

MINUTES
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MEETING
Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
December 2, 2020, at 3:00 pm

Chair: Keith Davidoff

Present: Greg Gillespie, Jacy Lee, Doran Musgrove, Erica Sangster, Megan Walker

Regrets: Jerry Blake, Illarion Gallant

Staff: Gina Lyons, Senior Planner, Current Planning; Chuck Bell, Planner, Current Planning; Lauren Mattiussi, Planner, Current Planning; Christine Rickards, Planner, Current Planning; and Tara Da Silva, Senior Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:01. p.m.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by J. Lee and Seconded by D. Musgrove: “That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on October 21, 2020, be adopted.”

CARRIED

MOVED by J. Lee and Seconded by M. Walker: “That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on November 4, 2020, be adopted.”

CARRIED

1525 Cedar Hill Cross Road and 3787 Cedar Hill Road

Application by M’akola Development Services (Bronwyn McLean). Rezoning, subdivision and development variance permit application to construct a six-storey, 95 unit, intergenerational housing development to replace existing residential wing of Luther Court Society Building.

Legal Description: Lot 2, Sections 39 and 40, Victoria District, Plan 31105; Lot 1, Sections 39 and 40 , Victoria District, Plan 31105 Except Part in Plan VIP81395

Planning File: DPR00744; REZ00655
Planner: Gina Lyons, Senior Planner

Comments from the Planner:

The Planner provided an overview of the proposal as follows:

- The site falls into the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan (SVAP) policy areas, which designates the site for 4-storey Institutional Development.
- The SVAP contains policies to consider changes to use and height designations, where projects advance the plan’s overall objectives and provide significant community contributions.

Comments from applicant / owner / applicant representative(s):

Karen Johnson-Lefsrud, Executive Director, Luther Court Society; Lyle McKenzie, Co-Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Cross; Jesse Garlick, Architect, Studio 531 Architects; Keith Grant, Landscape Architect, Keith N. Grant Landscape Architecture Ltd; Bronwyn McLean, M'akola Development Services; presented to the committee and highlighted:

- This proposal is an intergenerational affordable housing project and community hub for the corner of Cedar Hill Cross Road and Cedar Hill Road.
- The project's vision is to respond to the demonstrated need and demand for affordable housing in Saanich while bridging gaps between generations and supporting ageing in place.
- It consists of 95 new affordable housing units for students and seniors: 82 one-bedroom units for independent seniors and 17 studios for students, with shared outdoor community space.
- One hundred percent of the units are CMHC universally designed.
- The building is built to BC Energy Code Step 4 and follows the BC Housing Construction and Design Guidelines.
- There is a significant shared amenity space to promote the feeling of community.
- A robust community engagement process consists of five open houses, a stakeholder survey – with 79% in support and no negative comments. There is ongoing engagement with the Mt. Tolmie Community Association and the Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Action Committee.
- The guiding principles have been intergenerational housing, health and wellness, improving campus connectivity, respecting the home, intentional community, long term functional and operational sustainability, accessibility, and environmental sustainability.
- This proposal respects the OCP and SVAP and achieves many of their goals, including creating a complete community. It makes a place for people that is safe, comfortable, varied, attractive and provides affordable housing for students and seniors. It is developed around an urban village node that is served by transit. It achieves a high level of environmental responsibility by expanding on a previously developed site while strengthening existing community-focused organizations.
- The existing land use contract will be discharged.
- There is a campus of buildings at Cedar Hill and Cedar Hill Cross Roads. Luther Church of the Cross is on the corner; Luther House will be demolished and, together with the existing parking lot, become the L-shaped project site.
- This site slopes five metres and is surrounded by multi-family developments between four and five-storeys in height.
- This project will establish new lot lines to create three separate parcels. The new building will be adjacent to the existing (and remaining) Luther court Society Residential Care Home.
- A courtyard space between the two buildings will bring light and space to be shared by all residents.
- Common decks overlook the gardens, and there is a rooftop patio. The saw-tooth geometry allows for better views of Mt. Tolmie and softens the overlook on nearby residents.
- The addition of a fifth-floor creates twelve more units without changing the character of the building.
- The main entrance is on Cedar Hill road. The sloping site creates parking at grade. The main common room is at the parking level and connects to the main floor of Luther Court.

- The fifth floor is set back from Cedar Hill Road and is comparable to neighbouring four-storey buildings regarding scale and height. The south-facing common rooms have access to the garden and views of Mt. Tolmie.
- Each corner of the building is finished with different materials to reduce the bulk of the building. The exterior materials consist of grey brick; grey and terracotta, textured, fibre reinforced concrete panels; natural coloured sliding panels; flush, white metal panels, clear glazed, pre-finished windows; aluminum railings, exposed concrete with a natural finish; wood trellis with a glass roof, and aluminum storefront windows.
- The project includes a new concrete curb and a bike lane. Inside the courtyard, there are bike racks and benches, paving stones are used as a feature element.
- Foundation plantings will help provide privacy for the ground floor residents.
- Accessibility throughout the site is an essential factor. Minimum slopes have been incorporated into the design.
- On the south side of the building, the landscape screening consists of plantings and wood fencing to help visual softening of the loading area.
- A range of activities accommodates the area of open hardscape space at the central-eastern portion of the courtyard (i.e. exercise and informal gatherings). A small putting green and a fire pit are located on the southeast side of the courtyard.
- There are ramps to access the courtyard; low concrete walls help to define entrances. A water feature and plantings surrounding the courtyard provide visual interest.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Applicant stated:

- The lower level of parking also contains space for scooter storage.
- It is the intent to have laundry facilities on each floor.
- There is a relocated children's playground as there is a desire to have a daycare on the property one day, perhaps.
- The intention for all of the circulation space is to provide plenty of sitting areas.
- Currently, there are only three residents that have cars in our existing facility.
- The universal design standards provide accessible clearances but not adjustments such as lower counters.
- A delivery truck can drive into the loading dock and turn around instead of backing in off of the street.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Planner stated:

- The Engineering Department had no comments regarding the loading bay location.

Comments from the Panel:

- This project is a great initiative.
- The variation of materials and the sawtooth design help with the building mass.
- This project fits into the slope around it and into the neighbourhood quite well.
- The south façade (at the southwest corner) looks a bit stark; consideration could be given to some greenery or planters along the café patio.
- The richness of the programming in the courtyard is appreciated. A fair amount of space is given over to circulation; consideration could be given to providing a more generous ramp or free up more space for programming.
- The most challenging part of this project is the south elevation. The sawtooth creates some deflection on the façade; consideration could be given to integrating the landscaping or some other softening at the concrete on the building.

MOTION:

MOVED by G. Gillespie and Seconded by M. Walker: “That it be recommended that the design to construct a six-storey, 95 unit, intergenerational affordable housing development at 1525 Cedar Hill Cross Road and 3781 Cedar Hill Road be approved subject to consideration of the south elevation concrete walls with additional landscaping where possible.”

CARRIED

1641 & 1647 McRae Avenue and 3226 Shelbourne Street

Application by 1647 McRae Developments Ltd. (Devon Skinner) Rezoning and development permit application to construct a mixed used 6-storey commercial and residential building with 87 residential units.

Legal Description: Lot 3, Block 6, Section 34, Victoria District, Plan 1228; Lot 4, block 6, Section 34, Victoria District, Plan 1228; Lot 13, Block 6, Section 34, Victoria District, Plan 1228

Planning File: DPR00793; REZ00666
Planner: Gina Lyons, Senior Planner/ Lauren Mattiussi, Planner

Comments from the Planner:

The Planner provided an overview of the proposal as follows:

- The site falls into the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan (SVAP) policy areas, which designates the site for 4-storey Residential Development.
- The SVAP contains policies to consider changes to use and height designations, where projects advance the Plan’s overall objectives and provide significant community contributions.
- Variances are requested for parking, visitor parking, disability stalls, loading, class I bicycle spaces, and various projections.
- The SVAP policies that are relevant to this application are:
 - To encourage larger buildings to be divided into smaller-scale components to reduce the perceived bulk; and
 - The Plan provides guidance for setbacks. The Plan seeks a 6-metre setback for residential developments to allow area for landscaping and design features and to allow adequate setback from Shelbourne Street for privacy and sound attenuation.

Comments from applicant / owner / applicant representative(s):

Devon Skinner, Development Manager, Abstract Developments; David Echaiz-McGrath, Architect, and Xeniya Vins, Architect, WA Architects Ltd; Bianca Bodley, Landscape Architect, Biophilia Collective; presented to the committee and highlighted:

- This is a mixed-use residential project at the intersection of Shelbourne Street and McRae Avenue with easy access to downtown and Hillside Mall.
- This site is the consolidation of three lots and is surrounded predominantly by single-family dwellings.
- The primary pedestrian access is off of Shelbourne Street with a second convenience entrance on McRae Avenue. The parkade entrance is on McRae Avenue, as far from the intersection as possible.

- Along Shelbourne Street, townhouses will have their entrances with gates. The townhouses are 18 inches higher than the main building, have planters with screening plants that create a feeling of private space, and stairs make a pleasant frontage.
- There are suites at the back next to the play area, mainly targeted to younger families.
- The commercial unit has a public plaza on McRae Avenue. A drop-off area with a carshare is provided for the residents.
- Near the main entrance, the bike lane has been rerouted to retain a mature Maple tree.
- The parkade has a single aisle circulation pattern with parking on either side with storage spaces running down the middle. Electrical, mechanical and services rooms are underground.
- This building intends to build a community within a community with different types and sizes of units, demographics, and income brackets to increase density and activity in the neighbourhood.
- At the street level are the townhome units, built with richer materials and higher detail elements. The ground floor is much taller, and the windows are larger than the other floors; this is part of the strategy to provide vertical and horizontal distance and create a public realm. This height also increases the unit security and provides a sense of privacy.
- Brick is grounding the building; the next level up has an effect of two floating wooden boxes. There is a central element to break up the length of the building, and it is well articulated with the decorative elements of the guardrail, which also acts as wayfinding.
- The upper floors are less detailed, and a light colour aids in being less visual from a massing perspective.
- Although the highly detailed elements are on the ground floor, we want to keep with the natural materials and modern Westcoast contemporary design and purposely provided large glass-enclosed balcony areas.
- The building has a conduit installed to be photovoltaic/solar power ready.
- A parking study is engaged to review the proposal.
- An overview of the landscape, on the north corner, one of the major community amenity contributions is the community gardens, benches and tables, and bleeding edge where people will feel welcome.
- Along the east side along Shelbourne Street, the path jogs around the Maple tree and highlights the building's entrance. The units along Shelbourne are walk-ups with raised concrete planters that contain pollinators and native evergreens.
- The main entrance and pedestrian pathways are permeable pavers to add a sense of playfulness and modality. The concrete patios have interesting cut lines for visual interest.
- The two south units have generous lawn areas, separated by two trees.
- Along the east side, raised planters, trees and shrubs provide interest and privacy. The community gardens will have a lawn area and a natural playground area.
- The tree removal and replacement plan is in place; although the requirement is to replace one, there will be eight planted.

In response to questions, the applicant stated:

- There is an outreach effort to residents in regards to privacy mitigation. Consideration has been given to fencing, larger landscape elements, creeping vines.
- More of these types of projects will be developed in the future development of the SVAP.
- There will be hours when some neighbours have less sun.
- This site is very narrow; the building is oriented more to the south to assist with massing.

- The setback on Shelbourne follows the good urban design, similar to the design on 1580 North Dairy. There will be over 6 metres of public thoroughfare with improved corridor conditions, and it will feel very generous. It is that awkward growing pains period.
- Usually, the target is young professionals and couples, down-sizers, and single older people, but now the trend is families priced out of the single-family dwelling market. This type of housing is a good transitional form of accommodation to get into the market.
- Shelbourne Street is a busy street, experience from urban design is the height, and the separation vertically and horizontally will reduce the sound impact.
- There are three family-oriented units with ample space, a large patio space next to the play area, and a secured community garden.
- This project is proposing to rough in conduit for ten stalls, but since Saanich has updated their bylaw, potentially every stall will be roughed in.
- The only entrance to the community garden is via an exterior McRae Avenue entrance. There is no direct connection to the building.
- Regarding the Maple and canopy, the Arborist's report said that there would have to be an evaluation done with the parkade construction. The excavating will take up to 25% of the critical root zone and upper limbs' trimming.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Planner stated:

- The entire Shelbourne block between North Dairy and McRae Avenue has a height designation of 4-storeys.
- The 6-metre setback for residential projects referenced in the SVAP is limited to the property line.

Comments from the Panel:

- There is a tight setback on the south side of the building and a blunt building space very close to single family homes. This building overlooks the neighbours, and privacy needs mitigation.
- Consideration of additional screening would benefit this project.
- There is very little green space.
- One particular neighbour's morning sun is completely obliterated by this project.
- This project sets the wrong precedent for this area.
- The residential planting boxes are in perpetual shade.
- The single-family dwellings have no privacy.
- The hallways have a bowling ball alley feel with no natural light.
- The box framing up to the fourth level gives the illusion that the building steps back.
- Appreciate the diversity in materiality.
- The café is a great idea.
- Consideration could be given to the layout of the café and the bench.
- The west elevation looks formidable for the neighbour; the driveway is right up against the property line, a fence or guardrail will be needed. The landscaping seems minimal, not offering any softening or buffer. There are only two trees; it looks like a downtown streetscape facing that house; it could use some more thought.
- This project is too much building, especially for the neighbours on the south and west sides; it is overpowering.

MOTION:

MOVED by E. Sangster and Seconded by G. Gillespie: “That it be recommended that the design to construct a mixed use 6-storey commercial and residential building at 1641 and 1647 McRae Avenue and 3226 Shelbourne Street be approved subject to consideration of:

- 1. Increased setback on the south yard;**
- 2. Improved landscape buffering for the adjacent south neighbour; and**
- 3. Improved landscape buffering for the adjacent west neighbour including the full extension of the west property line.”**

DEFEATED

With J. Lee, D. Musgrove, M. Walker OPPOSED

1 and 21 Obed Avenue

Application by Novus Properties (Mark Whitney) Rezoning and development permit application to construct a new, four-storey, multi-family apartment with 26 residential units.

Legal Description: Lot C (DD 2277201), Block V, Section 11, Victoria District, Plan 860
Lot 6, Block V, Section 11, Victoria District, Plan 860

Planning File: DPR00760; REZ00643

Planner: Chuck Bell, Planner

Comments from the Planner:

The Planner provided an overview of the proposal as follows:

- This application is to rezone to the RA-10 (Apartment) Zone, this land use is supported, and this site is identified as having multi-family potential.
- There are two variances requested. The project proposes 26 resident parking spaces, 39 are required and proposing two visitor parking spaces where eight are required.

Comments from applicant / owner / applicant representative(s):

Peter Hardcastle, Hillel Architecture Inc.; Bev Windjack, Landscape Architect, LADR Landscapae Architects; on behalf of Novus Properties; presented to the committee and highlighted:

- This site falls within the Tillicum Local Area Plan, which identifies this particular block of Obed as potential multi-family. Other multi-family buildings are larger in scale and unit counts and most without horizontal or vertical articulation in the surrounding block.
- This site is the bookend to the quieter end of Obed Avenue and serves as a transition to the smaller family homes.
- This area is identified as a bike and pedestrian collector route, and as such, this project is contributing a new sidewalk, recessed streetside parking and a new pedestrian crossing.
- Obed Street is a greenway; trees' conservation is important while clearing out the woody growth at the site line level. Within that canopy, residents of the neighbourhood will see the rich wood plant life.
- The requested rezoning would allow five metre setbacks. Site coverage, floor area coverage, and building height are less than what is permitted under the requested zoning, and it defines the setbacks while the setbacks preserve the trees.
- The building's entrance level permits people to walk in from the sidewalk and allows cars to drive straight into the parkade.

- The parkade is planned in a natural opening in the trees, a level entry matching its surroundings. Parking is provided at a ratio of 1:1. There is a commuter bike room that is also suitable for scooters and guest bike parking.
- The first residential level has four ground floor units accessed outdoors directly and has private porches.
- The penthouse level is setback from the floors below to reduce the building volume and shadows and increase the tree canopy area.
- There are 18 one-bedroom units, six two-bedroom units, and two two-bedroom plus den units suitable for families and mature tenants.
- The elevation facing Obed Street is broken down to a townhouse volume with horizontal articulation and vertical setbacks.
- The penthouse level is generously setback with a large deck and textured walls on the middle two floors to blend in with the other buildings on the street.
- The rear elevation facing away from Obed Street has outdoor deck spaces protected from seeing the parking lot in neighbouring properties.
- The top floor is a very subordinate layer not to overpower the middle two layers.
- The Harriet Road elevation has the main entranceway accentuated with bright colours and texture. The penthouse level is more muted and understated with less texture.
- Exterior finishes include asphalt shingles; black and red pre-finished metal flashings; white and graphite gray cementitious lap siding, paneling, fascia board, and panelized smooth stucco; stone veneer and exposed concrete components.
- This site was completely overrun with vegetation. While working closely with Saanich, it was determined which trees the Parks Department thought were valuable and will aid in preserving a parklike atmosphere.
- We will retain one very large tree canopy and the street frontage trees. Low maintenance, primarily native plantings, will be planted to keep the site feeling open. The trees have been the primary focus of the landscaping plan. Garry Oak trees are replacing Garry Oak trees.

In response to questions, the applicant stated:

- This project targets and accommodates a diverse series of lifestyles.
- Consideration will be given to providing weather protection from the front entrance to the waste/recycling area. There is also a pathway for direct access to the bins.
- Daylight flows into the parkade and makes it more pleasant.
- Energized parking stalls are included.
- The long-term bike storage is located in the parkade. The commuter room is available so residents may bike in with all of their accoutrements. Consideration is being given to commonly owned bikes.
- The recreation lawn is accessed by walking through the parkade.

Comments from the Panel:

- A very well planned project, fits well into the site.
- Quite a conservative building, respectful and sensitive to the surrounding neighbourhood.
- It is obvious that the landscape architect has been diligent regarding tree preservation and woodline character in terms of sightline.
- Appreciate the variation in the materiality.
- This project is an example of sensitive infill housing in an existing neighbourhood.

MOTION:

MOVED by E. Sangster and Seconded by G. Gillespie: "That it be recommended that the design to construct a new, four-storey multi-family apartment at 1 and 21 Obed Avenue be approved as presented."

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY