

Urban Design Review Panel Comments and Applicant Responses

Urban Design Review Panel Comments

Date:	February 21, 2017	
Time:	2:45 pm	
Panel Members:	Present: Janice Liebe (chair) Bruce Nelligan Jack Vanstone Gary Mundy	Absent: Chad Russill Robert LeBlond Yogeshwar Navagrah Terry Klassen Greg Pardoe Eric Toker Chris Hardwicke
Advisor:	David Down, Chief Urban Designer	
Application number:	DP2017-3492	
Municipal address:	106 Redstone St NE	
Community:	Redstone	
Project description:	New: Liquor Store, Medical Clinic, Restaurant: Licensed - Small, Restaurant: Food Service Only - Small, Pet Care Service, Financial Institution, Drive Through, Child Care Service, Supermarket, Restaurant: Licensed - Medium, Restaurant: Food Service Only - Medium, Retail and Consumer Service (11 buildings); New: Multi-Residential Development (4 buildings, 430 units)	
Review:	first	
File Manager:	Joshua De Jong	
City Wide Urban Design:	Lothar Wiwjorra	
Applicant:	S2 Architecture	
Architect:	S2 Architecture	
Owner:		
Ranking:	Further Review Recommended	

Summary

This proposal is representative of the effort to develop a small urban high street on a green field site in a suburban environment. Elements that will help give the site animation are years away in being developed (the future LRT stop) and adjacent land is in some cases undeveloped. Further, these types of developments have limited allowable density to create vibrant animated public spaces throughout the site and on all edges.

It is the panel's opinion, reflected in the commentary below, that the available built form should be consolidated and focussed on delivering a vibrant community amenity. Recommendations have been provided in the text to move some of the larger retail elements to the high street to act as an anchor to the street – in particular the grocery store. A corner entrance that faces the high street and still provides great access to the parking lot should be achievable. Further recommendations have been provided to create a consistent street wall to the high street by infilling the small parking lots along the high street with built form.

Finally, many of the comments reflect the desire for the applicant to view the proposal from a "pedestrian first" lens. The panel would like the best practices listed to be implemented across the site. The panel is generally supportive of the layout, but would like the details such as continuity of sidewalk materiality across parkade ramps to be seriously considered and implemented.

Applicant Response

September 24th, 2018

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	beyond the columns and that the railing detail be significantly altered, or delete the railings entirely in favour of small garden walls with planters or planting to provide privacy. There is minimal landscaping indicated beyond the porch footprints. The landscape design should be significantly upgraded and extend to the sidewalks where ever possible and replace the grass surfaces. The walkways to the units should be expanded and incorporated into landscape elements to provide a more engaging street presence. Further, the building elevations should delineate the ground floor through material changes, variations in the size of fenestration, colour etc, and should not read a simple extrusion of the floors above.		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>Two storey townhouses have not been provided to avoid direct competition with other pure townhouse developments in close proximity to the site within the neighbourhood.</i>		
	<i>The elevations of the ground floor level of the residential buildings have been differentiated from the other levels with material changes such as the incorporation of manufactured masonry stone veneer trim detail around fenestration which has also been varied in these locations. The building elevations feature material and colour applications along the main floor that differentiate it from the floors above, without creating the illusion of a commercial podium.</i>		
	<i>At grade perimeter patios have been designed at the same size as the upper patios in response to the steep grade conditions that are predominant around the perimeter of the residential buildings. The main floor of the residential buildings is elevated above the adjacent grades of High Street due to geotechnical factors; that is, the shallow presence of bedrock, and the shallow depth of the utilities servicing the property. Along the street edge railings will be maintained to provide a sense of security from the public realm along the street.</i>		
	<i>The interior courtyard facing patios have been adjusted in response to the provided comments. The concrete slabs have been extended to support custom planters that are located outside of the posts that support the balconies above. The planter boxes have been designed to delineate the patio areas in front of the units creating a sense of privacy. Where planters are provided the railings have been removed. The planters have been designed with timber elements to respond to the projects contemporary prairie aesthetic.</i>		
	<i>A green lawn is to be maintained in the setback between the City sidewalk and landscape elements.</i>		
6	At grade parking	At grade parking is concealed behind building frontages along public streets.	Further review recommended
	UDRP Commentary		
	It is strongly recommended that for the full length of the high street that parking lots be removed and replaced with building form. This includes two small lots on the west end of the high street and two more small lots on the west side of the north south street facing the residential development. It is recommended that the grocery store in particular be moved south to front the high street with a corner entry accessible from the high street. The intent is to put full emphasis on the high street with continuous retail fronts. This may mean that building form is removed from the outer edges of the larger outer parking lots in favour of densifying the high street.		
	Secondly, it is strongly recommended that the visitor parking be removed from the courtyards of the residential developments and be place below grade or counted within the street parking. The courtyards should remain fully landscaped as an amenity for the residential units. There is very little landscaped area within the overall development and this will provide a highly desirable space.		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>This site is not located within an existing urban area that has great amounts of pedestrian traffic. We have developed a High Street that caters to pedestrian traffic but also acknowledges the use and necessary integration of the automobile. During the early life of this project there will likely not be enough pedestrian movement to support the proposed retail uses without also allowing for convenient access via the automobile.</i>		

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Buildings B and F have been rotated 90 degrees from High Street to afford convenient accessible parking for these buildings. As they are located at the west entry point to the site, queuing requirements to Redstone Street NE do not allow convenience parking, whether it be angled or parallel parking, along the High Street so the retailers in these buildings would not be afforded convenience parking for their patrons. Buildings B and F were also located on the site to create an appropriate pedestrian entry condition to the High Street development.

Future plans show how built form could develop as pedestrian traffic in the area increases. The intent in the future is to fill in these parking areas with greater density and to move more surface parking underground.

The Grocery Store has been placed away from High Street to maintain the smaller character pedestrian based retail along High Street. Due to the current and anticipated 5 to 10 year density of the area, grocery shopping will not follow the urban model which sees shoppers accessing the grocery store on a daily to bi-weekly basis. Suburban grocers are more likely to see shoppers on a weekly basis using cars and making use of grocery carts. This is due to the longer travel distance from their place of residence to the Grocery Store. As a result, these shoppers who are making larger purchases are also using grocery carts. Placing the Grocery Store off of High Street also resolves the issue of managing grocery carts left along High Street. Further, the Grocery Store has been located away from High Street to separate the loading requirements of the store from High Street.

If the Grocery Store switched locations with building B to locate it on High Street there is a concern that the smaller retail building (Building B) would be spatially isolated at the back northeast corner of the site. This would cause visibility issues for the smaller tenants and would negatively impact the potential success of these retailers.

In response to the comments about further activating the edge along high street we have provided additional built form as linear pergola structures. These structures visually tie high street together and continue the architectural form between Buildings B & F and Building C & H. The pergolas have been designed to complement the adjacent architectural form without impacting sightlines to retail or reducing pedestrian circulation widths.

The residential visitor parking has been located within the internal courtyard areas of the residential buildings for a number of reasons:

- Convenience of visitor access, pickup and drop off from the building's main pedestrian entry points.*
- Security: Separation of residential owner building access from visitors.*
- Existing issues are associated with separating the visitor area of parking from the residential owners area within the parkade. There becomes an issue of access to the elevator cores for the visitors, their access has to be controlled to separate the residents from the visitor parking for security purposes. The resident visitor calculation already accounts for the "street parking" along High Street and the north/south internal street.*
- Technical: There is not enough space in the parkades to accommodate both visitor and owner parking requirements. The high level of bedrock under the site makes it unfeasible to add a second level of below grade parking.*

The removal of the parking provided on top of the parkade would create an operational and logistical condition that is counter to the functionality required by the building's tenants and guests.

It will still be necessary to provide access to the central courtyards for loading purposes. Buildings 1 and 3 do have fire access from Red Embers Gate NE, however there is no opportunity to provide loading zones for the residents along this street, so it must be provided from the internal courtyard.

The development is currently achieving all of the Bylaw planting and area requirements and there is an MR park space directly adjacent in the NE corner of the site.

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7	Parking entrances	Ramps are concealed as much as possible. Entrances to parking are located in discrete locations. Driveways to garage entries are minimized, place pedestrian environment and safety first.	Further review recommended
UDRP Commentary			
<p>By removing the visitor parking from the residential courtyards, two parking ramps will be removed from the street and the sidewalk and pedestrian environment greatly improved. Sidewalk materials and treatments are to extend across the vehicular entry points to the residential parking garages. The current design which has the sidewalk jogging around the entry ramps is to be discouraged and replaced with straight sidewalk runs. This is expected in a "pedestrian first" and "safety first" environment.</p> <p>The package provided did not illustrate the relationship of the residential parkade entry adjacent to the building entry – it was also not evident on the elevations provided. The applicant is asked to provide further information in the form of enlarged elevations and 3D renderings. It seems unfortunate to place the main building entry directly adjacent to these ramps so the applicant is encouraged to study this further and potentially distance these two elements as this is not considered a "discrete" location as noted under best practice.</p>			
Applicant Response			
<p><i>We have designed the access points to the residential surface parking and parkades along the internal north/south internal street to provide ease of access and in response to queuing concerns of placing the access points along High Street. Also, concerns exist if access to the parkades are placed along High Street as this would create confusion to residential visitors that would not first see alternate access points for visitor parking and may attempt to access the secured owners parking.</i></p> <p><i>A queuing concern can also be described as a bottleneck at one of the two vehicular access points. Also note that the intersection at Red Embers Gate NE is not a signalized intersection at the time of the development.</i></p> <p><i>A further concern is that if vehicular access points are added along High Street they would disrupt the primary pedestrian circulation route along High Street. It is important to note that any vehicular access points along Red Embers Gate NE were not granted.</i></p> <p><i>The parkade and courtyard ramps are only going up and down ½ a level, and the concern regarding the presence of the ramps is mitigated as a result since drivers and pedestrians will have increased visibility due to these conditions. As recommended, the sidewalk materials will be continued along the front edges of the ramps to indicate to the pedestrians the pedestrian route to follow. Concrete pedestrian crossings have also been incorporated in the North South direction for the entire length of the internal road improving the pedestrian circulation from the community plaza to the north edge of the site by the MR. The sidewalks at the ramp locations have been jogged from a straight run for the functional requirements of achieving necessary headroom for the parkade, the ramp cannot be shortened as there are panning requirements for the slope of ramps.</i></p> <p><i>The principal building entrances for residential buildings 2 and 4 are located along the internal north/south street and are addressed for the buildings primarily for firefighting purposes. The primary resident and visitor entrances are located within the interior courtyards of each of the residential developments. These entrances are seen by both residents and visitors as the true entrances to the buildings and have been designed with additional architectural features to distinguish them. These entrances are located adjacent to the visitor parking spaces, are barrier free, and give easy access to the residential entrances for the buildings.</i></p>			
8	Other		
Applicant Response			
No response required.			
Urban Connectivity Provide visual and functional connectivity between buildings and places, ensure connection to existing and future networks. Promote walkability, cycle networks, transit use, pedestrian			

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<i>first environments.</i>			
Topic	Best Practice	Ranking	
9	LRT station connections	Supports LRT use via legible, dedicated pedestrian pathways to stations with direct routes. Avoids desire lines / shortcutting through parking areas.	Further review recommended
UDRP Commentary			
<p>The LRT and station are anticipated to be built in the long term. The proposal does acknowledge this with the location of a small parkette in proximity to the station stop. This parkette does also allow a nice connection to the development from the regional pathway.</p> <p>The applicant is strongly encouraged to revisit the elevations and uses at grade for building L. A retail use that could spill into this parkette would be preferable and would reinforce the animation of this space. Currently the elevation of building L as it faces this space is utilitarian and reads as a secondary or rear elevation. Its design should be commensurate with one that faces a public space.</p>			
Applicant Response			
<p><i>The north, east and south elevations of Building L have over 60% glazing and are well detailed following the architecture of the entire building. A medical use is specified for all of building L which would add to the visual connection to the plaza as a medical use is likely to maintain the provided transparent glazing. Further, a medical building has been proposed for this location to provide visual connection to the regional pathway to provide a sense of overview and safety.</i></p> <p><i>The main floor of building L is flush with the proposed grades of the plaza at the principal entrance. Any outdoor access from Building L is easy and convenient to the adjacent plaza area.</i></p> <p><i>Due to proposed grades of the surrounding properties and desired internal grades for access points and storm water management, the main floor elevation for Building L cannot be lowered. The east and south elevations of building L have been designed with planters to respond to the grade differential.</i></p>			
10	Regional pathway connections	Supports LRT use via legible, dedicated pedestrian pathways to stations with direct routes. Avoids desire lines / shortcutting through parking areas.	Further review recommended
UDRP Commentary			
<p>The parkette noted in item 9 above connects directly to the regional pathway which is a positive design inclusion. The panel is concerned about the design of the elevations of buildings L and G as they face the pathway. Fake windows of spandrel glazing and solid walls predominate. The applicant is asked to create real windows providing overlook and safety to the pathway. In particular, the large signage tower on the south west corner of building G is not in keeping with the applicants description of the use of "Prairie" architecture with low scale sloped roofing. The panel asks that the design of buildings facing the regional pathway be designed in keeping with the stated aesthetic and provide a real sense of front and overlook.</p>			
Applicant Response			
<p><i>Please refer to the response to Item 9 above addressing the glazing for Building L.</i></p> <p><i>Building G indicates spandrel panels facing south onto the regional pathway due to the use proposed for the building. The use is for a Drug Store, the side and rear walls of the Drug Store are typically lined with merchandise and as such would be covered over. The spandrel glazing sections will be filled with "Lifestyle" images for marketing purposes.</i></p> <p><i>As noted in Item 9 above, there is a height difference between the main floor elevations of Buildings G and L and the regional pathway, the regional pathway being lower. The height differential has been mitigated through the incorporation of landscape planters to reduce the scale of the south elevations.</i></p>			

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	One of the predominant features of "Prairie" architecture is the use of chimney elements in the building massing. This building design has incorporated the use of site signage into the building chimney elements thereby eliminating the need for pylon signs on the site by the regional pathway.		
11	Cycle path connections	Supports cycling via intentional, safe urban design connections to pathway systems and ease of access to bicycle storage at grade.	Support
UDRP Commentary			
Bike storage should be provided throughout the site in accordance with City requirements to promote bike usage in the neighbourhood.			
Applicant Response			
Bike storage has been provided throughout the site at logical locations. They have also been integrated with other landscape elements such as planters and site furniture.			
12	Walkability - connection to adjacent neighbourhoods / districts / key urban features	Extend existing and provide continuous pedestrian pathways. Extend pedestrian pathway materials across driveways and lanes to emphasize pedestrian use.	Further review recommended
UDRP Commentary			
The recommended extension of materials across drive lanes and ramps is not evident in the package and should be included in the design.			
The applicant is strongly encouraged to review the design of the east west high street to differentiate this space from the remainder of the development in material and form. This may include the extension of pedestrian realm materials across the entire high street inclusive of rolled curbs. Sidewalks are encouraged to be raised at parking lot entry points to place emphasis on the pedestrian realm over cars.			
Applicant Response			
Table tops were considered at pedestrian crossing areas but have been removed due to technical ponding requirements related to the site's storm water design requirements. As well, we believe that extending the sidewalk materials across the internal street along with the intended high vehicular traffic in the area could result in an increased potential for confusion of pedestrian traffic with regards to the true nature of the space.			
However, we do believe that the community plaza area adjacent to the LRT should have the sidewalk materials extended onto the vehicular turn around area. This would define the plaza area to be different than the street, even though it will function as a vehicular drop off for the LRT in the future. It is more of a deadend street situation rather than the High Street condition.			
13	Pathways through site	Provide pathways through the site along desire lines to connect amenities within and beyond the site boundaries.	Support
UDRP Commentary			
The layout generally conforms to this intent. Replacing the visitor parking with landscaping within the residential courtyards would further support this notion.			
Applicant Response			
Please refer to the response to Item 7 above. The courtyard spaces provide pedestrian circulation routes through them which links the residential to other areas of the site. These pathway systems are integrated with the circulation that accompanies the visitor parking for the residents and does not conflict.			
As indicated in the response to Item 6 above, There is still a requirement for loading within the courtyard areas for the residential buildings which would not negate the need for asphalt surfaces within the courtyard.			
14	Open space networks and	Connects and extends existing systems and patterns.	Support

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	park systems		
	UDRP Commentary		
	The layout generally conforms to this intent.		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>No response required.</i>		
15	Views and vistas	Designed to enhance views to natural areas and urban landmarks.	NA
	UDRP Commentary		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>No response required.</i>		
16	Vehicular interface		Further review recommended
	UDRP Commentary		
	The proposal generally reads as a vehicular first rather than pedestrian first design. See commentary under items 6, 7 and 12 above.		
	The applicant is encouraged to reduce the width of the streets to the minimum width of 6.0m at the pedestrian crossings and using the minimum width for all other areas. The 9m width seems excessive to the scale of the development and detrimental to a "pedestrian first" design.		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>The width of High Street has been reduced to 9.0m from the widths of the adjoining 15.4m of Red Embers Way NE to the east and the adjoining 14m width of Redstone Way NE to the west. Drive aisles have been reduced to the minimum 7.2 m where possible throughout the site.</i>		
	<i>Road width and corner radii have been designed to accommodate City Emergency and Waste & Recycling collection vehicles. Should the High Street be reduced to 6.0m width there would be a greater amount of corner cut required on the sidewalks for the turning radii of the larger vehicles accessing various parts of the site. Semi-trailers will also be accessing and circulating through the site which require even larger turning radii than the City vehicles, as such making the corners along High Street wider from a sidewalk point of view. Refer to DP1.07, DP1.08, and DP1.09 for the turning radii of each of the vehicles described above.</i>		
17	Other		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>No response required.</i>		
	Contextual Response <i>Optimize built form with respect to mass, spacing and placement on site in consideration to adjacent uses, heights and densities</i>		
	Topic	Best Practice	Ranking
18	Massing relationship to context	Relationship to adjacent properties is sympathetic	Support
	UDRP Commentary		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>No response required.</i>		
19	Massing impacts on sun shade	Sun shade impacts minimized on public realm and adjacent sites	Support
	UDRP Commentary		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>No response required.</i>		
20	Massing orientation to street edges	Building form relates / is oriented to the streets on which it fronts.	Further review recommended
	UDRP Commentary		

