

DATE OF MEETING [July 26, 2021]

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**SUBJECT [DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP1221
– 3945 BIGGS ROAD]**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present for Council's consideration, a development permit application for the redevelopment of the Nanaimo Correctional Centre at 3945 Biggs Road.

Recommendation

That Council issue Development Permit No. DP1221 at 3945 Biggs Road with the following variances to:

- increase the maximum allowable building height from 14.0m to 18.73m; and
- reduce the minimum required watercourse setback from Brannen Lake from 15.0m to 0m and the Millstone River from 30.0m to 0m for proposed upgrades to the existing road, security fence, and utility infrastructure.

BACKGROUND

A Development Permit application, DP1221, was received from Stuart Olsen Construction Ltd., on behalf of the Province of British Columbia for the phased replacement of the existing Nanaimo Correctional Centre at 3945 Biggs Road.

Subject Property and Site Context

<i>Zoning</i>	CS2 – Community Service Two AR1 – Rural Resource
<i>Location</i>	The subject property is bounded by Dunster Road to the north, Nanaimo Parkway to the east, Biggs Road and agricultural-zoned land to the south, and Brannen Lake and the city boundary to the west.
<i>Total Area</i>	Approximately 47 hectares
<i>Official Community Plan (OCP)</i>	Map 1 – Future Land Use Plan – Parks and Open Space Map 3 – Development Permit Area (DPA) No. 1 – Watercourses; DPA No. 2 – Environmentally Sensitive Areas; and, 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 contains the existing Nanaimo Correctional Centre (NCC) and is situated between Brannen Lake and the Nanaimo Parkway. The lake drains into the Millstone River, which runs along the southwest portion of the property. The existing correctional centre is

located in the southwest quadrant of the site. The remainder of the site is comprised of two large forested areas and an open field.

Existing rural residential lots are located to the north of the site, across the Nanaimo Parkway to the east are forested park and industrial areas, and to the south is a mobile home park and agricultural lands. The development site slopes from Biggs Road to Brannen Lake, with approximately 30m in elevation change.

DISCUSSION

Proposed Development

The proposed development includes the phased replacement of the existing corrections centre with 12 new buildings and accessory structures contained by a perimeter security fence. The proposal includes a new administration building, a program services building, a horticultural centre, and inmate residences throughout the site.

None of the development will take place within the portions of the property designated within the Agricultural Land Reserve. The proposed development is organized into four distinct quadrants around a central recreational area. The building composition for the quadrants is as follows:

Quadrant	Building(s)	Use	Size
1	AE	Administration	10,651.38m ²
2	F1 - F3	Medium Security	2,276.03m ²
3	GS	Guthrie Support	1,313.62m ²
3	H1 - H4	Guthrie Residences	660.61m ²
4	HT	Horticulture Centre	141.1m ²
4	LE	Landscape Equipment Shed	111.1m ²
Central	D1	Program Services	1,758.24m ²

The combined gross floor area (GFA) of all buildings is 16,912.09m². The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) will equal 0.15, well below the maximum permitted 1.25 FAR within the CS2 zone.

As part of the development permit, the applicant is also proposing improvements to the existing road, replacement of the existing security fence, and upgrades to the storm water and sanitary lines within the watercourse leave strip for Brannen Lake (15m) and the Millstone River (30m). The improvements include raising a 375m section of the perimeter maintenance road above the flood construction level, the installation of a concrete sanitary connection chamber, and a new storm water drainage outfall and headwall. The security fence is proposed to be replaced in the existing location.

Site Design

The site design emulates a campus with pods of buildings surrounding a central recreational area. Access to the site will be maintained from Biggs Road, where the visitor parking area is proposed to be located, and will include accessible parking and electrical vehicle charging stations. Bicycle racks are placed near the visitor and staff parking areas.

A pedestrian pathway connects the visitor parking area to the main administration building. Proposed landscaping, signage, monitored security, and passive wayfinding elements enforce the separation between restricted and publicly accessible areas. The site design also incorporates cultural elements by way of artwork and architectural features.

A total of 159 parking spaces are proposed within the development site, including 26 visitor spaces located parallel to Biggs Road, and staff parking east of the administration building. Staff bicycle lockers, a carpool area, and loading bays are located east of the administration building adjacent to the staff parking area.

Building Design

The proposed buildings vary in massing and design and will be constructed to achieve LEED Gold with emphasis on energy efficiency, indoor environmental quality, water efficiency, sustainable site design, and waste management.

The administration building (AE) is viewed as a two-storey building from Biggs Road; however, due to the substantial grade change across the length of the building and a central control and security system, the building height extends up to 18.73m at its highest point and appears as three storeys along the north elevation. The over-height central control area is set back from the south façade and is partially obscured from Biggs Road. The public entry on the administration building displays a large feature wall of natural wood cladding, fibre cement boards, and patterned siding. Exterior materials consist of a combination of fibre cement siding, composite aluminum panel, and custom metal cladding. The building has a mix of glazing and articulation, and due to its size and configuration, presents as three separate buildings.

