



To: Downtown Design Advisory Board (DDAB)
From: Bridget Rassbach, Urban Design Architect
Meeting: 12/12/2023
RE: Staff Report for Detailed Design Review
2nd DD Submittal
Bridget Rassbach
SGI: USA Denver Buddhist Center
1450 Speer Boulevard
Project # 2021PM0000378

- **D-GT**
- **New Construction**
- **General Building Form**

I. Board Authority and Role of Design Review

This project is located within the **Choose an item**. Zone District and is therefore subject to review in accordance with the **Downtown Urban Design Standards and Guidelines** and the **Denver Zoning Code** in addition to the requirements of other agencies. Projects submitted shall conform to all the requirements of the **Downtown Urban Design Standards and Guidelines**, even if they are not specifically referenced in the review notes.

Please refer to the “Character Area” chapter requirements that are applicable for this location. The *Standards and Guidelines* establishes a process for promoting the neighborhood vision by setting clear expectations for the level of design quality that is envisioned for improvements.

Through its provisions, the Design Advisory Board is directed to consider Design Review Submittals of the proposed project (per the Design Review Process chapter and checklists), to receive the staff findings, the applicant presentations, and to hear public comment to make a motion for *recommendation for Approval, Approval with Conditions, or Denial to the zoning administrator of the project’s design at each submittal to the Downtown Design Advisory Board.*

II. Scope of the Project

The proposed project is a 2-story (40 ft) religious assembly building in the D-GT Zone District. It is being developed under the **General Building Form**. This form requires 70% Build-to on all street frontages (0’-10’), 70% street active use be provided, 50% of the required Active Use for non-residential active use be provided along Broadway, and the 70% limitation of visible parking at street facing facades. Upper story setback is required along both Primary streets above 5 stories or 70’ for 65% of the structure length to a depth of 15’. Private Open Space is required - 5% of the Zone Lot Area

Project is meeting these minimum requirements.

III. Site Design and Massing Review

Project was approved for Site Design and Massing at the January 25, 2022 meeting with the following comments:

- A. *Improving the plaza landscape design to reconcile the parking area and streetscape with the building and address site geometry*
- B. *Alternative site wall and fence designs*
- C. *Improving the East building façade with landscaping*

IV. Design Review

Project has submitted for Design Development Review for a second review. First submittal had the following concerns to address:

1. *Provide a Landscape Plan that supports an active, useable landscaped space as aligned with standards and guidelines in the UDSG. Ensure for a visible edge between the parking and the plaza; extend consistently.*
2. *Consideration for 3D views to understand and represent how material transitions are coming together across the cohesive building façade elevations; with specific attention to the NW view. Re: Design Guidelines 3.34.*
3. *Provide additional material transition details; particularly along Speer BLVD between the foundation and the lower wall of the associated windows at this elevation.*

V. Staff Findings

1. Plaza design considerations
 - A. Plaza lighting has been changed and now appears on sheet A.9 to be a bollard light. Fixture BB-CC. Some renderings still show a pole light. Please clarify
 - B. Renderings and some plans show planters placed between parking and plaza but landscape plans, sheets L2 and L3 do not show these. Please clarify

The addition of the planters addresses the need to better define and separate the parking from the plaza.

2. Material transitions:
 - A. Detail 5 shows the porcelain tile and metal wood-look to be almost flush. This appears to be the section of south wall east of the primary entry. The offset shown along the east façade is a more successful transition. Can this south wall/ flush detail be revised to create a stepped transition?
 - B. What is the detail where the wood-look is above the CMU?

3. Overall Street scape landscaping is positive. Rock mulch is not allowed in ROW. Revise landscape plans to reflect the requirements for live plant materials.

VI. Submittal and Compliance Checklist

Refer to the attached checklist. Green-highlighted checked topics are areas that appear to comply or are not applicable to project; Orange-highlighted checked topics are issues for further design discussion; Red-highlighted checked topics (if there are any) appear to not comply and require intensive board input.

VI. DDAB Project Commentary

Refer to the attached board review form for initial board comment.

VII. Staff Recommendation

*Staff recommends the SGI: USA Denver Buddhist Center, 1450 Speer Boulevard, Project # 2021PM0000378, **resubmit for Design Review** to the Zoning Administrator and to study and address the following topics of concern:*

1. *Refine exterior materials transitions*
2. *Clarify Landscape plan and lighting plan regarding plaza lights, planters and ROW materials*