

Urban Design Review Panel Comments (LOC2018-3108 / DP2018-3108)

Date: July 11, 2018
Time: 3:00 pm
Panel Members:

Present:	Absent:
Chad Russill (co-chair)	Janice Liebe (chair)
Amelia Hollingshurst	Glen Pardoe
Ben Bailey	Robert LeBlond
Yogeshwar Navagrah	Terry Klassen
Chris Hardwicke	Bruce Nelligan
	Jack Vanstone
	Gary Mundy
	Eric Toker

Advisor: David Down, Chief Urban Designer
Application number: LOC2018-0059/DP2018-3108
Municipal address: 1018 McDougall Rd NE
Community: Bridgeland
Project description: New: Multi-Residential Development, Retail and Consumer Service (2 buildings, 2 phases)
Review: Second (PE2018-00310)
File Manager: Christine Leung
City Wide Urban Design: Lothar Wiwjorra
Applicant: Casola Koppe
Architect: Casola Koppe
Owner: Bucci
Ranking: Endorse

Summary

July 11, 2018

The proposed project was previously presented to UDRP in March 2018. The panel noted that the new package did a strong job describing the project and the applicant has addressed the majority of the comments from the previous submission. Panel members stated that they were excited by the well-considered project that would bring inspired architectural diversity to the neighbourhood. The panel appreciated the exterior expression of the building but expressed some concern about the quality of the clear fritted glass screens as they will predominantly define the image of the building. The success of the project's thesis will largely hinge on the execution of this details.

The panel felt that weather protection along the street edge could be investigated further. The panel suggested that the residential entries are not as developed as other building elements and suggested highlighting the residential entrances by extending the tower language as a consideration. Ground floor residential entrances at grade present some grade issues along the north and east, as openly discussed with the applicant.

The applicant presented a recent sketch (not originally in the submission package) that explored moving the amenity area inside. The panel supported this move in principle as it resolves the inside corner security issues and provides a continuous streetwall condition.

The panel discussed the large footprint of the tower elements that visually appear larger due to the wrap-around balconies but appreciated the massing move of dividing the bulk of the building into two towers rather than a continuous slab.

Urban Design Review Panel Comments (LOC2018-3108 / DP2018-3108)

Previous Comments (PE2018-00310)

March 28, 2018

The proposed project is a mixed-use midrise project that is comprised of two towers joined by a low podium. The Panel expressed support for the general urban strategy of the project including breaking the mass into two towers to provide a variegated elevation rather than a single slab. Recognizing that the project has no “back” as it is surrounded by parks or public streets on all sides the Panel supports the attempt to activate all frontages with commercial uses or live-work townhouses at grade. The Panel’s comments and concerns focused primarily on the challenges of providing active uses given the steep grades and the treatment of the servicing area. The landscape design is yet to be fully developed. In particular the boulevard condition in front of the retail units is currently shown as a grass boulevard typical of residential frontage. Opportunities to incorporate LID, resolution of universal accessibility and the specific detail of the stepped terraces and proposed retaining walls should be explored in future explorations. Similarly, the landscape in front of the townhouses is undeveloped showing only a simple walkway to the front door. Patio space, public/private separation and separation between units should be explored. The patio/playground courtyard on the north side of the project presents public/private interface issues and is also undeveloped. The edge condition along the blank wall to the south of the bike parking room does not show design mitigations to screen or articulate the blank wall. Finally, the applicant noted that the current design of the tower facades with a full building screen in front of deep balconies will likely change due to energy considerations and that future submissions may be different in aesthetic. For these reasons and others noted below the Panel endorses the project with comment.

Applicant Response

September 18, 2018

Urban Vitality			
	Topic	Best Practice	Ranking
1	Retail street diversity	Retail streets encourage pedestrians along sidewalk with a mix and diversity of smaller retail uses. Retail wraps corners of streets. Space for patios and cafe seating is provided.	Support
	UDRP Commentary		
	The proposal successfully provides retail street diversity on a challenging site.		
	Applicant Response		
	In an effort to provide opportunities for public gathering, we have proposed several new areas around the site for benches and landscape enhancement. These are located both on site (see areas within the north setback facing St. Matthew’s Square and offsite also facing St. Matthew Square Park within the enlarged boulevard area at the curve of St. Matthew. Along 9 Street, it is anticipate that the setback areas fronting the retail spaces will provide opportunities for a wide range of seating possibilities such as bench/planting combinations for informal short term seating (similar to a an Ice cream shop scenario) or a more formal chairs and tables type seating in front of CRU’s that are expected to attract restaurant or licensed establishments. We believe it is merely important to provide enough room, proper grading and visual security to allow these types of outdoor gathering spaces to evolve and adapt to the uses and micro-climates that will define them over time.		
2	Retail street transparency, porosity	Retail street maximizes glazing - 70% and more. Maintains view into and out of retail, avoids display-only windows.	Support
	UDRP Commentary		
	Project maximizes retail glazing and transparency.		
	Applicant Response		
3	Pedestrian-first design	Sidewalks are continuous on all relevant edges. Materials span driveway entries and parking access points. No drop	Further review recommended


