STAFF DESIGN COMMENT

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT NO. DP001149 – 415 PRIDEAUX STREET

Applicant/Architect: IAN NIAMATH ARCHITECT

Owner: 1126243 B.C. LTD.

Landscape Architect: FRED BROOKS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Subject Property:

Zoning	DT8 - Old City Mixed Use
Location	The subject property is located south of the intersection of Prideaux Street and Franklin Street, adjacent to the signalled E&N crossing
Total Area	4,897.54m^2
Official Community Plan (OCP)	Map 1 – Future Land Use Plan – Neighbourhood; Map 3 – Development Permit Area DPA No. 8, Old City Neighborhood; DPA No. 9 - Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Multiple Family, and Mixed Commercial/Residential Development
Neighbourhood Plan	Old City Neighbourhood Concept Plan; Sub-Area 6, Mixed Multi-Family/Commercial
Relevant Design Guidelines	Old City Multiple Family Residential Design Guidelines General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines

Site Context:

The subject property is situated in the Old City neighbourhood. Next door, to the south of the subject property, is an empty lot, to the north a single dwelling unit, across the street (and across the railway tracks) is a mixed-use apartment building. To the rear of the property is a 3.75m wide lane and the rear yards of houses on Milton Street. The subject property slopes downward from the lane to the street. The surrounding neighbourhood is a mix of low and medium density housing forms.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant is proposing to construct a 6-unit apartment building which consists of the following: – two 3-bedroom units, two 2-bedroom units, and two studio units. The building's gross floor area is 685.07m^2. The FAR is 0.85 which complies with the DT8 zone.

Site Design

The building is sited within the setback requirements and no variances are needed. Although the building footprint is quite uniform, the building volumes are well articulated creating carefully integrated entrances and amenity spaces. Pathway connections are provided on the perimeter of the building giving units a direct connection to the street and the rear parking area. Two ground level courtyard spaces (for the ground level accessible studio unit) are designed with overhead trellises and stamped concrete floor treatment. The site contains 6 parking spaces which are accessed from the rear lane and short-term and long-term bicycle parking are provided.

Staff Comments:

- The site is well utilized.

Building Design:

The building steps down the slope of the site with a three-storey segment (containing two 3-bedroom units) at the rear of the site and a two and a half storey segment (containing two 2-bedroom units) at the front. The two segments are completed by a two-storey central segment which contains two studio units.

In addition to the ground level courtyard spaces for the accessible studio unit, the building features rooftop patios sheltered by trellises for each of the two and three bedroom units as well as balconies for the units on the second floor.

The fragmentation of the building volume, the receding building heights, and the transparent elements (ie. trellises, railings and translucent panels) helps the building appear less massive from the street.

The building is to be finished in shiplap style siding and board and batten siding in two colours with white trim on the windows and at the floor levels. There is wood shake style siding on the front bay projections and the front gable end of the tallest roof. Brick is used on a portion of the front façade. Stucco is used on the separating walls on the rooftop patio. The roof is to be finished in shingles.

Staff comments:

- Consider unifying the front façade to better fit the neighbourhood context. Some design options to consider:
    - unify the top-most slanted windows with a siding treatment that makes them look like one window
    - a shed style roof over the front balconies to create a horizontal element that connects the halves. This would also help shelter the balconies and give a little variety to all the gable end roof forms.
    - a single-door entry alcove or a front porch that gives access to the front unit doors
    - replace the center two gates with one large double gate with a central pathway leading up to the individual front unit doors

- The building mass is most evident on the rear and side elevations.
    - Consider some changes in colour or material on the rear elevation to reduce the horizontal emphasis of the first and second floor and reduce the perceived height created by the vertical emphasis on the third floor.
    - Consider ways to add variety to the side elevations such as shallow bay projections and recesses, and carrying brick façade treatments around the corner.

Landscape Design

The subject property is located in the “Old Nanaimo Landscape Character Area” which is described as “historical city with formal streetscapes” and specifies that the design layout must be “formal”.

The proposed landscape plan retains an existing mature oak tree that straddles the south property line. Front garden beds have a formal symmetrical arrangement of grass edged with boxwood and punctuated by evenly spaced flowering deciduous trees and yucca plants. An arbour with a flowering vine separates the central front bed. Landscape beds along the sides and rear are a mixture of dogwood, maples, and cypress with shrubby perennials interspersed. Trembling Aspen is provided along the north property line. Landscape beds are enclosed by decorative picket style fencing and low-cast lighting is provided in certain locations.

Staff comments:

- Garbage enclosure details to be provided. Decorative fencing details to be provided.

PROPOSED VARIANCES

Maximum Building Height

A building height variance for the roof on the three-storey segment of the building is requested. A revised height measurement is to be provided by the applicant.