

# Urban Design Review Panel Comments

<b>Date</b>	July 22, 2020	
<b>Time</b>	1:00	
<b>Panel Members</b>	<b>Present</b> Chris Hardwicke (Co-Chair) Gary Mundy Beverly Sandalack Ryan Agrey Michael Sydenham Noorullah Hussain Zada	<b>Distribution</b> Chad Russill (Chair) Terry Klassen Ben Bailey Colin Friesen Glen Pardoe Jeff Lyness Jack Vanstone
<b>Advisor</b>	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
<b>Application number</b>	<b>PE2020-00230</b>	
<b>Municipal address</b>	2027 81 St SW	
<b>Community</b>	Springbank Hill	
<b>Project description</b>	2 multi-residential buildings	
<b>Review</b>	first	
<b>File Manager</b>	Joseph Yun	
<b>City Wide Urban Design</b>	Dawn Clarke	
<b>Applicant</b>	Casola Koppe	

\*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 site has definite challenges given the extreme slope. While a different development configuration, such as a single, larger building may have presented a greater urban design outcome, it is acknowledged by the panel that multiple concepts had been considered between the applicant and the City, and were deemed to be not feasible. The concept presented has shown methods and design choices to best optimize the built form chosen, however the overall configuration does leave some challenges, as it results in a very car-oriented design that struggles to actively meet 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW, a defined livable street in the ASP.

Given the need to maintain the built form presented, perhaps some adjustments to the number of surface parking stalls should be explored, to allow the expansion of the interior amenity space to create a larger, more functional greenspace/amenity for the residents. Stronger pedestrian and cyclist links should be included in the site plan, as the proximity to the neighbourhood activity center will mean many of the residents will look to walk to and from the main entrances, and as shown there is no direct connection from 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the main doors.

## Applicant Response

(2020-09-21) Following our meeting with UDRP we made a number of changes to our site design. We expanded our parkade as much as possible in order to provide all resident parking below grade, thereby freeing up more of the surface to be filled with landscaping and amenity space. Street oriented connections are made where the grade allows for along both 19<sup>th</sup> avenue and 81<sup>st</sup> street. Amenity space is also provided on the top floors of both buildings in order to best capture the desirable western views. We thank you for the time spent reviewing our project, please see below for expanded commentary responses.

