

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Date	September 29, 2021	
Time	1:00	
Panel Members	Present Chad Russill (Chair) Ben Bailey Anna Lawrence Doug Little Gary Mundy Katherine Robinson	Distribution Chris Hardwicke (Co-Chair) Beverly Sandalack Jack Vanstone Noorullah Hussain Zada Glen Pardoe Jeff Lyness
Advisor	Dawn Clarke	
Application number	PE2021-01692	
Municipal address	1409 4 ST SW	
Community	BELTLINE	
Project description	Pre-Application for: 4th street lofts	
Review	First	
File Manager	Derek Pomreinke	
City Wide Urban Design	Dawn Clarke	
Applicant	GIBBS GAGE ARCHITECTS	

*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 4SL development is a mixed-use building consisting of a 27-storey residential tower and 2-storey commercial and residential podium that incorporates the existing historic landmark of the Williams Block building. The podium fronts both the 4 Street SW Main Street and 15 Avenue SW and the massing respects the uses and adjacent buildings along those streets, integrating the existing Williams Block brick building at the corner of the site (currently Red's Diner). The podium and tower alignment has been intentionally pulled back from the laneway to the north allowing additional separation and relief from the adjacent property to the north, which will be developed as a similar high density 2-tower project. As a corner development, The Panel found the design effective at addressing both 4 Street SW and 15 Avenue SW with an engaging interface and is supportive of the high quality materials proposed for the East and South building elevations, as well as potential engaging art installations that could be contemplated for the West and North building elevations.

The Panel endorses the proposal and is supportive of the architectural design intent, however there are areas of concern that should be addressed as the applicant works with The City to secure a Development Permit approval. These aspects of the design are summarized below and are reinforced in the categorized elements that follow:

- **4 ST SW Public Realm** – There appears to be a challenge with the proposed at-grade commercial entrances along 4 Street SW due to the sloping of the site. Accessibility to the commercial units is stepped progressively along this face and causes a fragmented urban realm and landscape that is further bifurcated by large planters that impede pedestrian engagement with CRUs. The Panel recommends revisiting the site and building stepping, as well as the landscape strategy, to create a more contiguous Main Street frontage.
- **North Lane Surface Parking** – The applicant has proposed the northeast corner of the site, adjacent the 4 ST SW Main Street, be designated for surface parking. While this parking area was described as flexible for potential future public gathering (food truck, patio seating), the Panel strongly recommends the parking be removed and the space be designed as a permanent publicly accessible open space. This would better connect the 4 Street SW frontage and provide better interaction with the CRU glazing that wraps the corner to the lane.
- **Loft and Commercial Roofs** – To increase sustainable features of the development, the Panel recommends the implementation of green roofs atop the podium. The roof will be prominently viewed from the residential tower of this development and other adjacent future developments. Consider designing for this future condition and create more desirable views, as the roof will undoubtedly function as a fifth elevation.

Applicant Response

January 31, 2022

We appreciate your endorsement of the project's design intent, in particular the recognition of how the building has negotiated between the urban and commercial character of 4th street and the residential character of 15th Avenue. We acknowledge the concerns identified by the panel and believe we have made appropriate revisions in response. In regards to the 4th Street public realm, the long planters that ran parallel to the street have been removed to open up the space in front of the commercial units. We worked diligently to overcome issues with the challenging grading in this area and were able to limit the amount of steps required. Additionally, we removed the railing separating the access to Red's exit door and revised the grading to enable barrier free access to the restaurant's front door, while creating more integrated stairs to the exit door. These design changes have improved the previously fragmented pedestrian realm and enabled better interaction between the commercial uses and the public interface.

As an extension of the measures to further activate the 4th street interface, steel framed canopies have been added to the storefronts. These canopies emphasize the pedestrian scale as well as wrap around the northeast corner of the building to improve the laneway as an extension of the public realm. In addition to framing the space in front of the north storefront with the steel canopies, the sidewalk itself was also widened. This change was accommodated by angling the proposed parking by 45 degrees. While we can appreciate the concern of the parking stalls impeding the public realm, we believe that they will actually enhance the success of the commercial units and encourage year-round activation. The plaza and patio space is fully intended to be used as such during the warmer months, however, in the winter this space will remain empty. Providing convenient parking during the off season will improve access to the future businesses, especially considering there is no street parking along 4th street.

The recommendation of implementing green roofs on the podium is appreciated, however, is not viable for this project. We agree with the notion of the roof as a fifth elevation, and have proposed the roof to be surfaced with a decorative material. Higher quality ballast can be applied in patterns and imagery to improve sightlines.

Urban Design Element	
Creativity <i>Encourage innovation; model best practices</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall project approach as it relates to original ideas or innovation 	
UDRP Commentary	The project demonstrates creativity in the overall design; building articulation, quality materials, and the incorporation of the historic Williams Block create a strong street activating design that is appropriate for this location.
Applicant Response	Thank you.
Context <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"> Massing relationship to context, distribution on site, and orientation to street edges Shade impact on public realm and adjacent sites 	
UDRP Commentary	The massing is reflective of the evolving Beltline character of street-oriented midrise and tower developments. The Panel acknowledges the applicant's desire to provide greater separation and relief along the north lane, which provides a unique opportunity for an upgraded public realm that is complimentary with the 4 th Street SW context.
Applicant Response	Thank you.
Animation <i>Incorporate active uses; pay attention to details; add colour, wit and fun</i> <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	<p>High-quality materials like brick, stone, and durable panels contribute to an attractive and interesting streetscape/pedestrian realm. The Panel encourages the applicant to consider integrating the same level of attention to the lane north elevation.</p> <p>The residential tower façade mimics the fenestration of the podium units to bring the two parts of the development into context together and further compliments the streetscape realm.</p> <p>The west façade of the podium has the opportunity for integrating art/murals that would add colour and interest to what would be an interim blank façade. The Applicant is also encouraged to consider more permanent and lasting opportunities for high quality murals that would leverage the Beltline Urban Mural Project (BUMP) initiative. Attention should be paid to the north lane elevation and the type of installation that would be considered.</p>
Applicant Response	Thank you. The intent for the murals is to engage with the BUMP initiative. We have utilized a high quality of materials in on the north elevation to elevate this area as part of the public realm.
Human Scale <i>Defines street edges, ensures height and mass respect context; pay attention to scale</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Massing contribution to public realm at grade 	
UDRP Commentary	Overall building height is appropriate considering the tower is sufficiently set back from the streetscape. Street-oriented units create a rhythm that respects the human scale and adjacent buildings.
Applicant Response	Thank you.
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	<p>It is strongly recommended that the surface parking off the lane be removed and programmed as a permanent public plaza complete with public seating and inviting landscape design. This would provide additional public realm activation that would elevate the contiguous 4 Street SW Main Street.</p> <p>The 15 Avenue SW setback allows for ground level units that respect the residential yards along the avenue. The Panel recommends considering replacing the grass and trees along the curb edge with hardscaping to allow for the continuation of 4 Street public gathering to connect around the corner of 15 Avenue.</p>
Applicant Response	The design has been amended to prioritize the space as a patio space, with parking during the colder months to improve access to the future businesses.

	Noted. The design has been amended to remove the grass along 15 th Avenue and increase the available hardscaping for public use.
Connectivity Achieve visual and functional connections between buildings and places; ensure connection to existing and future networks. <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	Improved connections along 4 th Street SW should be considered for a more integrated public realm. While acknowledging building code requirements, explore methods to create a less fragmented street frontage.
Applicant Response	Noted. The design has been amended to better integrate the public realm by removing the planters that fragmented the space and revising the grading.
Accessibility Ensure clear and simple access for all types of users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier free design • Entry definition, legibility, and natural wayfinding 	
UDRP Commentary	Entries are clear and defined. The current application did not appear to have any accessibility issues, however while addressing public realm improvement recommendations noted in this review, attention should remain to preserve accessibility.
Applicant Response	Noted.
Diversity Promote designs accommodating a broad range of users and uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail street variety, at-grade areas, transparency into spaces • Corner treatments and project porosity 	
UDRP Commentary	The proposed development exceeds expectations for accommodating a broad range of users and uses in a mixed-use building, while incorporating heritage preservation.
Applicant Response	Thank you.
Flexibility Develop planning and building concepts which allow adaptation to future uses, new technologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project approach relating to market and/or context changes 	
UDRP Commentary	The application is a true mixed-use project and is built with strong Flexibility characteristics. The affordable housing component proposed to be disbursed throughout the towers strengthens the project related to market demand and being contextually appropriate in the Beltline.
Applicant Response	Thank you.
Safety Achieve a sense of comfort and create places that provide security at all times <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and security • Night time design 	
UDRP Commentary	Building setback off lane is commended by the Panel; the massing improves sight lines and increases safety. Removing the surface parking would complete an exceptional proposed design, from both Integration and Safety perspectives.
Applicant Response	Thank you. We have worked to show that the surface parking will be a flexible space utilized to encourage year-round activation of this urban space.
Orientation Provide clear and consistent directional clues for urban navigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance natural views and vistas 	
UDRP Commentary	The building street front massing and orientation along 4 Street SW and 15 Avenue SW is well defined.
Applicant Response	Thank you.
Sustainability Be aware of lifecycle costs; incorporate sustainable practices and materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site/solar orientation and passive heating/cooling • Material selection and sustainable products 	
UDRP Commentary	Opportunities for green roof (or other functional opportunities) are recommended to be considered for the lofts and CRU roofs.
Applicant Response	Noted. We have proposed the use of decorative ballast on the podium roofs to improve the view from the tower residences. Additionally, planting will be provided on both the 3 rd floor rooftop dog run area and penthouse rooftop amenity deck.
Durability 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 building materials include brick, paneling, and stone – all of which are durable and low-maintenance.
Applicant Response	Thank you.

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UDRP Comments

29/09/2021