

MINUTES
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MEETING
Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
January 20, 2021, at 3:00 pm

Chair: Keith Davidoff

Present: Illarion Gallant, Greg Gillespie, Colin Harper, Jacy Lee, Nicholas Standeven,
Megan Walker

Regrets: Erica Sangster

Staff: Chuck Bell, Current Planning; and Tara Da Silva, Senior Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:02. p.m.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by G. Gillespie and Seconded by Jacy Lee: “That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on December 2, 2020, be adopted.”

CARRIED

MOVED by G. Gillespie and Seconded by Nicholas Standeven: “That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on December 16, 2020, be adopted.”

CARRIED

986 & 990 Doumac Avenue

Application by Strongitharm Consulting Ltd. (Deane Strongitharm). Development permit and rezoning application to rezone from the RS-18 (Single Family Dwelling) Zone to a site-specific zone to construct a four-storey, 17 unit apartment building.

Legal Description: Lot 5, Block 1, Section 31, Lake District, Plan 1444; Lot 4, Block 1, Section 31, Lake District, Plan 1444

Planning File: DPR00797; REZ00671
Planner: Chuck Bell, Planner

Comments from the Planner:

- This application is to rezone two parcels from the RS-18; a site-specific zone has been requested, the Planning staff have determined that it can be accommodated under the RA-9 Zone with variances.
- This project is consistent with the Official Community Plan (OCP), which calls for low-rise residential, three to four storeys in village centres, and the draft Cordova Bay Local Area Plan (LAP) identifies the site as the potential for four-storey mixed-use, so the land use

- is consistent with our policies and plans.
- Under the RA-9 Zone, variances would be requested for the following:
 - Front yard setback, six metres is required, 2.51 metres is proposed.
 - East interior side yard setback, four metres is required, 0.6 metres is proposed.
 - Rear yard setback, six metres is required, 0.66 metres is proposed.
 - There is a one space parking variance; 26 spaces are required, 27 are being proposed; however, two spaces are tandem; therefore, both are not immediately accessible.
 - Site coverage of 50% is allowed, 72% is proposed.
- The Planning Department does acknowledge that these variances are all worst-case scenarios and that the bulk of the building is further back. However, the measurement is taken from the closest structure. Height and density are both consistent with the RA-9 Zone.

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

- The green wall mentioned on plan page L3 is not considered a retaining wall as it is part of the structure.

Comments from applicant / owner:

Deane Strongitharm, Strongitharm Consulting Ltd; Tony James, Architect, Continuum Architecture; Carole Rossell, Landscape Architect, Small & Rossell; presented to the Panel:

- This project is located in the Village area. It is consistent with the policies of the draft updated Cordova Bay LAP and the village core LAP by having a strong orientation towards the street and pedestrian areas framed by landscaping.
- The green roof, the green wall and living green space at grade are mitigating factors for the lot coverage variance request.
- There are storage lockers and a bike room at the basement level, which contains a bike repair bench.
- The main floor plan is level with the street. Considering the unique aspects of the site, it is economically unfeasible to have underground parking. The alternate approach is to have surface parking with a green roof and green walls on the north and east sides. The South wall is all stone, except for the translucent glazed garage doors.
- There are a number of EV charging stations and a tandem parking stall.
- The units are designed for downsizers or people looking for condo living; they range from 1000-1750 ft².
- There is direct suite access to three units and additional bike parking located at the main entrance.
- The second and third floors are similar, one-bedroom + den and two bedrooms + den mixed.
- Two larger units and a portion of the green roof comprise the penthouse floor. This floor is significantly set back to mitigate the massing impact of the building.
- The east side elevation of the building has a green wall. The other materials consist of grey and pepper stucco, wood siding and stone veneer.
- On the south elevation facing Doumac, the main entrance is recessed, and the garage door is backlit. The west side elevation is primarily stone finish on the main floor.
- As a scale comparison with the Haro, the stepping back of the building as it increases in height is apparent.
- The neighbours are happy with the landscaping.
- Trees and shrubs will make the most significant landscaping contribution. A mix of native and adaptive plants have been chosen for their ability to thrive in coast conditions and drought tolerance.
- The building is set lower than the street; the boulevard tree is a small species tree due to

the overhead hydro lines. A new two metre sidewalk will be built.

