

Urban Design Review Panel (DL2021-0003) Comments

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Date	April 14, 2021	
Time	1:00	
Panel Members	Present Chad Russill (Chair) Ben Bailey Jeff Lyness Glen Pardoe Katherine Robinson Anna Lawrence	Distribution Chris Hardwicke (Co-Chair) Gary Mundy Beverly Sandalack Michael Sydenham Jack Vanstone Noorullah Hussain Zada
Advisor	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number	DL2021-0003	
Municipal address	1907 26 St SE	
Community	Southview	
Project description	Journey to Freedom Park	
Review	first	
File Manager	Mona Ha	
City Wide Urban Design	Jihad Bitar	
Applicant	Stantec Architecture	

*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 "The Journey to Freedom Park", is a collaboration between the Calgary Vietnamese Canadian Association and the City of Calgary Parks. Located at the "entry" of the International Avenue corridor, the Park aims to commemorate the journey of the Vietnamese Boat People and to create a gateway into the City downtown area.

The Panel recognizes the complexity of designing a memorial park in an urban setting and appreciates the sensitivity of the subject matter. This includes recognizing the significance of traditional Vietnamese symbolism and direct references to Vietnamese culture in the memorial design. The Panel considers this proposal to be a great addition to the City's landscape and appreciates the opportunity to engage with the applicant early on suggested modifications that may serve to improve the ultimate design. These areas of focus include:

A more methodical entry that will utilize a transition into the memorial, through effective utilization of planters, surface material, site furniture and features to create a hierarchy in interest and a pathway for individuals to experience the memorial - promote natural wayfinding.

- More consideration of the interface of the Park / memorial with adjacent elements
 - Potential to review location of seating areas arrangement could further reinforce the journey desired when navigating the memorial park while also allowing for larger gatherings and utilize the natural views of the area.
 - Potential to include the existing landscape surrounding the park to enhance the impact of the memorial and the interaction of it with passers by
- Explore more effective and alternative symbolisms used in the memorial, that reference traditional Vietnamese garden design.
 - Maximize the memorial finishes using native species as recommended in traditional garden design,
 - Extend the potential of natural lighting to play with shadows in the memorial.

- Utilize the importance of rock garden design to create winter interest, as well as innovative water features that will allow for natural irrigation.
- Ensure the design results in a safe and secure park area with pedestrian focused lighting and clear sight lines etc.

Applicant Response

(No response has been received to date)

Urban Design Element	
<i>Creativity</i> Encourage innovation; model best practices <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 to the development of small park areas. The panel encourages the applicant to use innovative ideas to integrate the importance of symbolism, and enhance the proposed memorial design.
Applicant Response	
<i>Context</i> 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>While the project demonstrates a concerted effort to maximize the underlying potential of the site as a key gateway location, more consideration should be given to the site context and its relationship to the adjacent uses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interaction of the site with the adjacent 17th Ave and BRT transitway, should be revisited to consider pedestrian comfort and more improved buffering from traffic. • The entry to the site from the public pathway should be reinforced for greater legibility and strength of the design. • The views from the site could be better leveraged and integrated into the design for a more dynamic vista experience. • Edges of the memorial can be strongly defined to create strong sight lines and increase the appreciation of the symbolism • Site shadows can be integrated into the design
Applicant Response	
<i>Animation</i> Incorporate active uses; pay attention to details; add colour, wit and fun <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 proposed design is a significant improvement from the existing under-utilized condition, however further consideration should be given to the interaction with pedestrians on the pathway and how they are invited to experience the memorial.
Applicant Response	
<i>Human Scale</i> Defines street edges, ensures height and mass respect context; pay attention to scale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massing contribution to public realm at grade 	
UDRP Commentary	<p>The panel deems the scope of the project acceptable. Additional considerations should be given to the lighting approach, entry into the memorial, details of the seating areas and the at-grade paving in terms of improving the human scale and public realm.</p> <p>While recognizing the prescribed 'experiential route' inherent in the design, consideration should be given to breaking down the site into more human-scale usable nodes. Special attention to be given to open area surrounding the memorial statue, and how additional planting, seating, and more defined edges can help with this design element.</p>
Applicant Response	

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	Overall, the design will enhance the park area. In the development of this project, further details will enhance the winter-scape of the plan. The panel is encouraged by the presentation of vertical elements and anticipates positive design advancement related to the above-mentioned elements utilized to a greater extent.
Applicant Response	
Connectivity <i>Achieve visual and functional connections between buildings and places; ensure connection to existing and future networks.</i> <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 project will accommodate strong connectivity elements in its design through the direct proximity to the BRT transit line, bike lanes and pedestrian pathways.
Applicant Response	
Accessibility <i>Ensure clear and simple access for all types of users</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier free design • Entry definition, legibility, and natural wayfinding 	
UDRP Commentary	Overall accessibility to the site is well defined due to the site's natural boundaries. While the proposed programming is focused on the internal memorial space, the applicant is encouraged to work with the existing landscape topography and features to enhance the memorial's connections and flow of space outwards. The primary entry way into the memorial could be better aligned to improve natural wayfinding.
Applicant Response	
Diversity <i>Promote designs accommodating a broad range of users and uses</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail street variety, at-grade areas, transparency into spaces • Corner treatments and project porosity 	
UDRP Commentary	Consider more diverse uses and users based on the site's location next to a busy pathway system. Potential additions include more diverse and informal seating areas that could incorporate sloped berms, rock gardens or even seating walls.
Applicant Response	
Flexibility <i>Develop planning and building concepts which allow adaptation to future uses, new technologies</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project approach relating to market and/or context changes 	
UDRP Commentary	The current program of the site is singularly focused on the history of the Vietnamese emigrant experience. While the Panel understands the primary intent of the park design, the Applicant is encouraged to look at additional programming, such as natural play structures, meditation or music garden features to add additional interest to the site. These features could improve multi-generational use of the site, create a destination for families, and help event organizers engage the community in a greater appreciation of this new amenity.
Applicant Response	
Safety <i>Achieve a sense of comfort and create places that provide security at all times</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and security • Night time design 	
UDRP Commentary	Applicant to consider CPTED strategies to be incorporated into the overall design with an emphasis on lighting
Applicant Response	
Orientation <i>Provide clear and consistent directional clues for urban navigation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance natural views and vistas 	
UDRP Commentary	While the Panel supports the proposed orientation of the project, better directional cues and clearer natural navigation would help lead visitors in the intended direction through the memorial. The Panel encourages the applicant to provide more visual screening along the north property line and transit routes, while encouraging seating and contemplation along the west, overlooking the City.
Applicant Response	
Sustainability <i>Be aware of lifecycle costs; incorporate sustainable practices and materials</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site/solar orientation and passive heating/cooling 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material selection and sustainable products 	
UDRP Commentary	The applicant is encouraged to work with the existing landscape to enhance the design of the memorial. As part of the standard review process, it is expected that the applicant will engage Urban Forestry for a full assessment of existing trees, and development of a tree protection plan.
Applicant Response	
<i>Durability</i> 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 	
UDRP Commentary	The proposed materials are durable and meet expectations. The panel encourages the applicant to pay close attention to the detailing of the finished materials to ensure longevity of the materials.
Applicant Response	