The medium security and Guthrie residences (F1-F3, H1-H4) are grouped in two distinct neighbourhoods of small, two-storey buildings. The Guthrie support building (GS) is similar in scale to the residences. The façade is clad with fibre cement panels and horizontal lap siding. The building mass is articulated with patterned elements and potential artwork inspired by traditional Coast Salish architecture, with vertical trim elements extending the height of each building.

The program services building (D1), in the middle of the development site, is similar in scale and design to a community centre with the gym placed in the centre of the building. Due to the grade change of the site, only one storey is visible from the south elevation, while the full massing is visible from the elevation facing the lake. The exterior materials include custom pattern metal cladding, fibre cement board cladding, and generous curtain wall glazing.

Collectively, the building design achieves a cohesive aesthetic and meets City design guidelines.

Landscape Design

The site has extensive open recreation space, including public plazas, space for agriculture, and common green spaces. Indigenous elements and wellness programming are supported throughout the site with the inclusion of a healing garden, a sweat lodge and council circle, and a Shkode-Kaan (spiritual gathering place). The buildings and recreation areas are interconnected by an extensive network of universally-accessible asphalt and gravel pedestrian pathways.

A proposed 'commons plaza' is centrally located between the administration building (AE) and the program services building (D1). This area can accommodate dining, seating and gathering spaces, as well as an outdoor workshop plaza space. Areas around the residences are planted with trees to simulate a street edge with a rhythm of plantings, buildings, and walkways leading to the entrances of each building.

A flex-use plaza and 'common green' with a gravel running loop are located south of the program services building and offer space for large group gatherings and sports as an extension of the athletic functions held within the program services building. The southwest corner of the development site will provide opportunities for food production and orchard planting.

The staff parking area includes large deciduous trees that will provide shade and break up the paved areas. Trees and a 3m-wide landscape buffer are provided between the visitor parking lot and Biggs Road to reduce visibility of the parking area from the road. Lighting is provided throughout the site to provide safe, secure, and well-lit conditions. To address the grades within the site, there are multiple retaining walls that vary in height up to 9.3m in height. The retaining walls will be finished with artwork where possible, and will be integrated into the site and landscaping where possible.

The plant palette throughout the site includes mainly native, drought-tolerant and low-maintenance plant species. Wetland and meadow planting areas within the secured perimeter mimic the lakefront and riparian plant typologies. The retention of existing mature trees and the addition of deciduous and coniferous tree clusters connects the on-site landscape to the surrounding woodland and forest-edge typologies.

Design Advisory Panel

The Design Advisory Panel, at its meeting held on 2021-FEB-25, accepted DP001221 as presented with support for the proposed variance and provided the following recommendations:

- Consider additional landscape screening in the parking area; and
- Consider providing weather protection over all exterior doors.

The applicant addressed the Panel's comments by adding canopies over prominent exterior doors and amending the Landscape Plan to include a landscape buffer between the parking lot and Biggs Road to screen the visitor parking area from view.

Proposed Variances

Maximum Building Height

The maximum allowable building height in the CS2 zone is 14.0m. The proposed building height of the administration building (AE) is 18.73m; a proposed variance of 4.73m. The over-height area is approximately 120m², which is a relatively small portion of the building and facilitates the central control and security system for the entire prison campus. Staff support this variance, as the proposed height and location of the control room is necessary to provide site lines to the entire campus and it is partially obscured from view of Biggs Road.

Minimum Watercourse Setback

The required watercourse setback from Brannen Lake and the Millstone River is 15m and 30m, respectively. The applicant is proposing a variance to 0m for portions of both watercourse setbacks in order to place fill within the leave strip to facilitate improvements to sections of an existing maintenance road, replace the security fence in the existing location, as well as upgrade sanitary and storm water infrastructure. The improvements will elevate the road above flood levels, and the applicant has advised that maintaining the existing road alignment is necessary to preserve the intended programming on the rest of the site.

The applicant submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment, which recommends mitigation measures, including riparian area planting, and concludes that the proposed improvements within the leave strip area will not negatively impact the Millstone River or Brannen Lake. The proposed variance is supported by Staff, as plantings will enhance and restore the leave strip area and there will be no negative impacts to the watercourses. Provincial approval under the *Water Sustainability Act* will be required for any improvements below the identified high-water mark.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Development Permit No. DP1221 is for the phased replacement of the existing Nanaimo Correctional Centre at 3945 Biggs Road.
- Variances are requested for building height, and watercourse setbacks.
- Staff support the proposed variances.

ATTACHMENTS

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

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