- On the west side of the building, a maturing cedar hedge makes a green backdrop to a small common seating space for residents to enjoy.
- There is a path that will hug the perimeter fence to allow the patios more space. Consideration is being given to planting trees along here to create a sense of separation.
- There is a gap between a couple of trees at the very top and the cedar hedge at the bottom on the building's north side. A climbing vine is being proposed. The east side of the building is in a similar situation.
- The green roof area is above the enclosed parking lot and is not visible from the units above looking down. Fairly good-sized planters for good-sized trees are proposed for this area.
- The level four green roof provided to the foreground view of the units has deeper soil making steps for a wider variety of plant species attracting various wildlife and pollinating insects. This plan maximizes opportunities for new plants in a complementary setting that residents will find stimulating, and the landscape will thrive.

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

- The property slopes from east to west with the pedestrian link up Doumac Avenue. Saanich staff is in the preparatory stages of the new trail stages. The grades run from the lowest on the east side, going towards the waterway and rising one meter and rising another metre from south to north.
- The Holly tree is being retained for screening purposes.
- The front corner unit will have significant planting around the bedroom; the landscape plan shows boulevard trees. There's always a balancing act between providing privacy and allowing in light.
- The neighbour to the east, the corner property, has been informed, and we have received no negative feedback.
- On the north side, a wall rises about three feet with 28 townhouses on the other side. They have large fir trees that mitigate privacy. The first row of townhouses is 7.5 m away and has carports and driveways that face our property's direction.
- There have been discussions with the northern neighbours in regards to providing privacy screening.
- The accessible stall resident must come out to the front of the building and enter through the front door.
- All delivery and moving trucks will use the layby parking spots in front.
- The elevator size is the minimum allowable size, enough to fit a person on a stretcher.
- There are currently six EV charging stations, the allocation of those will be up to the owners.
- The waste and recycling v are located in the parking area.
- The green roofs will be accessed for maintenance through residents' units.

Comments from the Panel:

- The upper-level setback makes for a gentle approach to the streetscape and will help with privacy, particularly with the homes to the north.
- There are some generous moves in this project, like the wood planking, large suites, open living space.
- Consideration could be given to creating a connection between Unit 101 on the southwest corner to create an active street frontage if the living space were oriented on the corner.
- .Appreciate the creative use of tandem parking.
- The green wall seemed a little imposing but the flowering and seasonal colour will help

mitigate its size.

- The Panel expressed concern about the height and the very small setbacks.
- The materiality has a solid base, a creative play between the wood and stone; there is a clever use of materials in the exterior outdoor space's northwest corner.
- Quite tasteful design with the stepback and materiality.
- Consideration could be given to providing more accessible parking.
- This project is a good next step for increased densification for the Cordova Bay area and is a good fit.
- Appreciation is given to the landscaping textures and fabrics, the species choice, and the created intimate spaces.
- Consideration could be given to carrying the green roof around all of the decks.
- The design has a nice beach town esthetic and is appropriate for the area.
- Consideration could be given to have the applicant provide a context plan showing the neighbouring buildings, and the actual setbacks as the setbacks are aggressive
- On the north setback, parking could be closer to Doumac, thereby pulling it away from the north property line.
- On the south elevation, the “eyebrow” or dark band on level 4 extending across the step might be nice to break that band so that the stone is uninterrupted.
- It would be preferable to see the stairs aligned with the overall massing on the third floor.
- The wood material in its two bands doesn't appear anywhere else in the project and seems out of place on the north elevation. If you were to break up the north side as you did on the south side, that might solve this issue.

MOVED by G. Gillespie and Seconded by I. Gallant: “That it be recommended that the design to construct a four-storey, 17-unit apartment building at 986 and 990 Doumac Avenue be approved subject to consideration of:

1. Increasing the north and east setbacks and allow the opportunity for ground planting; and
2. Provision of installation of necessary conduits for EV chargers.”

CARRIED

3415 Douglas Street

Application by DHK architects (Charles Kierulf). Development permit and rezoning application to rezoning from the C-8 (Service Station) Zone to a Commercial Zone to construct a two-storey commercial building with a Pharmacy and retail space on the ground floor and offices on the second floor.

Legal Description: Lot A, Section 7, Victoria District, Plan 32585

Planning File: DPR00799; REZ00674

Planner: Chuck Bell, Planner

M. Walker recuses herself due to conflict of interest – worked on this project with previous employer.

Comments from the Planner:

The Planner provided an overview of the proposal as follows:

- Land-use, OCP, and the Uptown Douglas Plan, which has been endorsed in principle by Council, support this application. The OCP identifies this as the Uptown Major Centre, which would consider high-rise, mixed-use of twelve or more storeys at this location; however, road dedication has reduced the parcel's size, making it a challenging site.
- Parking variances are requested. Nine parking spaces are proposed, 28 are required. However, given the location of this site, that may be justifiable.

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

- The application has been review by the Engineering Department. The ingress and egress layout is based on Engineering's recommendations.
- The site is required to provide its own parking therefore parking cannot be incorporated into the Uptown Shopping Centre's parking lot.

Comments from applicant / owner:

Charles Kierulf, Architect, DHK Architects; presented to the committee and highlighted:

- Three trees have been a hot topic of conversation at the north end of the site facing the Uptown Shopping Centre. A preservation strategy is in place.
- This parcel of land is a former gas station site, and some of the complexities with a contaminated site come with it. A Certificate of Compliance is in place. The site can be used for commercial use only, and there are many above-ground hydro poles.
- There is surface parking only as it is a very tight site. Underground parking was briefly considered, but it was soon realized that access to the underground parking would take up a substantial amount of the site.
- The building is dedicated to lawyer use; not a lot of traffic is anticipated.
- Consultation with the Engineering Department has taken place. Engineering required that the entrance/exit be located on Saanich Road.
- A significant amount of the site was expropriated for the transit stop, creating a remaining trapezoidal shape.
- The proposal is for a modest commercial building with creative landscape and finishing work to create a south-facing plaza. It is anticipated that there will be quite a bit of foot traffic with the main bus interchange coming to that corner.
- This two-storey building will be approximately 2000 ft². The owner will be using some of the space for seminar use.
- The building will be built with high-quality materials throughout and attractive glazing.
- There will be stormwater management on site, under the landscaping in the plant area.
- The landscape concept plan creates an interesting public plaza level with benches and seating.
- Extensive landscaping and screening along Saanich Road to blend with the Uptown Shopping Centre.
- There will be landscape screening on Douglas Street between the bus shelter and the building.

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

- Building to four or five storeys was not considered. Uptown Shopping Centre's big blank wall is being used as a backdrop.
- There is a small elevator that is accessed from the parking area.
- It was envisioned that there would be more direct access from parking to the retail space.
- We can consider moving the three parking stalls south about one metre to create more room for manoeuvring.

Comments from the Panel:

- The landscaping creates a sense of refuge; many fertilizers and watering will need to occur. Healthy trees have been chosen to create a substantial edge yet remain generous and soft.
- Consideration could have been given to constructing a larger building. Is this the highest and best use of this site?
- Acknowledge the challenge of the restrictions with Certificate of Compliance.
- Appreciation is given to the respite area at the bustling intersection, creative landscaping with the benches and public space with the proximity to the bus stop.
- The elevations are minimalist and simple and work well on the south and west elevations.
- There is too much massing on the east elevation; perhaps artwork could be considered to break up the massing.
- This is like a landscape project with a structure on it.
- The seating is lovely and a vast improvement to the Douglas Street frontage.
- Strong architectural expression, really contemporary and crisp.
- It was anticipated that a larger building would be built on this site.
- Exterior access to the retail space would be more successful.
- Consideration could be given to wayfinding signage without taking away from the crisp design.

MOTION:

MOVED by N. Standeven and Seconded by C. Harper: “That it be recommended that application to construct a two-storey commercial building with Pharmacy and retail space on the ground floor and offices on the second floor at 3415 Douglas Street be approved as presented.”

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY