

# Urban Design Review Panel Comments

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<b>Date</b>	August 16, 2023	
<b>Time</b>	1:00	
<b>Panel Members</b>	<b>Present</b> Chris Hardwicke (Chair) Jeff Lyness (Co-chair) Rick Gendron Beverly Sandalack Noorullah Hussain Zada	<b>Distribution</b> Jadwiga Kroman Gary Mundy Raphael Neurohr (conflict) Glen Pardoe (conflict) Kathy Oberg Katherine Robinson Jack Vanstone
<b>Advisor</b>	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
<b>Application number</b>	DP2023-03797	
<b>Municipal address</b>	615 17 Av SW	
<b>Community</b>	Cliff Bungalow	
<b>Project description</b>	New: Mixed Use (1 building, 220 units)	
<b>Review</b>	Second (first at PE2023-00767)	
<b>File Manager</b>	Joseph Yun	
<b>Urban Design</b>	Jihad Bitar for Xia Zhang	
<b>Applicant</b>	DAAS	

\*Based on the applicant's response to the Panel's comments, the Chief Urban Designer will determine if further review includes the Panel or be completed internally only by Urban Design.

### Summary

The proposal is for a mixed-use building located on 17th Avenue SW and 5A St SW. Retail spaces face 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW and at grade units face 5A St. SW. The site incorporates a public plaza at the corner of 17th Ave and 5A St. Overall, the Panel was supportive of the project's massing, site placement and street edge conditions. However, the plaza design presented was undeveloped, and the at-grade units are not directly connected to the public sidewalk, understanding that this is a limitation imposed by the bylaw governing the historic landscaped boulevard. Elements of the proposal that the Panel suggests could be improved include:

- Design development of the corner plaza and integration of the plaza with the building.
- Connection between the at-grade residential units and the sidewalk.
- The rear entrance from the laneway.

### Applicant Response

[Applicant Response in Green](#)

<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	The Panel supports the siting of the building but believes that the plaza design was under developed.
Applicant Response	The applicant appreciates the support and recognizes the resolution of the plaza at the time of presentation. We recognize the feedback from the panel and are currently working with Heavy Industries in conjunction with Navagrah Landscaping to resolve the plaza and sculptural element to provide an engaging and comfortable pedestrian experience for the community. In addition, the plaza will respond to stakeholder and community feedback as gathered in our multiple meetings with the BIA and community association.
<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?
	Does the design include detail which will enhance street character and encourage use of the public realm?
UDRP Commentary	The Panel finds the scale of the building to be appropriate as the massing protects for sunlight on 17 <sup>th</sup> Ave. SW.
Applicant Response	Noted; we appreciate the support.
<b>Amenity</b> 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 "plaza" resolution is a critical component of the urban design. As stated before, the plaza needs design development. The applicant should work with the City to coordinate the public spaces on either side of 5A St. SW. The crossing at 5A St. SW could be narrowed with a curb extensions that could provide more public space and room for street trees.

Applicant Response	The applicant agrees on the importance of the plaza as the central urban design feature and is working with Heavy Industries and the City to provide a robust solution that is comprehensive and integrated into the surrounding context.
<b>Legibility</b> 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 signage on top of the awnings would be difficult to read from the sidewalk. Blade signage perpendicular to the sidewalk might improve pedestrian legibility. The rear entrance lacks a sense of welcoming and visibility to the laneway.</p> <p>Preserving the existing street trees has resulted in a discontinuous connection from the grade related units to the sidewalk. The Panel recommends working with the City to address the street tree locations, including the possibility of replanting. Our understanding is that the heritage street bylaw requires continued use of green ash trees, planted at the same spacing, and not preservation of specific individual trees. The bylaw and the City document "Calgary's Urban Forest History" identify the trees on 5A St as green ash. Another City document "Conserving Calgary's Historic Streets" seems to have incorrect nomenclature (the trees are noted as <i>Fraxinum mandschurica</i> (Manchurian Ash) however, this should be <i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>), an apparent error that is carried forward into the bylaw. Correct identification of the trees in question will be important in developing a street tree planting strategy adjacent to this project.</p> <p>The heritage street tree bylaw seems to advocate keeping the overall character, spacing, and species. The Panel believes that the spirit of the bylaw is also to improve the overall urban canopy, and could reflect newer and better tree planting techniques than those used historically, and also to improve the pedestrian realm over time, which could involve separated sidewalks, rather than the sidewalk directly adjacent to the carriageway.</p>
Applicant Response	<p>The applicant hears the panel and has provided blade signage to improve pedestrian wayfinding. Additionally, the lane design has been improved by eliminating parking and providing a more gracious walking experience in the lane for access to amenities and services. Further, a material change has been added with building signage to provide not only wayfinding, but also more of a second-main-entrance feel in the lane.</p> <p>Regarding the 5A St sidewalk, the applicant has worked with the city to find an appropriate solution while maintaining the heritage trees and providing an intimate and comfortable pedestrian experience along 5a St. We believe this solution reflects the value found in the heritage trees and will allow space for future landscaping development by the city along the boulevard.</p>
<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 building is set back on 17 <sup>th</sup> to provide additional public space. The retail spaces activate the public realm, but the blank wall above the plaza should be articulated or animated with public art. The plaza is not yet developed. Raising the awning height would allow for greater visibility and openness into the retail spaces.
Applicant Response	Noted; the applicant has provided a building sign to animate the blank wall and provide further way finding.
<i>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.</i>	
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 application supplied insufficient information for the Panel to provide comment.
Applicant Response	The client is providing infrastructure for PV panels on the roof, as well as EV charging stations in the parkade to anticipate a sustainable future. Additionally, the varied suite types, from 1 bed to 4 bed to townhouses, provides for a wide range of user types, increasing the adaptability of the building into the future.