

# Urban Design Review Panel Comments

<b>Date</b>	December 8, 2021	
<b>Time</b>	1:00	
<b>Panel Members</b>	<b>Present</b> Gary Mundy (acting chair) Rick Gendron Jadwiga Kroman Glen Pardoe Beverly Sandalack Noorullah Hussain Zada	<b>Distribution</b> Chad Russill (Chair) Chris Hardwicke (Co-Chair) Jeff Lyness Kathy Oberg Katherine Robinson Jack Vanstone
<b>Advisor</b>	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
<b>Application number</b>	<b>DP2021-7019</b>	
<b>Municipal address</b>	1405 4 ST SW	
<b>Community</b>	BELTLINE	
<b>Project description</b>	New: Dwelling Unit, Office, Retail and Consumer Service	
<b>Review</b>	First	
<b>File Manager</b>	COLLEEN RENNE-GRIVELL	
<b>City Wide Urban Design</b>	Dawn Clarke	
<b>Applicant</b>	ARCADIS (formerly IBI GROUP)	

\*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 proposed project is a multi-story mixed use (residential with retail at-grade) building located on the SW corner of 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW, in the Beltline area. The NE corner of the site is the active corner and is visible from Central Memorial Park located one block to the north. The south face of the site fronts a lane, across which is the proposed Red's re-development that will include open space facing the subject building. The proposed development provides generous on-site private open spaces, and access to the parking/bike areas are provided from the lane.

The Panel appreciated the attention given to the street level façade and public areas, noting the presence of plantings and art installments. A few aspects were identified by the Panel for consideration, that with further design review and development could contribute to an improved public realm and project as a whole:

- The NE corner view is the main outdoor public gathering area and focal point for the site. More consideration should be given as to how the scale of the building is experienced at the public realm. The overhangs help support the human scale, but they do not reflect what is shown in the precedents. It may be appropriate to lower the height of the raised overhang to better connect with the scale of the pedestrian realm. This may allow for the retail signage to be placed above the overhangs and in turn allow for a continuous wood treatment of the soffit.
- The tower itself is fairly plain and does not provide a high degree of interest or unique appearance. Additional consideration should be given to creating variations in the building face on the tower and at-grade.
- Review of the plantings and their installation should be considered to ensure appropriate species are selected for orientation and sun exposure on the rooftop terrace and also on-street adjacent to the parked vehicles. Consideration should also be made for planting for pollinators and designing for winter use.
- Consideration should be given to enhance sustainable design elements of the project.

DP2021-7019  
UDRP Comments

12/08/2021

## **Applicant Response**

(2024-05-15)

*A stronger expression has been created at the intersection of the site, enhancing the project's presence with the tallest and brightest tower grid facing the street corner, while the lower and darker grid addresses the NW aspect.*

*At grade, the development vision is to further extend, contribute to and enhance the 4th Street SW human experience. The Retail façades are designed with large portions of glazing, to visually connect with pedestrian activities. The corner CRU has a layered canopy, with glazing on top of the wood soffit, and it has been lowered to be more welcoming. Louvres are now located above the canopy for an improved streetscape. The recessed retail entry, patio furniture and the landscape features create opportunities for people to linger, with no interruption to the clear and accessible path in between.*

*The tower proportions have been broken up visually by the inclusion of narrow vertical stripes to elongate the tower proportion. This was accomplished by applying an architectural grid made of metal panel with various colours and heights, together with private balconies creating depth and variation to the building façade. Plus, it has been sculpted with a sloped rooftop screen, and various roof heights. The tower is now slenderer with more visual interest. At grade, a different language has been introduced to the retail frontage, with composite wood strips and large glazing split by dark mullions. Together with the canopy to create a warm and welcoming accent to the street.*

*The residential lobby has its own unique architectural language of a strong presence with limestone frame and a heavy canopy with composite wood accents hanging and signage attached. The indoor amenity space has similar curtain panel language to represent for residential, rather than commercial. Overall, the residential podium creates a contrast to the metal grid of the tower for distinction, but with same colour and material for integration.*

*The rooftop and street-level planting endeavors to accommodate the four-season climate. Street trees offer shade during summers and beautiful hues in the fall. The primarily fruit-bearing shrubs and perennials exhibit flowers in spring, berries in summers, and maintain visual interest in winter. These plants attract a variety of pollinators, including bees, birds, and butterflies.*

