

MINUTES
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL
Via MS Teams
Wednesday October 5, 2022

A/Chair: Andy Guiry

Present: Jacy Lee; Dorian Resener; and Brad Forth

Regrets: Greg Gillespie; Janine Wigmore; and Illarion Gallant

Guests: Nicholas Standeven; Trevor Smith; Blythe Smith; Kerry Gandy; David McGrath; and Bianca Boldly (applicant team)

Staff: Chuck Bell, Planner; Megan MacDonald, Senior Committee Clerk; and Austin Winters, Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The Senior Committee Clerk called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

NOMINATION OF ACTING CHAIR

Andy Guiry was nominated as Acting Chair for this meeting.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by A. Guiry and Seconded by J. Lee: "That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting dated May 4, 2022 be adopted."

CARRIED

MOVED by A. Guiry and Seconded by J. Lee: "That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting dated July 20, 2022 be adopted."

CARRIED

DESIGN GUIDELINES UPDATES

The Manager of Sustainability presented information on the Design Guidelines Update (PowerPoint on file).

1661 & 1663 FREEMAN AVENUE

Application by Abstract Developments.

This application is to construct two townhome blocks with nine units at 1661 and 1663 Freeman Avenue.

Legal Description: Lot 19, Section 36, Victoria District, Plan 7544
Lot 20, Section 36, Victoria District, Plan 7544

Planning File: DPR00808
Planning Staff: Chuck Bell, Planner

Comments from the Planner:

- The Advisory Design Panel recently considered a proposal from the same developer on the adjacent properties to this site, which was a multi-storey, multi-family building.
- The subject site is in the Shelbourne area of the Shelbourne Local Area Plan and is a “neighbourhood” designation within the Official Community Plan.
- Within the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan which this property falls under, this property is known as the Hillside Centre, which is designated for townhouses of two to three stories in height.
- The Saanich General Development Permit Area contains policy for high quality architecture which should be contemporary and authentic.
- The Shelbourne Valley Action Plan contains policy that encourages ground-oriented dwellings with their own entrances for townhouses and the use of high quality and long-lasting materials.
- The Plan also speaks to the reduction of perceived height and bulk buildings through articulation.
- Variances are currently being proposed for parking and no decision has been made on an attached landing zone, but a new landing zone may have to be created to accommodate the proposed density.
- The height of this proposed site would be accommodated through the RTWA Zone.

Comments from applicant:

The applicant team presented to the Panel and noted the following:

- The proposed site is located adjoined to the corner of Freeman Avenue and Shelbourne Street which places it within the Shelbourne Valley.
- The Shelbourne Valley Action Plan is intended to outline the goals and vision for the future of the Shelbourne Valley.
- The Plan discusses significantly changing the character of the Valley and creating a balanced mobility network that supports multiple means of transportation, various housing types and valuable community amenities.
- The proposed site is near the Cedar Hill Centre, Hillside Centre, Browning Park, Mount Tolmie and numerous schools.
- The location makes it an area from all walks of life, but especially young families with its easy access to the listed amenities and transit corridor of Shelbourne.
- This proposed development would be a key piece in the transition in height that is mentioned and desired within the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan to bridge the relationship amongst the various forms of housing.
- This application includes the provision of the much-needed missing middle housing which includes the construction of nine townhomes with three bedrooms on the upper floor as well as a lower floor flex room.
- The new frontage on Freeman is complete with a sidewalk and boulevard of trees which creates a beautiful streetscape.
- The wide unit module that is in this project allows for the front facing unit to present as a single-family style home that compliment the existing character of the neighbourhood.
- The east side of the property is where the vehicular entrance is for the two-car garage in the front units and the one car garage is for the back-facing units.
- Each of the front-facing units will have outdoor space with individual locations for bike parking and 9 bike parking stalls within the units themselves which excludes visitor bike parking stalls
- The form and character of the site is a modern take on the Victorian/Craftsman style.
- There is an emphasis on separating the private from public space and to do that there is a stoop that the resident walks into as well as a gated or rod iron fence on the individual units.
- The buildings are approximately 28.5 feet apart with an increased space of 33 feet between balconies to increase privacy.

- More articulation was done to the end units to ensure they are not simply a blank wall.
- On the ground floor of the front facing units is the double car garage with flex space.
- There is a modern layout with the second floor which includes an open concept, powder room and a balcony.
- On the top floor is the three bedrooms and two bathrooms.
- Each of the homes will have its own boulevard tree in its frontage, evergreen shrub and a bike parking stall.
- To break up the massing of the concrete driveway, it is interrupted with paving stone.
- There is a rain garden mid-block on the eastern side which features a conservatory in the middle of the garden which works to continually filter rainwater off of the drive.
- There is a shrub buffer on the adjacent side to separate from the adjacent home and a six-foot privacy wall which runs along the east and south side.
- The back units have a patio area and there is a shared planter demarcating the rear entrances to the shared suites and the paving stone treatment that is also used on the front units.
- Each of the units will be separated with a fence on the back patio.
- There is a generous buffer of native shrubs, trees and perennials.
- Eight of the plants that will be planted are native and six are non-native species.
- Although there are no trees required for this development, there are eight new trees provided with four along the boulevard and four on site.

In response to questions from the Panel, it was noted:

- For the ground-oriented townhomes there is something so fundamentally strong and clear in demarking each individual home with the pitch roof and vertical delineation.
- This is an opportunity to create a new architectural vision from previous builds.
- During the public engagement period for the six-story building there was concern over the modern blocks coming into the neighbourhood.
- The muted colours keep the design simplistic.
- The material selection was done purposefully to bring down the eyes to ensure continuity and maintain that flag indicating where the entry is.
- Differing residents will have opposing views as to how they use the flex room and that is ultimately up to the resident to decide how they use that space.
- A lot of different proportions of window size were examined for this build and the size that was chosen, fit best with the rest of the units.
- The pavers themselves are permeable, but the grading will be directed towards the rain garden for filtration.
- The operation of the two builds will be overseen by a strata council.
- The accessibility of this form of housing is difficult to address and is being addressed in other builds but unfortunately not this build.
- There are chair lift retrofits that could fit within the back facing units.
- Under the stairway there may be opportunity to increase storage capacity.
- Every square inch of the build is examined to find ways to make use of excess space.
- Garbage would currently be stored within each unit's garage.
- There is no visitor parking within the project, but there is street parking along Shelbourne available.

Comments from the Panel:

- The design choice of this proposed build seems to be a departure from the design of the build that this developer had just created in the same neighbourhood.
- The mass is broken down quite well specifically with the second and third floors of building 1.
- The flex room is a valuable amenity, but there is not a lot of utility storage in the plans which could lead to this flex room being a storage space.

- There potentially could be changes made to the design to reduce the size of the flex room for the introduction of more storage space in the garage.
- The scale of the doorways is a little small in comparison to the windows.
- The banding and paving on the roads are a positive.
- Trees in the interior roadway could be a potential addition.
- The look and feel of the build are good although the colouring of the build could be warmer which would help it tie into the surrounding buildings.
- An individual with accessibility needs may have issues accessing this build.
- There may not be enough storage capacity within the units.
- Between levels 2 and 3 of building 2, there is a bathroom that goes over the stairs and there seems to be only 1.5 meters of headroom.

MOVED by J. Lee and Seconded by B. Forth: “That it be recommended that the application to construct two townhome blocks with 9 units at 1661 and 1663 Freeman Avenue, be approved subject to the consideration of:

- a) increased landscaping and trees in front of the entries for building 2 and to the west property line;**
- b) providing more storage space within the units;**
- c) exploring more colour and material to align with the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan;**
- d) maximizing the adaptability of the units;**
- e) widening of the paving strips to align with the planters.**

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY