

DATE OF MEETING | May 27, 2019 |  
AUTHORED BY | BRIAN ZUREK, PLANNER, COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL PLANNING |  
SUBJECT | **DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP1123 – 4979 WILLS ROAD** |

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To present for Council's consideration, a development permit application for a 160-unit seniors' congregate care and multi-family residential development located at 4979 Wills Road. |

### **Recommendation**

That Council issue Development Permit DP1123 at 4979 Wills Road with the following variances:

- increase the maximum allowable building height from 14m to 26.13m;
- reduce the front yard setback from 6m to 4.7m,
- reduce the side yard setback from 3m to 1.14m,
- reduce the parking requirement from 101 to 96 spaces, and
- reduce the minimum number of loading spaces from 3 to 1. |

## **BACKGROUND**

A development permit application, DP1123, was received from Finlayson Bonet Architecture Ltd., on behalf of 1035452 BC Ltd. (Nanaimo Retirement Living LP), in order to permit a 160-unit seniors' development offering independent living and congregate care.

The City approved four previous development permits for the subject property. The proposed development is the second phase of the owner's concept for a comprehensive campus of seniors' care in Nanaimo. The first phase created the 79-unit Nanaimo Memory and Complex Care facility at 4989 Wills Road, which opened in April 2017.

In September 2008, the City first approved a development permit (DP567) for a comprehensive seniors' care centre. The concept included 183 units in two buildings contained on one lot, with variances for building height and yard setbacks. Council subsequently renewed the development permit twice: first in September, 2010 (DP672); and second in October 2012 (DP808). The owner updated the concept for the site in 2014 (DP887) and subdivided the parent parcel into two lots (4989 Wills Road and the subject property, 4979 Wills Road). These previous iterations included four storeys of residential units and care units situated on the northern portion of the site. The applicant has revised the building siting and design to create a more compact building footprint to minimize disturbance of treed areas adjacent to the multi-use Lakeview Road Trail.

**Subject Property:**

<i>Zoning</i>	R8 – Medium Density Residential W1 – Waterfront
<i>Location</i>	The subject property is located on the north west side of Long Lake, adjacent to Nanaimo Memory and Complex Care facility.
<i>Total Area</i>	3.7 ha
<i>Official Community Plan (OCP)</i>	Map 1 – Future Land Use Plans – Corridor; Map 3 – Development Permit Area No. 5 – Steep Slope Development; and, Map 3 – Development Permit Area No. 9 - Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Multiple Family and Mixed Commercial/Residential Development
<i>Relevant Design Guidelines</i>	Steep Slope Development Permit Area Guidelines; and General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines

The subject property is vacant and located in the Long Lake neighbourhood between Nanaimo North Town Centre and Long Lake in the OCP-designated Corridor along Rutherford Road. The Nanaimo Memory and Complex Care facility is located to the north at 4989 Wills Road. To the west, Wills Road separates the subject property from WorkSafe BC regional offices, while Lakeview Park and a multi-use trail separate the subject property from existing residential developments in Long Lake Heights and the proposed residential development at 4800 Cedar Ridge Place (DP1114). A range of existing and proposed commercial uses are also located within 140m along Wills Road, including a proposed rezoning application (RA397) to allow two car dealerships at 4900 Island Highway North (received third reading on 2019-MAR-14).

The elevation of the irregularly-shaped property falls approximately 11m from a rock outcrop in the northwest corner of the lot to the Long Lake shore. The OCP identifies steep slope features within the lot, which is subject to the City’s Steep Slope Development Permit Area Guidelines.

Stands of mature coniferous forests cover the majority of the site. An existing lakeside trail was constructed by the developer during Phase 1 and provides public access across the subject property from Wills Road to Lakeview Road Trail.

The subject property is within walking distance of transit service and Nanaimo North Town Centre, which is designated a Commercial Centre and a Mobility Hub by the OCP and Transportation Master Plan, respectively.

**DISCUSSION**

**Proposed Development**

The proposed development is a seven-storey 160-unit building offering both independent living and assisted care, and shared amenities with the existing dementia care facility at 4989 Wills Road. The care model allows staff to work in both Phase I and Phase II facilities, supporting a continuation of housing and support services. The proposed development includes:

- Five storeys of residential units
  - 50 multi-family dwelling units (senior'- oriented living)
  - 110 seniors' congregate care units

- One storey of resident amenities, administration, and parking on the ground level
- One storey of under-the-building parking and amenity space.

The proposed floor area is 14,289.87m<sup>2</sup>, and the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 1.23. The R8 Zone allows an FAR of 1.25.

The proposed project density is 138 units per hectare, which complies with the OCP's density range for Corridors of 50 to 150 units per hectare. Residential developments in the Corridor designation are encouraged to achieve medium- to high-level densities, generally in two- to six-storey building forms. The proposed development meets the intent of the OCP to support increased residential densities, including six storeys of residential use at the street on a one-storey podium of under-the-building parking in close proximity to surrounding services, transit, and recreational amenities.

### *Site Design*

The current proposal concentrates the development in the center of the property in order to preserve mature stands of trees adjacent to the public multi-use trail (Lakeview Road) and riparian areas adjacent to Long Lake. Previously, the City secured a covenant on the title of the subject property to limit the maximum lot coverage to 27%. The proposed lot coverage is 26.4%. A shared driveway provides access to the existing (Phase I) and proposed (Phase II) development.

The development permit approved previously (DP808) located the proposed building in areas of existing mature forest, and away from the high point of the site (a rock outcrop). To inform the current development proposal, the applicant provided an environmental assessment of the site in keeping with the Steep Slope Development Permit Area Guidelines. The assessment concluded there is no significant or rare plant species in the vicinity of the outcrop, and the rock is not a significant environmental habitat. Instead, the assessment recommended preserving an area of approximately 1,752m<sup>2</sup> of forest through this development; therefore, the building siting reflects this priority by retaining mature trees that will function as a vegetated buffer to public trails and a stormwater feature for the site.

The majority of the parking is under the building, with the access ramp located to the northwest of the building entrance. A drive-isle circle is located in front of the building that accommodates visitor parking and loading at the main entrance of the building.

The City requires the developer to improve a portion of the Lakeview Road multi-use trail along the northeast boundary of the subject property. The Urban Hard Surface Trail standard includes 3m of asphalt and pedestrian-scale lighting.

### *Building Design*

The proposed building is Y-shaped with long horizontal wall faces maximizing southern exposure with views of Long Lake. The vertical building bays feature unit balconies with shed roof caps that articulate the building elevation vertically and punctuate its roofline. Due to the slope of the site, the building is six storeys on the Wills Road frontage, and seven storeys on other aspects.

The proposed building design complements the existing complex care building and presents an exterior with patterns of coloured squares and long horizontal rectangles of board & batten vinyl siding to break up the mass of the building. Stone fascia frames the underbuilding parking entrance and exposed wall face areas. Cedar shake siding accents are used to highlight architectural features such as building entrance areas and elongated windows.

### *Landscape Design*

The developer proposes to integrate the landscaping and stormwater management requirements by creating rain gardens north and south of the proposed building. The landscaping plans propose a substantial outdoor amenity area that includes seating, gardens, and pathways extending off the lakeside dining room to the existing public lakeside trail. The proposed trail network offers residents multiple local walking loops. Additionally, the developer proposes to incorporate rock from the site within the landscaping.

### **Design Advisory Panel Recommendations**

The Design Advisory Panel, at its meeting held on 2018-DEC-13, accepted DP001123 as presented with variances, and provided the following recommendations:

- Look at strengthening the horizontal rooflines and detailing at the roof edges of the building to create more definition;
- Look at ways to enhance the main entrance way;
- Incorporate a lighting plan with your submission;
- Work with Staff to ensure an effective Tree Management Plan is in place;
- Revisit the proposed tree selection and provide an inventory list for each zone;
- Look at integrating the natural with the built edges of the path;
- Consider more natural plantings within the lakeside amenity area along the pathway edge to better transition to the lake;
- Revisit the City's Steep Slope Guidelines;
- Reconsider the use of Heavenly Bamboo due to its toxicity to wildlife.

The applicant has addressed the recommendations of the Design Advisory Panel. Updated architectural drawings indicate a more defined roofline and new timber elements to strengthen the main building entrance. Revised landscaping plans will be used to inform the Tree Management Plan required during the building permit process.

### **Proposed Variances**

#### *Building Height*

The maximum allowable building height is 14m. The proposed building height is 26.13m; a variance of 12.13m. Building height is measured from the average grade of the sloping site to the top of the structure's shed roofs. The proposed shed roofs add visual interest and break up the mass of the structure; the bulk of the building mass is approximately 24m high. The existing covenant reduces the building's lot coverage from 40% to 27%, and limits the number of surface parking spaces to minimize site disturbance. Additionally, the proposed building is subject to the flood construction level at Long Lake, which establishes a minimum elevation for the building's lowest floor. With a limited building footprint, underbuilding parking and a minimum floor elevation, the developer proposes to achieve its project requirements by constructing an over-height building. Due to the orientation of the proposed building and the steeply sloping

topography of the area, the proposed building would not limit views of Long Lake from the upslope properties. Staff support the proposed building height variance.

### *Siting of Buildings*

The required front yard setback is 6m. The proposed front yard setback is 4.7m; a variance of 1.3m. In addition, the required side yard setback is 3m. The proposed side yard setback is 1.1m; a variance of 1.9m.

The steeply sloping nature of the site and sensitive habitats constrain the building locations on the subject property. To minimize disturbance, the proposed building encroaches into front and side yard setbacks. The side yard is adjacent to the parking area for the Phase I building, and the two buildings are meant to function as one interconnected campus. Additionally, the proposed front setback provides street presence along Wills Road. Despite the setback variances, the proposed building is well separated from existing buildings on neighbouring lots. Staff support the proposed variances to building siting.

### *Off-Street Parking and Loading*

The required number of vehicle parking spaces is 101. The proposed parking is 96 spaces; a variance of 5 parking spaces. In addition, the minimum required number of loading spaces is 3; 1 loading space is proposed; a variance of 2 loading spaces.

The proposed seniors' residential use of the building is not expected to generate a demand for vehicle parking in excess of the proposed supply. Additionally, the developer will provide transportation services, including a vehicle shuttle, to help on-site residents attend medical appointments, recreation activities, or shopping centres. In addition, the arrivals court at the main building entrance will provide adequate drop-off and loading areas. Based on the proposed seniors'-oriented residential use and the parking provided, Staff support the requested parking and loading variances.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Development Permit Application No. DP1123 proposes a seven-storey, 160-unit multi-family and seniors' congregate care development.
- The OCP Corridor designation supports the proposed development density and multi-storey building form.
- The proposed development complies with the intent of the Development Permit Area Design Guidelines.
- Staff support the proposed variances to building height, yard setbacks, and parking and loading requirements.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Permit Terms and Conditions  
ATTACHMENT B: Location Plan  
ATTACHMENT C: Site Plan  
ATTACHMENT D: Parking and Amenity Plans  
ATTACHMENT E: Building Elevations  
ATTACHMENT F: Building Renderings  
ATTACHMENT G: Perspective Views  
ATTACHMENT H: Landscape Plan  
ATTACHMENT I: Aerial Photo |

### **Submitted by:**

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### **Concurrence by:**

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