urban design peer review
informing city shaping decisions

session 4: october 3, 2013
• Founded: October 2009 with a $2 million grant through the Trinity Trust Foundation from Deedie and Rusty Rose
• Funding: Five-year Public Private Partnership until 2014; annual operations of $500K
• Structure: Begun as part of the City Manager’s Office
• Governance: Council-Manager
make urban design the city’s priority
we’re not there yet
• ensure policies related to urban design are followed
• ensure buildings and public spaces fit context and improve quality of life
• support creative design responses
• foster working relationship between design community and city
• broaden public discussion on design
• fostering an active streetscape
• improving connectivity
• encouraging form that catalyzes continued development and improves place qualities
- internal staff review
- consolidation of TIF design review committees
- formalization of process modeled on best practices
- review limited to projects seeking tif funding, public projects in tif districts, or projects requested by the city manager
- Integrated into tif approval process
• 9-member panel composed of design professionals
  • 4 architects
  • 2 landscape architects
  • 2 engineers
  • 1 planner
• appointed by the city manager to serve as an extension of staff
• staggered 2-year terms, with a two-term limit
• peer review is not
  – the taste police
  – the zoning administrator
  – the board of adjustment
  – regulatory or legislative

• peer review is
  – focused on context and urbanism
  – addressing how buildings meet the street
  – collaborative
  – advisory
• pre-application meeting and review
• studio staff present key project issues
• applicant’s design team presents project
• discussion and commentary

• polling of members
• studio staff prepares summary
• recommendations integrated into development agreement for tif board and council consideration
Applicable Urban Design Priorities that Project Should Achieve

1. Designing the proposed hotel entry drive as a shared and inviting pedestrian passage through the primary building façades located along Elm and Pacific Ave. Thanksgiving Square is located directly across the street from the Pacific Ave. façade, while the stone street pedestrian connection currently terminates at the Elm St. elevation. Akard Station is located one block from the development. The building exhibits an existing street level entrance with a potential pedestrian connection between Elm St. and Pacific Ave.

A particular consideration for the proposal should be the quality and usability of a pedestrian connection from Elm to Pacific via the proposed main hotel entry. Ground floor organization as a glazing frontage, and uses will also be crucial in the fostering of a vibrant and active pedestrian realm.

Policy References
Downtown Dallas 360
Chapter 3, Chapter 4
Forward Dallas
Section 5 [urban]
TIF Urban Design Guidelines
Part III, Part IV [city center]

adopted policy

salient design issues

2. Strengthening DART linkage and neighborhood connectivity through enhanced streetscape and pedestrian realm amenities - Special attention should be made to the quality of streetscape linking the project to the adjacent DART station. By continuing a strong pattern of street trees, pedestrian friendly sidewalks, and pedestrian amenities and crosswalks, individual projects ensure and contribute to the overall success of a coherent and appealing pedestrian network throughout downtown. Careful attention to details such as curb treatment and crosswalk transitions are crucial to pedestrian realm continuity and connectivity.

3. Organizing ground floor uses to best utilize opportunities to foster sidewalk interest and activity while connecting to adjacent active uses - Careful consideration should be made to the location of the proposed ground level uses, and how they interact with the pedestrian realm. Uses should respond to local active zones, as well as create opportunities to add activity and interest to the street.

4. Minimizing or consolidating loading and utility zones along direct street frontage - While there are clear challenges due to existing site conditions and programmatic need for utility uses, careful consideration should be made to thoroughly research solutions to minimize impacts of utility zones and driveways on the pedestrian experience. Driveways should be treated to have minimal impact on physical and visual continuity of the sidewalk.

project context

The site is located in the main street district of downtown with the primary building facades located along Elm St and Pacific Ave. Thanksgiving Square is located directly across the street from the Pacific Ave. facade, while the stone street pedestrian connection currently terminates at the Elm St. elevation. Akard Station is located one block from the development. The building exhibits an existing street level entrance with a potential pedestrian connection between Elm St. and Pacific Ave.

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project data

1600 Pacific Ave.

Neighborhood:
Downtown
City Center TIF District

Program:
Hotel/Residential

Residential: 205,631 sqft [156 units]
Hotel: 276,774 sqft
Commercial: 29,598 sqft

02.22.2013

role of staff

Dallas CityDesign Studio
• provide advice concerning urban design components of a project
  • pressing design to a higher level, adding value, and understanding constraints
• rooted in adopted policies
  • forwardDallas!
  • Downtown 360
  • relevant area plans
  • tif design guidelines
• knowledge of place and design expertise
• Reviewed as a precursor to formal process
• Initial proposal:
  • Walled and gated
  • Internally focused
  • Abandoned the street grid
  • More of the same…
Robert L. Meckfessel, FAIA, LEED AP, UDPRP Chair
Karl Stundins, City of Dallas Economic Development
Evan Sheets, City of Dallas UDPRP Coordinator
http://www.dallascityhall.org/citydesign_studio/peer_review_panel.html