

# Urban Design Review Panel Comments

<b>Date</b>	May 24, 2023	
<b>Time</b>	1:00	
<b>Panel Members</b>	<b>Present</b> Chris Hardwicke (Chair) Rick Gendron Jadwiga Kroman Jeff Lyness (Co-chair) Beverly Sandalack	<b>Distribution</b> Kathy Oberg Jack Vanstone Gary Mundy Raphael Neurohr Glen Pardoe Katherine Robinson Noorullah Hussain Zada
<b>Advisor</b>		
<b>Application number</b>	DP2023-02496	
<b>Municipal address</b>	855 10 St SW	
<b>Community</b>	Downtown West End	
<b>Project description</b>	Phase 3, 1 Building, 251 Units. Mixed-use development (DP2014-0946)	
<b>Review</b>	First	
<b>File Manager</b>	Colleen Renne-Grivell	
<b>Urban Design</b>	Sonny Tomic	
<b>Applicant</b>	NORR Architects, Engineers, Planners	

\*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 Urban Design.

## Summary

The site is in the Downtown West End. Encompassing almost an entire city block between 10th and 11th Streets SW and 8th and 9th Avenues SW. The site could be considered a gateway to the downtown core. A portion of the site has already been developed; phases 1 and 2 adjacent to 9th Avenue and 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Streets. The application is for a mixed-use tower with retail opportunities fronting 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW with the specific development permit application relating to increasing the height of the third tower. Accessed via a series of vertically retractable glazed doors, the retail component presents as a colonnade or galleria along the street. This third phase of the development connects directly to the first two phases, creating a covered laneway. This laneway serves as access for service vehicles, access to the parkade, and loading and unloading of vehicles and passengers to the residential towers.

The retail galleria space on the north side is an interesting integration into the public streetscape. The Panel was concerned that the galleria might not fulfill the intent of urban porosity given site security concerns, our winter city environment, and potential energy costs.

The rear laneway requires further articulation. The Panel had concerns regarding safety in this area as well as wayfinding for service deliveries and visitors. For example, the main entry is perceived to be from 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW, however this is not the case.

The dramatic roofline of the building does not integrate with the abstracted Alberta landscape concept applied to the north façade of the building. The Panel noted that there is a lost opportunity to extend this abstracted landscape concept further around the building, incorporating the sloped roof and towers, creating opportunities for incorporating prairie grasses onto the roofscape via the introduction of greenroof structures, and extending the concept down to the street level through introduction of the colour palette and incorporation of native plant materials into the green spaces.

DP2023-02496  
UDRP Comments

05/24/2023

<b>Urban Design Element</b>	
<b>Place</b> 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 pedestrian areas allow for accessibility for mobility challenged users, however the visual wayfinding, including signage and colour differentiation on the horizontal plane, should be improved.</p> <p>The sloped roof plane provides a striking profile to the building in elevation; however the architectural elements and facade articulation do not respond to this design move. The visual presence of the sloped roof is arguably more impactful than the typical elevations, as a result the current design is viewed by the Panel as a missed opportunity for the development. The abstracted pixelated landscape façade treatment and the amount of façade area comprised of the colored panels does not integrate well with this sloped plane as an integrated design element. The sloped roof should be viewed as an elevation given its prominence and can be further integrated into the overall elevation strategy for the podium of the development. As currently constituted, the visual concept of the 'abstracted Alberta landscape' is not reflected in any purposeful manner beyond a few rows of panels and colored lighting at the entrances.</p> <p>The retail galleria on the north side of the building offers an interesting interface between the public and private spaces. The Panel was not certain how often the retractable glazed doors would actually be open given the issues of site security, the north exposure, and the winter city environment. Further refinement to the design is strongly encouraged as the design for public interface with the retail components as presented can be viewed as not meeting the aspirations of the applicant. When closed, the interface with the street is quite austere with limited articulation or visual wayfinding.</p>
Applicant Response	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wayfinding signage will be provided to clearly identify entrances and service areas. We will review colour and surface options to differentiate the horizontal planes.</li> <li>2. Roofing material on the sloped portion will be of highest quality.</li> <li>3. We feel strongly that our proposed design will work with circulation, energy conservation measures, and site safety!</li> </ol>
<b>Scale</b> 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?
UDRP Commentary	Does the design include detail which will enhance street character and encourage use of the public realm?
UDRP Commentary	<p>The retail galleria has the potential to present a very permeable interface between the building and the street edge. The sidewalk along 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW is generously wide and the inclusion of street trees helps with definition of the street edge. The Applicant is encouraged to locate the street trees closer together and consider extending the row as close to the 10<sup>th</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection as possible.</p>

	<p>The custom yellow colored bike racks are vibrant urban elements. The placement of the racks along the street edge should be reevaluated; there may be more opportune areas within the site.</p> <p>The constructed phases of the project are currently subject to frequent downdrafts creating a very windy condition at ground level. This condition is substantially exacerbated during any windy event. The Panel expressed concern that the increased height of the third phase tower would induce similar conditions at ground level in the plaza spaces and along 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The Applicant is encouraged to explore design solutions that will mitigate the potential windy conditions. This will be especially important for the winter months.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>Tree count and placement will be in accordance to the City of Calgary standards. Yellow bike racks will be relocated away from the street edge. The height of the third tower is the same as the previous phases. We feel the wind conditions will be mitigated via proposed building articulation and features.</p>
<p><b>Amenity</b> <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.</i></p>	
Site	<p>Are equitable, inviting access and varied movement options provided for all ages and abilities?</p> <p>Does the design work with sun orientation and seasonal climate variation?</p> <p>Does the site plan safely accommodate all travel modes?</p> <p>Are service and utility requirements located appropriately to lessen visual impact?</p>
Architecture	<p>Does the building(s) meet or exceed expectations for universal access design?</p> <p>Does the architecture create a pleasant street edge which feels safe to users?</p>
Public Realm	<p>Does the public realm design prioritize pedestrians and cyclists over vehicle access?</p> <p>Is the public realm visually interesting, comfortable, and safe during all seasons?</p> <p>Are the public spaces designed for people of all abilities and ages?</p> <p>Do the public spaces meet or exceed expectations for universal access design?</p>
UDRP Commentary	<p>The plaza areas at the northwest and northeast of the site do not appear to integrate well with the retail galleria, they present as separate spaces. Exploring options including allowing direct access to the galleria space from the northwest plaza, incorporation of bench seating, and materials and color integration pulled from the abstracted Alberta landscape façade treatment may be helpful.</p> <p>The laneway adjacent to the northwest plaza space needs to be incorporated into the plaza to provide a larger, more integrated public space. The incorporation of the laneway should also provide some traffic calming measures into the area and potentially reduce temporary parking or loading incidents.</p> <p>The rear covered laneway will function as the drop off and loading spaces for the residential units; further articulation of how this space will act as a de-facto street is encouraged. The Applicant is encouraged to incorporate as much lighting as feasible into this space and ensure there are interior spaces that look into the lane. There are very few windows into this space; the development for the most part does not address this area, which is a concern for the Panel. The proposed design for this area was not presented as part of the package and given the prominence of the residential entrance of the lane when viewed in the plan, the Panel assumes that an equitable level of consideration is being given to this area as the more traditional public street facing entrances.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>The laneway between the phases was already constructed under phase 2 of the project. Additional lighting will be considered as requested and openings to the west laneway are being proposed. Glazing from the previous phase and new phase will allow transparency to the rear lane, we do have to be mindful that the rear laneway is also the location of back of house services such as W&amp;R, Loading, and vehicular pick up/drop off.</p>
<p><b>Legibility</b> <i>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.</i></p>	
Site	<p>Does the project provide a permeable, fine-grained and functional urban structure of blocks and streets?</p>

	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 service alley location of the main access for loading and unloading of vehicles and passengers will be challenging, and the Applicant is encouraged to incorporate a robust wayfinding and signage program to highlight this main residential entry. The main residential entry should be from 8 <sup>th</sup> Avenue. It is not completely clear where service and delivery vehicles should access the building, leading to the anticipation of temporary parking for loading and unloading along 8 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, blocking the bike lane and half of the street.
Applicant Response	Service and Delivery is located off the laneway (within the building foot print), As per the COC's future of Stephen ave concept plan 8 <sup>th</sup> ave is being reduced to 2 lanes of vehicle traffic and raised bike paths. (No parking along 8 <sup>th</sup> ave) This means 8 <sup>th</sup> ave is not conducive for vehicle loading / unloading, hence why we are proposing the laneway loading and unloading.
<b>Vibrancy</b> 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 integration of a robust lighting program is appreciated and should add to the vibrancy and gateway aspect of the building. This lighting program should also be extended into the rear laneway for safety and security of the residents.  The ground floor retail expressed through the galleria on the north side is an innovative concept, however the Panel expressed concern regarding how often the retractable doors would actually be opened given the orientation of the retail spaces on the north side, the fact that we are in a winter city, and the transient community in the area. Programmatically, this element may be challenging.  The applicant is encouraged to explore a further integration of the northwest plaza adjacent to the Horizon Housing facility to help better integrate the block and deter unnecessary loitering.  The abstracted Alberta Landscape graphic should be extended to the ground floor and potentially expressed through colors or further design evolution of façade elements or urban furniture.
Applicant Response	Robust lighting will continue to areas of the laneway that have not been constructed. The west plaza will be well lighted and have limited blind spots, both designed to deter unnecessary loitering.
<b>Resilience</b> 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	<p>The extensive roof space offers opportunity for inclusion of solar panels or green roof installation. The Applicant did note that the requirements of the National Energy Code were being followed, however apart from extensive use of LED lighting there were no other notable elements.</p> <p>The energy consumption of the galleria space was a concern; open doors in the heat of summer may mean extensive air conditioning is required, and similarly in the winter extensive heating may be needed for the space. Have these energy requirements been examined? The Applicant did note that while it was technically challenging; they were confident they could address these issues.</p> <p>Given Calgary's climatic region, the Panel suggest that relying on an operable door that is acknowledged by the applicant as challenging to deal with is actually the solution that meets the aspirations of the project and is contextually appropriate.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>Preliminary energy reviews are being undertaken. Placing a green roof or solar panels on the North side of the 2story podium being shadowed by 3 towers may not be the best sustainable investment. We feel investing in improved insulation, high performance windows, and mechanicals systems will be a better sustainable investment, which will reduce energy consumption and improve user comfort.</p>