

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

June 16, 2021

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Date	June 16, 2021	
Time	1:00	
Panel Members	Present Chris Hardwicke (Co-Chair) Gary Mundy Doug Little Jack Vanstone Noorullah Hussain Zada	Distribution Chad Russill (Chair) Ben Bailey Anna Lawrence Jeff Lyness Glen Pardoe Katherine Robinson Beverly Sandalack
Advisor	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number	DP2021-3689	
Municipal address	4503 17 Av SE	
Community	Glendale	
Project description	New: Multi-Residential Development (2 buildings, 6 units), Medical Clinic, Restaurant: Neighbourhood, Drive Through	
Review	Second (first: LOC2019-0076)	
File Manager	Johnson Kwan	
City Wide Urban Design	Xia Zhang	
Applicant	Systemic 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 Glendale Commons development includes two two-storey buildings in a vehicular oriented development with surface parking and a drive-through tenant on the southwest corner of Glenmount Drive and 17 Avenue SW. The site is with 150 metres from the 45 Street LRT Station, and numerous bus routes. A site with this proximity to transit services such as this is considered to be within the intermodal node of the station, and should take advantage of this relationship by investigating transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities. The Panel feels that the proposed low-density vehicle-oriented development is not in keeping with good TOD practice, which promotes the use of transit over the private vehicle, and increased density of development within the station node in particular.

The above noted, the development attempts to create a place for people to come together along 17 Avenue on the west side of the east building. While the Panel commends the applicant for the inclusion of outdoor public amenity such as this, access to the space is not intuitive – particularly when approaching from the south, and should be

considered as part of a more holistic and occupiable site development that takes the deep east setback and east building façade into consideration. The lack of main floor glazing on the parking lot facades and the east building's east façade add to a service-type feel to the interior of the site. Adding glazing to these facades would make the interior of the site safer and more occupiable, benefitting the public and the residents. Lastly, the Panel urges the applicant to propose the development of the setback zone on the east boundary of the site. Treatment of this space to make it walkable and occupiable, along with ground floor glazing of the east façade would make a softer edge for the community.

Urban Design Element	
<i>Place Recognize and enhance the unique and evolving identity of a particular place by responding to local context and policy, contributing innovative new architecture and public realm, and reinforcing its sense of place.</i>	
Site	Does the site planning show innovation in addressing site constraints and challenges?
	Does the design relate to existing topography and landscape?
	Does the design reflect any distinctive social, cultural or historical aspects of the site?
Architecture	Is the project visually interesting and unique?
	Does the architecture meet or exceed the design standard of its existing context?
Public Realm	Does the project contribute to the creation of a high quality, connected public realm?
UDRP Commentary	The development does not take advantage of the proximity of the adjacent transit facilities, being low-density and vehicle-oriented. The development is introverted, turning its back on the community and surrounding public realm. the Panel urges the applicant to propose the development of the setback zone on the east boundary of the site. Treatment of this space to make it walkable and occupiable, along with ground floor glazing of the east façade would make a softer edge for the community. The applicant is commended for the creation of the occupiable public space along the north of the site between the buildings.
Applicant Response	The development currently aims to maximize density to the extent that parking and other requirements will allow, including the maximum building height. With the design updates currently proposed in response to DTR1, this project takes more advantage of its proximity to adjacent transit facilities by expanding and clarifying pedestrian movement and access. Effort has been made to also enhance the eastern edge of the site through (1) additional landscaping outside of the property within the utility right-of-way, (2) modifying building massing, materials and articulation, (3) common amenity spaces on exterior passageway which provide passive security and activate previously inactive parts of the site and (4) additional glazing which provides visual connection between the ground floor tenant space and the street.
<i>Scale Ensure appropriate transitions between building masses and adjacent places; define street and open space edges and bring human scale through articulation, materials, details and landscaping.</i>	
Site	Does the arrangement of uses and structures on the site address street edges well?
Architecture	Does the design employ strategies to reduce the impact of the building height and bulk?
	Is the street wall well defined?

