

MINUTES
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL
Via MS Teams
Wednesday April 3, 2024 1:02 pm.

Chair: Greg Gillespie

Present: Brad Forth; Chris Gower, Matthew Jarvis, Will Kryzmowski (1:03 p.m.) and Jacy Lee

Regrets: Kimberly Simpson and Stephen Deglow

Guests: Joseph Kardum of KOKA Architecture, Sean Leogreen of LADR Landscape Architects, Bibi Kang and John Bourcet of Kang & Gill Construction and Evan Lee

Staff: Eric Joyal and Chuck Bell, Planners; and Megan MacDonald, Senior Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The Committee Clerk called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

ELECTION OF CHAIR

MOVED by C. Gower and Seconded by B. Forth: "That Greg Gillespie be elected as Chair of the Advisory Design Panel for 2024."

CARRIED

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by J. Lee and Seconded by G. Gillespie : "That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on December 6, 2023, be adopted."

CARRIED

*** Panel member W. Kryzmowski joined the meeting at 1:03 p.m. ***

982, 986 & 988 ANNIE STREET AND 975, 981 & 985 MCKENZIE AVENUE

Application by GIC Developments Limited

The application is to rezone from RS-10, RS-6, RD-1 zones to RA-11 (Apartment) zone to construct 120 units in two six-storey apartment buildings. A Development Permit for form and character, with variances, is requested.

Legal Description: Lots A & B, Section 64, Victoria District, Plan VIS848, Together With An Interest In The Common Property In Proportion To The Unit Entitlement Of The Strata Lot As Shown On Form 1 Or V, As Appropriate.
Lots 7, 13, 14 & 15 Section 64 Victoria District Plan 1319

Planning File: DPR01034

Planning Staff: Eric Joyal, Planner

B. Forth declared a conflict of interest at 1:10 p.m. and excused himself from the panel as he is part of the design team for the project.

Comments from the Planner:

- Proposed variances include east side yard, parking space counts for resident and visitor parking, the depth of parking spaces and the width of parking maneuvering aisles.
- Surrounding land use is mostly residential, with two- or three-storey apartments and strata buildings along McKenzie, and predominantly single-family dwellings exist to the north, west and south. The site immediately east includes a five-storey apartment, the Otto.
- A few hundred metres east are commercial and industrial uses, including the Saanich Yard and a shopping centre. The site is proximal to transit, shopping, parks and schools.
- Policy designates this as a Centre, which currently supports up to an eight-storey development, however future draft policy is signaling the possibility of greater heights.
- McKenzie Avenue, a major road, is to the north, and Annie Street, a neighbourhood road, is to the south. The site is providing a 5.2 metre road dedication on McKenzie Avenue for road improvements, including All-Ages-and-Abilities Active Transportation infrastructure.
- The site slopes down from its northeast corner. To the west, a two-meter drop, and to the south and southwest, a six-meter drop.
- Of 120 units, 68 are for ownership and 52 are to be designated as rental tenure for a period of 10 years. Overall, it has 28% two-bedroom units and 16% of three-bedroom units.

Comments from the applicant:

- The lot is located in the 900 block of McKenzie Avenue, there is also a street frontage on Annie Street. This assembly is comprised of five lots which currently have residential houses.
- The location of the lots is on McKenzie Avenue, between the Patricia Bay Highway and Quadra Street. Christmas Hill to the north and swan lake to south
- Annie Park is located directly to the south, there are other multifamily projects in the area.
- The adjacent Otto building is a boomerang shape with townhomes in the front. Design considerations of the adjacent lots will complement the streetscape and maximize privacy.
- Stepping the building down on the east side of the Annie building and the west side of the McKenzie building allows for maximum sunlight into the courtyard.
- Both buildings are less than 20 metres tall.
- The main entrance to the McKenzie building is via a walkway path in the northwest corner, leading into a lobby facing McKenzie Avenue. A secondary entry will lead from the lobby out towards the central courtyard.
- A below grade parkade will be shared by both projects. There will be a total of 127 parking stalls, 5 accessible spaces, EV charging stations, 140 bike stalls and 12 short term bike spaces. This will be achieved by two levels of parking, one level for each building.
- The buildings will both have a variety of unit types, with studio to three bedrooms being available. One building will be rental and the other will be strata ownership condos.
- Larger balconies on both projects will provide private outdoor space.
- Accessibility considerations were made to optimize aging in place.
- Vehicular access to the building has been optimized with a layby on McKenzie Avenue for pick up/drop off, moving trucks and deliveries.
- The main entrance from McKenzie will have stairs and a ramp, along with landscaped entry courtyard, focusing on native and draught resistant plantings.
- New Garry Oak trees will likely be planted between the buildings and around the perimeter.
- The connectivity of the project was an important aspect. An existing right of way on site will

- be protected by landscaping and rain gardens.
- Efforts have been made to retain existing trees as much as possible.
 - The Annie building will also be fully accessible and include a vehicular layby area. One larger tree will be retained front and centre as a focal point for the project.
 - The landscaped courtyard between the buildings will be stepped due to the grade change.
 - The courtyard will feature work out equipment, large trees down the centre between the upper and lower courtyard, many new native plantings and an artistic children's playground.
 - A considerable number of new trees will be planted on site with this project.
 - Stepped planters for each ground level unit will provide privacy. Special paving, gates and stairs to a communal walkway will provide connectivity while maintaining a sense of privacy.

In response to questions and comments from the Panel, the applicant noted:

- Sustainability initiatives include directing surface water through rain garden filter system and into storm water holding tanks which will reduce water going into storm water system. These holding tanks will be used for irrigation during dry summer months.
- There will not be green roofs due to the long-term maintenance required. The additional weight on the roof also can be difficult as there is a risk of seismic activity in our area.
- There is a steep slope along McKenzie Avenue, the west side of the building is stepped down into the main entry. This access is not anticipated to be used as frequently as the parkade.
- There is no bike storage on the main level of the McKenzie aside from the visitor spots.
- Along the east side, the Annie building is more level which allows for direct access off the ground level into a bike storage room.
- The lower entrance area on McKenzie will be more sheltered.
- There will be an additional bike storage room on the lowest level of the parkade.
- Privacy of ground level units will be enhanced by design, plantings and privacy fences.
- Sunlight in the courtyard has been maximized by a stepped design for both buildings. The space will be fully irrigated and planted with carefully selected plants that will be suited for their location. Areas receiving full sun, part sun and shade will be planted accordingly.
- The design has considered the proximity of the adjacent Otto building, efforts have been made to maximize privacy for all.

Panel discussion ensued with the following comments:

- The north public face is very attractive with clear architectural design, members appreciate the townhouse expression of these units.
- Site permeability is important, an onsite storm water retention system minimizes the impact to the Districts storm water systems and reusing the stormwater maximizes sustainability.
- Inclusion of playground equipment is appreciated, a family-oriented design is commendable.
- The mix of rental and ownership tenures is a strong aspect. Splitting the design into two buildings is appreciated as it reduces massing and allows for more sunlight and greenspace.
- The McKenzie entrance is very disconnected from the ground plane, this should be improved.
- Including secure bike parking at grade will promote a car-lite and car-free lifestyle.
- Inclusion of a more harmonious color pallet to accentuate the wood may have been favorable.

MOVED by W. Kryzmowski and Seconded by M. Jarvis: "That it be recommended that the design to construct 120 units in two six-storey apartment buildings at 982, 986 & 988 Annie Street and 975, 981 & 985 Mckenzie Avenue be postponed to a future meeting to allow for consideration of:

- **Ground plane improvements for building entrances;**
- **More architectural richness of materials; and**
- **Improve convenience and expression of bike stalls at grade."**

Panel discussion ensued with the following comments:

- The McKenzie Avenue ground plane could be further refined by making the entrance closer to the street level and finding ways to make it more inviting.
- The canopy of the entryway is below eye level from the street, this main entrance should be raised and more connected to the streetscape. There is much room for improvement in the way this building connects to the streetscape, even with the slope.
- There are options available to make the entrance on the sloped site more favorable.
- This is a textbook example of creating density without overwhelming the area. The landscaping plan is detailed and commendable. Many trees and shrubs will provide year-round privacy and enhance the natural environment.
- Some outdoor spaces may not be useable in all seasons.
- Architectural detail is important. The materials and details are lacking materiality such as accents. These details would help dehumanize the buildings, especially in the entryway.
- There should be more secure bike parking at grade. Designated outdoor bike stalls near the entrances would allow secure storage for visitors or those who are coming and going.
- Breaking the application up into two buildings rather than one large block is appreciated.
- The architecture lacks expression, there is room for more richness of the materials.
- Saanich Class 1 standards for bike parking have been met, however the applicant could work to improve the convenience and expression of the stalls at grade.
- Shade design considerations to reduce the heat from the sun in summer months are ideal.
- The ground plane issue is worth exploring further. The Draft Official Community Plan may include information on providing height variances which could be given in cases of site-specific hardship. A slope such as this may be considered as such a hardship.
- Room to breathe between buildings is appreciated, the amenity area is attractive.
- Practicality speaks volumes, the six units for cargo bike storage are appreciated.
- The McKenzie building does not have an inviting sense of entry. The lower levels of the building are sunken and lost.
- The greenspace connectivity has been articulated successfully on the Annie building. The layout, orientation and tapering to neighbouring buildings is appreciated.
- Ground level units may have less privacy and be subject to more noise.
- McKenzie layby has constraints and challenges given the topography, however the inclusion of this necessary element is appreciated.
- The Annie building has a more successful entrance compared to McKenzie.
- The sawtooth design and the tapering fin in wood soffit are great elements, however the south and southeast corner are slightly harsh. This area should be reconsidered, it should have a more inviting entry which could be achieved by elevating the sunken basement feel.
- Ground oriented units should have access to grade from the Annie building.

