

MINUTES
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MEETING
Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
Via MS Teams
July 7, 2021, at 3:00 pm

Chair: Keith Davidoff

Present: Greg Gillespie, Illarion Gallant, Nicholas Standeven, and Megan Walker

Regrets: Jacy Lee, Erica Sangster, and Janine Wigmore

Staff: Gina Lyons, Senior Planner, 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 N. Standeven: "That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on June 2, 2021, be adopted as amended."

CARRIED

3956 Shelbourne Street

Application by Wesbild Holdings Ltd. (Bentley Harris)

A rezoning and development permit amendment application to redevelop a portion of the site as a mixed-use commercial/residential development including 597 dwelling units.

Legal Description: Lot A, Sections 56 and 57, Victoria District, Plan EPP84722

Planning File: DPA00931/REZ00605
Planner: Gina Lyons, Senior Planner

Comments from the Planner:

- This site falls into the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan policy area, which designates this site for mixed-use development up to eight storeys.
- The application proposes a shopping centre use at grade with residential units above.
- The development consists of four six-storey buildings with 597 residential units.
- Variances are proposed for:
 - The number of trees required for landscape and screening;
 - Parking for the shopping centre, residential and visitor parking;
 - Loading;
 - Parking design;
 - Various projections; and
 - Sign bylaw variance.

- The application was previously presented to the ADP on July 8, 2020. The Panel moved that the application be approved subject to an increase of accessible parking stalls and the provision of units that meet universal design requirements. Since that time, the applicant has submitted revisions.
- The revised application proposes a 10,000 ft² addition to the Home Depot at the north side of the existing structure.
- Other revisions include the relocation of Building D's residential entry from the north elevation to the west elevation, resulting in minor changes to the unit mix and parking design, a minor height increase for the podium and Building B, a decrease in the number of units.
- Planning is seeking from the Panel general comments on the development and its success in achieving the urban design and architectural expectation for a "Major Centre."

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

- Fifteen loading stalls are required. Ten full-size loading stalls and six parking space-sized stalls are proposed.

Comments from applicant /owner:

Bentley Harris, Director of Development, Wesbild Holdings Ltd.; Joel Smith, Principal, WA Architects Ltd.; Cam Woodruff, Associate Landscape Architect, PMG Landscape Architects; presented to the Panel:

- Cedar Hill Road bounds this site to the west, Shelbourne Street to the east, and McKenzie Avenue to the South.
- The revised proposal includes an expansion to Home Depot on the north side of the site.
- University Heights has some challenges related to existing businesses. An existing gas station is located on the most prominent corner of Shelbourne Street and McKenzie Avenue, not owned by Wesbild and not included in this redevelopment. Home Depot's lease entitles them approval rights to any changes to the existing site with a sizeable no-build area extending from in front of their store right through to McKenzie Avenue. Any development in this area is subject to Home Depot approval. Restrictions include maintaining continuous operation of their store throughout construction, including their lumber pick-up area, maintaining their signalized access on Shelbourne Street, maintaining the Shelbourne Street access into the site and maintaining the alignment of the existing driveway access to McKenzie Avenue.
- There is an approximate 20-foot grade differential between Cedar Hill Road and Shelbourne Street; this creates a challenge for accessibility. The projects' goal is to take the grades of the perimeter roads, Home Depot and the parkade and transition them as smoothly as possible to achieve a pedestrian-friendly and universally accessible project.
- The traffic consultant has submitted their report and findings and has identified the major intersection as congested at times. Any traffic challenges will be addressed.
- Concerns were heard from the community about parking on Cedar Hill Road and parking supply; this is addressed in this submission. New vehicle traffic will be restricted on Cedar Hill Road, and additional underground parking is provided.
- This project will be a dynamic project with activated street frontages. It will include public spaces for events, spaces for public art, safe pedestrian and cycle paths, new active and urban edges and engaged streetscapes.
- This project will incorporate the principles of universal design. The design environment allows for accessibility for the greatest extent possible by all people, pedestrian paths friendly for all ages and abilities, ample public seating and resting spaces, barrier-free entrances and access to retail, convenient accessible parking, a variety of seating for all abilities and publicly accessible elevators.

- The University Heights redevelopment strives to respond to the environmental needs of its region. The design incorporates the following measures:
 - Energy and conservation
 - Meeting Step 3 for residential and Step 2 for commercial.
 - Envelope
 - High-performance glazing systems
 - Highly insulated and cool roofing
 - Design
 - Local distributors
 - High-quality durable materials
 - Wood construction for residential uses, including possible cross-laminated timber floors
 - Stormwater management
 - Retention and upgrade of the existing structure reduces waste and resource usage.
- University Heights currently houses Home Depot, a multi-tenanted atrium building, a theatre, gym and outbuildings
- The scope of work includes demolishing the existing mall and outbuildings, redeveloping the site into a mixed-use, dynamic multi-family community and a 10,000 ft² expansion to Home Depot.
- Pedestrian access to and through the site has been enhanced significantly with multiple new site access points.
- There are two underground parkade levels. P1 is underneath most of the development and will include the restored portion of the existing parkade. P2 is located within the lower volume of the old cinema and extends under the south end of the existing parkade.
- There is a new limited-access podium driveway off Cedar Hill Road for deliveries, Handy-Dart, move-in and move-out and drop-off only.
- Also off of Cedar Hill Road is a new south driveway that is right in and out only. There will be a new Shelbourne Street driveway access between the gas station and the existing signalized intersection.
- Vehicles can access the parkade via the new vehicle ramp on Shelbourne Street or from the service lane off of Cedar Hill Road.
- The residential parking is the whole P2 level and is secured. The commercial parking has three commercial elevators.
- Saanich requires nine accessible parking stalls for residential and ten commercial stalls for a development of this size. This project is proposing a total of 26, ten of the spaces in the secured residential parking.
- This development will have e-bike charging and repair stations, end-of-trip and shower facilities, and locker rooms for commuters.
- The main level has minimal setbacks to provide urban edges. Building A has a breezeway with restaurant and/or retail on both sides. Building B will contain a large grocery store, Building C will house a pharmacy. Building D will have restaurant/retail on the street frontage along Shelbourne Street.
- At the Podium Level 2, this is the first level of residential facilities and indoor and outdoor amenities in buildings A, B, and C. In Building D, this floor contains the daycare and daycare outdoor play area.
- The remaining levels of the buildings contain residential units except for Building D having indoor and outdoor amenities on Level 3.
- The fully concealed loading facilities are accessed off of Cedar Hill Road.
- The design of the building is inspired by modern, clean esthetic using a limited but varied palette of high-quality and durable materials.

- Its function drives the forms of the individual buildings. The commercial base of the main level of all buildings and towers for vertical circulation is grounded with neutral coloured brick and continuous canopy weather protection.
- All residential entrances are highlighted with distinctly coloured illuminated glass surrounds to provide individual identity.
- The varied finishing materials break down the massing.
- Building D along Shelbourne Street takes centre stage as the gateway to the redevelopment and is designed with a similar palette as the rest of the development but more urban. It has dramatic angled columns supporting the overhangs above.
- The second-floor overhang for the daycare provides a separate identity for the major tenant.
- The glazing at this level is isolated to the Shelbourne Street and High Street elevations to provide the daycare space with a visual buffer from the driveway and the gas station.
- The residential levels are setback from Shelbourne Street and provided terraces and landscaped buffers to reduce the massing.
- Building A, which fronts McKenzie Avenue, creates an urban street edge, parallels a new three-bay bus stop, and has continuous weather protection.
- Building B, along Cedar Hill Road, contains the service lane and back-of-house facilities, an array of intimate art niches, sitting areas and heavily landscaped stepped planting. Cedar Hill Road is also the access of the new north driveway up to the Podium Park.
- The materials in the commercial components of this project are brick, exposed concrete, woodgrain panels and soffits, prefinished metal panels and aluminum storefront glazing.
- The materials on the residential components are black window-wall, black corrugated cladding accented by a variety of coloured frosted glass panels, white metal panels, white soffits, and wood grain panels as accents and dividers.
- This resubmission includes an expansion to Home Depot and a relocation of its 10,000 ft² garden centre. It is a simple extension of the building form and finishes.
- The landscape design is inspired by pedestrian connections and desire lines.
- Paving bands are used to provide direct visual connections between the buildings and key nodes or gathering spaces. The edges of the bands are used to define the edges of planters and seating areas and highlight significant features within the site.
- Over 320 trees are proposed for the site.
- Paving bands guide pedestrian routes throughout the site. Wide raised crossings signal the pedestrian priority at all vehicle crossings. A feature stair and ramp have been provided off Shelbourne Street, which forms the eastern terminus of the east/west access.
- Stair and ramp access have also been provided on the McKenzie Avenue frontage.
- All stairs will have runnels, so bikes will be able to go up and down the staircases.
- As part of the Memorial tree planting, ten London Plane trees will be planted on Shelbourne Street.
- A combination of bollards and smaller planters (green bollards) are used to provide the separation between pedestrian routes and vehicles.
- A large public park space has been provided on the upper level (the Podium), which acts as an amenity for the residential tenants and for those visiting the stores and services.
- The paving bands continue on the second level, highlighting the east/west connection as well as to and from residential entries.
- Significant planters with trees and shrubs provide clear delineation between private patios surrounding the site, the semi-private amenity patio and amenity room, and the public areas.
- The play equipment being proposed is meant to be sculptural; when there aren't children playing, it will still be attractive.
- The art niches along Cedar Hill Road have extensive terraced plantings.

- The landscape plan uses appropriately selected native and adaptive species tolerant of specific conditions of the region, including pollinator habitat for bees, butterflies and birds.
- Trees and shrubs are used as features to highlight entries and key spaces.

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

- Conduit will be run to all residential parking stalls.
- In previous iterations, there was a noncombustible design, but the concrete design became price prohibitive.
- A tree variance is required because the number of trees is limited due to a lack of soil volume. This development is built on a slab with an existing parkade. The podium level will have 221 trees.
- There aren't any specific stormwater features proposed other than detention tank sizing. There is a very considerable amount of soil volume that can accommodate a significant amount of rain.
- Each building will have its own garbage/recycling facilities.

Comments from the Panel:

- This site is large with an ambitious project that responds well to the site and situational constraints.
- The added residential component will serve the community well; the mix of unit types is appreciated.
- The site circulation is clearly articulated with the diagrams.
- Consideration could be given to strengthening the breezeway condition and connection with feature paving.
- The restaurant could have a more southerly exposure for sun access.
- The service lane routing is appreciated.
- Reconsideration could be given to the spacing, location or sizes of the art niches so they catch the public's eye.
- The tapering of the buildings breaks up the massing.
- The ramp design that is mid-block on Shelbourne Street is clever.
- Consideration could be given to softening the sightlines of the bike ramps coming up from Cedar Hill Road.
- Landscaping could address the appearance of the retaining wall around the gas station.
- Ensure there are shade elements on the south elevation of Building D; the Daycare patio will be in the direct afternoon sun.
- Smaller trees would soften the edge at the corner of Shelbourne Street and McKenzie Avenue; it is a bit "hard" at the pedestrian level.
- The east/west connection from Cedar Hill Road to Shelbourne Street has a strong presence in the development.
- There aren't enough charging stations.
- Appreciation is given to the universal design principles and the sustainability initiatives.
- This project is a complete community and has struck a good balance between public space and green space. Signage and wayfinding are going to be very important.

MOVED by N. Standeven and Seconded by G. Gillespie: "That it be recommended that the design to redevelop a portion of the site as a mixed-use commercial/residential development including 597 dwelling units at 3956 Shelbourne Street be approved as presented."

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 4:37 pm.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY