

STAFF DESIGN COMMENT

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP001234 – 345 NEWCASTLE AVENUE & 360 STEWART AVENUE

Applicant/Owner: MASTHEAD PROPERTIES LTD.

Architect: NDSA ARCHITECTS

Landscape Architect: SMALL & ROSSELL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS INC.

SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SITE CONTEXT

<i>Zoning</i>	Medium Density Residential (R8)
<i>Location</i>	The subject properties are located on the west side of Newcastle Avenue and on the east side of Stewart Avenue, between Rosehill Street and Mt Benson Street.
<i>Total Area</i>	1,619m 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; and Newcastle + Brechin Neighbourhood Plan Urban Design Framework and Guidelines

The subject properties are two standard lots that back onto each other in the Newcastle Neighbourhood. The west property, 360 Stewart Avenue, is currently vacant while the east property, 345 Newcastle Avenue, contains a single residential dwelling. The site slopes downhill significantly by 8m from west to east. The ocean is directly to the east of the site on the opposite side of Newcastle Avenue and the Queen Elizabeth Promenade.

Surrounding land uses include adjacent single residential dwellings, a 2-storey multi-family residential building to the south, a 4-storey multi-family residential building across Stewart Avenue to the west, an 8-storey multi-family residential building to the north, and the Nanaimo Yacht Club Marina across Newcastle Avenue to the northeast. There are nearby commercial services north and south of the site on Stewart Avenue and two blocks west on Terminal Avenue.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant is proposing to construct a multi-family residential development consisting of two buildings with a combined total of 11 dwelling units. The West Building, facing Stewart Avenue, will be 3-storeys and contain six 2-bedroom units. The East Building, facing Newcastle Avenue, will be 5-storeys and contain five 2-bedroom units. Unit sizes will range in size from 81m² to 196m².

The total proposed gross floor area is 1,959m² and the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) will equal 1.21, less than the maximum permitted FAR of 1.25 in the R8 zone.

Site Design

Both buildings will be sited to maximize their frontage along the two adjacent streets. Vehicle access will be from Newcastle Avenue with a drive aisle ramp proposed to lead to two parking levels between the buildings. All required parking is proposed to be provided on-site. The lower parking level, behind the East Building, will contain 10 parking stalls and will be largely covered. The upper parking level, behind the West Building, will contain 10 parking stalls and will be partially at-grade and partially under-the-building. Long-term bicycle storage is proposed on the ground level in each building and a waste/recycling room is proposed on the ground level of the East Building.

Walkways are proposed to building entries from adjacent streets and secondary entries to the buildings are provided from the parking levels. An exterior walkway and stairs are provided along the north side of the West Building, and there is an additional exit route and walkway from the south side of the East Building.

Staff Comments:

- Look at opportunities to provide a pedestrian connection for residents between both buildings.
- Provide site lighting details and ensure that parking areas are adequately lit while minimizing light spillover on neighbouring properties.

Building Design

The building design incorporates traditional and contemporary elements and massing is well articulated on all elevations. The street-facing façade of both buildings will feature large windows and balconies, and the East Building will take advantage of uninterrupted ocean views for all units. The ground-level unit of each building will have a private outdoor patio. Both buildings will have a visible street-facing entry portico. The flat roofs of each building are interrupted by overheight clerestory windows to provide visual interest and additional ventilation opportunities for the uppermost units.

Exterior materials are to include brick cladding on the West Building elevation facing Stewart Avenue, fiber cement shingles on the East Building elevation facing Newcastle Avenue and along the sides of each building, and cement panels on the side elevations of the West Building. Additional brick cladding will highlight the ground level of the East Building. Portions of the buildings, at ground level on the side elevations will include exposed concrete. The entry porticos will be constructed with heavy lumber and roof overhangs on both buildings will have wood-like fiber cement soffits.

Staff comments:

- The proposed building design respects the heritage character of the area and generally complies with the Newcastle + Brechin Neighbourhood Plan Urban Design Framework and Guidelines.
- Consider rooftop equipment screening options.

Landscape Design

Limited landscaping is proposed, with decorative trees including shore pine, cypress, dogwood, maple, and magnolias. Lawn is proposed along the street frontages and in the centre of the site on the roof of the covered parking level. Shrub planting is proposed at the front of the buildings, around the central lawn, along the north side of the West Building, and along the south side of the East Building.

Interlocking concrete pavers will be used for the pedestrian walkways, and grass cell paving is proposed for portions of the drive aisle on the north side of the East Building. Natural concrete retaining walls are proposed for portions of the side property lines where there is a grade difference from neighbouring properties.

Staff Comments:

- A landscape buffer with a minimum width of 1.8m is required along the west and east property lines and should be shown on the Landscape Plan. Additional planting should be provided on the south side of the West Building in place of the lawn.
- Look at design options for fences along the north and south property lines (on top of retaining walls) to provide additional screening, particularly adjacent to the drive aisle and parking areas. Climbing plants should also be considered on exposed concrete walls.
- Consider raised planter beds to define and screen the ground-level patios.
- Consider converting the central lawn, or a portion thereof, into a formal common outdoor amenity space accessible to residents of both buildings.

PROPOSED VARIANCES

The maximum permitted building height in the R8 zone is 14m. The applicant is proposing a building height of 15m for the East Building, a requested variance of 1m. The variance is requested to accommodate the clerestory level of additional windows on the East Building.