

# Urban Design Review Panel Comments

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| <b>Date</b>                   | September 15, 2021   |   |
| <b>Time</b>                   | 3:00   |   |
| <b>Panel Members</b>          | <b>Present</b><br>Chris Hardwicke (Co-Chair)<br>Gary Mundy<br>Glen Pardoe<br>Jack Vanstone         | <b>Distribution</b><br>Chad Russill (Chair)<br>Ben Bailey<br>Anna Lawrence<br>Jeff Lyness<br>Katherine Robinson<br>Beverly Sandalack<br>Doug Little<br>Noorullah Hussain Zada |
| <b>Advisor</b>                | David Down, Chief Urban Designer   |   |
| <b>Application number</b>     | DP2021-1024  |   |
| <b>Municipal address</b>      | 1470 Na'a Drive SW   |   |
| <b>Community</b>              | Medicine Hill  |   |
| <b>Project description</b>    | Multi-Residential Development (2 Buildings), Accessory Residential Building (garbage enclosure- 1) |   |
| <b>Review</b>                 | first  |   |
| <b>File Manager</b>           | Chris Wolf   |   |
| <b>City Wide Urban Design</b> | Sonny Tomic  |   |
| <b>Applicant</b>              | Carlisle Group   |   |

\*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 Panel appreciates the opportunity to review the application in its early evolution. The package and presentation was clear. The site along Na'a Drive is challenging with significant slopes and is situated in a prominent gateway location. The Panel was supportive of the general location of the buildings that provide a consistent street edge with ground-level units that address the street. The elevations are stepped back from adjacent residential and provide a diverse architectural expression. The inclusion of a second row of trees along Na'a Drive and retaining wall improvements were also recognized as important contributions.

The main aspects of the application that are of the greatest significance to the Panel are:

### Slope adaptive response

The building has been designed as a long slab that is situated along a slope. The design attempts to mitigate this situation by including raised and sunken entrances to street-related units. The result is less than desirable as it creates a broken streetscape, accessibility issues and exposed foundation walls.

### Amenity space

The size and location of the amenity space is compromised by the fact that is located on an island in the middle of a parking lot next to the garbage enclosure.

### Northern façade

The northern façade faces the Trans-Canada Highway. The building will be highly visible to thousands of travellers entering Calgary given its raised prominence and location. The northern façade should have an architectural expression and landscape design treatment that addresses its important location.

### Applicant Response

(2021 October 14)

No City policy or rule was located to provide guidance on the grade separation and the unit entrance on Na'a Drive, but working with the City over the past 18 months it was agreed that a maximum grade separation of 1m for the unit entrances along Na'a Drive is reasonable. The main floor of Building 1000 along Na'a Drive is stepped one story, from a geodetic elevation of 1105.5 on the east end to 1108.3 on the west and Building 2000 steps up to 1109.75 to adapt to the grade. The main entry onto building 1000 does not require risers and both the cross slope and slope to the building are minimal. No unit entrance has a grade change greater than 1m. All building code accessibility issues are met throughout the project. While the slope of Na'a Drive does present challenges we believe that we have met these challenges as well or better than other projects found around the City that have faced similar challenges, for example 2410 33 Ave SW, 611 Edmonton Trail NE, 721 4st NE, and 235 9a St NW. Each additional step in the building creates challenges in the design of the parkade, the number of elevators required to service the building, and the number of block fire walls required, all which add additional cost and complexity to the project which impair our goals of providing an attainable housing product. Exposed portions of the foundation wall are screened with landscaping or finished to complement the building.

As suggested by the UDRP the garbage enclosure has been moved adjacent to the parkade ramp into building 2000 creating a larger and more open amenity space.

As recommended by the UDRP the north elevations have additional details added which we feel has greatly enhanced our north elevation and respects this important location at the entrance to the City. The drawings submitted in response to DTR2 show the design changes to the north elevation.

| Urban Design Element   |   |
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| <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  | Although design accommodations have been made to allow entrances on to Na'a Drive, the proposed building is otherwise a conventional flat-slab apartment block that does not respond to the topography of the site.   |
| Applicant Response   | We recognize that the UDRP panel has a limited time to review the project drawings and may have missed the stepping of the parkade slab. The main floor of Building 1000 along Na'a Drive is stepped one story, from a geodetic elevation of 1105.5 on the east end to 1108.3 on the west, then Building 2000 steps up again to 1109.75 to adapt to the east west grade and steps down to 1106.95 to pick up the south to north grade. The main |

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|   | entry onto building 1000 does not require risers with both the cross slope and slope to the building from Na'a Drive are minimal. No unit entrance has a grade change greater than the guidance of 1m provide by The City. While the slope of Na'a Drive does present challenges we believe that with the guidance provided by The City, we have met these challenges as well or better than other projects found around the City, for example 2410 33 Ave SW, 611 Edmonton Trail NE, 721 4st NE, and 235 9a St NW.   |
| <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></p> <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   | The proposed buildings line Na'a Drive with a consistent street edge. Although there are entrances with direct connections to Na'a Drive, the building has not been stepped to mitigate the elevation change along the slope.   |
| Applicant Response  | As per our response above the buildings are stepped to mitigate the slope of Na'a Drive.  |
| <p><b>Animation</b> <i>Incorporate active uses; pay attention to details; add colour, wit and fun</i></p> <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 building elevations provide some detail and architectural diversity. The street relationship has been compromised, as most of the residential entrances are either above or below grade. The north elevations do not reflect the importance of the site as a gateway location which is highly visible from the highway entering the city. The architectural expression on the north facade should be improved to recognize this important role. A reforestation approach to the highway landscape would improve the façade.   |
| Applicant Response  | As per the examples provided in the summary response, we believe that we have addressed the street relationship as well or better than other high-profile projects in the city which have recently been approved and constructed, including the previously approved town home project on this site, DP2019-0949. It is a challenge to address a slopping street and manage the access to the units, but we feel that with the comments provide by administration we have come to a quality solution. We have listened to UDRP and agree that more was needed on the North elevation, this has been addressed on DTR2's submission. We have been told that The City and Province are not agreeable to adding any planting to the 16ave right of way. |
| <p><b>Human Scale</b> <i>Defines street edges, ensures height and mass respect context; pay attention to scale</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Massing contribution to public realm at grade</li> </ul>  |   |
| UDRP Commentary   | As noted above, the elevated and depressed street-oriented entrances detract from the public realm at grade. The proposed amenity area, next to the garbage enclosure, is small and is compromised in its location. Given the amount of greens space shown on the plan there should be a better location for a larger at-grade amenity area.  |
| Applicant Response  | Designing for a challenging site with multiple constraints due to conditions in the Area Structure Plan, the Landuse Bylaw, market conditions, Code   |