<b>Urban Design Element</b>	
<b>Creativity</b> Encourage innovation; model best practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall project approach as it relates to original ideas or innovation</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	Tower is fairly basic and would benefit from additional consideration of articulation both at grade and within the tower itself. The street level art (the birds) are very interesting and context-appropriate.
Applicant Response	<i>The tower has been sculpted with different colour patterns, a sloped rooftop screen, and varying roof heights atop the tower. The tower is now more slender, with added visual interest. There is cohesion with the use of the same colour metal panel from the tower on the vertical pilaster elements on the podium, by the residential entrance. These vertical expressions help to break up the linear nature of the podium, where it meets with the public realm.</i>
<b>Context</b> Optimize built form with respect to mass and spacing of buildings, placement on site, response to adjacent uses, heights and densities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Massing relationship to context, distribution on site, and orientation to street edges</li> <li>Shade impact on public realm and adjacent sites</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	The 14 <sup>th</sup> Ave/4 <sup>th</sup> St view should consider how the scale of the building is experienced at the public realm. The overhangs help to contribute to a human-scaled environment, but the precedents work because of the height / scale, and the glazing proposed here feels very commercial. More could be done to reduce the fragmentation of the public realm.
Applicant Response	<i>The corner CRU canopy has a layered design as per the precedent images in the DP drawings, with glazing on top of the wood soffits. Louvres are now located above the canopy for an improved streetscape. Besides, the canopy has been lowered to be more welcoming, and individual retail entries recessed as suggested.</i>
<b>Animation</b> Incorporate active uses; pay attention to details; add colour, wit and fun <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building form contributes to an active pedestrian realm</li> <li>Residential units provided at-grade</li> <li>Elevations are interesting and enhance the streetscape</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	Corner is a missed opportunity as it doesn't contribute to the view corridor, particularly looking north on 4 <sup>th</sup> Street toward Downtown and Central Memorial Park. Also, the lane should be better coordinated with the Red's project (across the lane to the south).
Applicant Response	<i>The design has been updated to provide more animation at the prominent corner interface with the public realm. At the SE corner, where the streetscape meets the lane, more glazing to the corner CRU and visual interest has been added, by way of a wall canvas for a future mural. Enhanced materials, such as brick and composite wood panel, are also provided to further enhance the entry to the lane. Parkade access, Loading, and Garbage area have been pushed westwards to the new West property line.</i>
<b>Human Scale</b> Defines street edges, ensures height and mass respect context; pay attention to scale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Massing contribution to public realm at grade</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	At-grade accesses work well, benches and sculpture somewhat fragment the public realm. Consideration may also need to be given to drop-zone for scooters to avoid their accumulation in the main public space at NE corner. Also consider moving granite blocks along 14 <sup>th</sup> Ave SW closer to the building to allow space for car door swings.
Applicant Response	<i>Refer to the updated design with provides a minimum of 2m pedestrian through zone along 14 Avenue SW. The benches and sculptures provide moments of pause to the pedestrians without encroaching into the through zone. The granite blocks have been removed.</i>
<b>Integration</b> The conjunction of land-use, built form, landscaping and public realm design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parking entrances and at-grade parking areas are concealed</li> <li>Weather protection at entrances and solar exposure for outdoor public areas</li> <li>Winter city response</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	Winter city response is weak, snow storage, ice on canopies, parkade entrance and loading is industrial-looking and not inviting, particularly for cyclists.
Applicant Response	<i>Parkade access, Loading, and Garbage area are concealed as best as the site boundaries allow. In addition, the exterior façade to the lane has been improved to continue the retail aesthetic to wrap around the SE corner and create a more inviting interface with the entry to the service lane.</i>

<p><b>Connectivity</b> Achieve visual and functional connections between buildings and places; ensure connection to existing and future networks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian first design, walkability, pathways through site</li> <li>• Connections to LRT stations, regional pathways and cycle paths</li> <li>• Pedestrian pathway materials extend across driveways and lanes</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	Access to elevator core is circuitous. The location is logical for the design of the core, but the connectivity to the street could be improved or made more direct. Cyclist access to the parkade along the east of the parkade ramp is not inviting, and potentially an unsafe experience for riders. Site grades along 14 <sup>th</sup> Ave SW sidewalk appear to be excessive. The applicant should review the concept plans for the development to the south (Red's block) and try to integrate this project re: street tree alignment, sidewalk continuity, etc.
Applicant Response	<i>Access to the elevator core from the main residential entrance has been simplified and is more intuitive and direct from the street.</i> <i>Cyclists shall be provided with 2 means of access to the Bike Room on P1: a back-of-house access path to the elevators has been provided and indicated on the main floor plan.</i> <i>Alternate access shall be via the assigned stairs with bike track. All doors along this path to be provided with auto openers as suggested.</i> <i>Site grading along 14<sup>th</sup> Ave has been revised, and the residential lobby elevated to distinguish the entry from commercial retail frontage. Access ramp provided to residential entry. Please also refer to the response for point # 70 in City DR2 Comments.</i>
<p><b>Accessibility</b> Ensure clear and simple access for all types of users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barrier free design</li> <li>• Entry definition, legibility, and natural wayfinding</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	Consider reducing the numbers of granite blocks to allow for better pedestrian movement from street parking areas along 14 <sup>th</sup> Ave SW to residential and commercial entries. No mention of any accessible units. Internal access to waste & recycling may not meet code. Floors shown to match street grade but may prove to be different once design advances due to site conditions.
Applicant Response	<i>The public realm design layout has been simplified for better pedestrian movement. The granite blocks have been removed in the updated plan. The plans and grading have been updated to ensure compliance with Code in terms of accessibility.</i>
<p><b>Diversity</b> Promote designs accommodating a broad range of users and uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail street variety, at-grade areas, transparency into spaces</li> <li>• Corner treatments and project porosity</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	Corner treatment is a missed opportunity (on 14 <sup>th</sup> Ave/4 <sup>th</sup> Street to connect visually with Downtown and Central Memorial Park) and within the lane (to connect with Red's proposed outdoor space).
Applicant Response	<i>The design has been updated and the corner treatment offers a patio space to animate the street interface and afford users views of the trees lining the sidewalk, the canopy across the street and the Central Memorial Park, as well as Downtown. The bird sculpture adds a point of interest. These make the patio experience comfortable and lively. CRU#2 entries are provided on both 14th Ave and 4th St to create connections between indoor to outdoor, along with large portion of glazing facade and the patio seats on 14<sup>th</sup> Ave, the corner is more welcoming and with opportunities for people to stay and enjoy the space.</i>
<p><b>Flexibility</b> Develop planning and building concepts which allow adaptation to future uses, new technologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project approach relating to market and/or context changes</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	Primarily 1 bedroom rental units – fairly static in terms of uses.
Applicant Response	<i>Among 219 units, 87 are 1BRs and/or 1BR JRs, roughly in 40%, and 132 are 2BRs and/or 2BR JRs, roughly in 60%.</i>
<p><b>Safety</b> Achieve a sense of comfort and create places that provide security at all times</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety and security</li> <li>• Night time design</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	There are CPTED concerns with the loading area and parkade access off the lane. The large recesses will likely make these areas unsafe, negatively impacting both real and perceived safety.
Applicant Response	<i>Parkade exterior wall is in line with the loading wall in the south. Both loading and parking are enclosed with overhead gate to improve safety and security, as well as weather protection in winter.</i>
<p><b>Orientation</b> Provide clear and consistent directional clues for urban navigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance natural views and vistas</li> </ul>	

UDRP Commentary	Site wayfinding is logical for retail uses, loading and access. Main tenant access is logically located but the interior route to the elevators etc. is circuitous.
Applicant Response	<i>This has been addressed on the updated plans. Wayfinding to the elevators is more intuitive now. Signage may be provided if required to guide people/visitors to locate the elevators.</i>
<b>Sustainability</b> <i>Be aware of lifecycle costs; incorporate sustainable practices and materials</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site/solar orientation and passive heating/cooling</li> <li>• Material selection and sustainable products</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	The Panel's understanding is that the applicant is doing what is required to meet NECB requirements, while the City's policy is to do more. A more tangible response as to specific sustainability measures is requested beyond the statement provided that 'the building will exceed the requirements of the NECB by 5%'. Sustainable initiatives seem to be modest, and the applicant is encouraged to team with the City to see if more impactful sustainable initiatives are achievable in the future. Nothing is really being done to address solar orientation. Planting will need to respond to seasonal and solar conditions on both rooftop area and at street level. Consider also planting for pollinating species and to reflect our four season climate.
Applicant Response	<i>The rooftop and street-level planting endeavors to accommodate the four-season climate. Street trees offer shade during summers and beautiful hues in the fall. The primarily fruit-bearing shrubs and perennials exhibit flowers in spring, berries in summers, and maintain visual interest in winter. These plants attract a variety of pollinators, including bees, birds, and butterflies.</i>
<b>Durability</b> <i>Incorporate long-lasting materials and details that will provide a legacy rather than a liability</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of low maintenance materials and/or sustainable products</li> <li>• Project detailed to avoid maintenance issues</li> </ul>	
UDRP Commentary	High quality durable materials are being proposed in places, with less durable materials being proposed on the tower (it appears that a vinyl panel is being proposed for the white panels on the tower – the applicant is requested to update the Panel on this item).
Applicant Response	<i>Metal panel cladding is proposed on the tower. Please refer to updated drawings.</i>