The Motion was then Put and CARRIED

2921 EARL GREY STREET

Application by KG2 Developments Limited.

This application is to rezone the site from the RA-3 (Apartment) Zone to the RA-11 (Apartment) Zone to construct a 39 unit, five-storey multi family building with underground parking. A Development Permit for form and character, with variances for siting and parking, is requested.

Legal Description: Lot A, Section 11 & 12, Victoria District, Plan EPP68785

Planning File: DPR00973

Planning Staff: Chuck Bell, Planner

Comments from the Planner:

- A previous application to construct a four-storey, 24-unit apartment building with underground parking on the site was approved by Council in 2016. Construction on that application started, but halted after the underground parkade was excavated.
- A feature of that previous development was the retention of a significant Garry Oak in the northeast corner of the site. The current application also aims to retain this tree.
- The site is within the Tillicum Local Area and is in what the Official Community Plan considers to be a “Neighbourhood”. The proposed land use is supportable, and the Tillicum LAP identifies the site for multifamily housing.
- The proposed height of five-storeys is higher than the four-storeys envisioned for neighbourhoods, and so an OCP amendment will be required.
- Variances are requested for:
 - o Front and Exterior Side Yard Setbacks (Gorge Rd West and Earl Grey St respectively);
 - o Parking (including Visitor Parking, Parking Stall Depth and Maneuvering Aisle Width);
 - o Distance from Driveway to Window of Habitable Room

Comments from the applicant:

- This location is to the north of the Gorge Waterway, the park and walkway is directly across Gorge Road. There are two bus stops nearby.
- Council had previously approved a four-storey building at this location. The lot was cleared and excavation began, however the project was abandoned leaving a partially excavated site.
- New owners have purchased the lot, and a five-storey building is now envisioned.
- This application has an additional storey; however, the overall height will be similar as the parkade will be dropped lower in the ground.
- Privacy for neighbours was a design consideration. Balconies and window placement were designed to ensure that they do not impose on neighbours. A significant buffer of landscaping and screening will also be utilized. Balconies will have privacy glass, and some are enclosed.
- Balconies were omitted in some areas and window sizes were reduced in response to feedback and concerns from the neighbours.
- The building has been staggered to add articulation.
- The lot is quite sloped with the lowest point along Gorge Road, with a steep slope upwards along Earl Grey, this makes access to the lot difficult. Access is further complicated by Saanich Engineering requirements, as the road access must be off Earl Grey, not Gorge.
- The requirements also state that vehicle access must be set back from the intersection of Gorge and Earl Grey. Consequently, the vehicles will be entering the lot from one of the highest points and will need to travel down a significant slope to enter the parking area.
- There will be 39 parking stalls, 3 accessible stalls. All stalls will be EV ready. There will also be 76 bike parking stalls below grade, accessed via the ramp or elevator.
- A small private parklet will be included as an amenity space surrounding the significant Garry Oak tree. This will include tables, seating and landscaping, as well as a path for access to the street on the north-east corner.
- The exterior cladding near the Garry Oak is an artistic expression of tall trees, the cladding will be painted to resemble trees using geometric shapes and natural colours. At night, the small windows on this side may suggest a starry sky. This nature based abstract painting was intended to be reminiscent of the work of Emily Carr.
- Extensive rain gardens will be installed to promote sustainability, reduce stormwater impacts and to provide habitat for native pollinators.

In response to questions and comments from the Panel, the applicant noted:

- The building has been moved away from the setbacks compared to the previous application due to the imposing shadows previously proposed. Locating the building further from neighbouring lots will reduce the shadowing and alleviate concerns.
- Ensuring privacy of the neighbours influenced the landscaping plan in many ways.
- Engineering has indicated that the driveway access must be off of Earl Grey Street, access to Gorge Road is prohibited at this site. This creates a unique driveway situation.
- This building is intended to be all rental units.
- Although a variance for parking has been requested, the bike parking space requirement has been doubled. These additional bike spaces may mean less residents use cars.
- Locating the dog-wash room off the lobby allows owners a private area to clean up dogs before they go into the rest of the building. This space is more accessible than the parkade, and may help reduce the amount of dirt potentially tracked in during the muddy season. It is reasonable to assume that owners will often walk dogs at the Gorge Park.
- The garbage staging area is another requirement which complicates the design. It states that garbage trucks must be able to come onto the property and turn around, rather than backing out onto Earl Grey Street. Given the location of the garbage in the parkade, and the slope of the ramp, it will be necessary for a smaller truck to pull the garbage bins out of the parkade area and put them in the staging area until the bigger truck arrives.
- The narrow pathway to the parklet provides some level of access to the rain gardens and the Garry Oak for maintenance providers, the path is a necessary inclusion.
- The community was clear about their desire to retain the significant Garry Oak. This retention creates another restraint on the design.
- The elevator will have double sided doors, this will allow access from the lobby directly to the bike room on lowest floor.
- The building will be fully powered by electricity. Significant energy modeling has taken place and it may be possible to achieve a grant or rebate from the Province for energy efficient building design and construction.
- Driveway and grade impact the flexibility of form and character.

Panel discussion ensued with the following comments:

- The main entrance is prominent; however, the walkway from the parklet to the street appears disconnected, suggesting remnants of a previous thought process.
- Numerous limitations exist, including constraints related to hydro locations, entry points, and engineering requirements.
- Not ideal to have entry off of earl grey – cannot have entry on gorge
- The project will integrate seamlessly into this neighborhood, as its architecture complements the surrounding environment.
- Accessing the parkade seems impractical. It would be more sensible to position parking access on Gorge Road instead to avoid the long ramp and slope. Given the inability of the applicant to do this, there is not any reasonable way to change this.
- The choice of materials is attractive, with the main entrance being well-framed and accentuated. The plentiful plantings will make this green and inviting.
- Inclusion of a lobby would be ideal, but there is not room for one given site conditions.
- The unit layouts effectively balance functionality and variety.
- The cementitious panels and diverse balcony styles enhance the aesthetic appeal.
- Garbage staging area could be improved with better landscaping.
- The addition of a parklet is a nice touch, although the location is not ideal, it's making the best of the situation. The walkway to address maintenance will be helpful.
- The driveway and entrance may be congested and inconvenient, but unfortunately, there are no viable alternatives.

- The designer exhibited cleverness by incorporating abundant variation and expression into the relatively modest structure, resulting in ample visual appeal.
- Arrangement of the units has been effectively managed.
- The applicants' willingness to experiment with materials and form is commendable.
- The presence of art on the building is valued, especially for its abstract interpretation, variation, and expression. It's a terrific gesture to embellish the blank facade of the building with both art and small windows.

MOVED by J. Lee and Seconded by C. Gower: "That it be recommended that the design to construct a 39 unit, five-storey multi-family building with underground parking at 2921 Earl Grey Street be approved subject to consideration of:

- **Varied materiality, increased plantings and improved design at the building entrance and driveway entrance to make it more visually appealing;**
- **Updated and accurate renderings be provided;**
- **At grade access to ground floor units;**
- **Fixed seating within parklet**
- **Family-oriented bike parking at grade."**

Panel discussion ensued with the following comments:

- Relocation of the ramp would be far more favorable. The current design coming out one end and wrapping around the building to the road is not ideal.
- The artwork on the building is appreciated. Having a display pedestal that residents and pedestrians can view near that side of the building would allow people to understand the reason and the story of the design. The artist gave a great explanation, which could be shared with all so the story becomes part of the legacy of the building.
- The location, grade and length of the ramp is not ideal. The applicant has done their best to comply with municipal requirements, however the location requirements where it meets the road combined with the grade of the building creates an undesirable outcome.
- The parklet should include fixed benches or seating as well as moveable chairs and tables to allow for informal gathering in this area.
- An entry courtyard or more defined open area at the entrance would be beneficial.
- At grade access to ground floor units is strongly encouraged near the public right of way as per design guidelines. This would contribute to the public face of the building.

The Motion was then Put and CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

CHAIR, Greg Gillespie

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY