

MINUTES
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL
Held electronically via MS Teams
Wednesday August 21, 2024 at 1:02 pm.

Chair: Greg Gillespie

Present: Stephen Deglow and Chris Gower (1:03 p.m.)

Regrets: Brad Forth, Matthew Jarvis, and Will Kryzmowski, Jacy Lee and Kimberly Simpson

Guests: Vincent Rizzo Kayle Rizzo and Louise Peluso of Rizzo Developments; Erica Sangster, Mike Barros and Carole Rossell of DAU Studio

Staff: Amber Walker, Planner and Megan MacDonald, Senior Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

As quorum was not present, the minutes could not be adopted.

3383 Harriet Road and 3442 & 3444 Whittier Avenue

Application by Rizzo Developments Ltd.

To rezone three properties from RS-6 (Single Family) to the RA-11 (Residential Apartment) to construct a 57-unit multi-family rental building with underground parking. Variances are requested.

Legal Description: Lots 1 & 2, Section 7, Victoria District, Plan 13300
Lot 4, Section 7, Victoria District, Plan 4414

Planning File: DPR01063; REZ00762

Planning Staff: Amber Walker, Planner

Comments from the Planner:

- The application is for a five storey rental apartment.
- Vehicles will access the site off of Whittier Avenue.
- A multi-use pathway and corresponding Right of Way (ROW) will be provided as part of this application to connect Harriet Road through to Whittier Avenue.
- Bicycle parking provided exceeds the Zoning Bylaw requirements.
- The project has 9% studio units, 61% one bedroom units, 19% two bedroom units, and 11% three bedroom units.
- The site is within a Primary Growth Area and designated as "Uptown Core." Further guidance on land use, density and building heights is included in the Uptown Douglas Plan (UDP).
- The site is also included in the provincially designated Uptown Transit Oriented Area (TOA).
- TOA designation means the project is eligible for the minimum density requirements and parking relaxations. The TOA supports up to six storeys and an floor space ratio of 2.5.
- There are no residential parking requirements within the TOA.

- This area is designated as Neighbourhood Apartment Residential in the UDP, which envisions 4-5 storeys as the base height with potential for up to 6 storeys.
- The Neighbourhood Apartment Residential designation includes a street wall height of 2-3 storeys with buildings stepping back a minimum of 3 metres at street wall height.
- Whittier Avenue/Culduthel Road fronting the property are identified as a Green Corridor in the UDP. As per UDP policy 4.5.4., considerations for green corridors include:
 - Planting additional trees within the right-of-way;
 - Adding pocket parks with trees and appropriate vegetation;
 - Integrating stormwater management features; and
 - Reducing impervious surfaces within the right-of-way and on adjacent properties
- Further to this, under the UDP, the site is located in the Tolmie Quarter neighborhood sub-area. An important sub-area objective is to support a mix of uses and housing options that enhance the area's vitality.
- Variances are requested for:
 - Front setback for Harriet Road (1.0m)
 - Interior Side Yard Setback on the south side (0.91 m)
- Planning is seeking comments on the site design and building design. Comments on liveability, the relationship to the street and path, the design of the public pathway and landscaping along the Green Corridor (Whittier Avenue frontage) are also requested.

Comments from the applicant:

- The goal is to provide sustainable urban development in the developing area.
- The Tolmie Road intersection is designated as a growth node, providing an opportunity to enhance the streetscape and establish a distinctive neighborhood character.
- This multifamily residential project is strategically designed to mediate between the high-density urban core and the lower-density residential zone of Tillicum Road.
- Harriet Road has been designated as the principal facade and pedestrian access.
- Whittier Road experiences less traffic, making it an optimal choice for vehicular access.
- The North edge will have a walkway path, connecting Harriet Road to Whittier Avenue.
- The five-storey proposal will offer a variety of unit types, from studio to 3 bedroom homes.
- The south-facing landscaped area will enhance the visual appeal of Whittier Avenue.
- The building will feature a terraced design along Harriet Road, creating a gradual transition in scale to the adjacent lower-height residences. The massing strategy will fit the neighbourhood.
- The building's four-story street facade, with the upper two stories set back, will mitigate the visual massing, which will integrate well with the surrounding context in the short and long term.
- The architectural design conveys the building's residential character, enhancing visual interest.
- Tone and texture articulate the building's elements. A neutral base anchors the overall design.
- Flat and custom-profiled angled metal corrugation on the midsection will create dynamic visual interest as it interacts with daylight. The inset, generously proportioned balconies will feature textured surfaces, enhancing their comfort and livability.
- The upper section is characterized by a roof overhang with wooden soffits that align with the underside of the balconies, fostering a cohesive integration with the character of Saanich.
- The building will embody a classic aesthetic while adapting to the evolving neighborhood, reflecting principles of sustainable urban design.
- The site will feature an enhanced pedestrian environment, including a sidewalk, boulevard, and street trees, along with a designated loading bay and on-street parking.
- Patios will offer direct access to the sidewalks, complemented by an accessible pathway.
- The L-shaped frontage along Whittier Avenue will create a dedicated outdoor amenity area.
- The garbage and recycling facilities will be located at the base of the ramp, with three dedicated bike storage rooms that include provisions for accommodating larger bicycles.
- The main floor will feature the lobby and 11 residential units, with a dedicated bike room situated in the northeast corner. Two- and three-bedroom units will be located at the corner positions.
- Elevated landscaping and planters will delineate the patio areas.
- The units are vertically aligned, with daylighting incorporated at the corridor ends of all hallways.

