

DISTRICT OF SAANICH
MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL
Via MS Teams
Wednesday, October 18, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.

Chair: Greg Gillespie
Members: Brad Forth Andy Guiry; Jacy Lee
Regrets: Stephen Deglow; Will Kryzmowski; Kimberly Simpson
Staff: Gina Lyons, Senior Planner; Kirsten Brazier, Senior Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by J. Lee and Seconded by A. Guiry “That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting dated October 4, 2023, be adopted as amended.”

MOVED by A. Guiry and Seconded by J. Lee “That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting dated October 11, 2023, be adopted as amended.”

CARRIED

843 Nigel Avenue

Application by Joel Newel Architect

This application is to construct a 6-storey rental apartment building with support services and parking at main floor level.

Legal Description: Lot 11 & 12, Block 2, Section 33, Plan 1375 and Lot A, Sections 9 & 33, Plan 40348, Victoria District

Planning File: DPA01027

Planning Staff: Gina Lyons, Senior Planner

Comments from the Planner:

- The site is designed for multi-family use and falls within the policy area for the Uptown Douglas Plan. It is within Nigel Valley Municipal Campus subarea and within the mid-rise residential land use designation.
- The Nigel Valley is a master plan community which has eight development sites to allow for a phased development of supported, affordable and market housing.
- The guidelines for the area envision one residential or mixed-use building with vehicle access and the main entrance from Nigel Avenue.
- Planning is seeking comments on the general form and character and site plan of the development.

Comments from the applicant:

- This is a BC Housing funded project.
- The Newbridge site at Nigel Valley has been in the works since 2015. It includes five partners, nine acres of land and is in several phases of development.
- The site is challenging geotechnically as it is being built on the old riverbed that would have fed Swan Lake.
- The master development agreement was approved in 2019.

- As part of this project Vernon Avenue has had traffic calming, bike lanes and crosswalks installed.
- The Newbridge building parcel has had the adjacent lots donated from BC Housing to allow for a bigger building to be built.
- The previous Newbridge building was taken down last year. Tenants were relocated to other units within the supported housing portfolio.
- Island Community Mental Health (ICMH) has been providing housing in the community since the 1970's and is committed to working with individuals experiencing mental health challenges.
- ICMH provides housing coaches for their clients.
- Funding for this project is being requested from BC Housing.
- 110 units are proposed with most of these being bachelor and one-bedroom units (five two-bedroom units are included).
- 20% of the units will be at the Provincial Income Assistance rate, 50% will be at rent geared to income rates and 30% will be at moderate income rates.
- This project will add affordable housing to the community.
- The building will meet Step 4 of the Energy Code and will be 100% electrified. It will meet all the BC Housing Guidelines, and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Accessibility and Design Guidelines.
- The site is close to the Saanich core and Uptown Plaza. It is close to transit and active transportation routes.
- This project will be boarded on three sides by roads. The main entrance is off Nigel Avenue, and a new public park is being created across the street.
- The site is steeply sloped from Vernon Avenue to Nigel Avenue.
- Parking access will be off Nigel Avenue to an underground parkade.
- There will be a common laundry on each floor. Accessible and two-bedroom units have in-suite laundry.
- Balconies facing onto Vernon are shielded by side walls to provide sun protection.
- The project meets the Saanich adaptable housing requirements, CMHC universal design requirements, and the BC Housing design requirements.
- Materials include wood look siding that will be used to line the balconies and will be installed on soffits. Glass balconies will be used on this project.
- The building at Nigel is taller as it is at grade. Balconies have dividing walls between them.
- Landscape provides both public and private spaces and pathways.
- A small seating area has been provided at the entry with bike racks. Another small seating areas is located just outside of the amenity room.
- Pathways and grades have been designed to minimize retaining walls onsite.
- Ground level patios will have landscape screening planted to provide privacy for the units.
- The depth of the parkade slab allows for soil volume above to plant shrubs and small and medium sized trees.
- A rain garden runoff area will be built to address stormwater runoff.
- Landscape plantings include native and non-native plants that are adapted to the site conditions.
- Proposed new tree plantings will help reestablish urban biodiversity and will provide shade as the trees mature. Larger trees will be located on grade areas.

SUMMARY

In response to questions from the panel, the applicant stated:

- This raingarden has been placed at the lowest point of the site for maximum effectiveness. The layout of the land is dictating its placement.
- The bike room plans shown today include scooter parking spaces. A revision is in the works that will allow for more than 50% of bike spaces to be level and the rest will be hanging.

- The applicant is also looking at having on ground or hanging bike parking at the front of the parking stalls.
- The amenity spaces are intended for the tenant’s general use. ICMH will also use these spaces to offer small workshops and programs.
- Office and counseling spaces will be for ICMH staff to use.
- HandiDart pickups will happen along Nigel Avenue.
- Emergency vehicles would be along Nigel Avenue for now. Once the adjacent projects are completed Nigel Avenue would come all the way through the development and exit onto Darwin Avenue. Emergency vehicles would then make use of this route.
- A small area of outdoor seating has been planned outside of the interior amenity space. There are other outdoor spaces close to the building.
- The plaza at the end of Nigel Avenue is part of Phase 2 and the next road phase. A park space will be across from this property.
- BC Housing issues guidelines that mostly pertain to the interior of the building (unit specifications, materials used, affordability), and they perform technical reviews on these projects.
- BC Housing guidelines also state specific storage requirements for each unit.
- BC Housing has specific requirements regarding the size and affordability of units. Because of these smaller size units, the amenity space on the main floor is very important.
- The designs of the units for this project are largely targeting clients who require independent living situations.

In response to questions from the panel, staff stated;

- Staff have recommended that the bicycle parking should be revised.

Comments from the Panel:

- The width of the balconies could be slightly wider to accommodate a chair.
- The addition of a cover for the outdoor seating area could be considered.
- The orientation of the access to the bike room could be reconsidered.
- The public realm along the street with the raingardens creates a tight space to the building.
- The streetscape fronting on Vernon Avenue needs further articulation.
- The articulation of the building is very nice.

MOVED by J. Lee and Seconded by A. Guiry: “That the application to construct a six-storey apartment building with support services and parking at the main level at 843 Nigel Avenue be approved subject to the consideration of:

- **The amenity space reconfiguration to bring it closer to the lobby;**
- **Address the usability of the exterior amenity space;**
- **Consideration of balcony depth for usability;**
- **Relocation of bike parking access in proximity to the main entrance; and**
- **Consideration of extending the landscaping above the garbage and recycling area as grades permit.”**

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 2:39 p.m.

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CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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COMMITTEE SECRETARY