

STAFF DESIGN COMMENT

(Revised Submission)

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP001187 – 550 BRECHIN ROAD

Applicant: WESTURBAN DEVELOPMENTS LTD.

Architect: THUJA ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

Landscape Architect: LAZZARIN SVISDAHL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Owner: 1228590 BC LTD.

SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SITE CONTEXT

<i>Zoning</i>	R8 – Medium Density Residential
<i>Location</i>	The subject property is located on the north side of Brechin Road, adjacent to Beach Drive and the BC Ferries Departure Bay Terminal.
<i>Total Area</i>	0.52ha
<i>Official Community Plan (OCP)</i>	Map 1 – Future Land Use Plan – Neighbourhood Map 3 – Development Permit Area DPA No. 5 – Steep Slope Development; and Development Permit Area DPA No. 9 – Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Multiple Family, and Mixed Commercial / Residential Development
<i>Relevant Design Guidelines</i>	General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines; Newcastle + Brechin Neighbourhood Plan Urban Design Framework and Guidelines; and Steep Slope Development Permit Area Guidelines

The subject property is a forested and steeply-sloped lot in the Newcastle + Brechin Neighbourhood, immediately uphill from the BC Ferries Departure Bay Terminal. The lot is bound by the exit lanes from the ferry terminal to the east, Brechin Road which is under the jurisdiction of the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) to the south, and Beach Drive to the west. An existing section of the Nanaimo Waterfront Walkway crosses through the BC Ferries property adjacent to the subject property.

BACKGROUND

The application was previously considered by the Design Advisory Panel (DAP) on June 25, 2020. DAP recommended the application return to a future meeting with revised plans to address form and character in relation to the Newcastle + Brechin Neighbourhood Plan, in addition to the following recommendations:

- Consider ways to provide increased amenity space on-site;
- Consider ways to strengthen the columns on the braces of the building; and
- Consider the use of local indigenous species within the landscape concept plan.

The applicant has submitted revised plans for the Panel's consideration. Key design revisions are outlined in the attached response letter and are summarized below:

- Addition of an outdoor amenity space on the roof of the parking level ramp;
- Adjustments to the size of the columns;
- Inclusion of 74% native species in the planting plan;
- Reduction to the slope of the roof;
- Incorporation of a lighter siding colour;

- Realignment of the elevators to allow a view corridor through the lobby; and
- Reduction of retaining wall heights.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant is proposing to construct a 4-storey multi-family rental residential building with 87 dwelling units and under-the-building parking. The proposed building will have a gross floor area of 6,864m², excluding the two levels of parking. The proposed unit mix is as follows:

- 3 studio units approximately 37m² in area
- 44 one-bedroom units approximately 57m² in area; and
- 40 two-bedroom units between approximately 71m² and 79m² in area.

The proposed Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 1.32, which is below the maximum permitted FAR of 1.40 in the R8 zone where 60% of the parking is provided underground.

Site Design

The siting of the proposed building has not changed since the previous iteration, but other minor site design changes have been incorporated. Larger private ground-level patios are proposed facing Beach Drive, and the slope in the rear of the property will be graded to require less extensive retaining walls. The ground floor will be sunken slightly below street level, requiring a ramp and staircase from Beach Drive to the front entrance. The vehicle entrance is proposed from Beach Drive, in the northwest corner of the site. A common outdoor patio space is proposed on the rear side of the building, facing Departure Bay, and a second outdoor amenity space is proposed on the east side of the building above the parking level ramp.

Building Design

The building design has changed from the previous iteration with the incorporate of lighter shades of materials and more prominent window boxes. A lower slope to the roof will provide a less imposing roofline in the neighbourhood. A mix of light and dark fibre cement siding will present a west coast wood tone. The exposed wall of the ramp between parking levels, facing southeast, will feature a perforated corten steel screen.

Landscape Design

Revisions to the landscape plan include a more robust landscape buffer along the north property line, with the inclusion of dogwood trees. The new outdoor amenity area will include a lawn with berm, a vine maple tree, and raised planters. The remainder of the site's proposed landscaping is largely the same as the previous iteration.

PROPOSED VARIANCES

The previously indicated building height and retaining wall height variances have been eliminated, and the applicant is not requesting any variances at this time.