

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Date | November 22, 2023 | |
| Time | 1:00 | |
| Panel Members | Present Jeff Lyness (Chair) Rasool Ghodoosi Dehnavi Rick Gendron Ryan Martinson Raphael Neurohr Katherine Robinson | Distribution Kathy Oberg (Co-chair) Noorullah Hussain Zada Boris Karn Maria Landry Beverly Sandalack Brendan Stevenson |
| Advisor | Dawn Clarke, Urban Designer | |
| Application number | PE2023-01775 | |
| Municipal address | 10 11A Street NE | |
| Community | Bridgeland/ Riverside | |
| Project description | Outline Plan | |
| Review | First | |
| File Manager | Dwayne Drobot | |
| Urban Design | Hardy Huang | |
| Applicant | S2 Architecture | |

*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 Panel strongly supports the aspirational ambitions of this mixed use project that will be the home of CNIB's western hub. The Applicant confirmed targets of 20% below market housing and 15-20% improvement on code requirements for energy efficiency. Key aspects of the design concept that must be further developed to prove that the lively public realm and pedestrian focused design presented in the renderings can be achieved include:

- Massing and placement of the highest elements to provide identity to Bridgeland and signify this site's location as a gateway to the east side of the city. Shaping of the density into slender point tower forms that lessen shadow impacts and allow access to natural light and views around and between them as well as leaving generous amounts of open public space at grade.
- Locating the higher buildings where they have the least impact on neighbouring properties and then transitioning the massing down to heights that relate to adjacent buildings.
- Full activation of both the shared street and plaza and creating linkages from them to the fragrant garden so that all 3 areas become contiguous outdoor spaces.
- Pedestrian connections to pathways external to the site.
- Placement of back of house, loading, waste & recycling, and parkade entrances to divert traffic away from pedestrian zones.

The Panel requests to see the project again at DP stage to see how the concept has been developed and to confirm that the ambitions represented have been achieved.

Applicant Response

December 14, 2023 – Please refer to the responses below. Comments will be addressed in more detail at the Development Permit stage 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? |
| | <p>Strong placemaking opportunities have been identified in the submission and the Applicant should develop these further:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement of taller tower at SE corner in response to a gateway opportunity for the city. • Fragrant garden, shared street and plaza are aspects of a strong public realm design if the buildings facing them are designed to activate the public spaces. Currently the shared street lacks activation as building edges are not continuous along the street and in some instances, back of house functions are situated adjacent to the shared street. The Panel suggests focusing back of house functions towards the Memorial Drive area of the site to allow more activation of the public / pedestrian zones and possibly even extend the shared street towards the west to connect with 11a St NE. |
| Applicant Response | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At the Development Permit stage of the project the project will be addressing all aspects of the site questions above. The design will respond to the existing site topography, landscape and archeology. The concept of the Shared Street is intended to be an outdoor learning area for the disabled and will be designed as such. 2. From an architectural point of view, the intent is to not only recognize that this site is to be visually interesting but that it is a gateway/landmark site and will be designed to respond to these comments. 3. For the Public Realm, we agree that the southeast corner of the site should be the taller tower in response to the gateway opportunity. The Shared Street, which bisects the site in the north/south direction is to be developed further to accommodate activity from not only the building frontages but also in relationship to the Fragrant Garden and the centrally located plaza, the intent is to activate all public areas and utilize the Shared Street as a pedestrian corridor as well as a teaching opportunity for the disabled. The back of house components of the project is to be relegated to the perimeter edges thereby freeing up the interior of the site for the public. |
| 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 | Massing strategy as proposed is effective as it locates the tallest element at the SE corner of the site where it can give identity to the Bridgeland community and leverage a gateway opportunity for this east end of the city. From there it transitions downward in response to |