- The building will adhere to Step 3 of the *Building Code*, featuring motion-activated LED lighting in common areas. Zero-carbon performance standards will be adhered to, prioritizing sustainability. The design will integrate seamlessly with the surrounding neighborhood.
- The landscape design is organized in a geometric layout, incorporating three key elements: raised concrete planters, pavers for hard surfaces, and low planting to soften the built form and enhance the natural environment. Raised planters on concrete slabs will be sufficiently elevated to accommodate tree planting.
- Trees will provide shade, enhancing the comfort and usability of the shared space.
- A rain garden will be positioned parallel to the multi-use trail.
- Trees will be strategically placed on either side of the main entrance to frame the entryway.
- Nine bylaw-protected trees will be removed, but mature screening is maintained through retention of offsite trees. The landscape plan will fulfill the requirement for replacement trees.
- The northern edge of the site will feature a rain garden planted with native species, designed for water detention and drainage, with a gradual release into the municipal system.
- To the north of the site, a 3-meter-wide multi-use trail will be situated at ground level, adjacent to patio spaces. Despite the proximity of the patios, raised planters with trees and shrubs will enhance the width of the vegetated buffer, creating a pleasant green walkway.
- The main seating area will be integrated into the soft landscaping and feature multiple bench seats, with two access points. A hedge along the parkade driveway will enclose the space, ensuring safety and separation from the edge. A planted buffer on the side and a neighboring tree will further enhance the area's appeal and usability.
- A smaller seating area is proposed for the northern corner, offering a quieter place to sit.
- In spring, the planting palette will provide nectar and scent, attracting birds and bees, while enhancing the experience for people. The selection of plants will support local wildlife and ensure straightforward landscape maintenance.
- Many of the plants will have low water requirements, reducing overall water usage.

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

- Saanich has indicated that the driveway should be accessed from the lower-volume street.
- A more formal, pedestrian-focused street frontage is recommended along Harriet Road.
- The rain garden will act as a wet fence and trees will provide screening and privacy to units along the pathway. This screening will be visually permeable to give residents oversight.
- Lighting details for the pathway have not yet been confirmed.
- Each unit is equipped with a heat recovery ventilation system to maximize efficiency.
- The design complies with the 2018 Adaptability standards, although the 2024 standards, which will be required by March 2025, would necessitate additional adjustments.
- The design incorporates planter walls and patios, the outermost edge of which is used to calculate setbacks. The building envelope will require less of a setback variance.

Panel discussion ensued with the following comments:

- Providing bike parking at grade is commendable.
- The units are generously sized, offering a pleasant living experience overall.
- The materials will feature warmer tones, complementing the existing neighborhood aesthetic.
- Low maintenance and reduced water requirements for planting are advantageous.
- It is commendable to address this transitional zone as such.
- The applicants have responded effectively; the massing reduces the building's scale, resulting in a relatively subtle yet distinct structure. The variety of finishes will be quite refined.
- For the massing, consider projecting or stepping back the corner unit at the north corner of the building to scale down from the fifth story to the street level. This adjustment could reduce the building's scale. Additionally, a projection could create a canopy over the bike parking area.
- Attention to detail is evident in the careful and subtle finishes.
- The building is attractive, offering both functionality and livability. The functional layout and pleasant outdoor garden space enhance its appeal.

- The emphasis on pedestrian engagement is effective, with a well-considered second outdoor area. The pedestrian flow is functional and enhances the overall appeal.
- At-grade bike parking is crucial, and the ample provision of bike spaces is commendable. The inclusion of cargo bike parking is also a significant advantage.
- The layby option enhances the frontage, and the functional alley is well-conceived.
- The material variation, including the use of corrugated metal panels, adds a great design touch.
- The building form is responsive to the existing neighbors, and opting not to pursue the full six stories demonstrates a strong respect for the surrounding community.
- Bee-friendly plantings are commendable, and these small improvements collectively enhance the project's quality. The provision of at-grade access at both ends of the building is a significant benefit. It's also impressive that the landscape plan addresses all relevant concerns thoroughly.
- The project demonstrates clear management of rain gardens and roof water runoff.
- The design is well attuned to its setting and anticipates how densification in neighborhoods can be architecturally inspiring.
- Evolving to include ample underground parking is a wise decision, providing valuable space and accommodation for residents.

Consensus by present Panel members: “That it be recommended that the design to construct a 57-unit multi-family rental building at 3383 Harriet Road and 3442 & 3444 Whittier Avenue be approved.”

Panel discussion ensued with the following comment:

- The design is subtle, and the landscaping is commendable. A stepped massing could be introduced on the northeast side near the bike storage.
- The applicant could consider various suggestions for the massing on the northeast corner. Stepping it back may not be the only or best solution.
- Applicant can make changes as they see fit

The meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

CHAIR, Greg Gillespie

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY