

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Date	July 19, 2023	
Time	1:00	
Panel Members	Present Chris Hardwicke (Chair) Rick Gendron Kathy Oberg Glen Pardoe Beverly Sandalack	Distribution Jeff Lyness (Co-chair) Jadwiga Kroman Gary Mundy Raphael Neurohr Katherine Robinson Jack Vanstone Noorullah Hussain Zada
Advisor	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number	PE2023-01005	
Municipal address	1550 Na'a Dr SW	
Community	Medicine Hill	
Project description	Development: Icon Phase 2	
Review	First	
File Manager	Quadri Adebayo	
Urban Design	Sonny Tomic	
Applicant	Devereaux Design	

*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 subject lands are located within the neighbourhood of Trinity Hills, within the Medicine Hill Community. The parcel is located along the Trans-Canada Highway on the north side of Na'a Drive. The site is comprised of two proposed buildings up to 6 storeys in height and an amenity clubhouse. The site has some unique grading challenges, requires pedestrian scale fronting along Na'a Drive and must also address the Trans-Canada Highway with acceptable articulation and detail. The Panel understands this is the second parcel (with a developing site to the east) and the clubhouse is a shared amenity for both phases.

The lands are contained within the Canada Olympic Park & Adjacent Lands Area Structure Plan and identified on the land use concept as being located within the Village District. **"Buildings within the Village District shall be designed to enhance the public realm with entryways to ground-floor residential and commercial units along the Residential Main Street providing individual, direct entryways to the sidewalk."** While the Panel understands that commercial uses might not be viable in this location and are better served within the commercial district, they are unable to support a development that doesn't properly address the street.

The current building is devoid of, at a minimum, a main lobby along Na'a Drive and individual accesses as identified as required in the ASP. The Panel is concerned at the size of the continuous building wall, lack of accesses and the interface of the amenity building with the street. The Panel is worried that the pool amenity will not be visible nor will activity be evident in the outdoor spaces and interior building to those on the street. The Panel would like to see more windows, activity and activation with potential consideration of flipping the pool towards the north side and the offices flipped to the south for increased windows and inside activation.

The Panel does like the articulation as visible from the Trans-Canada Highway but suggests that additional landscape treatment will improve the tenants' relationship with the roadway.

The Panel is concerned that the interior corridor between the buildings is lacking in true way-finding and understanding. The sidewalks should be increased in width and more vegetation added, in addition to more connections to Na'a Drive.

The pedestrian interface along Na'a Drive is a key element of the ASP. Consider a row of townhomes or at-grade units that have walkways extending to the sidewalk. While we recognize that this edge contains a multi-use pathway, the Panel is supportive of multiple connections leading to this pathway.

The Panel looks forward to seeing the Development Permit package and appreciated the opportunity to review this proposal at the Pre-Application Stage.

Applicant Response

(September 13, 2023)

Thank you to the panel for the thoughtful response to our application. The project is faced with many challenges with regards to the site grading of which the project has addressed with some slope adaptive development elements integrating parking where less desirable living spaces would normally be, enhanced private amenity spaces both indoor and outdoor with high quality accessible spaces.

We have addressed the pedestrian interface along Na'a Drive with some design changes reflected in the new design respective of the ASP. We have provided a dedicated lobby entrance along Na'a Drive for the residents to have direct access to the street along with a series of front door access sidewalks for units directly facing Na'a drive to activate the public realm. We have allocated two areas along Na'a drive for interpretive features in consultation with Indigenous advisors; 1) bordering the west MR lands a portion of the sloped hillside will provide a interpretive display and garden of native planting to provide an interactive public feature along the pedestrian pathway. 2) the screening to the pool area will be an Indigenous art inspired custom screening element to provide an enhance public realm and interest along Na'a drive. The windows to the amenity building have been increased in size to provide additional views into the active, south facing gym area with views to the street and pool.

Additional planting has been added to improve the privacy for tenants along 16 ave. Furthermore the walkways leading from the buildings to the amenity space have been amended to have direct pathways from both buildings to the amenity.

We feel our efforts to address the concerns of the panel has been well considered in the revised elements and look forward to your support in our 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	The proposal is trying to manage grades effectively which comes at a detriment to the public realm along Na'a Drive and within the interior corridor between the buildings. The Panel appreciates the varied articulation of the overall massing and the interface with the Trans-Canada Highway. The proposal needs to address the public realm along Na'a Drive as required by the ASP – consider townhomes.
Applicant Response	<p>We have incorporated this feedback and have changed the building interface with Na'a Drive to have the addition of a residential entrance. Due to the drastic grade changes townhomes were considered but unfortunately not feasible, but we have added walkways to ground floor units where we were able to.</p> <p>With the resident amenity building acting as a focal point of the development along Na'a Drive with a focus of indigenous elements to add to the public realm, we believe that this design element meets the desired intent.</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 Panel is concerned that the site is maximizing units without full consideration of the street. While it is appreciated that there is an amenity offering, the grades make the interface a little challenging (someone walking on the street won't be able to see this activity) and the length of the block is significant for users of the pathway. Improvements should be made to the location of uses within the exterior and interior spaces.
Applicant Response	With the above mentioned adjustments to activate the public realm along Na'a Drive, we believe we have met the intent of UDRP's comments. Given the challenging grade, the density is required to ensure the project is viable and will ensure we can bring additional high quality housing to the City of Calgary.

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.</i>	
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 Panel appreciates the offering of an amenity clubhouse, the uses programmed and its location for optimal sunlight, however, the retained area and lack of windows on the building make this more of an interior amenity than one that is active with the street. The site lacks pathways and connections to the street – all users are intended to access at limited locations and make use of the interior pathways. Improvement needs to be made to the overall site movements.
Applicant Response	<p>We believe the adjustments to the entrance of building 1 allow for more access and permeability into the site. As for the amenity building, it is intended to be an amenity for the tenants of the buildings and the architecture respectfully reflects that by creating a degree of separation from the public realm all the while engaging them visually into the glazing on the railing and windows provided. We have also added indigenous artwork and imagery along Na'a Drive to enhance the public experience.</p> <p>Universal access to all tenants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3m shared used path, multi-modal - Meets the ground nicely with the public interface design of the amenity building - Deliberately only have 1 entrance to site to minimize the potential confusion/hazard with roadway and pedestrians
Legibility <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>	
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	User accessibility is very sub-standard on this proposed site plan. Notably, a resident walking from the west would be expected to walk the full length of the building before they could access a sidewalk to the interior pathways that lead to the building lobby(s). The interior pathways are quite small and lobbies are absent. A lobby entrance should be added to the south façade in the south building at a middle distance to improve accessibility. Recognizing that direct pathways are not allowed to the Multi-Use Pathway, the Panel supports more than one pathway connection and/or an interior pathway with multiple connections. Given the location of the parkade access (to work with the site grades) more consideration needs to be given to that interface since this is intended as a main access route for pedestrian access.
Applicant Response	The applicant took the suggestion from the UDRP and added an entrance and lobby to the South building's South façade. Due to grades, the location was the farthest West we could place it to still be accessible for tenants and visitors.

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 appreciates the building articulation and materials presented. It is also recognized that a variety of methods of articulating the building are being used on the end facades to set the buildings apart, especially from the Trans-Canada Highway. While the Panel likes the interface with the Trans-Canada, the interface with Na'a Drive requires more attention to reduce the length and scale. Please provide additional renderings along that interface with the next submission that clearly articulate the building interface with the street, as the public realm is extremely important. Please focus on scale and experience as you evaluate the revisions.
Applicant Response	Noted. We have adjusted the interface of Na'a Drive and believe we have met the desired intent.
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	No information provided – we look forward to seeing the resilience package with the DP submission.
Applicant Response	As the applicant will be the owner and operator of the site for the foreseeable future it is in our best interest to be as sustainable and resilient as possible, as long as it makes business sense. For our energy model we are targeting 10% better than code at the moment. In addition to this, we as a company have committed to 5% of parking stalls to have EV chargers. In addition, we will have 5% of the stalls be EV Ready for future expansion. We will be also including air sourced heat pumps for all suites along with high efficiency boilers and mechanical equipment. Lastly, both of our buildings will be Solar Ready in the sense that the roof structural package will be ready to accommodate, there will be empty conduit going from roof to the electrical room and there will be space on the electrical panel for this future conversion. We believe this meets the intent of the comment.