

DATE OF MEETING | December 21, 2020 |

AUTHORED BY | CALEB HORN, PLANNER, CURRENT PLANNING |

**SUBJECT | DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP1174 –
2535 BOWEN ROAD |**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present for Council’s consideration a development permit application for a proposed automobile dealership (Nanaimo Honda) at 2535 Bowen Road. |

Recommendation

That Council issue Development Permit No. DP1174 at 2535 Bowen Road with the following variances:

- to waive the minimum building height requirement; and
- reduce the required landscape buffer along the west property line from 1.8m to 0m. |

BACKGROUND

A development permit application, DP1174, was received from Island West Coast Developments, on behalf of J.B.R. Enterprises Ltd., in order to permit a commercial development at 2535 Bowen Road.

Subject Property and Site Context

<i>Zoning</i>	COR3 – Community Corridor
<i>Location</i>	The subject property is a located on the southwest corner of Bowen Road and Cienar Drive.
<i>Total Area</i>	0.79ha
<i>Official Community Plan (OCP)</i>	Map 1 – Future Land Use Plan – Corridor 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 currently contains the Nanaimo Honda automobile dealership. The existing 900m² building was built in the 1970s, with an addition constructed in 2002. The majority of the lot is paved and utilized for parking and vehicle storage. The existing building is located on a raised step, approximately 5m higher in elevation than Bowen Road.

The surrounding neighbourhood includes a number of other automobile dealerships, with Toyota across Cienar Drive to the north and Mazda on the adjacent property to the south. Properties to the west and across Bowen Road to the east are zoned for light industrial use. |

DISCUSSION

Proposed Development

The applicant is proposing to construct a new 2,280m² car dealership to replace the existing Honda dealership. The new building will be a more modern structure to meet the needs of Honda, and the design of the facility is largely dictated by corporate brand standards. The proposed building will have a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.29 and the maximum permitted base FAR in the COR3 zone is 0.75.

Site Design

The proposed building will be sited in the same location as the current building but with an expanded footprint. The site has been designed to improve vehicle circulation. Currently, there are two vehicle entrances from Cienar Drive and one vehicle entrance from Bowen Road. The eastern vehicle entrance from Cienar Drive will be closed as part of this development.

Different parking areas will be provided with display parking in front of the building facing Bowen Road, customer parking along the south side of the building, and service parking to the rear. A drive-thru service bay and wash bay is proposed on the south side of the building. A drive aisle will connect to surplus parking at adjacent 2321 Cienar Drive. A walkway for pedestrians from Cienar Drive will provide both an accessible entryway and a feature staircase. A small patio and outdoor staff amenity area is proposed near the service bay entrance. Site lighting will be improved with on-site exterior lighting and increased street-facing fenestration.

An outdoor refuse receptacle area will be provided on the west side of the building facing the internal drive aisle and facing away from the street.

Building Design

The building design is standardized for the Honda corporate brand. The building is sited close to Cienar Drive and provides street presence with large showroom windows. The east elevation, facing Bowen Road, is situated above the lower parking area and features large windows for vehicle display and a significant entryway with red aluminum composite panels. The south and west elevations, facing neighbouring properties, will have corrugated siding and smaller window openings.

The interior of the building is separated into different sections based on intended use. The street-facing portions of the building will contain sales and the showroom, the interior of the building will contain parts and service, the west portion will contain the automobile repair garage, and the second floor will contain administrative offices.

Landscape Design

Robust landscaping is proposed along both street frontages, with low evergreen shrubs, ornamental grasses, and a feature raingarden at the northeast corner of the property. Small-species street trees are proposed to enhance the existing Cienar Drive street boulevard and at the vehicle entrance from Bowen Road. A landscaped bank below the east face of the building will accentuate the building entrance with retaining walls, Japanese maple, dwarf dogwood, and

evergreen groundcovers. Other trees and landscaping are provided throughout the site in islands and around the edge of the building to break up the hardscaping.

Design Advisory Panel

The Design Advisory Panel (DAP), at its meeting held on 2020-FEB-27, accepted DP1174 as presented with support for the proposed variances. The following recommendations were provided:

- Consider adding landscape islands, in particular at the eastern corner of the site, near the Bowen Road entrance;
- Consider adding street trees along Bowen Road;
- Consider adding weather protection at all building entrances;
- Consider using more robust materials and detailing to accentuate the feature staircase railing and retaining walls to emphasize the main entrance and connection to the street; and
- Advise Honda to consider changing their corporate building design and work with Staff to ensure the proposed design meets the City's design objectives.

The applicant subsequently revised the application to address the DAP recommendations with the addition of a landscape island with trees near the Bowen Road entrance, weather protection, and extension of the decorative concrete surface to the feature staircase.

Proposed Variances

Minimum Building Height

Section 9.7.1 of the Zoning Bylaw requires a minimum building height of two storeys above grade. While a second floor is provided in a portion of the building, a variance is requested to allow a primarily one-storey building, given the nature of automobile dealership use and the space programming requirements of Honda corporate branding. The street-facing portions of the building will appear as two storeys above grade due to the large showroom ceiling heights. No negative impacts are anticipated and Staff support the proposed variance.

Minimum Landscape Buffer

The minimum landscape buffer in the COR3 zone along zone boundaries is 1.8m. The proposed landscape buffer along the west property line ranges between 0m and 1.1m; a requested variance of up to 1.8m.

No landscape buffer is proposed on the southern portion of the west property line, adjacent 2321 Cienar Drive, where the neighbouring property will be utilized for parking. The proposed landscape buffer along the northern portion of the west property line, adjacent to 2317 Cienar Drive, will be 1.1m. This buffer will include low groundcover species and evergreen vines on mesh fencing. There will be an overall increased amount of landscaping on-site compared to the existing condition.

Given the adjacent light industrial uses to the west, no negative impacts are anticipated and Staff support the proposed variances.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Development Permit application No. DP1174 is for a 2,280m² automobile dealership to replace the existing Honda dealership at 2535 Bowen Road.
- Variances are requested to waive the minimum building height requirements and to reduce the required landscape buffer along the west property line from 1.8m to 0m.
- Staff support the proposed variances.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Permit Terms and Conditions
ATTACHMENT B: Context Map
ATTACHMENT C: Location Plan
ATTACHMENT D: Site Plan
ATTACHMENT E: Building Elevations
ATTACHMENT F: Building Renderings
ATTACHMENT G: Landscape Plan and Details
ATTACHMENT H: Aerial Photo

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