



MEMORANDUM

Date: October 08, 2021
To: City of Austin Design Commission
From: Planning & Urban Design Working Group
Subject: Review of the 216 East 4th Street project for substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines.
Meeting Date: October 01, 2021; 12:00 pm, Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting
Applicant: Richard T. Suttle, Jr.; Armbrust & Brown, PLLC
Architect: Perkins & Will, Michael Hsu Office of Architecture

The project is located at 216 East 4th Street.

Existing zoning for the property is CBD and it is not within the Capitol View Corridor. The lot area is 35,371 SF and the total proposed project area is 813,000 square feet (Office: 765,000 SF, Retail: 48,000 SF). The proposed FAR for this project is 23:1, this is more than the 8:1 maximum allowed, so an increase in FAR of 15:1 is being requested (530,565 SF). The proposed building height is 705 feet with 50 floors. There are 18 levels of above grade parking. There is no onsite Community Benefit included in this project and no fee-in-lieu is required for a office project.

Per the Density Bonus Program ordinance, the applicant is required, at a minimum, to meet the three gatekeeper requirements:

1. Substantially comply with the City's Urban Design Guidelines
2. Provide streetscape improvements that meet the Great Streets Program Standards.
3. Commit to a minimum of 2-Star rating under Austin Energy's Green Building Program.

WORKING GROUP COMMENTS REGARDING COMPLIANCE WITH THE URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

AREA WIDE GUIDELINES

1. Create dense development-
23:1 FAR being requested. Project complies with this section.
2. Create mixed-use development-
The project has office use above retail. This project complies with this section.
3. Limit development which closes downtown streets-
This project is not proposing to permanently close any streets. Project complies with this section.
4. Buffer neighborhood edges-
Project does not border any neighborhoods. This section is not applicable.
5. Incorporate civic art in both public and private development-
No public art is being proposed. This project does not comply with this section. Add public art to comply.
6. Protect important public views-
Project is not within the Capitol View Corridor and does not encroach ROW. This project complies with this section.
7. Avoid historical misrepresentations-
Project design is a modern style. Project complies.
8. Respect adjacent historic buildings-
No adjacent buildings identified as historic landmarks. Section is not applicable.

9. Acknowledge that rooftops are seen from other buildings and the street-
Unclear if rooftop will be screened. Project does not comply with this section. Show how the rooftops are screened to comply.
10. Avoid the development of theme environments-
No theme shown. Project complies.
11. Recycle existing building stock-
Existing buildings will be demolished. This project does not comply.

*Project complies with 6 of the 9 applicable Area Wide Guidelines.

GUIDELINES FOR THE PUBLIC STREETSCAPE

1. Protect the pedestrian where the building meets the street-
While there is a large covered area along 4th street, the building does not protect the pedestrian at the garage entrances. Project does not comply. Provide overhead protection for pedestrian at the garage entries/ curb cuts to comply.
2. Minimize curb cuts-
There are two curb cuts planned adjacent to alley curb cuts, neither are covered. Project does not comply with this section.
3. Create a potential for two-way streets-
San Jacinto garage entry is two-way. Project complies with this section.
4. Reinforce pedestrian activity-
First two levels are recessed 18 feet from ROW, planned paseo provides connection to alley, and retail on all sides reinforces pedestrian activity. Project complies.
5. Enhance key transit stops-
There are no transit stops on site or adjacent site. Not applicable to this project.
6. Enhance the streetscape-
Project complies with Great Streets, covered plaza provides seating and opportunity for café tables and pickup windows. Paseo and retail in the rear helps to activate alley. Project complies with this section.
7. Avoid conflicts between pedestrians and utility equipment-
Utilities, including AE vaults, are located underground. Project complies with this section.
8. Install street trees-
Full street trees provided. Project complies with this section.
9. Provide pedestrian-scaled lighting-
Lighting Diagram provided. Project complies with this section.
10. Provide protection from cars/promote curbside parking-
Great Street trees and furniture provided. Curbside parking provided. Project complies.
11. Screen mechanical and utility equipment-
Equipment at street level is located underground. Project complies.
12. Provide generous street-level windows-
Project appears to comply.
13. Install pedestrian-friendly materials at street level-
Materials appear warm and durable. Project complies.

*Project complies with 10 of the 12 applicable Guidelines for Public Streetscape.

GUIDELINES FOR PLAZAS AND OPEN SPACE

1. Treat the Four Squares with Special Consideration-
Project does not front one of the squares. Not applicable.
2. Contribute to an Open Space Network-
Plaza on 4th Street contributes to open space network. Project complies.
3. Emphasize Connections to Parks and Greenways-
Enhanced landscaping and lighting along 4th Street emphasizes connection to Brush Square. Project complies.

4. Incorporate Open Space into Residential Development-
Project has no residential use. Not applicable.
5. Develop Green Roofs-
Project appears to have green roof at amenity roof deck. Project complies.
6. Provide Plazas in High Use Areas-
Project provides mid-block plaza, with paseo to alley, and generous street-level retail. Project complies.
7. Determine Plaza Function, Size, and Activity -
Plaza design provides defined edges with enhanced landscape and seating. Plaza appears to mainly serve to support retail spaces and office tenants. Project complies.
8. Respond to Microclimate in Plaza Design-
Plaza provides enhanced landscape, with understory trees, as well as shading. Project complies.
9. Consider Views, Circulation, Boundaries, and Subspaces in Plaza Design-
Plaza is defined and provides direct access to pedestrian routes. Project complies.
10. Provide an Appropriate Amount of Plaza Seating-
Project provides seating at edge of plaza in sunny locations and in shaded paseo. Project complies.
11. Provide Visual and Spatial Complexity in Public Spaces-
Visual connection between street level and mezzanine level is provided. Plantings draw people to mezzanine level. Paseo also visually connects plaza with alley. Project complies.
12. Use Plants to Enliven Urban Spaces-
Enhanced landscape in plaza appears to comply.
13. Provide Interactive Civic Art and Fountains in Plazas-
No art or fountains provided. Project does not comply.
14. Provide Food Service for Plaza Participants-
No food service, public restrooms, or drinking fountains are indicated. Project does not comply.
15. Increase Safety in Plazas through Wayfinding, Lighting, & Visibility-
Plaza and paseo appear well lit, but wayfinding plan is not indicated. Project does not comply.
16. Consider Plaza Operations and Maintenance-
Plaza function and management plan not provided. Project does not comply.

*Project complies with 10 of the 14 applicable Guidelines for Plazas & Open Space.

GUIDELINES FOR BUILDINGS

1. Build to the street-
Building built to the street, except at open plaza space. Project complies.
2. Provide multi-tenant, pedestrian-oriented development at the street level-
Project has retail/restaurant spaces on all four sides of building at street level and on three sides at mezzanine level. Project complies.
3. Accentuate primary entrances-
Primary entries to lobbies and retail spaces are unclear. Project does not comply. Provide exhibits illustrating accentuation to comply.
4. Encourage the inclusion of local character-
The activated alley and landscaped plaza appear to satisfy this guideline, but material selection is unclear. Project minimally complies.
5. Control on-site parking-
Above grade parking garage does not comply. Provide habitable space at street wall to comply.
6. Create quality construction-
Project appears to comply.
7. Create buildings with human scale-
Project appears to comply.

*Project complies with 5 of the 7 Guidelines for Buildings.

Positive features of this project include the substantial amount retail on the street and mezzanine levels, including along the alley, and the landscaped plaza, and paseo, that connects them. These features reinforce pedestrian activity. Incorporating retail in the alley could be a sea change for Austin and is very much supported by this Working Group. Locating the Austin Energy vault below grade is vital to being able to utilize the alley and we encourage more projects to do so. Where this project does fall short is in protecting the pedestrian at the entry drives. Both drives are adjacent to the alley and provide no overhead protection or pedestrian refuge. Additionally, the 18 levels of above grade parking is not ideal. While it is understood that the market demands parking, the Working Group would prefer the amount to be reduced and located below grade.

Based on the items outlined above, the Planning & Urban Design Working Group has determined that this project, as presented, substantially complies with the Urban Design Guidelines. We do encourage you to address the non-compliant items listed above in order to ensure a finding of substantial compliance from the Design Commission. The Working Group has appreciated the opportunity to review and comment on this project.

Respectfully,



David Carroll, Chair
City of Austin Design Commission

Working Group Members in attendance - David Carroll, Evan Taniguchi, Bart Whatley

cc: Evan Taniguchi, Bart Whatley, Aaron Jenkins, Jorge Rousselin