

Urban Design Review Panel Comments (PE2021-00320)

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Date	March 31, 2021	
Time	1:00	
Panel Members	Present Chris Hardwicke (Co-Chair) Michael Sydenham Jack Vanstone Noorullah Hussain Zada	Distribution Chad Russill (Chair) Ben Bailey Anna Lawrence Jeff Lyness Gary Mundy Glen Pardoe Beverly Sandalack Katherine Robinson
Advisor	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number	PE2021-00320	
Municipal address	3404 Bow Trail SW	
Community	Spruce Cliff	
Project description	Land Use, Development - Closer to Home & Affordable Housing	
Review	first	
File Manager	Jarred Friedman	
City Wide Urban Design	Dawn Clarke	
Applicant	MTA	

*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 Closer to Home development is a true mixed-use six-storey building. The project utilizes a derelict and challenging site in a key TOD location. Proposed uses include retail, office, cultural programs, child care and affordable housing. The site challenges include numerous easements, significant grade changes, and proximity to Bow Trail and the large intersection of Bow Trail and 33rd Street SW. However, the building has been thoughtfully designed to accommodate all of these challenges, and presents a well-conceived building that enhances the site and surrounding area. Overall, the Panel supports the approval of this project.

The panel recommends review specific to the following areas:

- Review of the SE plaza design, to allow for greater flexibility and space.
 - o The current configuration may create pinch points with the proposed walkway accesses.
 - o Reconfiguring the planters and plaza design may allow for more flexible uses, such as outdoor seating for the proposed café.
- Resident access for the building.
 - o The Panel acknowledges there are programming and security challenges with allowing access through the main floor 24/7, but we encourage further thought to see if this can be accommodated, given that the SE corner is the major desire line for most resident trips.

Urban Design Element	
Creativity <i>Encourage innovation; model best practices</i> Overall project approach as it relates to original ideas or innovation	
UDRP Commentary	The project demonstrates creativity in the overall design. The placement of the plaza in the SE corner to create a welcoming space that also acts as a buffer to the traffic on Bow Trail has been well thought out. The design of the upper portions of the building to allow for a rooftop terrace that can be utilized for cultural activities is well considered.
Context <i>Optimize built form with respect to mass and spacing of buildings, placement on site, response to adjacent uses, heights and densities</i> - Massing relationship to context, distribution on site, and orientation to street edges - Shade impact on public realm and adjacent sites	
UDRP Commentary	The building's scale and massing is well suited for the planned Community Activity Centre it is located in. The orientation of the design to the SE corner responds well to the highest visible portion of the site, and the building will act as an excellent "entrance" into the community.
Animation <i>Incorporate active uses; pay attention to details; add colour, wit and fun</i> - Building form contributes to an active pedestrian realm - Residential units provided at-grade - Elevations are interesting and enhance the streetscape	
UDRP Commentary	The mix of uses and intended programming will ensure this is a very active and animated site. The plaza and rooftop terraces will be active with the multiple users of the building.
Human Scale <i>Defines street edges, ensures height and mass respect context; pay attention to scale</i> Massing contribution to public realm at grade	
UDRP Commentary	The art piece proposed for the wall fronting Bow Trail will be key. As proposed, this is an imposing 3 storey wall without much articulation. A dramatic, well done art piece will greatly enhance this façade, so we encourage a high degree of detail and thought for the chosen piece. The frontage along the proposed financial institution space is quite imposing adjacent to the sidewalk within the plaza. Consider extending the soffit adjacent to the café, or other design choices, to mitigate the impact of the scale of this wall.
Integration <i>The conjunction of land-use, built form, landscaping and public realm design</i> - 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 project does a good job of utilizing the utility easement area to accommodate a lot of the more functional aspects of the project. As this north portion also acts as the main residential entrance, be sure to focus on the lobby plaza to ensure proper lighting and weather protection design elements are incorporated.
Connectivity <i>Achieve visual and functional connections between buildings and places; ensure connection to existing and future networks.</i> - 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 provides many great connections to the existing networks in the immediate vicinity. UDRP supports the proposed right-in off of Bow Trail, to allow better access and reduce through traffic within the community. The Panel acknowledges the challenges of permitting resident access through to the SE lobby at all hours, however this would be a strong desire line, so further thought is encouraged to see if this level of access can be achieved for the residents.
Accessibility <i>Ensure clear and simple access for all types of users</i> • Barrier free design • Entry definition, legibility, and natural wayfinding	
UDRP Commentary	The project meets expectations, and has done a good job of accommodating the elevation change on site.
Diversity <i>Promote designs accommodating a broad range of users and uses</i> • Retail street variety, at-grade areas, transparency into spaces • Corner treatments and project porosity	
UDRP Commentary	This project represents an exemplary example of a true mixed-use building.
Flexibility <i>Develop planning and building concepts which allow adaptation to future uses, new technologies</i> • Project approach relating to market and/or context changes	
UDRP Commentary	This category was not really discussed or addressed by the materials.
Safety <i>Achieve a sense of comfort and create places that provide security at all times</i> • Safety and security • Night time design	
UDRP Commentary	The multiple users of the site will provide a high level of activity and “eyes on the street”. The 4th floor plaza space may present a safety concern for some of the residential units, as it is a semi-public space that has the potential to have direct views into their units/bedrooms. Consider the use of landscaping or other buffers to provide privacy to these units.
Orientation <i>Provide clear and consistent directional clues for urban navigation</i> • Enhance natural views and vistas	
UDRP Commentary	The building orientation makes great use of the parcel shape and location. The rooftop terraces should provide exceptional views out over the Shaganappi Golf Course and the downtown skyline to the east. The corner plaza provides a nice focal point off of the intersection with Bow Trail and 33 rd Street.
Sustainability <i>Be aware of lifecycle costs; incorporate sustainable practices and materials</i> • Site/solar orientation and passive heating/cooling • Material selection and sustainable products	

UDRP Commentary	Specific sustainability elements were not discussed as part of the presentation. Although the panel notes that the TOD nature of this development will provide a great degree of sustainability already.
<i>Durability</i> Incorporate long-lasting materials and details that will provide a legacy rather than a liability • Use of low maintenance materials and/or sustainable products • Project detailed to avoid maintenance issues	
UDRP Commentary	The material palette presented appears to be durable and high quality. The use of native landscaping will help achieve a low maintenance exterior.