



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 4, 2020
To: City of Austin Design Commission
From: Planning & Urban Design Working Group

Re: Density Bonus Working Group review of Tower 5C at 415 Colorado Street for substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines

Meeting date: February 27, 2020/12:00 pm
Applicant: Michael Whellan- Armbrust & Brown

The project location is 415 Colorado Street.

The project includes mixed uses of retail, 2,332 sf, and office, 465,900 sf, totaling 468, 232 sf.

The applicant is seeking a density bonus to raise the FAR from 8:1 to 22:1 (maximum allowance). The site area is 22,080 sf, and the total project area is 468,232 sf.

The total building height is 655'-11" (41 floors). The maximum height achievable under the density bonus program in this portion of Downtown is not applicable.

The additional square footage made available by the FAR & height density bonus is 291,592 sf. The current 8:1 FAR yields 176,640 sf.

Per ordinance, the applicant is required to provide streetscape improvements along all public street frontages consistent with the Great Streets Standards, and the applicant shall commit to a minimum of 2 star green building rating. The Mayor and Council and the Planning & Development Review Director is to determine appropriate bonus area and in light of community benefits to be provided.

Positive attributes of the project include a more contemporary Great Streets design that utilizes elements that trigger a strong connection of the building to the streetscape unlike many of the more traditional designs. These elements include dynamic paving patterns and a variety of planting materials. The architecture of the building provides a unique

sculptural form in the skyline against a majority of rectilinear structures. Refer to checklist for additional comments.

Concerns primarily center on possible traffic impact of already congested thoroughfares due to large amount of tenant parking spaces, even though substantial on-site bicycle parking is provided. The historical element of the Colorado Street side garnered a lot of discussion. And although the enhanced paving pattern and other atypical streetscape elements were well received, there is some concern that it might interrupt the uniformity of the traditional Great Streets program which is most prevalent Downtown. Refer to checklist for additional comments.

We recommend that this project, as presented, is in substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines.

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST

AREA WIDE GUIDELINES

1. *Create dense development - [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a*
2. *Create mixed-use development - [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a*
The Working Group (WG) would like to see a nice mixture of retail that supports the area and not just a large restaurant that might not serve a diverse range of customers. Also, the WG encourages public use of the Lobby which was proposed to be a "We Work" type space and not limit its use for office hours only. More mixed use would be nice but the ground floor was limited due to the large area required for elevators and stairs.
3. *Limit development which closes downtown streets - [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a*
4. *Buffer neighborhood edges - [] incorporated, [] need input, [X] n/a*
5. *Incorporate civic art in both public and private development - [] incorporated,*
6. *[X] need input, [] n/a*
7. *Protect important public views - [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a*
8. *Avoid historical misrepresentations - [] incorporated, [X] need input, [] n/a*
Although the historical homage to the existing Warehouse District on the Colorado Street side is mandated by other entities, the WG would like the structure to be either a mural that is sensitively placed on the face of the new building, or have it deep enough to provide some type of function. Also, the brick structure at the parking garage entrance is puzzling if you are not aware that it has historical significance. As presented, the historical homage elements seem to be a distraction (instead of attraction) as it interrupts the uniformity of the streetscape provided by this project.
9. *Respect adjacent historic buildings - [] incorporated, [X] need input, [] n/a*
See Item 8 above.
10. *Acknowledge that rooftops are seen from other buildings and the street - [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a`*
11. *Avoid the development of theme environments - [] incorporated, [X] need input, [] n/a*
See Item 8 above.
12. *Recycle existing building stock - [] incorporated, [] need input, [X] n/a*

GUIDELINES FOR THE PUBLIC STREETScape

1. Protect the pedestrian where the building meets the street- [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a
The paving material at the parking garage entrance should differ from the other streetscape paving to alert pedestrians of this automobile crossing.
2. Minimize curb cuts - [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a
3. Create a potential for two-way streets - [] incorporated, [] need input, [X] n/a
4. Reinforce pedestrian activity - [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a
5. Enhance key transit stops - [] incorporated, [X] need input, [] n/a
Was not discussed.
6. Enhance the streetscape- [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a
7. Avoid conflicts between pedestrians and utility equipment - [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a
8. Install street trees- [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a
9. Provide pedestrian-scaled lighting-[] incorporated, [X] need input, [] n/a
Was not discussed.
10. Provide protection from cars/promote curbside parking - [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a
11. Screen mechanical and utility equipment- [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a
12. Provide generous street-level windows- [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a
13. Install pedestrian-friendly materials at street level - [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a

GUIDELINES FOR BUILDINGS

1. Build to the street- [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a
2. Provide multi-tenant, pedestrian-oriented development at the street level- [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a
The Working Group (WG) would like to see a nice mixture of retail that supports the area and not just a large restaurant that might not serve a diverse range of customers. Also, the WG encourages public use of the Lobby which was proposed to be a “We Work” type space and not limit its use to office hours only.
3. Accentuate primary entrances - [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a
4. Encourage the inclusion of local character - [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a
5. Control on-site parking - [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a
The Working Group (WG) would like to see less on-site parking which could encourage the use of public transportation as our focus is to reinforce safe and vibrant pedestrian activity and not more automobiles Downtown.
6. Create quality construction - [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a
7. Create buildings with human scale - [X] incorporated, [] need input, [] n/a

GUIDELINES FOR OPEN SPACE (not applicable)

The Working Group appreciates the opportunity to preliminarily review and comment on this project and we look forward to a continued collaborative process while moving this project forward.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Evan K. Taniguchi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Evan K. Taniguchi
Planning & Urban Design Working Group of the Design Commission