

**MINUTES**  
**ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL**  
Held via MS Teams  
March 19, 2025 at 1:02 PM

**ROLL CALL**

**In Attendance:** Greg Gillespie (Chair), Chris Gower, Matthew Jarvis, Sean Partlow (1:10 p.m.), Jacy Lee, Kimberly Simpson, Xeniya Vins (1:05 p.m.)  
**Guests:** Joseph Kardum, Koka Architecture, Rodrigo Rodrigues, Gala Landscape Architects  
**Regrets:** Brian Fraser  
**Staff:** Eric Joyal, Planner, Current Planning; Colton Whittaker, Committee Clerk; Phil Prell, Attendee

**ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

**MOVED by M. Jarvis and Seconded by J. Lee: “That Chris Gower be elected as Vice Chair of the Advisory Design Panel for 2025.”**

**RESULT: Carried 6 TO 0**

**IN FAVOUR:** Gower, Jarvis, Gillespie, Lee, Simpson, Vins

**OPPOSED:** None

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**MOVED by J. Lee and Seconded by C. Gower: “That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on March 5, 2025, be adopted as circulated.”**

**RESULT: Carried 6 TO 0**

**IN FAVOUR:** Gower, Jarvis, Gillespie, Lee, Simpson, Vins

**OPPOSED:** None

**COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS**

**961 MCKENZIE AVENUE & 3986 AND 3990 SAANICH ROAD**

**Applicant:** Seba Construction Ltd.

**Project Description:** To rezone from RS-6 and RS-10 to RA-11 to construct a 6-storey, 60-unit multi-family building

**Planning File:** DPR01057; REZ00751

**Planning Staff:** Eric Joyal, Planner

Planning provided an overview of the proposal, followed by a presentation from the applicants (PowerPoint on file).

**The applicant noted the following in response to questions from the Panel:**

- This is a market residential building.
- The building follows the BC Building Code and will be constructed with a wood-frame structure. Regardless of material selection, sound transmission is inevitable.
- Acoustic mitigation strategies include the installation of a mat beneath the flooring to reduce noise. Rainwater drainage pipes are insulated to minimize sound disturbances for residents. A sound test is conducted during construction to confirm compliance with the BC Building Code.

- Some suites may incorporate acoustic glazing, and further discussions with the developer may occur in later project stages regarding additional sound mitigation measures.
- The south property line presents challenges for planting due to site constraints. On the east side, greater emphasis is placed on planters and integrated greenery.
- Recycling and garbage facilities are located adjacent to the loading area for efficiency and accessibility.
- The development includes an internal amenity space while each residential unit features private outdoor space. The amenity room, located near the entryway, is intended for communal use and may serve as a multi-purpose gathering or party room.
- Consideration was given to retaining existing Garry oaks on-site. While some trees are preserved along the property perimeter, constraints related to size of the canopy, root systems, and excavation for the parkade required the removal of others.
- A total of 22 bylaw-protected trees are subject to removal. Several trees are located within required setbacks, while the majority are positioned within the building footprint.
- Retention of a Garry oak tree within the road right-of-way will require further exploration.
- Economic constraints limit the feasibility of increasing the building's height.
- The rooftop was explored as a potential amenity space but was ultimately excluded due to structural load considerations. Additionally, exposure to wind would require extensive screening.
- The loading area must provide sufficient space for vehicles to turnaround. A significant amount of space is being lost due to this requirement.
- Bicycle parking is located at the P1 level. Residents accessing bike storage will utilize the underground ramp to reach this area.
- Cargo bike storage has its own dedicated gated enclosure.
- Suite layouts and washroom configurations are designed to meet Saanich's adaptability requirements.
- Corridors and unit entries have been adjusted to enhance accessibility and adaptability.
- The garbage room is accessible from the exterior, with an entry through the covered loading area. The pathway leading to the garbage facility maintains a slope of less than 5%, meeting the definition of a flat surface for accessibility purposes.
- Sliding doors may be taken into consideration to improve accessibility within residential units.
- Bike storage dimensions have been fully designed to accommodate an appropriate number of bicycles for the size of the building.
- The proposed loading bay height is 3 meters, whereas the required height is 4.25 meters. The ground floor level has been raised to optimize clearance, however, the space is not designed to accommodate large moving trucks. Larger moving vehicles can utilize the adjacent roadway for loading and unloading.

**The following was noted during Panel discussion:**

- This project is supportable.
- The building shape is unique for a six-storey residential structure and features an efficient floor plan.
- Loading zone requirements can be challenging, and eliminating the turnaround space requirement could allow for outdoor amenity space, which could enhance the project.
- A lay-by or pull-in/pull-out loading zone could provide more space for landscaping.
- A secondary use for the loading zone could make it feel less utilitarian.
- The lobby could benefit from a direct visual connection to the elevator.
- Expanding the lobby space could improve functionality.
- A larger, more programmable amenity space could be beneficial.
- A meeting room in the lobby would be a valuable addition.
- Landscaping and screening along the southern property line is minimal and could be explored to provide more of a buffer.
- Vertical landscaping elements, such as trellises or vines, could improve the south property line.

- The facade is well-executed and visually compelling.
- Garry oaks are worth retaining, and further efforts to preserve them should be considered. This will balance ecological sustainability with housing needs.
- The fences are well-designed.
- Walls and balconies are well-detailed, and the subtle refinement in design is appreciated.
- The McKenzie Avenue setback allows for generous landscaping and the landscape setback along Saanich Road is well-executed.
- Landscaping helps soften the building, especially on the north side.
- An accordion wall in the amenity space could provide flexibility, allowing for one large or two smaller rooms.
- Including corridor dimensions for accessibility would be helpful.
- Any visual strategies to minimize the scale of the building in a single-family residential area should be considered.
- Acoustic separation is a challenge in wood-frame buildings.
- Locating cargo bikes outside the main bike room and making them more visible is a thoughtful design choice.
- The corner treatment is well-handled.
- The ground floor outdoor space is well-integrated.
- The unit mix and sizes are appropriate.
- The tile cladding is a strong design element.
- The linear form and flow of the building are well-executed.
- The intersection of aluminum slats adds an interesting design detail.
- There is a significant amount of hardscape due to the loading zone.
- Consideration of light and massing is well-handled, and additional lighting in the entryway could further enhance the design.
- Preserving some trees along the west and south property lines would be beneficial. Trees along McKenzie should be planted on grade rather than on slab.

**MOVED by M. Jarvis and Seconded by C. Gower: “That it be recommended that the design to construct a 6-storey, 60-unit multi-family building at 961 McKenzie Avenue & 3986 and 3990 Saanich Road be approved subject to considerations of:**

- **Softening the southern hardscape area and the addition of landscape screening along the southern side of the building;**
- **Exploring opportunities to retain mature Garry Oak trees;**
- **Provision of an outdoor amenity space.”**

The following discussion ensued:

- It may be beneficial to see the project return with more trees preserved. Retaining more trees would help establish a stronger sense of place.
- Preserving mature Garry oak trees while incorporating an outdoor amenity space should be considered.
- Exploring the potential for a small rooftop amenity space with appropriate screening could significantly enhance the building.

**RESULT: Carried 6 TO 1**

**IN FAVOUR:** Gower, Jarvis, Gillespie, Partlow, Lee, Vins

**OPPOSED:** Simpson

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**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOVED** by J. Lee and **Seconded** by M. Jarvis: “That the meeting be adjourned at 3:13 p.m.”

**RESULT: Carried 7 TO 0**

**IN FAVOUR:** Gower, Jarvis, Gillespie, Lee, Partlow, Simpson, Vins

**OPPOSED:** None

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CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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COMMITTEE CLERK