

# STAFF DESIGN COMMENT

## DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP001214 – 400 FITZWILLIAM STREET

***Applicant / Architect:*** OMICRON ARCHITECTURE ENGINEERING CONSTRUCTION LTD.

***Landscape Architect:*** CONNECT LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

***Owner:*** TELUS COMMUNICATIONS INC.

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### SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SITE CONTEXT

<i>Zoning</i>	Wallace (DT3)
<i>Location</i>	The subject property is bound by Richards Street to the west, Wentworth Street to the north, and Wallace Street to the east.
<i>Total Area</i>	0.71ha (development parcel)
<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>Neighbourhood Plan</i>	Nanaimo Downtown Plan - Wallace
<i>Relevant Design Guidelines</i>	General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines; Downtown Urban Design Plan and Guidelines

The subject property is located in Downtown Nanaimo's Old City Quarter. The site is highly visible near the edge of downtown, and is within walking distance of employment, commercial services, cultural and recreational amenities, and active transportation routes. As part of the City's road standards, an off-street bicycle path will abut the edge of the site on the Wentworth Street and Wallace Street frontages.

Surrounding land uses are a mix of residential and commercial uses with buildings ranging in height from 1- to 3-storeys. Neighbouring properties include multi-family residential buildings across Richards Street to the west, a City-owned parking lot across Wentworth Street to the north, retail and office uses across Wallace Street to the east, and commercial uses along Fitzwilliam Street to the south.

The property is currently addressed at 400 Fitzwilliam Street and includes the existing Telus building which faces Fitzwilliam Street. The remainder of the lot is primarily vacant and includes a surface parking area. There is a concurrent subdivision application (SUB01398) to separate the Telus building parcel from the development parcel that will front Wallace Street, Wentworth Street, and Richards Street. The development parcel slopes gradually downhill from southwest to northeast and is currently supported by low retaining walls facing Wallace Street.

The site is within the Wallace precinct of the Downtown Urban Design Plan and Guidelines (pg. 25), which were adopted in 2008 following a charrette and stakeholder engagement process in 2006-2007. The Wallace precinct is noted for its unique urban geometry and grade change towards Terminal Avenue. The intersection of Wallace and Wentworth Streets is a focal point of identified view corridors from the west and east.

## PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant is proposing to construct a mixed-use development consisting of one 7-storey building and one 6-storey building with a combined total of 197 residential units, one commercial retail unit, and a shared underground parking level.

The proposed unit composition is as follows:

<b>Unit Type</b> <i>(Average Unit Size)</i>	<b>3-Bedroom</b> <i>(101m<sup>2</sup>)</i>	<b>2-Bedroom</b> <i>(67m<sup>2</sup>)</i>	<b>1-Bedroom</b> <i>(46m<sup>2</sup>)</i>	<b>Studio</b> <i>(36m<sup>2</sup>)</i>	<b>Total</b>
Building A	2	13	21	15	51
Building B	8	32	74	32	146
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>197</b>

The commercial retail unit will have a floor area of 37m<sup>2</sup>. The proposed gross floor area (GFA) of the development is as follows:

Building A	3,970.5m <sup>2</sup>
Building B	11,109.0m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total Floor Area</b>	<b>15,079.5m<sup>2</sup></b>

The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) will equal 2.26, below the maximum permitted FAR of 2.55 in the DT3 zone

### Site Design

The two buildings are oriented to face Wallace Street, a major road through downtown. The site design takes advantage of a bend in Wallace Street, allowing the development to act as terminating vista from the north. Building A will be sited on the north portion of the site, next to Wentworth Street. Building B will be L-shaped and is sited through the centre of the site, with frontage along Wallace Street.

A public plaza is proposed to face Wallace Street, near the intersection of Wentworth Street. The commercial retail unit will have its entrance to the plaza. A private courtyard will separate the two buildings. A dog park and playground for residents are proposed on the south side of the site, behind Building B. A walkway will connect around the rear of Building B from Wallace Street. A rooftop amenity space is proposed for Building B.

A shared underground parking level will be accessed via a vehicle ramp from Richards Street below the private courtyard. A smaller surface parking lot behind Building B will also have access from Richards Street and will include visitor parking as well as loading space. Required bicycle parking will be provided with 100 long-term bicycle parking spaces on the underground parking level and 12 individual bicycle racks provided outside the building entries.

Refuse receptacle rooms are proposed in the underground parking level.

### Staff Comments:

- The Downtown Urban Design Plan and Guidelines envisions a public mid-block connection and amenity space between Wallace Street and Richards Street. Ensure a

public connection is provided through the site to enhance the public realm and increase block permeability.

- Provide adequate spacing in the public plaza to allow for a cohesive design and functional configuration with amenities such as seating, feature trees, and/or a water feature.
- Look at opportunities to further highlight the corner of Wentworth and Wallace Street as a focal point in the neighbourhood.

### Building Design

The buildings are striking in design with projecting lighter shade volumes at the buildings' bases, and darker recessed façades on the upper floors. The recesses will also break up the horizontal massing of the buildings at intervals. The front entry of Building A will face the intersection of Wallace Street and Wentworth Street. The front entry of Building B will have one entry facing Wallace Street mid-block, and its second entrance facing the surface parking lot. The entrances on Wentworth and Wallace Streets will include accessible ramps.

The shared parking level will be masked on the Wallace Street elevation with residential units, with Building A presenting a 6-storey elevation and Building B presenting a 7-storey elevation to the east. To the west, Buildings A and B will present 5- and 6-storey elevations, respectively. The south wing of Building B will step down gradually and its southernmost massing presents a 3-storey elevation adjacent to the existing retail buildings at Wallace Street and Fitzwilliam Street.

Building A will include the commercial retail unit on the ground level, as well as a multi-purpose room for residents. A fitness room is proposed on the ground level of Building B in addition to indoor and outdoor amenity space on the uppermost level. All units will include private balconies or patios. The private patios facing Wallace Street will be above grade and separated from the sidewalk by a low retaining wall with metal cable-wire guardrail.

Building materials consist of aluminum composite panels, natural wood-look cementitious siding, and corrugated metal cladding. Exposed concrete will be visible above the commercial retail unit and multi-purpose room for Building A, facing the plaza.

### Staff Comments:

- Given the prominence of the location and character of nearby buildings, consider framing both buildings with roofline banding to match the lighter shade aluminum panels.
- Look at opportunities to provide further animation along street frontages with direct connections to individual units where possible.
- Review the prominence of the building entries in relation to the scale of the buildings.
- Consider cladding and lighting options for the exposed concrete above the commercial retail unit.

### Landscape Design

Landscaping is proposed throughout the site with a planting mix of trees, shrubs, groundcovers, and grasses. The site perimeter will be bound by deciduous trees and a cluster of conifers in the northwest corner of the site. The public plaza will be raised from the sidewalk level and separated by planter beds. Plaza programming includes seating and bollard lighting. A staircase will connect the plaza to the private courtyard and will be flanked by landscaping, decorative boulders, and an art feature. A second public art feature is proposed at the intersection of Wallace and

Wentworth Streets. Surface materials for the plaza, courtyard, and walkway will consist of concrete pavers.

The rooftop amenity space will include an outdoor kitchen, seating, lounge furniture, and garden planters for residents.

Staff Comments:

- Ensure that the public domain is activated on all frontages and that amenities including outdoor art are strategically located to encourage public interaction. In accordance with the Downtown Urban Design Plan and Guidelines, more opportunities to green the edge of Wallace Street are encouraged (e.g. with cascading plants along street-facing retaining walls).

## **PROPOSED VARIANCES**

### *Building Height*

The maximum permitted building height in the DT3 zone is 14m. The proposed building height of Building A is 17m and the proposed building height of Building C is 19m, requested variances of 3m and 5m respectively.