

# STAFF DESIGN COMMENT

## DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP001198 – 361 ALBERT STREET

**Applicant / Architect:** DOUGLAS JOHNSON

**Owners:** GAGAN DEEP SHARMA

**Landscape Architect:** PMG LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

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### SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SITE CONTEXT:

<i>Zoning</i>	DT9 Old City Central
<i>Location</i>	The subject property is located in the downtown area on the east end of Albert Street between Cavan Street and Robarts Street.
<i>Total Area</i>	0.1ha
<i>Official Community Plan (OCP)</i>	Map 1 – Future Land Use Plan - Neighbourhood Map 3 – Development Permit Area No. 9 - Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Multiple Family and Mixed Commercial/Residential development; and Development Permit Area No. 8 – Old City Neighbourhood
<i>Relevant Design Guidelines</i>	General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines Nanaimo's Old City Multiple Family Residential Design Guidelines

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The subject property is a vacant, sloping site in the old city neighbourhood. The site has a 14m grade change from the northwest corner of the site to the southeast corner. The property is surrounded by a mix of commercial and office uses located on Albert Street, as well as multi-family uses located on Hecate Street.

### PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant is proposing a 23 unit residential building with underground parking. The subject property is zoned DT9 which permits an FAR of 1.1 when parking spaces are provided underground, and an FAR of 1.1 is proposed for the development.

<i>Unit Type</i>	<i>Number of Units</i>	<i>Units Sizes</i>
Work/live studio	1	36m <sup>2</sup>
One bedroom	21	37m <sup>2</sup> – 50m <sup>2</sup>
Two bedroom	1	69m <sup>2</sup>
<i>Total</i>	23 units	

### Site Design

The building will front onto Albert Street with the underground parking level built into the slope of the land, such that retaining walls are needed at the south side and rear property lines. The driveway access to the underground parking is at the centre of the front lot line, and the pedestrian access, from the sidewalk to the building entry, is on the north side of the front lot line. An outdoor amenity area, 500m<sup>2</sup> in size, is proposed on the top of the parking structure at the rear of the property.

### Staff Comments:

- Provide information regarding the height and materials of the retaining walls in both the front and rear yards.
- Provide one electric vehicle parking space and one visitor parking space in the parking garage.

### Building Design

The building is proposed to be five storeys in height facing Albert Street, and will be four storeys at the rear of the parcel. The properties and buildings located behind 361 Albert Street are at a significantly higher elevation, reducing the impact of the proposed building height at the rear. The main level contains the building entrance, lobby, one work/live studio unit, indoor bike storage, refuse/recycling room and parking spaces. The upper four storeys contain the residential units with covered balconies. The outdoor amenity area is accessed from the second storey of the building. The building is a contemporary design, with flat a roof and balconies for each unit. The building entry is accented by a glass canopy with steel supports.

#### Staff Comments:

- Add more interest to both side elevations of the building, as these will be visible from several locations in the downtown.
- A goal in the 'Old City Neighbourhood Plan' and the 'Old City Multiple Family Residential Design Guidelines' is to preserve view corridors. To support the height variance request provide a view analysis to demonstrate the impact to the Albert Street view corridor.
- Consider revisions to the front elevation of the building, such that the garage entry appears recessed in relation to the lobby area and work/live unit. The improved design for the front elevation should create a more animated relationship to the street.
- Consider the use of contrasting colours on the vertical balcony fin walls to add interest.
- Ensure rooftop equipment is screened from view.

### Landscape Design

The amenity area at the rear of the parcel will contain plantings, as well as garden plots, an outdoor kitchen, a play area for children, and open lawn. Douglas fir are proposed at the rear of the amenity area. The front yard area will be landscaped with trees and shrubs.

#### Staff Comments:

- Provide more information about the pedestrian route connecting the public sidewalk to the building entry (i.e. cross section to show grade change). Consider a bench and other landscape features to create interest.
- Replace the patio fencing for the first storey work/live studio unit with plantings that allow for a sense of privacy while also a creating a better relationship with the street.
- An outdoor rack for two bicycles will be required.
- Provide information regarding any fencing that may be needed on the property.

## **PROPOSED VARIANCE**

### *Building Height*

The maximum allowable building height is 11.2m, and the proposed building height is 14m, a proposed variance of 2.8m.