

## STAFF DESIGN COMMENT

### DEVELOPMENT PERMIT No. DP001155 – 6117 Uplands Drive

**Applicant:** DENCITI DEVELOPMENT CORP

**Owners:** NORED DEVELOPMENTS INC. and GEORGIA VIEW VILLAGE LTD.

**Architect:** INTEGRA ARCHITECTURE INC.

**Landscape Architect:** LADR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

---

#### SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SITE CONTEXT:

Zoning	R8 - Medium Density Residential
Location	The subject property is located in North Nanaimo at 6117 Uplands Drive with access from McRobb Avenue via Sentinal Drive (strata road).
Total Area	0.778 ha or 7780m <sup>2</sup> (1.9 acres)
Official Community Plan (OCP)	Map 1 – Future Land Use Plan - Corridor Map 3 – Development Permit Area No. 9 - Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Multiple Family and Mixed Commercial/Residential development.
Relevant Design Guidelines	General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines

---

The subject property is in North Nanaimo and is one of two undeveloped lots within a recently developed high density mixed-use block which is defined by Applecross Road to the west, Uplands Drive to the east, McRobb Avenue to the north and Hammond Bay Road to the south. The multi-family developments to the north and south are both four storeys in height with primarily underground parking. A six-storey multi-family building is proposed to the west (DP001130) with underground parking. McGirr Sports Complex is within a 5 minute walk of the property via a pedestrian path from Uplands Drive.

#### PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant is proposing a five storey multi-family building with 108 rental units (57 two bedroom units and 51 one bedroom units). A floor area ratio of 1.13 is proposed, with a gross floor area of 8,858m<sup>2</sup>, which complies with the base density permitted in the R8 zone.

##### Site Design

The property slopes gently down from Sentinal Drive to Uplands Drive, with a grade difference of 5m along the 145m length of the property. The subject property is proposed to be accessed by both Sentinal Drive (strata road) and Uplands Drive. The building is proposed to be located in the northeast corner of the site with a 7.5m setback from the north property line to respect the adjacent strata residential units and pedestrian path. All parking is proposed to be surface parking located on the south and west sides of the property, with 117 parking spaces. A detached accessory building (85m<sup>2</sup>) for secure bicycle parking is also proposed. A parking space for loading/unloading is provided and a drop-off area is provided at a building entrance.

The applicant has confirmed that 12 parking spaces will contain level 2 Electric Vehicle chargers for electric vehicles.

Staff Comments:

- The number of proposed parking spaces complies with the City's off-street parking requirements; however, all of the parking is provided as surface parking. For a project of this scale, the applicant is encouraged to explore the opportunity to incorporate some or all of the required parking underground or under-the-building.
- Provide details regarding short term bicycle parking.
- Uplands Drive access to be reviewed further through the development permit application process.

Building Design

Five stories are proposed with a total height of 15.85m (16.77m to architectural appurtenances). The maximum permitted height is 14m, a proposed variance of 1.85m or 2.77m.

Building articulation is achieved with prominent covered decks on three sides of the building. The primary building entrance is located on Uplands Drive and is proposed to be emphasized with an architectural feature and 'old cherry' fibre cement board siding. The primary exterior façade materials are proposed to be beige and gray fibre cement board siding with black accents and white vinyl windows. Secondary entrances to the building are located from the parking area. The garbage storage area is proposed to be on the west side of the building such that it can be accessed from Sentinal Drive.

The 51 one bedroom units are proposed to be approximately 55m<sup>2</sup> in floor area. The 57 two bedroom units are proposed to range in floor area from 73m<sup>2</sup> to 84m<sup>2</sup>. Each unit contains in-suite laundry and a private balcony. A common amenity room, approximately 55m<sup>2</sup> in area, is also proposed on the first floor near the Uplands Drive entry, and will have a common outdoor patio area adjacent to the building entrance. A pet wash and bike wash station is proposed at the rear of the building.

Staff Comments:

- Units facing Uplands Drive should relate positively to the street to contribute to a sense of neighbourhood identity. Consider ways to emphasize the ground level podium of the building and incorporate design elements (architectural, landscaping, walkways) to better connect the building with the ground plane and the street.
- While the covered private patio structures provide some building articulation, further articulation would be preferable such that the upper storey is setback from Uplands Drive and/or the north and south property lines.
- The building entrance at the rear is located behind the bike storage accessory building. Explore ways to maximize visibility and wayfinding for the building entrance.

Landscape Design

The landscape plan contains the minimum required landscape buffer around the perimeter of the property. A 7m wide landscaped area is provided along the length of the north property line, which contributes to the character of the existing (strata) pedestrian path that is located primarily

on the adjacent property. A blend of drought resistant and low maintenance trees, shrubs, perennials and ground covers is proposed. The property was cleared approximately 10 years ago, thus no tree retention is proposed. The landscape plan incorporates onsite storm water management utilizing vegetated river rock swales.

**Staff Comments:**

- Consider more evergreen trees in the planting scheme to be consistent with the North Nanaimo character requirements (Zoning Bylaw Section 17.12).
- Consider ways to break up the surface parking area with landscaping to provide shade and enhance the character. Pedestrian connections to the building are also desirable.
- Lighting details to be provided for the parking area and building entrances.
- While the outdoor patio connected to the amenity room provides some common outdoor space, it does not meet the intention of the design guidelines which encourages areas of useable open space for meeting and recreation (i.e. play areas for small children, garden plots, etc). Explore additional opportunities for outdoor amenity space onsite.
- The need for a publicly secured pedestrian connection from Uplands Drive sidewalk through the subject property to Sentinal Drive is to be reviewed through the development permit application process.

**PROPOSED VARIANCES**

*Building Height*

A variance is proposed to the maximum permitted building height from 14m to 15.85m (16.77m to architectural appurtenances), a proposed variance of 1.85m or 2.77m.