Urban Design Element	
<b>Creativity</b> <i>Encourage innovation; model best practices</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall project approach as it relates to original ideas or innovation</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	<p>The sloped nature of the site does present challenges, and the lining of the parkade with units on the western edge is a clever way to activate what would otherwise be a blank wall. However, greater effort or creativity could be used in the overall site layout to perhaps adapt to the slope in a different manner, and create a stronger presence along 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue.</p> <p>A bit more variety in the architecture between the two main buildings should be explored. Maintain a similar theme, but see if a variation between the two can be created, to provide more visual interest.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>Direct connection to 19<sup>th</sup> avenue has been provided where possible. Amenity building on 19<sup>th</sup> avenue has been designed to serve as the front entrance to the site. More walkways connecting buildings to 19<sup>th</sup> avenue have been added</p> <p>Variation in materiality between the two buildings is being explored in order to create a more compelling visual.</p>
<b>Context</b> <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"> <li>Massing relationship to context, distribution on site, and orientation to street edges</li> <li>Shade impact on public realm and adjacent sites</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	<p>While the site grading does present challenges, the form of the buildings does not respond very strongly to the surrounding streets. As well, the nature of the parkade being built into the slope will present the appearance of a 7 storey building close to the south and west property lines. While technically still within the policy and bylaw limits, this will appear to be quite a bit taller than the adjacent future development.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>Direct connections from buildings and individual units has been provided on both 19<sup>th</sup> avenue and 81<sup>st</sup> street where possible. An entrance has also been added to the parkade along 81<sup>st</sup> street to allow direct connection to the bike room.</p> <p>Parkade wall along the south property line has been pulled back between 3m and 5.7m to allow for a more significant buffer to be created between us and our future neighbours. Significant planting will be used along this edge to provide more of a separation.</p>
<b>Human Scale</b> <i>Defines street edges, ensures height and mass respect context; pay attention to scale</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Massing contribution to public realm at grade</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	<p>The built form presents some large walls adjacent to the south property line, and the appearance of a 7 storey building for both the south and western edges, which will interact with adjacent developments. Attempts to screen the parkade wall with landscaping are acknowledged, but the addition of fenestrations into the wall should be explored, and including setbacks along the southern edge to minimize this imposing nature.</p> <p>Confirm the required limiting distances and setbacks, as there is some concern that the amount of glazing shown on the west face of building 1 may not be achievable given the proximity to the property line.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>We are providing a setback of 3m between buildings 1 and 2 and our south property line, and a setback of 5.7m between the main parkade wall and the south PL. Fenestrations into the parkade along the south wall are being explored.</p> <p>We are providing a setback of 4.4m along the west property line and limiting distance won't be an issue here.</p>
<b>Integration</b> <i>The conjunction of land-use, built form, landscaping and public realm design</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parking entrances and at-grade parking areas are concealed</li> <li>Weather protection at entrances and solar exposure for outdoor public areas</li> <li>Winter city response</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	<p>Placing the majority of the parking underground is commendable, however there is still a substantial amount of surface parking that will be prominent on the site. The public realm along 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue appears to be quite strong with numerous boulevard trees and the separate sidewalk, however more landscaping/trees should be considered for 81<sup>st</sup> Street as the placement of the shown deciduous trees are located far from the sidewalk, and may not enhance the public realm on that side.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>Parkade has been expanded to allow for all resident parking to be provided below grade. Surface parking as been reduced as much as possible.</p> <p>Trees and shrubs line the eastern edge of our property line along 81<sup>st</sup> street.</p>

<b>Connectivity</b> Achieve visual and functional connections between buildings and places; ensure connection to existing and future networks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian first design, walkability, pathways through site</li> <li>• Connections to LRT stations, regional pathways and cycle paths</li> <li>• Pedestrian pathway materials extend across driveways and lanes</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	The direct connections for the units where possible on 81 <sup>st</sup> street is acknowledged. More direct pedestrian connections for the main site should be incorporated, as currently the only way for pedestrians to access 19 <sup>th</sup> Avenue from the buildings main entrances is to cross the central parking drive aisles. Consider placing a pathway or pedestrian connection along the western edge of the property, to allow direct access for the parkade flanking units.
Applicant Response	Direct connections from both building entrances to 19 <sup>th</sup> avenue are provided. Direct connection has also been added from the parkade to 81 <sup>st</sup> street.
<b>Animation</b> Incorporate active uses; pay attention to details; add colour, wit and fun <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building form contributes to an active pedestrian realm</li> <li>• Residential units provided at-grade</li> <li>• Elevations are interesting and enhance the streetscape</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	The chosen form makes an active pedestrian realm difficult. The floor plans should configure the northern end units to provide activation of 19 <sup>th</sup> Avenue. The interior amenity space is very constrained by the amount of parking adjacent to it. Explore removing some of the parking to create a more usable area that would likely be better animated and enjoyed by the residents.
Applicant Response	North facing units have been redesigned to allow for a direct connection to 19 <sup>th</sup> avenue. Exterior amenity space around the amenity building has been significantly expanded with the removal of street parking. A second exterior amenity space along the south property line has been added above the parkade, as well as an expanded green space to the west of it.
<b>Accessibility</b> Ensure clear and simple access for all types of users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barrier free design</li> <li>• Entry definition, legibility, and natural wayfinding</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	The chosen form does create a very accessible design, by minimizing grade differences and necessary ramps.
Applicant Response	Thank you.
<b>Diversity</b> Promote designs accommodating a broad range of users and uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail street variety, at-grade areas, transparency into spaces</li> <li>• Corner treatments and project porosity</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	The inclusion of some 3 bedroom units is a positive. Without being able to evaluate all of the floor plans (only main floor provided), the panel encourages designs that will allow work-from-home spaces. And, while there is a substantial amount of commercial development planned to the north, perhaps the inclusion of some form of retail would help to animate 19 <sup>th</sup> Avenue.
Applicant Response	Unit averages for 1 bed, 2 bed, and 3 bed units are 647 sq.ft., 935 sq.ft., and 1144 sq.ft., respectively and allow for adaptability for work-from-home spaces. The development directly across 19 <sup>th</sup> avenue from our site will be adding over 120,000 sq.ft. of retail & commercial space. Taking dwelling units away from our site to add even more work space seems like a poor design choice.
<b>Flexibility</b> Develop planning and building concepts which allow adaptation to future uses, new technologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project approach relating to market and/or context changes</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	The site layout makes public access to any future adaptive reuse difficult. Only 3 units have direct access to a public street, so if a future live-work situation was desired, it would be very challenging for that use to present a public presence.
Applicant Response	The purpose of our proposal is to increase the options available for density in the area and attract more residents to the western edge of the city. Directly across 19 <sup>th</sup> avenue from our site is a development which will provide 120 000+ sq.ft. of commercial and retail space, creating opportunities for work, play, and lifestyle for our future residents. Should work-from-home become a more permanent reality in the future, the size and layouts of the units we are proposing will allow for adaptability in order to enable this.

<b>Safety</b> <i>Achieve a sense of comfort and create places that provide security at all times</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety and security</li> <li>• Night time design</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	No obvious dead spaces are presented on site, and there are multiple units overlooking all areas. One potential concern that may develop would be the narrow space along the western property edge, depending on what is developed on the adjacent property. Consider creating a more accessible greenspace to be shared between this development and the adjacent parcel, to create a more activated and welcoming area, rather than a potential deadspace.
Applicant Response	Our setback along the west property line is 4.4m, and when coupled with whatever future development goes in on the otherside this space should be at least 5.6m. We also have decks for the parkade units in the setback area along this property line which will provide some activity.
<b>Orientation</b> <i>Provide clear and consistent directional clues for urban navigation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance natural views and vistas</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	<p>The site has access to large, high value views to the south and west. The current orientation of the buildings will provide access to these views for some of the units, but not all, especially after development to the west occurs. A different layout may be better able to take advantage of the vistas. The applicant should also consider including a resident amenity space on the upper floors, to allow greater access to the views for all residents.</p> <p>As well, the building orientations are very internal focused, and will not create an active interface with the adjacent commercial development and NAC.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>Building 1 is set a full storey lower than building 2, which will allow for western views for the entire western half of building 1, and the western half of the top floor of building 2. We are also providing rooftop amenity spaces on the top floor of both buildings. These will be located on the southern end of both buildings and will provide excellent views for building residents.</p> <p>The orientation of the buildings went through a series of iterations before landing on the current configuration. The proposed layout best allows us to activate the street along 81<sup>st</sup>, capture the western views across the site, and create a compelling front entrance to the site off of 19<sup>th</sup> avenue while still providing the required vehicular access. Unit orientation on the north sides of both buildings connect with 19<sup>th</sup> avenue where possible. The interior of our site is filled with indoor and outdoor amenity spaces, green spaces, and ample landscaping in order to create a connective space between the buildings for the residents.</p>
<b>Sustainability</b> <i>Be aware of lifecycle costs; incorporate sustainable practices and materials</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site/solar orientation and passive heating/cooling</li> <li>• Material selection and sustainable products</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	Too early in the design stage to properly evaluate.
Applicant Response	Agreed.
<b>Durability</b> <i>Incorporate long-lasting materials and details that will provide a legacy rather than a liability</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of low maintenance materials and/or sustainable products</li> <li>• Project detailed to avoid maintenance issues</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	The material palette chosen should provide long term durability.
Applicant Response	Agreed.