not be provided. The at-grade dwellings will be 400mm above the main floor entry and will have a notable separation from grade. We have provided sections and additional information on our plans to convey this information.

Human Scale Defines street edges, ensures height and mass respect context; pay attention to scale. Massing contribution to public realm at grade	
UDRP Commentary	<p>Refer to the above sections Context regarding building mass at-grade and Animation regarding public realm interface.</p> <p>Overall building height is appropriate, including outdoor rooftop amenity. Entry plaza is well designed and welcoming.</p>
Applicant Response	We appreciate the feedback.
Integration The conjunction of land-use, built form, landscaping and public realm design <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	<p>Landscaping along 9A Street NW requires further applicant review, including exterior patio space for the ground floor units in conjunction with the landscape buffer. Current design shows proposal for pollinator gardens, tying back to the Bow-to-Bluff strategy. This minimal landscape approach will be subject to a harsh condition of seasonal impact.</p> <p>The Panel views this area as an on-going maintenance concern that is not likely to achieve a desirable landscaping outcome. An enhanced landscape strategy should be explored. Applicant to ensure the landscape design embraces the CPTED principles.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>This building's ownership is to be retained by the developer as the units are rental units. On-site maintenance personnel will perform necessary maintenance. It is the intent for the area to function as a self-stabilizing meadow. The perennial garden is made up of two distinct layers of ground cover and seasonal interest plants. Low maintenance grass species form the ground cover layer and have been selected for their capability to create 'mats' of planting and eliminate bare soil where weeds typically thrive. This approach is suitable for this development as it will provide consistent coverage and not require any seasonal deadheading. The seasonal interest layer is made up of a handful of flowering plants to provide height and texture variation. All perennials proposed are within a consistent palette of white and red. This will create a consistent ground cover with pops of colour. Perennial gardens are a widely used urban realm program that provide valuable pollinator habitat as well as being a vibrant addition to the urban realm. As a rental property, the owner is committed to providing long term irrigation and maintenance that will ensure the garden remains beautiful all year long. These activities include Biannual cleanups of the garden in spring and fall and season-long weeding and maintenance. Any successful planting in this area will require maintenance, regardless if it is shrubs or perennials and given the context across the street, suitable plant selection and commitment to maintenance, we feel perennial planting is suitable for this project.</p>

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	<i>Apart from the at-grade entry potential already identified, the project achieves great connectivity with the front entry and existing crosswalk locations. Connection to the C-Train is inherent in the site location and will surely be a driving factor in the overall project success.</i>
Applicant Response	We appreciate the feedback.
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	<p><i>An internal stair was identified as creating a conflict to achieving barrier-free access; revision is anticipated. Parkade ramp design at the outer limit of slope may meet code requirements but is not perceived as being ideal for bike users. Panel recommends applicant review this area, including ramp width and grade, to improve bicyclist comfort level when accessing the parkade.</i></p> <p><i>It is noted that the entry canopy doubles as oversized resident balconies above. In the current format, there is potential conflict for people on the balcony to engage people using the main entrance. This may not be desirable in all conditions and could erode the success of the otherwise successful entry condition; applicant to further review to ensure built outcome meets design expectations. Considerations to buffer this interface, such as built-in planters or an intermediate balcony railing, to create space at the balcony/canopy edge is encouraged for an improved access condition.</i></p>
Applicant Response	<p>The internal stair has been changed to a ramp. The parkade ramp has been designed in accordance with the City of Calgary Roads and Construction Standards.</p> <p>The balcony above the entry is sufficiently separated that we do not foresee any conflict regarding the entry condition. In contrast, this will create a more dynamic and interesting condition at the entry providing overlap of activity and occupancy.</p>
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	<i>During the presentation and review, discussion of main floor active uses occurred. This included the opportunity for limited retail and/or small kiosk that would work well with the proposed Hive Lounge concept. Other considerations such as moving the bike repair station from the parkade to being more 'front and center' for a deliberate approach to spaces, active use, and the anticipated resident typology could be explored. These were presented as driving factors of the design by the developer and as such, should be further expressed through the design.</i>