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	Refer to comments under item 6 above. The panel acknowledges that the concentration of building form along the high street will leave more views into parking lots from other vantages, and some of the other streets less developed. The intent is that the available density should be focused as best it can on the spaces that can best be animated. Trying to deliver continuous street face on all streets will not be possible give the site size and available building form. It is the panel's opinion that delivering the high street should be the priority.	
	Applicant Response	
	<i>Please refer to the response to Item 6 above. High Street is considered a priority in the design. However, in designing the overall site it is important to consider that the High Street is only a portion of the overall design. The balance of the site must also function properly. To focus just on the High Street design alone and not consider the ramifications to the balance of the site is poor design. We believe the entire site must all work as a collective whole, and as such must address the requirements of all uses and areas of the site to be successful.</i>	
21	Massing distribution on site	Further review recommended
	UDRP Commentary	
	See response to item 20 above	
	Applicant Response	
	<i>Please refer to the response to Items 6 and 20 above.</i>	
	<i>The massing distribution on site has been carefully considered to make sure that not just High Street is successful but also the retail buildings which are not on High Street are also visible and successful. As such, a solid, continuous building wall was not developed along High Street to allow the free flow of both pedestrians and vehicles to circulate throughout the site.</i>	
	<i>Where there are gaps between the buildings (Buildings C and D, and Buildings H and J) along High Street, which do not allow for vehicular traffic, plaza spaces have been developed to maximize the opportunities for spill out of activities into the public realm provide pedestrian linkages from the parking at the rear of the buildings to High Street.</i>	
22	Massing contribution to public realm at grade	Building form contributes to a comfortable pedestrian realm at grade
	Further review recommended	
	UDRP Commentary	
	Generally the scale of the buildings is appropriate. In addition, see response to item 20 above.	
	Applicant Response	
	<i>Please refer to the response to Item 21 above. The building forms have been designed to respond to the pedestrian with space provided between the buildings for comfortable pedestrian scale activities.</i>	
23	Other	
	Applicant Response	
	No response required.	
	Safety and Diversity Promote design that accommodates the broadest range of users and uses. Achieve a sense of comfort and security at all times.	
	Topic	Best Practice
24	Safety and security	CPTED principles are to be employed - good overlook, appropriate lighting, good view lines, glazing in lobbies and entrances.
	Further review recommended	
	UDRP Commentary	
	Refer to response to item 10 above	
	Applicant Response	
	<i>Refer to response to Items 10 and 21 above. The site has been designed to respect CPTED principles including overlook, appropriate site and building lighting, view lines throughout the site and glazing in residential lobbies and being able to see through the residential buildings at the</i>	

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	<i>building entrances.</i>		
25	Pedestrian level comfort - wind	Incorporate strategies to block wind, particularly prevailing wind and downdrafts. Test assumptions and responses via Pedestrian Level Wind Analysis. Particular attention to winter conditions.	NA
	UDRP Commentary		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>No response required.</i>		
26	Pedestrian level comfort - snow	Incorporate strategies to prevent snow drifting. Test assumptions and responses via Snow Drifting Analysis. Particular attention to winter conditions.	NA
	UDRP Commentary		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>No response required.</i>		
27	Weather protection	Weather protection is encouraged at principal entrances. Continuous weather protection is encouraged along retail / mixed used frontages.	Support
	UDRP Commentary		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>No response required.</i>		
28	Night time design		TBD
	UDRP Commentary		
	Not enough information on site lighting was provided to comment.		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>Please refer to DPE1.01 for the "Overall Site Plan – Site Lighting Layout".</i>		
29	Barrier free design	Site access to be equal for able and disabled individuals. Provide sloped surfaces 5% grade or less vs ramps.	TBD
	UDRP Commentary		
	The applicant is to confirm that the exterior ramps on site meet the max 5% condition. Consider using sloped walks in lieu of stairs between regional pathway and project site.		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>Pedestrian ramps provided at the residential entrances off of the internal street to the respective sites have been provided at 1/12 which corresponds to 8.3% as per the requirements of the Alberta Building Code for accessibility. This slope was chosen to match the adjacent drive aisles to avoid the requirements for retaining walls at these locations.</i>		
	<i>There are 5 stairs located adjacent to Building L which link the plaza area down to the regional pathway, all other access points to the regional pathway are by sloped sidewalks to allow for maximum accessibility. At the terminus of the LRT platforms there is accessibility to the site without any use of stairs, all pedestrians have access to the LRT platforms via sloped sidewalks which meet the Alberta Building Code requirements for accessibility.</i>		
30	Winter city	Maximize exposure to sunshine for public areas through orientation, massing. Design public realm that supports winter activity.	Support
	UDRP Commentary		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>No response required.</i>		
31	Other		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>No response required.</i>		

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Service / Utility Design <i>Promote design that accommodates service uses in functional and unobtrusive manner. Place service uses away from and out of sight of pedestrian areas where possible. Screening elements to be substantive and sympathetic to the building architecture.</i>		
Topic	Commentary	Ranking
32 (specify)		TBD