

MINUTES
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL
Held virtually via MS Teams
November 05, 2025 at 1:00 PM

ROLL CALL

In Attendance: Chris Gower (Chair), Brian Fraser, Matthew Jarvis, Jacy Lee, Sean Partlow, Kimberly Simpson, Xeniya Vins
Guests: Olivia Lund, Aryze Developments; Mariam Ibrahim, Aryze Developments; Erica Sangster, DAU Studio; Mark Zupan, DAU Studio; Catherine Orr, MDI Landscape Architects; Kai Ming Ren, MDI Landscape Architects
Regrets: Greg Gillespie,
Staff: Thomas Kempster, Non-Market Housing Planner; Daniel Lake, Planning Analyst
Attendee; Preet Chaggar, Senior Committee Clerk

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

August 6, 2025

MOVED by B. Fraser and Seconded by M. Jarvis: “That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on August 6, 2025, be adopted as circulated.”

RESULT: Carried 7 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Fraser, Gower, Jarvis, Partlow, Lee, Simpson, Vins

OPPOSED: None

September 3, 2025

MOVED by B. Fraser and Seconded by X. Vins: “That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on September 3, 2025, be adopted as circulated.”

RESULT: Carried 7 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Fraser, Gower, Jarvis, Partlow, Lee, Simpson, Vins

OPPOSED: None

*** M. Jarvis declared a conflict of interest and did not participate as a Panel member for this application. ***

COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS

526 NORMANDY ROAD

Applicant: Aryze Developments (Olivia Lund)

Project Description: To rezone from RS-8 to RA-11 to construct a six-storey residential building. Variances are requested.

Planning File: DPR01087

Planning Staff: Daniel Lake, Planning Analyst

Planning provided an overview of the proposal, followed by a presentation from the applicants.

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

- Within the Streamside Protection and Enhancement Area (SPEA), including the 30-meter setback, all trees are required to be native. Proposed species include Bigleaf Maple, Vine Maple, and Douglas Fir.

- Other areas will feature a diverse mix of plants and trees selected for their landscape performance. Trees on slab include Ruby Ray, Persian Ironwood, and Katsura.
- Trees in the rain garden will be *Nyssa sylvatica* (Tupelo).
- Proposed boulevard trees are *Malus 'Royal Raindrops'* (Crab Apple) and *Cornus 'Venus'* (White Flowering Dogwood), to be alternated rather than grouped, per Saanich guidelines.
- Garbage collection is located in the basement. Smaller garbage trucks will access the parkade and stage bins in a designated waiting area near the driveway for pickup by larger trucks.
- Two centrally located elevators serve the building, positioned near the main entrance and amenity spaces.
- Elevator placement prioritizes convenience at the main entrance while providing efficient access across the floor plate.
- Residents moving in or out will book the elevators, with moving trucks using on-street loading areas.
- Final tenure has not yet been determined; there is a preference for rental, but no decision has been finalized.
- Of the 132 units, 30 are planned as adaptable (meeting the 1-in-5 requirement). The design also meets the 2024 seismic standards.
- The design focuses on maximizing stormwater management and resident use within the central courtyard rather than providing circulation around the entire building.
- The SPEA area is strictly protected, with access permitted only for invasive species management. A fence is required, and the area cannot be used as amenity space or for any activities.
- The buffer zone between the building and SPEA fence is intended mainly for maintenance access.
- Introducing additional stairs or paths would reduce green space, and the rain gardens are already optimized given site constraints.
- The preference is to maintain expansive, vibrant landscaping rather than add hardscape, particularly along the north and west sides of the building.
- Three-bedroom corner units are located on the creek-facing side to maximize light, consistency, and unit count (six total). Northwest corner units receive additional light, large balconies, and forest views.
- Two amenity spaces are provided to offer a variety of options, and proximity to the recreation centre and park supports family-oriented living.
- Window size and placement are designed to ensure sunlight and daylight throughout the day.
- There is no traditional storage-locker room, but each suite includes generous closet space.
- A small dedicated storage area is provided on levels 2–5, with approximately three lockers per floor.
- The parkade is designed to maximize vehicle and bicycle parking, meeting minimum parking and drive-aisle requirements, which limits leftover space for storage.
- Some unused areas in the parkade are being considered for kayak or large-equipment storage.
- The lighting design is not included at this early stage but will complement both the architecture and landscaping.
- The ground and top floors are intentionally taller to visually distinguish the base and top from the middle floors.
- Accent colours (copper) are used sparingly on angled surfaces, window returns, and balcony returns to avoid an overwhelming appearance.
- Alternating window patterns were considered but made the facade appear too busy.
- A key architectural feature is the use of large, deep balconies, highlighted with varied materials and skylights.

The following was noted during Panel discussion:

- The project was viewed as thoughtfully designed, with the building's slight rotation, angularity, and accents around windows and balconies enhancing visual interest and helping to break down the massing.
- A concern was raised regarding the number of studio units (approximately 17), noting that units under 500 sq. ft. can be challenging to live in.
- Ground-floor units with direct access to the landscape were highlighted as positive, supporting community-building and encouraging outdoor activity.
- Courtyard connectivity could be improved—even with raised landscaping—by adding simple elements such as stepping stones to provide informal access.
- Exploring connectivity options for three-bedroom units at the back, such as stairs along the building or relocating paths, without reducing green space.
- For the courtyard, potential creative solutions could allow direct access from patios, such as small steps or stepping stones, while maintaining raised landscaping.
- It was suggested that a few benches be added in or near the SPEA area, where feasible, to enhance usability without obstructing access to units.

MOVED by B. Fraser and Seconded by J. Lee: “That it be recommended that the design to construct a six-storey residential building at 526 Normandy Road be approved subject to consideration of:

- Better connectivity to the ground-floor units and improve access to the landscaped areas;
- Increase the variation of colour tones to break up the building’s uniform appearance.”

RESULT: Carried 6 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Fraser, Gower, Partlow, Lee, Simpson, Vins

OPPOSED: None

*** At 3:08, M. Jarvis joined the meeting as a Panel member. B. Fraser declared a conflict of interest and did not participate as a Panel member for this application. ***

898 SEVENOAKS ROAD

Applicant: DHK Architects on behalf of Capital Region Housing Corporation

Project Description: Two six-storey buildings containing 134 units of non-market housing and one level of parking.

Planning File: DPR01090

Planning Staff: Thomas Kempster, Non-Market Housing Planner

Planning provided an overview of the proposal, followed by a presentation from the applicants.

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

- The pedestrian route is being redesigned to improve safety and circulation.
- This redesign may require a variance to remove one loading bay and one or two visitor stalls. Reducing surface parking would allow direct access from the north lobby through the planting area to the south lobby.
- Units along the north side do not have at-grade access due to grade differences and the level of public exposure along McKenzie Avenue, which helps maintain privacy and limit permeability.
- The buildings are smaller in scale, with shorter elevations and only 14 units per floor plate.
- Tall windows are a key design feature, providing increased daylight, timeless character, and a higher level of quality than typically seen in affordable housing, while meeting energy-modeling requirements.

- A clean, simple design was achieved through colour variation between buildings, paired and staggered windows, and roofline adjustments.
- Pull-outs on Nelthorpe Street are not feasible, as the area functions as a rain garden and swale; reducing it for parking would compromise its purpose.
- Blank wall areas without windows on Nelthorpe Street were intentionally incorporated to create pauses in the elevations, offering visual breathing room and contributing to the overall composition.
- The connection of courtyard patios to common spaces has not yet been considered but will be explored if feasible. Discussions with the operator group are required to determine what best serves residents.
- The addition of small patios for McKenzie Avenue units will also be reviewed.
- E2 and C2 units do not have full balconies due to building geometry.
- Creating an accessible roll-out balcony for an accessible unit is not feasible due to structural framing constraints and added cost.
- Only residents will have access to the secured underground parkade; all visitor parking remains on site.
- Reducing one surface parking stall and obtaining a loading-zone variance could expand landscaped areas and improve courtyard usability.
- Cementitious paneling (similar to Hardie board) will be used, with colour-matched recessed trims to avoid shiny metal finishes.
- Where budget allows, alternate panels or contoured metal may be used between windows. Metal trims will be included, and windows will be recessed as much as the exterior insulation allows.
- The roofline is sloped and extended around the balconies.

The following was noted during Panel discussion:

- The Panel acknowledged the challenges of designing within affordable-housing constraints.
- The two buildings were viewed as well-proportioned, with subtle differences in height and tone.
- Introducing slight shifts in wall panels and a second colour consistent with the window patterning could add depth and visual interest.
- The facade could benefit from a greater sense of warmth to reinforce the residential, family-oriented nature of the project.
- Subtle material accents, patterns, or color treatments would help make the building feel more inviting.
- Adding modest residential features at building entrances such as lighting, canopies, or sculptural elements could further enhance building character.
- A few minor facade refinements were recommended to elevate the overall design.
- Appreciated the focus on family-oriented housing with a high number of three-bedroom units.
- Recommended incorporating patios wherever feasible for ground-floor units, as even small outdoor spaces can significantly improve livability.
- Informal connections between some patios and public spaces were suggested to support community interaction.
- Supported the entry area and highlighted the importance of pedestrian access and considering including pathways connecting both lobbies for accessibility.
- The landscaped courtyard is a key feature of this project.

MOVED by X. Vins and Seconded by J. Lee: "That it be recommended that the design to construct two six-storey buildings containing 134 units of non-market housing and one level of parking at 898 Sevenoaks Road be approved subject to consideration of:

- The addition of patios and balconies where feasible and provision of patios for all ground-floor units with direct ground-level access to landscaped areas;

- Maximize the courtyard by removing or relocating surface parking, particularly near the lobby to increase landscaped area, improve pedestrian access to lobbies, and create more family-friendly outdoor amenity space;
- Enhance the building facade by incorporating a mix of materials to create greater depth, warmth, and visual appeal;
- Enhance and accent the entrance ways with design features that better articulate the building as a residential destination.”

RESULT: Carried 6 TO 0

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

OPPOSED: None

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by M. Jarvis and Seconded by X. Vins: “That the meeting be adjourned at 4:18 p.m.”

RESULT: Carried 6 TO 0

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

OPPOSED: None

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

SENIOR COMMITTEE CLERK