	Does the design use human scale details to enhance street character?
Public Realm	Is the building scale and placement appropriate for the street size and type?
	Does the design include details to enhance street character and activate the public realm?
UDRP Commentary	The small scale of the development fits within the context of the single family dwellings, creating a village feel. Again, the applicant is commended for the creation of the occupiable public space along the north edge of the site, though the east of the site and the Glenmount / 17 Avenue intersection should be better defined. Intuitive access into the site should be promoted, as there is a concern that pedestrians may try to walk into the site via the drive-through exit.
Applicant Response	The Public Plaza has been extended in front of Building A and is now visible from Glenmount Dr. Appropriate landscaping has been provided within the utility right-of-way in order to give pedestrians a visual pull towards the public plaza and stair access to residential units above instead of walking cutting through the drive-through exit.
Amenity <i>Ensure that public sidewalks and gathering spaces are generously proportioned, comfortable, safe, fully accessible, and framed by transparent, permeable facades which allow for indoor/outdoor sharing and activation throughout the year.</i>	
Site	Does the project provide equitable, inviting access and movement options for all ages and abilities?
	Is the project designed to take advantage of local climate throughout all seasons?
	Are shared spaces designed for a variety of users and uses?
	Are service and utility requirements located appropriately to lessen visual impact?
Architecture	Does the project contribute to a high-quality user and pedestrian experience?
	Does the architecture create a pleasant street edge which feels safe to users?
	Does the building meet or exceed expectations for universal access design?
Public Realm	Does the public realm design prioritize pedestrians and cyclists over vehicle access?
	Is the public realm visually interesting, comfortable, accessible, and safe during all seasons?
UDRP Commentary	The east setback has the potential to be a better community amenity, even if it's only for the use of the residents. The lack of main floor glazing on the parking lot facades and building A's east façade add to a service-type feel to the interior of the site. Adding glazing to these facades would make the interior of the site and the community edge safer and more occupiable, benefitting the public and the residents. The waste and recycling area is centrally located, and would benefit from screening.
Applicant Response	Glazing has been added to Building A east and west facades to address these comments. The waste and recycling facilities are 'Molok' type and should not require screening as they are designed to fit aesthetically within a commercial or residential parking lot.
Legibility <i>Create logical, permeable networks of streets and pathways that prioritize active movement modes and connect within and between neighbourhoods and public places; design buildings with well-defined entrances and distinctive, memorable attributes.</i>	

Site	Does the project provide a permeable, fine-grained and functional urban structure of blocks and streets?
	Does the project prioritize active travel modes?
	Does the project provide legible, continuous walking and cycling connections within the site and to nearby destinations?
	Does the proposed network allow for easy future expansion into surrounding areas?
	Are large parking areas designed with clear, safe, direct pedestrian connections?
Architecture	Is the building designed to support wayfinding?
Public Realm	Are the public routes and spaces configured to facilitate easy and safe navigation?
UDRP Commentary	Public access to the site from the south along Glenmount Drive is on the northwest corner of Building A via stairs, and via the north driveway for wheeled access. There is concern that the public will enter the site from the drive-through exit rather than taking the long way around. The applicant should investigate allowing pedestrian access at the southeast corner, and/or improving access for all modes directly off Glenmount Drive across the north face of building A to provide more convenient equitable access.
Applicant Response	The Public Plaza has been extended in front of Building A and is now visible from Glenmount Dr. Appropriate landscaping has been provided within the utility right-of-way in order to give pedestrians a pull towards the public plaza and stair access to residential units above instead of walking cutting through the drive-through exit.
<i>Vibrancy</i> Ensure that new developments contribute positively through well designed architecture which provides choice for all users and animates the adjacent public realm.	
Site	Will the building orientation, architecture and finishes contribute to the creation of an animated streetscape and to the success of the proposed uses?
	Does the project contribute to the economic variety and vibrancy of the neighbourhood?
Architecture	Do the buildings contribute to the vibrancy of the streets and community overall?
	Is there a variety of residential unit types and sizes provided?
	Does the design include opportunities for varied commercial and work environments?
Public Realm	Are outdoor shared spaces designed for a variety of users and uses?
UDRP Commentary	The proposed community plaza is very successful, however, the east side of the side does not contribute to a vibrant urban edge to the community. There is a good balance of residential, professional, and food services on the site, but the panel feels that a deeper residential balcony would give the occupants the opportunity to enliven this otherwise empty portion of the building facades while providing passive surveillance to the inner parking lot on the adjacent street.
Applicant Response	The exterior passageway on the east façade of Building A has been expanded to accommodate a common amenity space, or balcony, in order to provide passive surveillance on the street. Similarly, the exterior passageway on the south façade of Building B has been expanded in kind to provide passive surveillance of the parking area.

