

Date: June 12, 2023
To: City of Austin Design Commission
From: Planning & Urban Design Working Group
Subject: Density Bonus Working Group review of 708 E 12th Street substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines
Meeting date: June 7, 2023; 12:00 pm; Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting
Applicant: Leah M. Bojo

The proposed project, 708 E 12th Street, is located on 12th Street between S I-35 Frontage Rd on the east and Sabine Street on the west, it is separated from it's northern neighbor by an existing alley.

The project includes a hotel (565,001 gsf / 527 rooms) and retail (10,965 gsf) on a 49,114 square foot lot.

The applicant is seeking a Density Bonus to raise the FAR from 8:1 to 12:1. Current height limitation is 400 feet and proposed heigh is 404 feet.

The current allowable area is gross building area is 392,912sf. With the density bonus, the applicant will receive an additional 172,089sf of gross building area.

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

- Substantially comply with the City's Urban Design Guidelines
- Provide streetscape improvements along all public street frontages consistent with the Great Streets Program Standards
- Applicant must commit to a minimum of 2-star green building rating (3-star proposed).

WORKING GROUP REVIEW OF PROJECT FOR COMPLIANCE WITH THE URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

AREA WIDE GUIDELINES

1. Create dense development –
Project complies with this Section.
2. Create mixed-use development –
Project complies with this Section.
3. Limit development which closes downtown streets –
Project complies with this Section.
4. Buffer neighborhood edges-
N/A
5. Incorporate civic art in both public and private development –
Project is not currently incorporating any public art. Project does **not** comply with this Section.
Working Group Thoughts:
 - utilizing art on the north & east elevations to shield parking structures
 - Incorporate Red River Cultural District tie-ins with opportunities for live music performance, pre-wired staging areas, etc
6. Protect important public views –
Project is outside of Capitol View Corridor and adjacent to S I-35, This section is N/A.
7. Avoid historical misrepresentations –
Project complies with this Section.
8. Respect adjacent historic buildings-
N / A
9. Acknowledge that rooftops are not seen from other buildings and the street –
Project complies with this Section.
10. Avoid the development of theme environments-
Project complies with this Section.
11. Recycle existing building stock –
Project does **not** comply with this section.
Working Group Thoughts:

- Building is not historically significant so we do not feel strongly that this should be incorporated.

Project receives 6 points for full compliance. 3 items are not applicable. 2 items are **not** in compliance.

GUIDELINES FOR THE PUBLIC STREETScape

1. Protect the pedestrian where the building meets the street-
Project **partially** complies with this section.
Working group thoughts:
 - Would recommend a site diagram showing how pedestrians, vehicles and deliveries enter and exit the site.
2. Minimize curb cuts-
Project complies with this section.
3. Create a potential for two-way streets-
N/A
4. Reinforce pedestrian activity-
Project **partially** complies with this section
Working Group Thoughts:
 - Enliven streetscape by activating second story.
5. Enhance key transit stops-
N/A
6. Enhance the streetscape-
Project complies with this Section.
7. Avoid conflicts between pedestrians and utility equipment-
Project complies with this section.
8. Install street trees-
Project complies with this Section.
9. Provide pedestrian-scaled lighting-
Project complies with this Section.
10. Provide protection from cars/promote curbside parking-
Project complies with this Section.
11. Screen mechanical and utility equipment-
project does **not** comply with this section.
Working Group Thoughts:
 - Mechanical and utility equipment are visible from I-35.
12. Provide generous street-level windows-
Project complies with this Section.
13. Install pedestrian-friendly materials at street level-
Project **partially** complies with this section.
Working Group Thoughts:
 - East and North sides of building need further refinement as it relates to views from S I-35 and Frontage rd. S I-35 Frontage does have a sidewalk and East façade should provide more friendly façade to potential pedestrians.

Project receives 7 points for full compliance. 3 items are in **partial** compliance. 2 items were not applicable, 1 item does **not** comply.

PLAZAS AND OPEN SPACE GUIDELINES

1. Treat the Four Squares with special consideration-
N/A
2. Contribute to an open space network-
Project complies with this Section.
3. Emphasize connections to parks and greenways-
Project complies with this Section
4. Incorporate open space into residential development (pool, deck, dog area)-
N/A

5. Develop green roofs-
Project **partially** complies with this Section.
Working Group Thoughts:
 - Provide more substantial green roof area throughout building roofs.
6. Provide plazas in high use areas-
Project does **partially** complies with this Section.
Working Group Thoughts:
Explanation provided that Waterloo Greenway is exceedingly close to this development is acceptable.
7. Determine plaza function, size and activity-
N/A
8. Respond to microclimate in plaza design-
N/A
9. Consider views, circulation, boundaries and subspaces in plaza design-
Project **partially** complies with this Section.
Working Group Thoughts:
 - Allow for public access to vistas of Waterloo Park
10. Provide an appropriate amount of plaza seating-
N/A
11. Provide visual and spatial complexity in plaza design-
N/A
12. Use plants to enliven urban spaces –
Project complies with this Section.
13. Provide interactive civic art and fountains in plaza-
N/A
14. Provide food service for plaza participants-
N/A – food service is provided but no formal plaza.
15. Increase safety in plazas through wayfinding, lighting and visibility-
N/A
16. Consider plaza operations and maintenance-
N/A

Project receives 3 points for full compliance. 2 items are in **partial** compliance. 10 items were not applicable.

GUIDELINES FOR BUILDINGS

1. Build to the street-
Project complies with this Section.
2. Provide multi-tenant, pedestrian-oriented development at the street level-
Project complies with this Section.
3. Accentuate primary entrances-
Project complies with this Section.
4. Encourage the inclusion of local character-
Project does **not** comply with this section.
Working Group Thoughts:
 - Consider more deliberate connections to Waterloo Greenway and Red River Cultural District for a site-specific project with local character.
5. Control on-site parking-
Project complies with this Section.
6. Create quality construction-
Project complies with this Section.
7. Create buildings with human scale-
Project **partially** complies with this Section.
Working Group Thoughts:
 - Project more human scale facades on North and East sides of buildings. Even though they face the substation and S I-35 they will be viewed by many humans each day

Project receives 5 points for full compliance. 1 items are in **partial** compliance and 1 item is not in compliance.

OVERALL RESULTS

Areawide	6 out of 11 comply	0 partially complies	3 not applicable
Public Streetscape	7 out of 13 comply	3 partially comply	2 not applicable
Plazas and Open Space	3 out of 16 comply	2 partially comply	10 not applicable
Buildings	6 out of 7 comply	2 partially comply	0 not applicable
TOTAL	24 out of 47 comply	6 partially comply	15 not applicable

The Density Bonus Working Group has determined that 708 E 12th Street is in substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines. It should be noted that the findings of this Working Group Memo are not reflective of the Design Commission and should not be construed as a final determination. Not all categories have equal weight from a points determination perspective. Substantial Compliance is a judgement call based upon the overall contribution to the experience of the public. Bringing partial points to full compliance and any out of compliance items to full compliance increases the likelihood of support from the full Design Commission.

WORKING GROUP COMMENTS

- AW5 - utilizing art on the north & east elevations to shield parking structures. Incorporate Red River district tie-ins with opportunities for live music performance, pre-wired staging areas, etc
- PS1 - Would recommend a site diagram showing how pedestrians, vehicles and deliveries enter and exit the site.
- PS4 - Enliven streetscape by activating second story.
- PS13 - East and North sides of building need further refinement as it relates to views from S I-35 and Frontage rd. S I-35 Frontage does have a sidewalk and East façade should provide more friendly façade to potential pedestrians.
- PZ5 - Provide more substantial green roof area throughout building roofs.
- PZ9 - Allow for public access to vistas of Waterloo Park
- B4 – Be more deliberate and site-specific by including local character to the overlapping districts that come together at the site – Red River Cultural District, Innovation District, New Waterloo Greenway.
- B7 - Project more human scale facades on North and East sides of buildings. Even though they face the substation and S I-35 they will be viewed by many humans each day

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

With thanks,



Marissa McKinney
City of Austin Design Commission
Planning & Urban Design Working Group