

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Date	June 29, 2022	
Time	1:00	
Panel Members	Present Chris Hardwicke (Co-Chair) Rick Gendron Jadwiga Kroman Gary Mundy Beverly Sandalack	Distribution Chad Russill (Chair) Jeff Lyness Kathy Oberg Glen Pardoe Katherine Robinson Jack Vanstone Noorullah Hussain Zada
Advisor	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number	DP2022-02654	
Municipal address	1880 85 St SW	
Community	Springbank Hill	
Project description	Multi-Residential Development, Office, Retail and Consumer Service (4 buildings, 5 phases)	
Review	Second (first PE2021-00128)	
File Manager	Kieran Slattery	
City Wide Urban Design	Sonny Tomic	
Applicant	Casola Koppe	

*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 appreciated the applicant's presentation and the evolution of the proposal since the last UDRP session. The Panel supports the overall massing, density and mix of uses proposed in the development.

The site is challenged by a significant slope. The slope presents accessibility issues as well as challenging the ability to animate the street edges at grade. The design has chosen to create a central retail street that runs north-south and a pedestrian mews that cuts across the slope running east-west. The massing of the building is organized by the crossing of these two organizing routes. The Panel was supportive of the main retail street which will activate the development. Although the main retail street and overall massing of the project is strong the Panel suggests the following issues that could be improved through design iteration:

1. Edge conditions

The proposed development internalizes the active uses of the scheme along the central retail street. The outside edge conditions are considerably challenged from an activation point of view. The west façade is raised above grade with raised planters defining the public street edge. The north and south facades are dominated by blank facades. The

south façade is raised from grade with servicing and loading taking up a considerable length of the elevation.

2. East-West Plaza

The plaza that runs east to west is challenged by accessibility issues. The staircases are too narrow and the stramp slopes do not seem to work. The Panel notes that a landscape architect has not been engaged on the project and encourages the Applicant to engage a landscape architect to assist with the development of the plaza and overall landscape design.

3. Slope Adaptation

The proposed first floor elevation along 85th Street SW has been raised significantly above grade. The panel suggests exploring a plinth that uses 85th Street SW as the datum line allowing for at grade access across the site rather than stepping down the project and attempting to mitigate the slopes.

Applicant Response

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	The central retail street is a strong element that creates an active place. The remaining elevations require more development to ensure that the project improves the public realm at grade. The design is using an aspen grove as an inspiration for the building facades. At the ground level it would help to use that same theme on the blank walls.
Applicant Response	Significant improvement has been made along all facades.
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 Panel felt that the overall massing and scale of the development was appropriate to the context.
Applicant Response	Noted. We appreciate the support of the overall scale of the development and are working with City representatives to settle the discrepancy between the ASP and Land use Bylaw.
<i>Amenity</i> 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	There are significant challenges with accessibility within the east-west plaza. The slopes on the stramp do not seem to work. The ground floor along 85 th Street SW is raised above grade. The plaza slopes down but also require ramps to access the building lobbies. The plaza does not allow for universal access to the east of the site and the park. The staircases are too narrow.
Applicant Response	Both 19th Avenue and shared road along North property lines have grades at roughly 8%, meaning that they cannot facilitate a barrier free path of travel without switchback ramps that would not be allowed on City boulevards. We have done everything we can to accommodate paths of travel and accessibility for the site under the constraints. A wide ramp is not a better ramp, and is in fact less accessible

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	The project is generally legible with the exception of accessibility issues as mentioned above. The plaza is a dead end from an accessible point of view and presents a significant slope to return. The main retail street is not visible from 85 th Street SW which will challenge the viability of certain retail uses.
Applicant Response	We acknowledge that the commercial street does not have great visual access from 85th, but as this is really the only reasonable place to have an effective commercial area, the developer is comfortable with this scenario. Commercial along 85th simply does not make economic sense.
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 outside elevations are challenged from a vibrancy standpoint. There are many blank walls, raised planters and service entrances. The internal plaza lacks programming. The requirement to provide a long ramp takes over much of the public space that is supplied. The project offers no real connection or activation to the park to the east.
Applicant Response	Although we have made significant improvements to the design, we would once again like to reiterate that we cannot make the site flat. Access for pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic must all be considered.
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 applicant noted that Building D was intended to be mass timber with the remainder of buildings concrete. The project minimizes glazing and is considering cogeneration. It is a mixed use mid-rise project that is in close proximity to transit. The applicant indicated that there will be ample EV charging stations and will accommodate the electrical supply for future EV charging stations.
Applicant Response	Noted. The intention of Building D to be mass timber remains and the other factors mentioned above regarding minimized glazing, consideration of cogeneration, proximity to transit, and EV charging station indication all stand.