

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Date	November 2, 2022	
Time	1:00	
Panel Members	Present Chad Russill (Chair) Rick Gendron Gary Mundy Noorullah Hussain Zada	Distribution Chris Hardwicke (Co-Chair) Jadwiga Kroman Jeff Lyness Kathy Oberg Glen Pardoe (conflict) Katherine Robinson Beverly Sandalack Jack Vanstone
Advisor	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number	DP2022-06848	
Municipal address	823 17 Av SW	
Community	Lower Mount Royal	
Project Description	New: Dwelling unit, Retail and consumer service; Restaurant (Licensed) - Enzo	
Review	first	
File Manager	Ben Ang	
Urban Design & Open Space	Dawn Clarke	
Applicant	DAAS	

Summary

The proposed development is for a new 6 storey multi-family residential building with a commercial ground floor on the south side of 17 Avenue SW, directly opposite Tomkins Park. The site is in the centre of one of the busiest and most vibrant urban environments of the city, surrounded by intensities of uses that include living, working, shopping, dining, entertainment, and the activities of the adjacent park. The proposed design is intended to address the adjacent park while respecting the massing of neighbouring buildings and the street form created by the massing of Mount Royal Village. The design also proposes at-grade commercial across the length of its 17 Avenue frontage.

The massing and distribution of uses within the proposed development fit well within the context of 17 Avenue and is a good start to addressing the adjacent park in terms of massing but is not as successful in providing actual and perceived connections with the park, due mostly to cladding and materiality. Dark brick is used extensively at the lower levels and close to the street, hampering views to the park and from the park from the first and second floors, and contributing to an overall dark façade along the north of the building where the project might benefit from a brighter, more translucent face on the street and park. For example, while the ground and second floor are intended by design to act as an extension of Tomkins Park, the lack of visual permeability due to the brick parapet at the second level patio, and the limited amount of glazing along the street level tend to create a feeling of separation from the street and park, rather than an embracing of them. Reasoning for the lack of permeability in these locations provided by the applicant included limited budget, and the need to locate equipment on the second floor behind the parapet. The Panel feels that these obstacles can be overcome without negatively affecting budgets and urges the applicant to investigate creating a stronger and more direct connection with the park. The Panel likes the idea of the digital display on the west façade of the building but is concerned that there is no plan in place should the digital projection not be successful. The Panel suggests that the applicant include a contingency plan for the treatment of the west elevation that mitigates the likelihood of the exposed façade being a large white EIFS face.

Applicant Response

2023-03-29

Regarding the connection with Tomkins Park, we are providing six glass retail and commercial doors, to create permeability with the immediate sidewalk. The percentage of glass on the main floor is of 42% which means 870 square feet of glazing; at the same time the percentage of glazing in the whole façade is 47%. We think this is a significant visual connection to the park. The dark brick, together with a see-through glass creates a contrast that enhances the glass. On the second floor, while we want to create porosity and visual connections, these need to be balanced with privacy. The second-floor balconies are fully accessible to the second-floor units, creating the opportunity to overlook the Park in front, in a controlled manner.

In the occasion that the digital display is not successful, we propose that this wall becomes a mural. This wall could display a painted art mural, to be commissioned upon completion of the Project.

Urban Design Element	
Place Recognize and enhance the unique and emerging identity of a place by responding to surrounding context, local policy, and community objectives through the contribution of innovative architecture and public realm.	
Site	Does the site planning show innovation in addressing site constraints and challenges?
	Does the design respect existing topography, landscape, and archaeology?
	Does the site design accommodate people of all abilities?
Architecture	Is the project visually interesting and unique?
	Does the architecture respond to landmark and gateway opportunities presented by the site?
	Does the design reflect any distinctive social, cultural or historical aspects of the site and community?
Public Realm	Does the project contribute to the creation of a high quality, connected public realm?
UDRP Commentary	<p>The building does not differentiate itself from other recent developments in the area, nor does it propose a different relationship between the building and the street. Dark brick with dark retail facades presents a fairly standard face along the avenue, matching development patterns and facades immediately to the east and west. A greater sense of place would be achieved by creating a unique experience that can heighten the experience of the area. One consideration may be realized through a strengthened connection to the park and street via increased visual interconnectivity. The concept of the building tying into the park is strong, but requires better execution at the lower two levels.</p> <p>The inclusion of new street trees along 17 Avenue is appreciated, however the Applicant is encouraged to utilize tree grates and not sodded areas at the base of the trees. These areas, generally, deteriorate quite quickly in the urban realm. The Applicant did note that the alignment of the underground utilities were still in discussion with the design team; efforts should be made to preserve the larger of the existing street trees along 17 Avenue through re-alignment of the underground utilities.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>The project proposes unique features, such as: a large entrance canopy with the building's name on top; curved brick walls to channel in residential access. This combination of materials is not found on any recently completed building on 17th Avenue SW.</p> <p>The connection to the park is strengthened by the program proposed (commercial and retail) and the sidewalk patios these will generate. The use of extensive glazing along this wall further strengthens the connection between the building and the park.</p> <p>While efforts will be made to retain the large existing trees, construction will most likely require a removal of these trees. We have implemented tree grates instead of sod for the base of the trees.</p>
Scale Ensure appropriate transitions between building masses and adjacent places and spaces; define street and open space edges and bring human scale through articulation, materials, details and landscaping.	
Site	Does the arrangement of buildings and spaces on the site address street edges well?

	Is the scale and placement of buildings and structures appropriate for the street and public space size and type?
	Are large service and surface parking areas modulated and screened by structures and landscaping?
Architecture	Are design strategies employed to reduce the impact of building height and bulk?
	Are street walls well defined and of appropriate height to street width and type?
	Are human scaled elements and details included to enhance street character?
Public Realm	Are public spaces well edged and framed by structures and/or landscaping?
	Does the design include detail which will enhance street character and encourage use of the public realm?
UDRP Commentary	The scale of the building is appropriate for its location, and the setback from the curb seems right. The Panel appreciates how the stepping-back from 17 Ave mirrors that of the Mount Royal Village step-backs. The Panel is concerned that there is no plan in place should the digital projection on the west façade not be successful. The Panel suggests that the applicant include a contingency plan for the treatment of the west elevation that mitigates the likelihood of the exposed façade being a large white EIFS face.
Applicant Response	We propose that the proposed east and west walls will be concrete block, a combination of smooth and split face, emulating the window pattern on the north and south walls. This effectively will make this building four-sided building. Further, the west building wall will be receiving a quality mural. This painted art mural to be commissioned upon completion of the Project.
Amenity Ensure that public sidewalks and gathering spaces are generously proportioned, comfortable, safe, fully accessible, and framed by permeable facades which allow for activation throughout the year.	
Site	Are equitable, inviting access and varied movement options provided for all ages and abilities?
	Does the design work with sun orientation and seasonal climate variation?
	Does the site plan safely accommodate all travel modes?
	Are service and utility requirements located appropriately to lessen visual impact?
Architecture	Does the building(s) meet or exceed expectations for universal access design?
	Does the architecture create a pleasant street edge which feels safe to users?
Public Realm	Does the public realm design prioritize pedestrians and cyclists over vehicle access?
	Is the public realm visually interesting, comfortable, and safe during all seasons?
	Are the public spaces designed for people of all abilities and ages?
	Do the public spaces meet or exceed expectations for universal access design?
UDRP Commentary	The connectivity between the main and second floor and the adjacent park are key to the success of the design, and should be reconsidered. Conceptually, the ground floor commercial space should blend with the adjacent sidewalk creating a singular urban environment, and on the second floor, the patio should have an actual connection via an overlook of the park, and could even go as far as pulling in some of the pattern of the adjacent planting and hardscaping. With the above noted, the building addresses grade very well, presenting a walkable, universally accessible façade to the street.
Applicant Response	A 3 m deep patio space, addressing the commercial uses beyond, has been placed on the north side of the commercial base providing space for summer patio and seasonal display and other amenities. Further, the store fronts are generously glazed and protected from the environment by deep glass canopies. In the latest design the parapet has been lowered, allowing view lines and connectivity with the park and beyond. Further the residential entry has moved forward towards the sidewalk with the removal of the metal gate.
Legibility Create logical, permeable networks of streets and pathways that connect within and between neighbourhoods and public places; design well-defined community and building entrances with distinctive, memorable attributes.	
Site	Does the project provide a permeable, fine-grained and functional urban structure of blocks and streets?
	Does the project provide legible, accessible, continuous walking and cycling connections within the site that connect to adjacent systems and destinations?

	Does the proposed network consider future expansion into surrounding areas?
	Are large parking areas designed with clear, safe, direct pedestrian connections?
Architecture	Are buildings designed with clearly marked and differentiated entries to facilitate wayfinding?
Public Realm	Are the public routes and spaces configured to facilitate easy and safe navigation with clear paths and appropriately placed wayfinding elements?
UDRP Commentary	As with Place, the building is not clearly differentiated on the avenue from the perspective of the pedestrian. The Panel feels that the legibility of the entrance could be further emphasized. One consideration includes placement on one side or the other rather than between the retail units. This would also provide a more consistent retail front interface at the same time. The design of the residential units on the south façade does not promote passive surveillance, exacerbating CPTED issues in the lane, particularly where there are recesses along the façade with no overlooking.
Applicant Response	By proving the main entrance in a central location, we guarantee movement across the front of the building, proving safety and ensuring constant movement across the street facing length of the building. The large entry canopy will provide clear legibility for the building, in addition to the curved brick walls on both sides of the residential main entrance. The south façade units provide living spaces directly overlooking the lane, proving surveillance, and enhancing CPTED. Recesses have been minimized and eliminated where possible.
Vibrancy Ensure that new developments are configured and designed to animate streets and public spaces with varied sizes and types of grade-oriented uses.	
Site	Will the building placement and orientation together with the arrangement and variety of uses activate the adjacent streets and public spaces? Will the project contribute to creating greater economic, employment and/or residential diversity in the neighbourhood?
Architecture	Does the building articulation, materials and details contribute to the vibrancy of the streets and public spaces? Is there a variety of residential and/or commercial unit types and sizes?
Public Realm	Do outdoor spaces provide varied experiences and accommodate people with diverse abilities?
UDRP Commentary	The Panel recommends that the applicant investigate ways of better integrating the urban realm at street level, as the sidewalk feels separated from the uses within. This may be due to dark materials and dark glazing, and may be remedied by increasing visual porosity through the use of clear low-iron glass for example. Outdoor uses on the second floor are physically and visually separated from the street and the adjacent park. The applicant is urged to review this issue to help contribute to vibrancy, legibility, and place.
Applicant Response	Vibrancy, achieved by the use of the space, is further enhanced by six glass doors on the main level, in addition to clear glazing and to the patios on the main level. This creates visual porosity and contributes to the vibrancy of the street. The residential entry is well lit and easily identifiable.
Resilience 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.	
Site	Is the project designed to respond to change (economic, social, demographic or other) over time? Does the plan meet/exceed climate resilience/sustainable design expectations? Are active travel modes prioritized, and active lifestyle choices encouraged?
Architecture	Does the building show indication of sustainable design practices and materials? Is a range of uses accommodated; does the design anticipate future change? Is the building designed to endure over time with reasonable maintenance?
Public Realm	Are public spaces adaptable for multiple uses over short and medium term? Does the public realm design respond to climate resilience / sustainability expectations?

UDRP Commentary	The project is well designed to fit into a livable and walkable community, however, it does not go beyond minimum required sustainability practices as required by current codes and regulations.
Applicant Response	To further enhance sustainability practices, this building will now have triple glazed windows. EV chargers are conveniently located in the parkade. Roof stub-outs will be placed to provide for solar panel installation (under separate cover). The building materials have also been selected to withstand time and age gracefully.