

Urban Design Review Panel Comments & Applicant Response (Review #1)

Urban Design Review Panel Comments – Review #1

Date: November 1, 2017

Time: 3.45 pm

Attendance:

Panel Members:

Present:

Janice Liebe (chair)
Brian Horton (vice-chair)
Chad Russell
Philip Vandermeij
Terry Klassen

Absent:

Robert LeBlond
Bruce Nelligan
Yogeshwar Navagrah

Advisor: David Down, Chief Urban Designer

Application number: DP2017-4075

Municipal address: 1818 1 ST SE, 1825 Park Rd SE, 1919 Macleod Tr SE

Community: Beltline

Project description: New: Multi-Residential Development, Retail and Consumer Service (1 building, 1250 units)

Review: first

File Manager: Brendyn Seymour

City Wide Urban Design: Lothar Wiwjorra

Applicant: Norr Architects, Engineers, Planners

Architect: Norr Architects, Engineers, Planners

Owner: Albari Holding, Cidex Developments

Ranking: Further Review Recommended

Summary

UDRP commends the applicant for an ambitious proposal on a difficult to develop site. Given its location as a gateway to Calgary's city centre, the eventual development will be a landmark for the City. UDRP supports the density and the programming of the site, but suggests that a number of design changes would improve the overall quality of the site in an urban design context. UDRP is particularly concerned with the architectural design and language of the podium levels and has provided more detailed commentary below.

Although the site is bound by two major roadways, Macleod trail SE and 1 Street SE, UDRP believes that the site could be better integrated with the surrounding urban context. With significant improvements to 17 Avenue east currently underway and the planned extension of 17 Avenue across Macleod Trail into the Stampede Grounds and the ultimate extension of Riverwalk, the panel suggests that the connection of the project to the site to 17 Avenue can be improved by extending the proposed Park Road paving condition to the north. UDRP further recommends that this connection be extended to the river promenade by introducing a public north-south connection through the building from Park road to the river.

Our intention is to extend the proposed paving shown in our Landscape drawings North to 18th Avenue SW, pending approval from Roads / Transportation, and the approval/coordination from/with neighboring landowners to our site. The request to consider the introduction of a public path/opening through the site to access the river promenade would cause circulation, functionality, building operations, safety, CPTED and constructability concerns to Hat @ Elbow River. Additionally this would further complicate the limited servicing/back of house frontage we have at Park Road itself. As an alternative, the ground floor level is now proposed as a continuous double and triple height space with animated uses including thematic retail, coffee, fine dining and gathering/socializing areas which can be accessed from both building frontages (Park Road and the river promenade). The overall height of the lobby and the transparency of the glazing will allow the public to see through the lobby from both directions. To further complement, the existing

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sidewalks and City grid will have direct access to the river promenade portion of the site (with the respective agreement) so the public can freely have use of it. Please see Image 1 and Image 2 for clarification.

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.	Further Review Recommended
UDRP Commentary			
UDRP suggests that the grade level interface could be improved by introducing more active uses on the ground level. In the current proposal, both the north and south frontages are dominated by building lobbies and administrative spaces that do not represent active uses.			
Applicant Response			
<i>Active uses have been introduced (see Image 1). Although it is the grand lobby of the building, active uses complementary to the tenants' requirements/amenities are proposed, and will be provided dependent on market demand. Transparency of the glazing will help to emphasize the active uses inside (see images 2 and 3).</i>			
2	Retail street transparency, porosity	Retail street maximizes glazing - 70% and more. Maintains view into and out of retail, avoids display-only windows.	Further review recommended
UDRP Commentary			
UDRP acknowledges that the north and south facades have a significant amount of glazing that will result in permeability, but is concerned that the design lacks a human scale. UDRP suggests that creating a more fine-grained environment at grade and introducing canopies and a variety of warmer materials will help in creating a more human scale. UDRP also recommends internalizing the servicing functions currently located on the east side of the building which will provide an opportunity to introduce active uses on the Macleod Trail edge.			
Applicant Response			
<i>Human scale is achieved on both sides of the building, Park Road and the river promenade, by the introduction of the cantilevered floor above at the second level, providing shelter to the public walking by and to avoid antagonizing pedestrians against a 10 storey podium. In some cases this cantilever becomes an arcaded walkway. At the same time, at the building entrances, we are proposing additional human scaled canopies. See images 1 to 5.</i>			
3	Pedestrian-first design	Sidewalks are continuous on all relevant edges. Materials span driveway entries and parking access points. No drop offs or lay-bys in the pedestrian realm. Street furnishings support the pedestrian experience.	Further review required
UDRP Commentary			
Please see comment above regarding creating a north-south pedestrian connection from Park Road to the River.			
Applicant response			
<i>As explained in the summary response, to break the building ground level in two would create challenges for the efficiency of the building functionality and operations as ultimately this is a private complex. Instead we proposed a transparent, accessible, very attractive and active ground floor that over time will be a destination for the public and the tenants. Please refer to images 1 and 2.</i>			

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4	Entry definition / legibility	Entry points are clear and legible	Support
	UDRP Commentary		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>Noted</i>		
5	Residential multilevel 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.	N/A
	UDRP Commentary		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>Not applicable. All units are in the upper levels. Only active uses, lobby and service areas are located at ground level.</i>		
6	At grade parking	At grade parking is concealed behind building frontages along public streets.	Support
	UDRP Commentary		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>Noted. To confirm, at grade parking is within the parkade: indoor.</i>		
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		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>Noted. Both parkade entrances are minimized to just the overhead doors in the only access road possible.</i>		
8	Other		
	Applicant Response		
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, pedestrianfirst 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 with comment
	UDRP Commentary		

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<p>As noted above, extending Park Road to the north will improve one pedestrian route option to the LRT. UDRP requests that the applicant works with the City to create a riverfront pedestrian and cycle connection east which will act as another route to the LRT station.</p>			
<p>Applicant Response</p>			
<p><i>Noted. As mentioned, it is the intent to extend the paving to the North to 18th Ave SW, pending on approvals.</i></p>			
10	<p>Regional pathway connections</p>	<p>Supports LRT use via legible, dedicated pedestrian pathways to stations with direct routes. Avoids desire lines / shortcutting through parking areas.</p>	<p>Support with Comment</p>
<p>UDRP Commentary</p> <p>In addition to the comment above, UDRP recommends that the applicant work with the City in determining if a riverfront pathway connection to the west is feasible. If determined not feasible, UDRP requests that an alternate crossing of 1 Street SE be explored.</p>			
<p>Applicant Response</p> <p><i>Noted. Under the bridge on Macleod Trail to the West there is no headroom clearance, so an alternative should be explored by Transportation in conjunction with Parks and Roads.</i></p>			
11	<p>Cycle path connections</p>	<p>Supports cycling via intentional, safe urban design connections to pathway systems and ease of access to bicycle storage at grade.</p>	<p>Support with Comment</p>
<p>UDRP Commentary</p> <p><i>Noted. Bike storage is provided throughout the development, as self-standing wall mounted bike lockers or inside storage lockers for the tenants.</i></p>			
<p>Applicant Response</p>			
12	<p>Walkability - connection to adjacent neighbourhoods / districts / key urban features</p>	<p>Extend existing and provide continuous pedestrian pathways. Extend pedestrian pathway materials across driveways and lanes to emphasize pedestrian use.</p>	<p>Further review required</p>
<p>UDRP Commentary</p> <p>See comment above regarding extending Park Road</p>			
<p>Applicant Response</p> <p><i>We are proposing to provide and extend paving for all pedestrian areas (even roadway area) on Park Road and the river promenade frontage, to create an extended plaza experience.</i></p>			
13	<p>Pathways through site</p>	<p>Provide pathways through the site along desire lines to connect amenities within and beyond the site boundaries.</p>	<p>Further review required</p>
<p>UDRP Commentary</p> <p>See comment above regarding creating a new north-south connection through the site.</p>			
<p>Applicant Response</p> <p><i>Answer also addressed in previous responses. Please see above.</i></p>			

