

STAFF DESIGN COMMENT

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP001208 – 497 MENZIES RIDGE DRIVE

Applicant / Architect: RAYMOND DE BEELD ARCHITECT INC.

Landscape Architect: KATE STEFIUK STUDIO

Owner: MENZIES RIDGE ESTATES LTD.

SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SITE CONTEXT

<i>Zoning</i>	R6 – Low Density Residential
<i>Location</i>	The subject property is located on the south side of Menzies Ridge Drive between Buttertubs Marsh Park and Sarum Rise Way.
<i>Total Area</i>	5,470m ²
<i>Official Community Plan (OCP)</i>	Map 1 – Future Land Use Plan – Neighbourhood Map 3 – 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

The subject property is a vacant lot in the greater Hawthorne subdivision that is being developed between Buttertubs Marsh and Wakesiah Avenue. The property is a through-lot and has a frontage on the corner of Bird Sanctuary Drive and Poets Trail Drive to the south and Menzies Ridge Drive to the north. The lot is predominantly flat with a slight slope towards Buttertubs Marsh to the west. Buttertubs Marsh and its surrounding riparian area are protected by a covenant that was secured at the time of the property's creation in 2014. A covenant amendment to limit the total number of dwelling units to 22 was approved by Council on 2020-SEP-17.

The surrounding neighbourhood consists primarily of low-density residential uses with single residential dwellings to the north, east, and south, and duplex lots the southwest and northwest. Buttertubs Marsh Park is approximately 10m to the west of the subject property. A six-storey, 159 unit affordable seniors' residence is under construction at 10 Buttertubs Drive, approximately 120m to the northwest of the subject property.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant is proposing to construct a 22 unit multi-family development consisting of seven buildings. Each unit is roughly 145m² in size with two bedrooms and a den in a two-storey townhouse form with single car garages on each unit. The property zoning (R6) permits a base floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.45. The applicant is proposing to achieve Tier 1 of Schedule D in the Zoning Bylaw, allowing an additional 0.10 FAR (for a total of 0.55). The proposed FAR is 0.49. The total gross floor area (GFA) for all buildings is approximately 2,659m² with a proposed lot coverage of 29%.

Site Design

The proposed buildings are oriented from north to south, with Buildings A and B facing Menzies Ridge Drive, providing street presence and individual unit connections to the sidewalk. Buildings C to F include 2 to 3 units each, and are located approximately in the middle of the site. Building G has 4 units and is oriented toward the main (publicly accessible) internal drive aisle, which is

located along the south and east property lines of the site. Each individual unit is accessed by one of two additional two-way internal drive aisles.

Pedestrian circulation is extensive within the site, with a 1.5m wide private walkway through the middle of the site, with connections to individual patio areas and a central landscaped play area. There is an existing easement for a public walkway through the site to provide pedestrian access from Menzies Ridge Drive to Bird Sanctuary Drive. The applicant is proposing a 2m wide walkway along the south and east property lines.

Parking is provided within single car garages for each unit, and additional surface parking is provided along the main drive aisle. In total, 40 stalls are provided, with 3 accessible stalls and 2 visitor stalls, and there are electric vehicle charging (EVC) facilities for 12 stalls.

Bicycle parking is proposed with long-term bicycle storage within the parking garages and a short-term bicycle rack accessed from an internal walkway. Refuse receptacles will be stored within an enclosure located on the south elevation of Building E.

Staff Comments:

- Look at ways to mitigate potential conflict between vehicles and pedestrians along both sides of the proposed public walkway along the east property line.
- Ensure the single car garages are adequately sized to include the required bicycle storage.
- Provide details of the driveway entrance from Bird Sanctuary Drive and ensure adequate screening from adjacent properties.

Building Design

The proposed buildings are contemporary in design and provide visual interest along Menzies Ridge Drive and Bird Sanctuary Drive. Buildings A and B, along Menzies Ridge Drive, are pulled close to the street edge with a pedestrian connection to each unit from the public walkway.

The façade and rear elevation of each building consist of wood textured longboard, bordered by projected metal flashing. Glazing is a prominent feature on both the front and rear elevations of all buildings. Fiber cement panel is also featured on all elevations of the proposed buildings.

Each unit has a low-pitched roof, with a flat portion between some units set back from the facades. Balconies for outdoor living are fully covered by the metal flashing on the front elevations of all units above the garages. Entrance canopies are provided to each unit with a privacy screen between the adjacent units.

Staff Comments:

- Consider materials and details that better reflect the character of the Hawthorne neighborhood (i.e. horizontal siding, shingles, porches with prominent timber posts, windows with mullion and transom designs, and balconies overlooking walkways and the streets).
- Add glazing on the side elevations of each building, particularly facing the walkways and public realm.
- Consider a variation in façade design, setbacks, or rooflines to add interest and individuality to the units, particularly fronting Menzies Ridge Drive.
- Re-design the units facing Menzies Ridge Drive with front entries facing the street to complete the street frontage and better align with the Hawthorne neighbourhood design.

Landscape Design

The western landscape buffer incorporates indigenous species that integrate with Buttertubs Marsh, adjacent to the subject property. The northern landscape buffer, along Menzies Ridge Drive is broken only by pedestrian connections (including the main pedestrian entrance to the site), and the southern drive aisle that provides vehicular access to the site.

Layered plantings are proposed throughout the site with a mix of indigenous, deciduous, and evergreen shrubs and trees. The landscape plan is centered around a naturalized play area with mounds, stepping stone paths and a cedar platform overlooking a densely planted low point, emulating a marsh. Bird boxes are proposed throughout the site to encourage nesting.

Benches and bollard lighting are proposed along the pedestrian walkways and within the central play area. Private amenity spaces are provided for each unit in the form of a patio with concrete paving, which are accessed through a 1m cedar fence. A 1.8m cedar fence on top of a 1.35m redi-rock retaining wall is proposed along the western property line to provide screening from adjacent properties.

Staff Comments:

- Look at opportunities to minimize the retaining walls in the northwest corner of the site adjacent to existing residential properties and wetland to create a more natural edge.
- Confirm the site lighting program (ie. bollard lighting) along public and private walkways.
- Increase opportunities for landscaped areas along the internal drive aisles and ensure they are adequately sized to be maintained in front of the units.

PROPOSED VARIANCES

Minimum Landscape Treatment Level

Part 17 of the City of Nanaimo Zoning Bylaw requires that properties within the R6 zone meet a Minimum Landscape Treatment Level 2 within the side yard with a minimum width of 1.8m. The proposed landscape plan shows 0m along the majority of the eastern property line, therefore a variance is required.