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|  | <p>requirements, and subdivision design creates a situation where not all of the goals are aligned, and the ideal solution is not practical. The slopes created by the construction of Na'a Drive create an interesting design challenge which we feel has been creatively addressed. First by minimizing the grade change between the sidewalk on Na'a Drive and the entrances to the unit entrances to 1m or less, which is a smaller grade change than was achieved with the previously a Additionally at each private entrance along Na'a Drive they are identified with a feature screen with the municipal address and one of the neighborhood animal profiles, along with landscaping planting of shrubs and Karl Foerster Grass to frames the units entries.</p> <p>As per UDRP's suggestion the garbage enclosure has been relocated to create a larger at-grade amenity area.</p> |
| <p><b>Integration</b> <i>The conjunction of land-use, built form, landscaping and public realm design</i></p> <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>Unlike the street-related entrances along Na'a Drive, the internal elevations show a raised building finish-floor with the concrete foundations exposed to the parking lot. This condition should be mitigated through a more thoughtful approach to the stepping of the building in relation to the topography of the site.</p>   |
| Applicant Response   | <p>In the design process the primary constraint was the selection of a 6-story wood framed building, followed by addressing Na'a Drive and providing direct access to the street from the grade level units and then to minimize retaining walls on 16th Ave and provide a high-quality architectural design and that parking stalls can only have a cross slope of 4%. To address all of these constraints some sloping is required internal to the site. Of the 26 grade level units in the central courtyard, 16 have direct access to the grade. In building 2000 5 units are lower than grade between 1.65m and .9m. For building 1000 5 units are above grade between .9m and 2m. The face of the foundation is screened with landscaping and insulated and cladded.</p>  |
| <p><b>Connectivity</b> <i>Achieve visual and functional connections between buildings and places; ensure connection to existing and future networks.</i></p> <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  | <p>As shown, the internal sidewalks do not provide complete connectivity. A direct sidewalk connection should be included along the southern edge of Building 6 leading to the garbage enclosure. Locating the garbage within the building(s) would improve the site connections significantly.</p>   |
| Applicant Response   | <p>We have found that maintenance and management of the waste and recycling area is more effective and there are fewer conflicts with the residents if the garbage is stored and collected outside of the residential building whenever possible. Access to the garbage building for the south block of building 2000 is available through the interior corridor of the building, exiting at the south east stair well on to the sidewalk to the garbage building.</p>  |
| <p><b>Accessibility</b> <i>Ensure clear and simple access for all types of users</i></p>   |   |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barrier free design</li> <li>• Entry definition, legibility, and natural wayfinding</li> </ul>   |   |
| UDRP<br>Commentary  | Navigation within the sloped parking lot for accessibility is problematic. The location of the accessible stalls for Building 6 force users to travel up the driveway to access the sidewalk that leads back down to the entrance. It is not clear how the garbage enclosure would be accessed by persons with disabilities. The elevated and sunken street-oriented unit entrances do not appear to be accessible.   |
| Applicant<br>Response   | While the location of the building 2000 accessible visitor parking stalls are slightly compromised, any residents requiring accessible parking will be provided with stalls in the parkade. Sidewalks from the buildings are accessible with ramps at the road crossings and ABC compliant building entrances and exits. The street-oriented unit entrances are not designed or required to be accessibly designed.   |
| <b>Diversity</b> <i>Promote designs accommodating a broad range of users and uses</i> <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<br>Commentary  | The project is a residential building offering no opportunity for a mix of uses.  |
| Applicant<br>Response   | Section 5.7.1(1)(a) of the Canada Olympic Park and Adjacent Lands ASP states “the Village District should be composed predominately of multi-residential development in the form of apartments...” While the DC Landuse does allow for up to 300m2 of retail commercial the guidance we received from administration and supported by the precedents of the other approved DP applications in the Village area is that commercial retail uses are not required in the Village as there is sufficient commercial retail close by in the Gate Way and Commercial Districts. |
| <b>Flexibility</b> <i>Develop planning and building concepts which allow adaptation to future uses, new technologies</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project approach relating to market and/or context changes</li> </ul>                     |   |
| UDRP<br>Commentary  | It is a standard wood-framed apartment building with no real flexibility for change.  |
| Applicant<br>Response   | The project is a high-quality wood-framed construction with long life maintenance free exterior finishes. The project will have comparable flexibility to other multi-family developments throughout the City. Wood frame construction provides a quality and sustainable structural product providing a lower carbon footprint than that of other structural options, but still at a attainable price point for the majority of Calgarians.  |
| <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<br>Commentary  | The disconnected pedestrian network in the surface parking combined with the garbage location, internal foundation heights, and un-surveilled side and rear yard conditions present CPTED issues.   |
| Applicant<br>Response   | The garbage building has been relocated as suggested by the panel. We disagree and believe that the internal pedestrian network provides safe and continuous connections throughout the site, to the building entrances, to the garbage enclosure, to the amenity spaces and out to Na’a Drive. Proper lighting is provided and all side of the property have eyes on the ground from have units looking out from every face of the building.   |

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| <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<br>Commentary   | The project presents clear entrances to each building and the main driveway. Natural views and vistas do not seem to be considered.  |
| Applicant<br>Response  | The orientation of the site and policies in the ASP has focused the buildings on Na'a Drive and 16ave. The orientations of the building provide a selection of views for the residents to enjoy from their windows and balconies. The south facing units have wonderful views of the Paskapoo Slopes which are spectacular with their fall colours. The north and west facing units will have mountain views and the east facing units have City views. The roof top patio will provide a panoramic view of all that surround the project. |
| <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<br>Commentary   | Insufficient information was provided to inform comments.  |
| Applicant<br>Response  | The buildings will be constructed to the standards of the National Energy Code.  |
| <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<br>Commentary   | Insufficient information was provided to inform comments.  |
| Applicant<br>Response  | All materials are long lasting low maintenance designed to preserve the aesthetics of the buildings and minimize maintenance costs.  |