STAFF DESIGN COMMENT

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP001220 – 4961 Songbird Place

Applicant: **WESTMARK CONSTRUCTION LTD**

Architect: DARYOUSH FIROUZI ARCHITECTURE INC

Owner: **486407 B.C. LTD.**

Landscape Architect: **VICTORIA DRAKEFORD LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT**

SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SITE CONTEXT:

Zoning	COR1 Residential Corridor
Location	The subject property is located to the southeast of the North Nanaimo Town Centre, between Rutherford Road and Songbird Place.
Total Area	1.25ha
Official Community Plan (OCP)	Map 1 – Future Land Use Plan - Corridor Map 3 – Development Permit Area No. 9 - Commercial, Industrial, Institutional Multiple Family and Mixed Commercial/Residential development
Relevant Design Guidelines	General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines

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The subject property is currently vacant and includes a wetland on the eastern portion. The wetland requires a 15m aquatic setback. The lot is triangular in shape with a narrow access at Songbird Place and increased width to the south with frontage on Rutherford Road. Due to the wetland location and the unique shape of the property, the developable area is limited to the southwest portion.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant is proposing a five-storey residential building with 108 rental units and underground parking. The subject property is zoned COR1 which permits a floor area ratio of 1.0, and a floor area ratio of 0.74 is proposed for the development. The unit composition is as follows:

Unit Type	*Number of Units*	*Unit Size*
One bedroom	68	63.6 m^2
Two bedroom	32	84-85 m^2
Three bedroom	8	94.7 m^2
Total	108 units	

Site Design

The proposed building is L-shaped, with one section facing Rutherford Road and the other section facing the wetland area. The siting of the building is outside of the 15m aquatic setback. Driveway access is from Songbird Place, and access to the underground parking area is provided at the north end of the building. A landscape buffer, surface parking, and the garbage/recycling/organics enclosure is provided along the northwest property line.

Staff Comments:

- The siting of the building creates an active frontage along Rutherford Road, and is located outside of the aquatic setback area.
- The applicant is to show the proposed location of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations for electric vehicles and bicycles.
- Consider siting the garbage/recycling/organics enclosure near or inside the underground parking garage.

Building Design

The L-shaped building is proposed to be five storeys in height, with horizontal and vertical accent walls, and a blend of exterior materials and colours to break the building massing. The exterior building materials are proposed to be cement board panel and 'wood-like' cement board plank, with vinyl windows and aluminum balcony railings. The lobby, building entrances, and amenity room are on the first storey in the centre of the building with the primary entrance facing the surface parking area, and a secondary entrance facing Rutherford Road. The underground parking area contains 89 parking spaces, bicycle storage rooms, and a fitness room.

Staff Comments:

- Find ways to reduce the overall perceived massing of the building (i.e. grounding the base of the building with robust façade materials such as stone or brick).
- Consider ways to better distinguish the primary entrances to the building.
- Consider simplifying the rhythm of the exterior façade elements (i.e. glass railings on the balconies, less variation along the roofline, window placement/size/mullions, and exterior architectural elements).
- Consider a roofline that will provide better weather protection for balconies, and ensure the balconies on the southwest corner of the building extend to maximize southern exposure.
- Ensure rooftop equipment is screened.

Landscape Design

Three pedestrian connections are provided from the Rutherford Road sidewalk to building entrances. Two pedestrian path connections, an outdoor amenity space and retained grove of arbutus trees are located by the east building entrances. The path at the west end of the property winds through a landscaped area and raingarden to the surface parking area. A painted line pedestrian path is provided along the driveway to Songbird Place. A landscaped buffer with evergreen trees is proposed along the full length of the west property line. Approximately 75% of the property is protected wetland, riparian area. The vegetation management of the riparian area will include removing invasive species and any debris, maintaining the soil, and replanting approximately 25% of the area with indigenous plants.

Staff Comments:

- Consider revising the circular courtyard drop-off area to allow for a greater separation and landscape buffering between the first storey patios and the pedestrian paths.
- Consider using pavers for the parking spaces near the circular drop-off area to improve the aesthetic.
- Ensure continuous accessible connections from the main building entrances to Songbird Place and Rutherford Road. These walkways should be raised or textured with a different surface material where shared with a drive aisle or crossing the entrance to the underground parking garage.
- Consider increasing the size of the outdoor amenity areas to allow more seating and a play area for children.
- Provide details of site lighting, and ensure lighting is located along pedestrian pathways and in outdoor amenity spaces.

PROPOSED VARIANCE

Building Height

The maximum allowable building height is 18m, and the proposed building height is 18.39m, a proposed variance of 0.39m.

Minimum Front Yard Setback

The minimum required front yard setback is 3.5m. The proposed front yard setback for a small portion of the building is 2.45m, a proposed variance of 1.05m.

Parking

A maximum of 40% of the required parking spaces may be small car parking spaces (45 small car spaces). It is proposed that 41% of the parking spaces are small car parking spaces for this development (46 small car spaces), a proposed variance of 1% to the permitted small car parking spaces.