Urban Design Review Panel Comments (LOC2018-3108 / DP2018-3108)

		offs or lay-bys in the pedestrian realm. Street furnishings support the pedestrian experience.	
	UDRP Commentary		
	The applicant has attempted to mitigate slope issues to provide reasonable accessibility given its challenging site. The pedestrian surface treatment does not appear to span the vehicular entry to the parkade. Some difficult areas still exist and require further study to resolve fully.		
	Applicant response		
	Although continuous pedestrian surfaces are desirable, the change in material for the main access drive surface (complete with standard City of Calgary concrete apron) will provide a visual queue for pedestrians that vehicles may be present. Private patios and onsite commercial setback frontage areas are paved in contrasting pavers to provide a subtle definition of the pedestrian walk and areas of seating and/or layby potential.		
4	Entry definition / legibility	Entry points are clear and legible	Further review recommended
	UDRP Commentary		
	Residential entries are not as developed as other building elements; review of these entries is suggested to strengthen concept further. A possible expression may be to highlight entrances by extending the tower language or other avenues to differentiate these entries nodes from the retail.		
	Applicant Response		
	Although the entry canopies seem undeveloped, the intent here is to execute a simple slab type canopy form that both highlights the entry point while not competing with the simplicity of the rest of the design. A minimalist composite white metal panel clad canopy that appears to pierce the glass wall is the general appearance we are after. This canopy treatment will be repeated at the south tower entrance as well as that of the north tower on 9th Street NE.		
5	Residential multi-level units at grade	Inclusion of two or three storey units are encouraged, particularly at street level. Private outdoor patios with access to the sidewalk are ideal. Patios are large enough to permit furnishing and active use.	Further review recommended
	UDRP Commentary		
	The proposal incorporates residential units at grade. The Panel encourages the applicant to consider the private/public realm transition, incorporating thoughtful buffering in the form of gating and/or landscaping features to promote usable private amenity space at grade.		
	Applicant Response		
	Grade oriented unit entrance areas are defined with careful placement of planters with both low lying vegetation and shading tree elements that define the private/public edge and provide (with mature growth) a bit of a green canopy to each entry. A low pedestrian gate provides secured access for resident's private outdoor amenity. All patio surfaces for these amenities will be finished in modular permeable concrete pavers to provide better drainage and residential scale.		
6	At grade parking	At grade parking is concealed behind building frontages along public streets.	NA
	UDRP Commentary		
	NA		
	Applicant Response		
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.	Support
	UDRP Commentary		
	The proposal appears to have minimized parking entrances as best as possible. See item #3.		
	Applicant Response		
8	Other		
	Applicant Response		

Urban Design Review Panel Comments (LOC2018-3108 / DP2018-3108)

Urban Connectivity <i>Provide visual and functional connectivity between buildings and places, ensure connection to existing and future networks. Promote walkability, cycle networks, transit use, pedestrian-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.	Support
UDRP Commentary		
The Design includes a clear north-south pathway connection to nearby LRT station and activates with retail uses at grade.		
Applicant Response		
Inclusion of commercial uses will provide greater activation of 9th Street NE and thus provide greater natural security for this important north/south pedestrian route throughout the day.		
10	Regional pathway connections Supports walkability via intentional urban design connections to pathway systems.	NA
UDRP Commentary		
Applicant Response		
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		
Outdoor public bicycle storage at grade has been provided.		
Applicant Response		
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.	Support
UDRP Commentary		
The proposal includes continuous sidewalks along all four sides and is mindful of the grade changes as it relates to adjacent uses.		
Applicant Response		
13	Pathways through site Provide pathways through the site along desire lines to connect amenities within and beyond the site boundaries.	NA
UDRP Commentary		
Due to the site size, pathways through the site are not deemed necessary to support successful urban design for this project given strength of public realm interface.		
Applicant Response		
14	Open space networks and park systems Connects and extends existing systems and patterns.	Support
UDRP Commentary		
Retail/commercial facing 9 th Street and residential facing St. Matthew Sq. and McDougall Road support the current use patterns of adjacent sites.		
Applicant Response		
15	Views and vistas Designed to enhance views to natural areas and urban landmarks.	Support

Urban Design Review Panel Comments (LOC2018-3108 / DP2018-3108)

UDRP Commentary		
The two-tower massing improves views to the city. The design also brings an inspired architectural diversity to the neighbourhood, enhancing the local streetscape.		
Applicant Response		
16	Vehicular interface	NA
UDRP Commentary		
Applicant Response		
17	Other	
Applicant Response		
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
		Further review recommended
UDRP Commentary		
Although visually dense the two-tower design breaks up the massing of the building. Continued study of the clear fritted glass screens is recommended as they will predominantly define the image of the building.		
Applicant Response		
During the past couple of months, the project design/engineering team has been exploring different strategies on executing the aesthetic look of the “patterned screen” that is the cornerstone of the application’s identity. Until a few weeks ago, we were leaning towards an “all glass” exterior skin. However, upon rendering under different lighting conditions, it became clear that the behavior of light/glare on the glass surface was going to compromise the reading of the vertical change of the pattern. Therefore, we have decided to move to an all composite metal panel solution that better matches the original renderings and strikes a better balance of constructability and aesthetics. See the latest rendering below:		
		
19	Massing impacts on sun shade	Sun shade impacts minimized on public realm and adjacent sites
		Support
UDRP Commentary		

Urban Design Review Panel Comments (LOC2018-3108 / DP2018-3108)

	The two-tower massing somewhat minimizes shadow impact on adjacent sidewalks.		
	Applicant Response		
20	Massing orientation to street edges	Building form relates / is oriented to the streets on which it fronts.	Support
	UDRP Commentary		
	The proposal successfully addresses adjacent streets with grade-related uses and form.		
	Applicant Response		
21	Massing distribution on site		Support
	UDRP Commentary		
	Although visually dense the two-tower massing breaks up the massing of the building. The staggered placement of the towers maximizes the separation between the towers and views.		
	Applicant Response		
22	Massing contribution to public realm at grade	Building form contributes to a comfortable pedestrian realm at grade	Further review recommended
	UDRP Commentary		
	The panel commends the clean lines and architectural expression of the glass box podium though weather protection along the street edge could be investigated further.		
	Applicant Response		
	As previously mentioned, we believe that commercial establishments should be allowed the ability to provide their own seating and canopy solutions. The glass podium provides a common backdrop for any/all solutions to occur. (ie. trellis, umbrella, private planter trees etc.) Furthermore it is our experience that built-in type free draining architectural canopies pose their own challenges during icy/snowy freeze thaw conditions.		
23	Other		
	Applicant Response		
Safety and Diversity <i>Promote design that accommodates the broadest range of users and uses. Achieve a sense of comfort and security at all times.</i>			
	Topic	Best Practice	Ranking
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		
	Moving the amenity area inside would resolve the inside corner security issues and provide a continuous streetwall condition. This option should be further studied as it was generally supported as shown, though design was not completely resolved at time of review.		
	Applicant Response		
	The north "inset" court has been deleted and the north building edge now engages St. Matthew continuously with additional grade oriented residential units.		
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		
	Not reviewed.		
	Applicant Response		

Urban Design Review Panel Comments (LOC2018-3108 / DP2018-3108)

	The towers have significant articulation (continuous deep screen/balcony) that should prevent wind shear or down drafts to occur.	
26	Pedestrian level comfort - snow	Incorporate strategies to prevent snow drifting. Test assumptions and responses via Snow Drifting Analysis. Particular attention to winter conditions.
	UDRP Commentary	
	Not reviewed.	
	Applicant Response	
27	Weather protection	Weather protection is encouraged at principal entrances. Continuous weather protection is encouraged along retail / mixed used frontages.
	Further review recommended	
	UDRP Commentary	
	The panel recommends weather protection along the street edge could be investigated further.	
	Applicant Response	
	Majority of daily traffic in and out of the building will be through the tower lobby entrances. They are treated with their own special canopies. See note 22 for commercial retail units.	
28	Night time design	
	Support	
	UDRP Commentary	
	The proposal provides active uses along its retail frontage and passive surveillance opportunities along its residential edges.	
	Applicant Response	
29	Barrier free design	Site access to be equal for able and disabled individuals. Provide sloped surfaces 5% grade or less vs ramps.
	Further review recommended	
	UDRP Commentary	
	The proposal appears to have attempted to mitigate slopes on a difficult site. The main residential entries provide ramps and there are some residential units with at grade barrier free entries.	
	Applicant Response	
	Barrier free access into and around the public areas of the building are code governed and conformed to throughout. Private residential units are barrier free accessible from within the building corridors if not from the street.	
30	Winter city	Maximize exposure to sunshine for public areas through orientation, massing. Design public realm that supports winter activity.
	NA	
	UDRP Commentary	
	Not reviewed.	
	Applicant Response	
31	Other	
	Applicant Response	
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)	