| | |
|---|--|
| | the established buildings in the neighbourhood. The renderings represent a design concept with highly articulated building facades and variety of façade treatment from building to building. |
| Applicant Response | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For the site, the intent is to arrange the buildings and spaces such that they activate not only the street frontages but also the internal open public spaces. The scale and placement of the buildings are responding to not just the scale of the streets but also the surrounding massing that has been previously approved. There are to be no large open parking lots in the concept, rather just some parallel parking opportunities along the Shared Street. 2. The architecture will be designed to respond to the streetscape and create character through details in the facades. The building massing is to be as UDRP has commented upon whereby the tallest building is in the southwest corner of the site and then steps down to the scale of the neighbourhood to the north. The towers have been separated to allow for not only more diverse views into and out of the site but also to address sun shadow on and off the site. 3. The Public Realm is to be designed to address all edges that front onto the streets but also the internal plaza area and the Fragrant Garden, public interaction is a key feature to this project and its goals for the CNIB. |
| 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 | <p>Shaping the density into taller built form allows for ample public space at grade. The panel would like to see more continuity between the fragrant garden, shared street and the plaza so that each is an extension of the others.</p> <p>As a multi generational space the Panel encourages the Applicant to ensure the site is both physically and cognitively accessible to all residents.</p> |
| Applicant Response | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For the site, the site is to be designed to accommodate the disabled and must be not only accessible but safe for all as will be used for learning for the disabled as well as the public. Parking for the site is all underground with access to these parking areas being at the perimeter of the site, similarly, the servicing of the site will be kept to the perimeter as much as possible to free up the pedestrian zones of the site. 2. The buildings will meet or exceed Universal Design requirements as there are disabled individuals which must be accommodated on and off site, as such, the environment must also be a safe zone for all. 3. For the Public Realm, the pedestrian is the major focus of the outdoor spaces. The Fragrant Garden, Shared Street and the central Plaza will be designed as a connective and continuous realm seamlessly blending one into the other. Each of these spaces will have different requirements which have to be addressed to address the multi-generational use of the spaces. As these spaces are for all residents, they are also for the disabled and thus will be designed to address Universal Design for all spaces, including both physical and cognitive accessibility. |
| 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 | <p>The site is very walkable internally but there are additional opportunities to make connections outward to adjacent areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastward connections to adjacent pathways. • Give consideration to the walking route to the LRT station and ensure a sense of arrival where that route joins the site – this may include a SW connection near Memorial drive in addition to the route that connects at the NW corner. <p>The Panel recognizes that the proposed pathway layout is conceptual at this point in time, and encourages the Applicant to explore opportunities to increase cognitive wayfinding through the creation of a pathway hierarchy and integration of the art elements as wayfinding elements.</p> |
| Applicant Response | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For the site, the intention is to design the project to be permeable and functional and provide legible, accessible continuous walking and cycling connections within the site, but also to the structured grid of the adjacent neighbourhood and surrounding pathway systems surrounding the site. The public circulation will have proper connections to pathways and streets for the pedestrian to have access to the Bridgeland-Memorial Drive LRT station as well. 2. All entries to buildings are to be clearly defined from not only a massing and scale point of view but also from a legibility aspect to allow the disabled to navigate the site easily. 3. Through Universal Design, care and attention will be given to wayfinding throughout the site, which will include pathway hierarchy and the integration of outdoor artwork. It is important to design the spaces for all including the disabled. |
| 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 development has the potential to be very vibrant if the fragrant garden, shared street and plaza have maximum activation at their edges. Locate the daycare where it can connect to outdoor green space that receives sunlight. Public art in the plaza can be a branding and/ or wayfinding opportunity for the development. |
| Applicant Response | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For the site, the buildings have been oriented to help organize the site and define the outdoor public spaces including the Fragrant Garden, shared Street and internal Plaza. The building edges will animate these edges and provide activity. With the introduction of retail/commercial spaces, some of which will run by the CNIB, there will be a positive economic and employment opportunity for area residents as well as CNIB users. The project is being designed for multi-generational users attracting all people to the project. 2. Materials and details are to be carefully thought through to help with the vibrancy of the project, as well as wayfinding and clarity. 3. The outdoor public spaces are being designed to accommodate varied experiences for individuals with diverse disabilities and abilities. |
| 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 Panel commends the Applicant for their commitment to improve on energy efficiency targets by 15-20% as stated. |
| Applicant Response | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For this project active travel modes will be prioritized as many of the people will have disabilities and will be reliant on alternate travel modes. 2. The buildings will be funded through CMHC and as a result will employ strategies to improve energy efficiency targets by 15-20%. 3. The public spaces will be designed to be adaptable for multiple uses over both the short and long term. The public areas will be designed to Universal Design standards for all the public areas on site. |