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14	Open space networks and park systems	Connects and extends existing systems and patterns.	Further review required
UDRP Commentary			
Although proposed park and open space connections will extend existing systems and patterns, details are lacking – requiring further review, including health of existing trees, slope stability/erosion management, existing retaining structure assessment, context-specific consideration of this site and its location regarding riverfront values, access, landing at water's edge, ecological significance of fisheries and interpretive messaging/public art that narrates how			
mountain rivers are important to the Rivers District, Calgary, and surrounding region. The Open space network, its connection to the Riverwalk, and its ability to meet at the water's edge is fundamentally important to successful development at this site, for which partnering with CMLC (and their precedent downstream experience) is recommended.			
Applicant Response			
<i>BIA study has been commissioned to provide comments and suggestions about this regard.</i>			
15	Views and vistas	Designed to enhance views to natural areas and urban landmarks.	Further review required.
UDRP Commentary			
The view and on top of bank is truncated by the two bridges that couple Macleod Trail around the site. The view at the water's edge extends under the bridges upstream and downstream – an opportunity for a riverfront site in its high-profile gateway location that should not be missed.			
Applicant Response			
<i>The proposal celebrates the river front with an extensive and continuous walkway to which the building itself is facing. It also promotes the connection for the Regional Pathway, and people accessing the water. The fact the site is on the North side has provided the opportunities to develop the building along the river and exploit all the views to the South. The openness of the glazing and the active internal uses proposed at ground level will promote the intensive use and interaction of this outdoor public space. On the east end of the site is a gateway to the City from the South, therefore the intention is to create a welcoming structure with architectural / sculptural details that express the openness of the amenity spaces inside like the SE corner structure which will catch the interest of people driving into the City (see image 8)</i>			
16	Vehicular interface		Support
UDRP Commentary			
Applicant Response			
<i>Noted. All parking is screened with dynamic façade to facilitate interest.</i>			
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

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18	Massing relationship to context	Relationship to adjacent properties is sympathetic	Further review recommended
UDRP Commentary			
<p>The overall scale and distribution of the towers and base is supported. The architecture of the podium however severs the towers from the base, and is of an entirely different language and scale. It is the opinion of the panel that further design iterations of the podium that soften the language, provides greater opportunity for occupied spaces other than parking at the street faces, the potential for the tower architecture to extend down to street level should be considered. Breaking the podium up into separate buildings should also be explored. Most importantly, the triangular portion of the southeast corner is a dramatic element which could be celebrated in a significant way architecturally. This project will become a gateway element to the downtown core, and this triangular component t is highly visible from the one-way traffic heading north into the city.</p>			
<p>The design response could take more advantage of this important position to provide a very significant piece of architecture for the prow. The massing of the podium should take into consideration of any future repurposing of portions or whole of parkade is appropriate given the high-profile gateway location.</p>			
Applicant Response			

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	<p><i>First of all, to understand the overall concept of the proposed design, it is necessary to explain that being right next to the River, we based our inspiration in the nautical theme. While not literal, the SE corner piece represents the prow of the boat, the podium represents the boat itself and the towers represent the chimneys. This concept was the result of finding a way to adapt the building to the surrounding context. The comments provided by UDRP were actually either details overseen in the presentation package (maybe due to lack of a deeper explanation from our part) or have been addressed in this new iteration: Tower A, on the East, and Tower C, on the West end, have been designed to show some of its elements coming down to the ground (please see images 6 and 7). The proportion and color of all the glazing panels in the building (towers and podium) are similar and there are glazing elements that are spilling down through the podium to the ground that conserve the same proportions to keep the same language throughout. However, the approach was also to differentiate the uses within the building and also to emphasize the different masses (image 9 and 10). To differentiate the uses, the application of different materials is key. The towers are glazed throughout and have continuous wrapping balconies and this represents the residential use. The glazing and continuous balconies in the podium represent the residential use again, but its horizontality denotes different unit types, in this case the smaller shotgun type 1 bedroom units. Below that, the parkade is screened with dark gray metal panels, but the introduction of staggered glazed horizontal openings, with vertical glazing breaks add to its articulation. Following UDRP commentary, additional vertical breaks were introduced to this metal paneling to avoid having large horizontal masses. These vertical breaks also act as a metaphor to the appearance of the podium with the towers. The ground floor in response to the requirement for more active uses, now has retail, and other businesses complimentary to the proposed residential and amenities. The corner piece was further detailed, articulated and adjusted after receiving UDRP comments to have more interest, being an important piece in the building as the downtown gateway. It expresses the mixed use of restaurant at the base (clear glazing), screened parkade on top (metal panel), and the amenity spaces in the two upper levels (glazing); the corner shows a clear glazing piece that denotes vertical circulation that integrates the three parts of this sculptural element (see image 8). In the case of the massing, the podium had to clearly read as the base of the three towers and not just as a widening of the tower footprint: There had to be a break from both masses. The triangular SE corner piece is an extension of the podium so its language is part of the overall podium concept, but reads as the most important part of the nautical concept: the prow of the boat. In case there will be a market shift in the future, portions of the parkade could be repurposed with other uses.</i></p>		
19	<p>Massing impacts on sun shade</p>	<p>Sun shade impacts minimized on public realm and adjacent sites</p>	<p>Support</p>
<p>UDRP Commentary</p>			
<p><i>Noted. The location does not impede sun penetration at critical times of the day nor cast shadows on any parks or public spaces during the key hours as stated in the Beltline ARP</i></p>			
<p>Applicant Response</p>			
20	<p>Massing orientation to street edges</p>	<p>Building form relates / is oriented to the streets on which it fronts.</p>	<p>Further review recommended</p>
<p>UDRP Commentary</p>			

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<p>The large mass of the podium needs more articulation of active uses at street level to create a human scale. UDRP recommends splitting the podium into several buildings related to the towers to create more fine-grained development.</p>			
<p>Applicant Response</p>			
<p><i>The podium was further articulated by the introduction of additional vertical breaks (glazing) in the parkade levels to avoid extended horizontal portions (see images 9 and 10). In addition, active uses have been proposed at ground level, and to maintain human scale, the second level is cantilevered or arcaded to mitigate the impact of having a 10 storey wall next to a pedestrian walkway and canopies at the building entrances are proposed (see images 1 to 5).</i></p>			
21	Massing distribution on site	Support	
<p>UDRP Commentary</p>			
<p>Applicant Response</p>			
<p><i>Noted.</i></p>			
22	Massing contribution to public realm at grade	Building form contributes to a comfortable pedestrian realm at grade Further review recommended	
<p>UDRP Commentary</p>			
<p>As proposed the massing contribution to public realm opportunities need to be better articulated with wrap-around and walk-through benefits.</p>			
<p>Applicant Response</p>			
<p><i>The front and back of the building have been extensively Landscaped to improve the pedestrian realm. Regional Pathway has been reviewed to provide connection to the East and to be incorporated into the Landscape (see image 11). As mentioned, walkthrough will be accessing the lobby/ground floor to use the proposed active uses within when possible (see images 1 and 2).</i></p>			
23	Other		
<p>Applicant Response</p>			
<p>Safety and Diversity Promote design that accommodates the broadest range of users and uses. Achieve a sense of comfort and security at all times.</p>			
	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.	
<p>UDRP Commentary</p>			
<p>Details not comprehensively available for review.</p>			
<p>Applicant Response</p>			
<p><i>Safety will improve with the development. There will be a 24hour concierge and security system that will look after the public and tenants inside and outside the building.</i></p>			

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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.	
	UDRP Commentary		
	Details not comprehensively available for review.		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>A wind study will be provided as a condition of DP release. The building being on the North side of the river, will provide shelter to prevailing winds from the NW direction into the river promenade (see images 4 and 5)</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.	
	UDRP Commentary		
	Details not comprehensively available for review.		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>Same as above, the building will provide shelter to the river promenade and being the main entrances on the East side, these will also be sheltered from snow drifting (see images 4 and 5)</i>		
27	Weather protection	Weather protection is encouraged at principal entrances. Continuous weather protection is encouraged along retail / mixed used frontages.	
	UDRP Commentary		
	Details not comprehensively available for review.		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>Second level is cantilevered / arcaded. Also, canopies are provided at the entrances (see images 4 and 5)</i>		
28	Night time design		
	UDRP Commentary		
	Details not comprehensively available for review. Inspirational images shown of penthouse lighting to support the buildings serving a gateway function, but no details provided to confirm in the proposed design.		
	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.	
	UDRP Commentary		
	Details not comprehensively available for review.		
	Applicant Response		
	<i>Barrier free principles have been addressed throughout.</i>		

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30	Winter city	Maximize exposure to sunshine for public areas through orientation, massing. Design public realm that supports winter activity.	
UDRP Commentary			
Details not comprehensively available for review.			
Applicant Response			
<i>See response items 25 to 27</i>			
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	Waste / recycling		TBD
33	Enmax (Power) / Atco (Gas)		TBD
34	Transformer / switchgear		TBD
35	Exhaust / intake		TBD
36	Electrical vaults		TBD
37	Loading	<i>2 loading stalls provided, plus small tenant move-in vehicles (vans or small trucks) can be accommodated in P1 underground level.</i>	Further review recommended
38	Fire truck access		Endorse
39	Other		