Applicant Response	While we appreciate the idea of introducing retail or a kiosk in the Hive Lounge, the character of 9A street does not include any retail (the land-use does not accommodate this use for the site). Significant effort is being placed into providing the Hive lounge as a unique and flexible amenity space for the residents to use and activate the entry plaza. Please see additional detail of hive lounge on A201. Bike wash and repair functions are positioned adjacent to bike access and storage locations for practical purposes intended to foster a functional and efficient bike culture in the building and community.
Flexibility Develop planning and building concepts which allow adaptation to future uses, new technologies. Project approach relating to market and/or context changes	
UDRP Commentary	<p>A residential apartment building is not exceptional at flexibility by nature of unit separation and design, especially when void of mix-use considerations. For this project, should the approach to at-grade units and entrances facing 9A be explored, it would add flexibility for future considerations (potential live/work, etc.).</p> <p>The Panel suggests the applicant consider how the design might accommodate future development of the site to the south. A 1200mm setback at the upper levels may not be sufficient to allow for long term access to light within the 3 southernmost residential units.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>We have added at-grade access to the units fronting onto 9A Street. The at-grade dwellings will be 400mm above the main floor entry and will have a notable separation from grade. We have provided sections and additional information on our plans to convey this information.</p> <p>With respect to the 3 southernmost units, their interior layouts anticipate development to the south. The corner unit interior plans have been laid out to orient the public spaces of the unit along the east and west edges and maximize access to daylight, while the bedrooms are located along the south edge and have been provided with a generous window. The centre studio unit along the south edge has been pushed back to 800mm from the rest of the elevation in order to increase the amount of glazing allowed.</p>
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	<p>Significant CPTED concerns for through-site ped/bike access running along the south edge of the building exists in current design. This space is minimal and will require lighting and potential fencing to limit access.</p> <p>Balcony safety concerns at the main floor exist, as reiterated by the applicant. The Panel suggests further review of grade separation as well as elimination of transparent glazing with a substitute material, to improve separation of public and private space. This aspect is even more critical at balconies on lower level facing lane and adequately addressing privacy issues.</p>

Applicant Response	<p>During the panel discussion, the CPTED concern along the south edge discussed was the presence or lack thereof of a canopy along the south walkway, it was discussed that there was not an overhang, and therefore nowhere for people to gather in shelter around the corner; this was recognized as the correct way to handle the area.</p> <p>The bike access path has been thoughtfully considered with the inclusion of appropriate lighting (see electrical site lighting drawings), and identifying an additional opportunity for a mural. The bike access path is a hardscaped straight line with good visibility from both ends.</p> <p>The at-grade dwellings will be 400mm above the main floor entry and will have a notable separation from grade. We have provided sections and additional information on our plans to convey this information. The at-grade patios have been modified to include the use of a landscape block that complements the brick at the entry and hive lounge. This robust material is selected to provide a sense of safety to the occupants of at grade units and simultaneously ground the building mass.</p>
Orientation Provide clear and consistent directional clues for urban navigation Enhance natural views and vistas	
<i>UDRP Commentary</i>	<i>Project responds very well to natural views and reinforces the directional cues of urban navigation.</i>
Applicant Response	We appreciate the feedback.
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 	
<i>UDRP Commentary</i>	<i>Project location (proximity to C-Train and downtown) and densification of amenity-rich inner-city sites are intrinsic sustainable qualities. Some programming aspects, such as encouraging a reduced reliance on vehicles is also observed, though other significant sustainable practices are not prevalent nor presented in the design, beyond NECB compliance.</i>
Applicant Response	Correct.
Durability Incorporate long-lasting materials and details that will provide a legacy rather than a liability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of low maintenance materials and/or sustainable products • Project detailed to avoid maintenance issues 	
<i>UDRP Commentary</i>	<p><i>A more robust and durable landscape approach is required, to ensure design meets CPTED requirements as well fire safety requirements. Applicant should review the proposed materials and design in the outdoor amenity spaces in order to achieve consistency between proposed materials and eventual built outcome. Review Integration section above for further commentary.</i></p> <p><i>Building materials meet expectations; where utilized, faux wood (metal) is a high-quality material. Brick is noted as being implemented at the building base, which is an appropriate community response in Sunnyside, however this material is utilized in a very limited application (suspended above the front</i></p>

	<p>entry). Expanding the use of this material for a unified and durable composition at the lower level is recommended. It should also be noted that fiber cement siding is generally considered as a durable product, though is not without long-term maintenance requirements (paint). As this material is used primarily throughout the project and at 9 stories in height, materials with reduced maintenance may offer better lifecycle value.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>The landscape treatment along 9A Street will be constructed out of durable cast-in-place concrete for the ramp and stairs leading to the building's entrance. All furniture such as bike racks and benches will be securely surface mounted to the concrete paving. Site lighting such as soffit, recessed wall lights and linear step lights have been provided in several areas in addition to ambient lighting from the building, to provide sufficient light throughout the site. Fob-access gates have been provided at the north property line (pl) walkway to ensure limited access. The bike access route along the south PL will have a consistent concrete surface, ample wall lighting and no overhead canopy to ensure it does not become a space for people to occupy. The ground floor patios enforce natural access control by stepping the patios back from the property line, using guardrails around the entire patio and having a vertical grade difference of .5m above the sidewalk. Low planting and the thin profile of the trembling aspen trees allow for clear site lines. The elevated grading of the front plaza will deter the space from being occupied by non-residents. All wood within the rooftop amenity space will be treated with FX Lumber Guard, a fire-resistant coating that meets City of Calgary's safety requirements in an amenity setting.</p> <p>The at-grade patios have been modified to include the use of a landscape block that complements the brick at the entry and hive lounge. This robust material is selected to provide a sense of safety to the occupants of at grade units and simultaneously ground the building mass.</p>

Sincerely,



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