

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Date	June 25, 2025	
Time	3:00	
Panel Members	Present Boris Karn (a/chair) Rick Gendron Rasool Ghodoosi Dehnavi Ben Klumper Ryan Martinson	Distribution Jeff Lyness (chair) Kathy Oberg (chair) Noorullah Hussain Zada Andrea Kennedy Maria Landry Bao-Nghi Nhan Brendan Stevenson
Advisor	Joyce Tang, Chief Urban Designer /a	
Application number	PE2025-00772	
Municipal address	1024 Na'A Dr SW	
Community	Medicine Hill	
Project description	Self-storage facility	
Review	first	
File Manager	Quadri Adebayo	
Urban Design	Sonny Tomic	
Applicant	Storewest	

*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

This project is a 5-storey mixed use self-storage facility located in the Medicine Hill neighbourhood. Despite its large size, the scale and massing of the proposed building has been well managed on site and addresses the street in an appropriate and commendable manner (e.g. street-facing CRUs). Additionally, the large and well considered public art mural proposed on the two most prominent and publicly visible sides of the building will be a landmark for the area. The Panel appreciates and fully supports the robust engagement process with Indigenous communities that led to the proposed mural motif and overall design approach. The Panel appreciates the applicant attending the Urban Design Review Panel at this early stage of the development process and is supportive of this unique application, with some potential refinements noted below that could be integrated prior to formal Development Permit submission.

The Panel encourages the applicant to consider increasing the size of the mural while simplifying or removing some of the other façade motifs, logos, and colours. Also, the Panel suggests that additional softscape / landscaping on the sidewalk adjacent to Na'a Drive and within the loading area be considered. Finally, further articulation to the individual entrances for the CRUs and storage would be appropriate.

Applicant Response

PE2025-00772
UDRP Comments

06/25/2025

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 proposed development will be a landmark in the area because of its large mural installation on two sides of the building. This is a very exciting and well-thought through installation that recognizes the Indigenous history and traditions of the area. The Panel encourages the applicant to consider making the mural installation larger and reduce / simplify some of the other motifs to help bring this public art installation into greater focus. Additionally, it is recommended that the applicant place an easily viewable interpretive plaque on site so the public can learn more about the mural and its meaning.
Applicant Response	Making the Buffalo Mural larger has been considered. Due to the overall cost of providing the Mural, the process of applying the Mural and the precast concrete panel sizes the Buffalo Mural is to remain the size as designed. Reducing the other motifs has been considered. With these items not being provided on the same sides as the Mural we believe there is still a great focus on the Mural especially from the Trans-Canada Highway. Additional motifs around the building are also to remain to maintain links to the Indigenous history in the area and the Bluebird brand identity. A viewable/intractable plaque on the site is to be provided to allow the public to learn more about the meaning the mural and the Indigenous history. Options being considered include a pedestal or a plaque that has been cast in to the precast wall. These items are being discussed and worked on to see what can be provided as we go along with the subsequent design stages.
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 building creates a legible street wall, with good scale along the street frontage. The overall size of the building is masked well by the varied grade of the site. The Panel recommends that the applicant explore increasing the size of the public realm / sidewalk by moving the building further north to allow for more opportunities for trees and other street furniture to be incorporated.
Applicant Response	The Direct Control (DC35D2025) Bylaw requires a <u>maximum</u> 3.0m setback from NA'A Drive. The building cannot be pushed North to increase sidewalk due to already being set at the maximum allowed setback.
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	The Panel recommends that the applicant explore additional amenity in front of the building near the offices and commercial retail units. Incorporating a boulevard with trees as a buffer between the sidewalk and the street will help to create a more pleasant pedestrian environment and give the frontage of the building a softer look and feel. Incorporating CRUs into this development at the street level is fully supported for helping to animate the street, especially given the primary use of the site is passive in nature.
Applicant Response	Due to the Direct Control (DC35D2025) Bylaw requires a maximum 3.0m setback from NA'A Drive there is minimal room to incorporate big buffers. However, the long sidewalk in front of the entrances has been broken up with landscape areas under the storefront windows. This helps to provide a more pleasant feeling as well as help direct and highlight the entrances for the pedestrians.
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	The Panel commends the proposed art installation on the building's prominent blank facades and recommends that the applicant explore simplifying / refining the proposed signage and architectural accents on the building to further emphasize the presence of the public art installation. Additionally, the individual entrances to the CRUs and the storage facility could be articulated more clearly through colour or architectural features / design details. The Panel suggests that the grounding of the building be done without the black banding and use a softer treatment instead (e.g. landscaping). All doorways to the CRUs should also have an accessible landing area.
Applicant Response	Providing landscape areas under the windows along Na'a Drive helps to provide a more pleasant feeling as well as help direct and highlight the entrances for the pedestrians. Barrier-Free design items for doorways complying with the N.B.C.- 2023 A.E. have been considered for access to publicly accessible areas. Additionally, the removal of the large black banding around the helps make the building feel more grounded.
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 proposed development has a variety of potential users which can activate the street, while also providing a useful service to the nearby residents. The scale of the building is suitable for the street and surrounding area. The Panel suggests that the parking area be buffered with more landscaping on the side adjacent to the street and that the hard surface area of the turnaround/loading area be reviewed further to determine if impervious surface could be reduced or broken up with soft scaping.
Applicant Response	The stalls closest to Na'a Drive have been pushed back into the site to provide a larger landscape buffer. This larger landscape buffer has allowed for the use of layered landscaping to screen the parking lot. Reviewing further providing landscaping in the middle of the parking

	area is not feasible. By pushing these stalls back, we have reduced the turnaround area for trucks to access the loading bays which in turn has reduced the amount of impervious surface on the site.
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	Further sustainable design practices could be explored through the development process. Treatments like LED lighting, solar panels on the roof, and incorporating soft scaping within the large impervious surface that is used for the turnaround/loading area are some considerations the Panel suggests. These are by no means exhaustive.
Applicant Response	Items like building mounted LED lighting are incorporated to further explore sustainable design practices. Providing landscaping in the middle of the parking area is not feasible as it interferes with truck access to the loading bays. However, this has reduced the amount of impervious surface on the site as a larger landscape buffer is being provided along Na'a Drive.