Resilience <i>Ensure that projects provide opportunities, through their site layout, spatial configuration, materials, and sustainable design features for responsible operation and continuous adaptation to change over time.</i>	
Site	Is the project designed to provide a range of facilities and services?
	Is the project designed to respond to changes in economic and social conditions over time?
	Does the site plan respond to climate resilience/sustainable design expectations?
	Does the site design encourage active lifestyle choices?
Architecture	Does the project show indication of sustainable design practices and materials?
	Will the building accommodate a range of uses both now and in the future?
	Is the building designed to endure over time with reasonable maintenance?
Public Realm	Is the public space adaptable for multiple uses over short and medium term?
	Does the public realm design respond to climate resilience / sustainability expectations?
UDRP Commentary	The development does not take advantage of its relationship to existing transit infrastructure by investigating transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities. The vehicle-oriented low-density development is not adaptive to change as the aging community grows around it, thus impacting the resilience of the area.
Applicant Response	<p>This project addresses resilience through implementation of a variety of characteristics, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Range of Uses: In isolation, the applicant can appreciate that a drive through restaurant alone does not take advantage of the proximity to transit. While this application does incorporate a drive through Restaurant (Neighbourhood), it also includes Medical Clinic as well as six residential housing units. By definition, transit-oriented development takes advantage of nearby transit infrastructure by incorporating a mix of both residential and commercial uses, which the proposed application clearly addresses through use and location. Within these six residential units are a variety of studio, onebedroom, and two-bedroom units, that offer exceptional diversity within the overall unit count. - Response to Change Over Time: Retail CRUs inherently can change over time. The current design allows for approximately three CRU units per building on the ground floor, if future tenants requiring reduced space to operate than compared to the current lease interests, for ultimate flexibility. Furthermore, the residential units are compact and efficient. As noted above, the proposed variety of sizes anticipates a diverse user group that accommodates a mixture for changing market demands over time. - Active Lifestyle Choices: the provision of both restaurant and medical uses within walking distance of a train station encourage visitors coming to the site to use public transportation. Residents of the site are anticipated to depend primarily on public transportation to/from their homes, by nature of LRT proximity and available parking. - Durable and Low Maintenance Materials: The building materials are both durable and low maintenance. The primary exterior finish is fibre cement board and batten siding, also appropriate to the context and scale of the development, in addition to the inherent durability. - Public Realm Design: The public realm proposes improved, enlarged infrastructure along 17th Ave. This will activate the pedestrian environment further. This includes the provision of a widened

	<p>sidewalk and integrated public plaza feature, beneficial to the site itself as well as the surrounding community and transit users.</p> <p>While the small surface parking area and drive-through are screened from the 17th Avenue SW, these vehicular attributes are far outweighed by the other project TOD characteristics described above. This application emphasizes pedestrian oriented design through street facing frontage, variety of uses, and the installation of a plaza between Buildings A and B. This layout is highly resilient and the plaza area can be used in variety of ways, from informal seating to larger scale public event space.</p>
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