

MINUTES
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MEETING
Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
Via MS Teams
October 20, 2021, at 3:02 pm

A/Chair: Greg Gillespie

Present: Erica Sangster (3:25), Nicholas Standeven, Megan Walker

Regrets: Keith Davidoff, Illarion Gallant, Jacy Lee, and Janine Wigmore

Staff: Lauren Mattiussi, Planner, Current Planning; and Tara Da Silva, Senior Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. It is noted that there is no quorum this afternoon, and members are unable to make motions; however, the Panel may come to a consensus on any items, and it will be included in the minutes for the record.

4096 TORQUAY DRIVE

Application by Strongitharm Consulting Ltd. (Deane Strongitharm)

This is a rezoning and development permit application to construct a five-storey, 86-unit multi-family apartment building. Variances are requested for setbacks, building height, parking and visitor parking.

Legal Description: Strata Lot 1, Section 55, Victoria District, Strata Plan 873, together with an Interest in the Common Property in Proportion to the Unit entitlement of the Strata Lot as Shown on Form 1

Planning File: DPR00805; REZ00680
Planner: Lauren Mattiussi, Planner

Comments from the Planner:

- This application will rezone the property at 4096 Torquay Avenue from the R-T1 Attached Zone to the RA-8 Apartment Zone to develop a five-storey apartment building with 86 units.
- The property is located on the northwestern edge of the intersection of Shelbourne Street with Torquay Avenue and is within the Gordon Head Local Area. The property is also within Shelbourne Valley Action Plan, or SVAP, as part of the Feltham Village area, where it is designated for a three-storey apartment building
- Zoning Bylaw variances are required for the proposed building setbacks along Shelbourne Street, Torquay Avenue and the western/rear property line. The proposed setbacks also fall short of SVAP Policy, which speaks to building setbacks along street frontages for new multi-family residential buildings to be no less than 6 m.

- The proposal would require a Zoning Bylaw variance as the height of the proposed building is 14.64 m, from average grade to the building parapet, and 17.51 m to the elevator lobby that accesses the rooftop amenity area, the height limit of the RA-8 Zone is 11.5 m.
- The proposal goes beyond the height designation and residential setbacks within the SVAP that is three-storeys, and seeks zoning bylaw variances to height and setbacks. Staff is seeking comments from the Panel on the proposed design and perceived massing.
- Planning is also seeking feedback for materials applied to the elevator lobby on the rooftop that has been clad in a material that may be reflective or obtrusive. Policy within the SVAP discourages the use of reflective coatings and films.

Comments from applicant /owner:

Deane Strongitharm, Strongitharm Consulting Ltd.; Barry Cosgrove, Partner and Architect, Number TEN Architectural Group; Brad Forth, Landscape Architect, 4 Site Landscape Architecture; presented to the Panel:

- This site has eight existing townhouses on site. This application will provide 38 one-bedroom units, 13 one-bedroom + den units, 18 two-bedroom units, 13 two-bedroom, two-storey townhouse type units, and four three-bedroom units.
- The project presents townhouses to the north and west sides of the property, and the south and east elevations are commercial units.
- This site is located close to parks, schools and shopping amenities.
- Currently, the area is very busy with the bike lane. The property has a designated transit lane, a buffer, bike lane and finishes off with the boulevard.
- The main entrance to the townhouses is off of Torquay Drive. The northwest corner has large, mature trees. Due to the bike lane, the trees will have to be removed. The trees will be retained along the north property line.
- This project's footprint is smaller than the existing dwellings on site. Stormwater gardens run along the perimeter of the site.
- The Engineering Department requires the entrance to be on Torquay Drive versus Shelbourne Street.
- The removal of existing trees is required to accommodate 4.2 m property dedication on Shelbourne Street for a new bike lane, planted boulevard and sidewalk and new boulevard and separated sidewalk on Torquay Drive.
- The lower part of level one is at grade along Shelbourne Street; some units are two-storey with a door off the common hallway and a door and balcony on Shelbourne Street. The large bike room and main vehicle access are here as well.
- Upon entering the underground parkade, seven visitor parking stalls with a ramp down to the lower level. Elevators and a hallway out to the north connect to allow access to the back of the property and pathways.
- The ground floor contains the main floor entrance. On the right-hand side of Shelbourne Street, this level presents as the second floor; on the left-hand side, they are at grade because of the grade difference. To the left of the lobby is a kids' play area, an outdoor play area/patio space.
- At the second level is the interior courtyard. The courtyard scheme breaks up the massing with twisting and turning facades. No living room window looks into another living room window to mitigate privacy concerns.
- The fourth floor has a large amenity space, an interior room with a large communal kitchen area, soft seating for events or residents' meetings. Outside on the large roof deck area is an outdoor barbeque with passive seating and a grassed area.
- The top floor is in shadow a lot of the time; the north side will have garden plots.
- Lower levels 2 and 3 are for parking, which requires an 18 stall variance.

- From the Torquay and Shelbourne intersection perspective, materials make it seem like a two-storey base with a variety of HardieShingle, HardiePlank, Sagiper wood siding and Hardie-stucco siding. The colours at the base follow Saanich's recommendations, are arts and crafts style, while the upper levels are west coast earth tones.
- A glass canopy partially covers the driveway and interior courtyard. There is guest parking in front, parkade access to the left. No unit looks directly into another unit.
- Planning expressed concern about the rooftop cladding; three walls are the same HardiePanel as the rest of the building, the metal roof wraps down around the back towards the courtyard, which is the only reflective part. It should be noted that it is not visible from the pedestrian point of view.
- The metal roof is curved to reduce the profile and visibility, matte gray, not highly reflective.
- On the ground level, a walking path circumnavigates the building.
- Pods have been created to contain exercise equipment. A play area has been created that will contain a play structure.
- The landscape is natural-looking, with large boulders, tree stumps, logs for kids to sit and play on within the walking trail. A large section of the Garry Oak trees will be maintained.
- Stormwater rain gardens around the building, some wet, some will be dry but in peak storms, they could hold water temporarily while water infiltrates into the ground.
- Carefully chosen trees have been selected for the courtyard: a sculptural pine tree and Japanese maple.
- Landscaping special features include rain gardens, retaining rock walls, a wood bridge, basalt pathway, wood/stone bench, carved heavy timber beams, river rock, driftwood, large boulders, and waterfalls.
- The building has been sited in the already disturbed area of the lot. The building is cut on bias, so it creates significant separation and respects the neighbour. Due to the topography of the site, this building fits into the neighbourhood very well.

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

- This site is in the Feltham village and is designated for three-storey apartment use.
- Regarding the EV Charging Bylaw, this application will be grandfathered, however, it is recommended that parking spaces are energized.

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

- The play area is located on a level area where no further digging is required, and it does not affect trees. Access is equal along the pathway from both streets. The play area is located near the three-bedroom unit block.
- Two-storey massing is identified materially by shingles and siding to reference the arts and crafts homes in the neighbourhood, similarly with the colours. Residents could enter either through the main building entrance or use the ground-oriented entrance as a front door.
- The Shelbourne frontage is one storey lower than the rest of the building; moving around the building's north side, the top floor amenity space is added. The building presents five storeys along the treed north property line on the corner along the Shelbourne frontage. On the west property line, it appears as four storeys. To the neighbouring residence, the proposal appears as 3.5-storeys tall.
- Consideration will be given to installing outlets for bike charging.
- The materials chosen for the metal and glass canopy at the front entrance can span the space effectively. Wood would require the construction of a heavier structure.

- The basalt pathway will be graded so that it is sloped and will be wheelchair accessible. Along Shelbourne Street, the pathway cannot connect at the access stairs due to the road dedication.
- The turf was decided for the roof garden patio as it looks realistic and doesn't require much maintenance. The only alternative is a high-maintenance grass surface.

Comments from the Panel:

- Between the topography of the site and retaining the trees, this is quite a complex project.
- Five stories are manageable and appropriate for this location.
- This proposal is thoughtful and considerate of the next door neighbour.
- The resident amenities are great, along with the stormwater features and townhouse entries.
- The massing of this large building is broken up somewhat by the materials.
- The five-storey expression viewed from Shelbourne Street is more successful than others; consideration could be given to some setbacks.
- Some of the walls appear fairly tall; consideration should be given to softening them and screen with plantings, especially the wall that edges down into the parkade.
- The existing trees on the north edge soften the expression of the building, which is appreciated. This should be considered with the new tree selection as well.
- Some of the drawings felt that the courtyard could use some verticality in the tree expression.
- Consideration should be given to the consequence of having pets on the roof with turf.
- Regarding massing, perhaps colour could be used to express different sections.
- The amenity package is quite rich and provides a lot of options.
- The unit mix is great; unit plans are well resolved. The inside corner and outside corner have some playfulness.
- Careful grading and consideration of how the building touches the ground are appreciated.
- Concern is expressed regarding the courtyard and that the entry presence relies too much on features like the trellises, canopies, side by side balconies with screenings.
- The courtyard is a bit compromised because of the surface parking and parkade access; consideration could be given for entry off of Torquay Drive.
- As Torquay Drive's perspective has a strong presence, the proposal's height is supportable.
- Consideration could be given to having a quieter palette. The townhouses are almost competing with the main entrance by having white arches.
- The hierarchy on private and public space will need to be clear.
- Quite creative with the tree preservation and attempting to use the disturbed space on the site.
- It appears some efforts have been made to mitigate possible reflection from the roof.

Consensus by present Panel members: “That it be recommended that the design to construct a five-storey, 86-unit multi-family apartment building at 4096 Torquay Drive be forwarded to Council subject to consideration of:

- **A simplification of the colour scheme, distinguishing the courtyard and the street-facing elevations;**
- **The cladding and the expression of entry to clarify the public versus private entrances of the building; and**
- **Improving accessibility from the building to all areas of the amenities.”**

The meeting adjourned at 4:32 pm.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY